



AgeWell Services of West Michigan  
275 W. Clay Ave., Suite 100  
Muskegon, MI 49440

**PLEASE HELP KEEP YOUR RECORD UP TO DATE!**

Is your name and mailing address correct?

Please contact Colleen G. Steinman with any changes:

Email: [Colleen@agewellservices.org](mailto:Colleen@agewellservices.org)

Phone: 231-412-7966



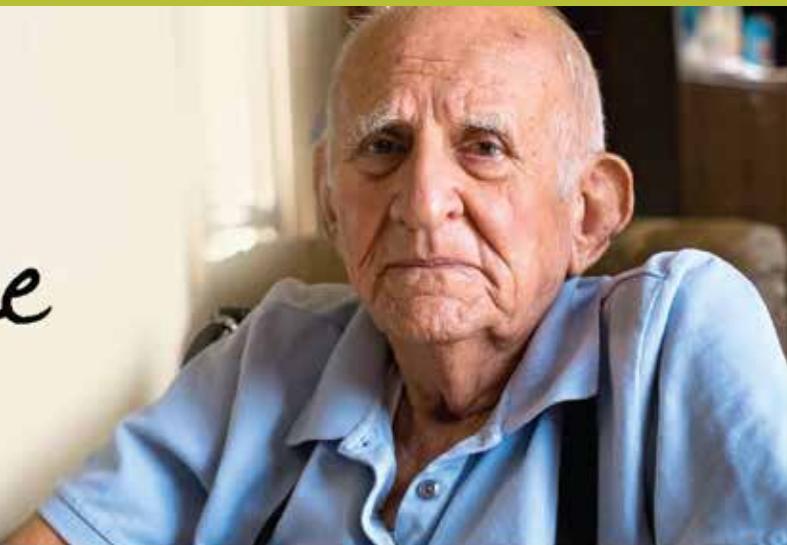
## SafeSeniors Outdoor Campaign

Every year, an estimated one in 10 adults become victims of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation. Too many times, these crimes aren't reported because seniors think it's their fault or they're embarrassed to have fallen for a scam. Sometimes, people think it's a "family matter" and not a criminal act.

This is one of three examples of billboards in our community to help raise awareness about these issues that endanger our most vulnerable population. These billboards carry messages about physical abuse and financial exploitation. To learn more about protecting the aging adults in your life, visit [safeseniors.info](http://safeseniors.info) or call Chris at 231-726-7106.

~~it's my fault~~  
they left me alone

Report Abuse: 855-444-3911



**SafeSeniors.info**  
Educate. Advocate. Seek Justice.



This project was supported by Federal Award 2018-V2-GX-0067 from the Department of Justice, administered by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Victim Services.



# Behind the Wheel

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## An Aging Adult's Enemy: Social Isolation

Homebound and unable to drive, Lillian, 84, picked up the phone one afternoon this spring at her Spring Lake home to call her nephew and realized the phone wasn't working. Both she and her husband Paul, 85, tried several things to get it working again, but nothing helped.

"We had no way of contacting anyone for help," Lillian explained. "What could we do?"

The next day, when their Meals on Wheels delivery driver stopped by with their daily meals, Lillian shared a note with the man, who promptly called their nephew from his cell phone.



**"Isolation can be as dangerous as smoking 15 cigarettes a day"**

Kris Collee, AgeWell Services  
Executive Director

Later that day, their nephew Dan fixed the phone.

"We were so thankful for our driver," Lillian said. "We would have been stuck without his help."

AgeWell Services' home delivered meals, more commonly known as Meals on Wheels, delivers nutritious meals five days a week and offers frozen weekend meals to help individuals remain independent in their own homes. In fact, more than 60% of AgeWell Services HDM participants report their only social contact is with their delivery driver.

More than simply providing nutritious food, these daily safety checks also act as lifelines to stave off the isolation of living alone.

More than 56% of older adults reported feeling socially isolated in June 2020, more than double the 27% reported in 2018, according to the University of Michigan's National Poll on Aging.

"The real enemy is isolation," Executive Director Kris Collee said. "Isolation can be as dangerous as smoking 15 cigarettes a day."

Health studies estimate as much as \$6.7 billion in annual spending is attributed to social isolation among older adults. Social isolation and poor relationships were associated with a 29% increase in risk of coronary heart disease and a 32% increase in the risk of stroke.

In addition to the health impacts, isolation can make seniors more vulnerable to physical or financial abuse, according to Chris Burnaw, who manages AgeWell Service's SafeSeniors program.

A friendly voice on the phone or what appears to be a kind face on a social media account can make an isolated senior feel less alone, she explained. Sadly, scammers know exactly what to say to create a safe space for seniors to open up with information they need in order to defraud the vulnerable senior.

Another common scam is to have a caller pose as an authority figure from a government

(Continued on next page)

## Isolation Busters!

AgeWell Services has a variety of programs to combat isolation, each geared to meet the individual needs of aging adults. Here are ways to bust through that wall of isolation!

### Lunch & Activity Centers:

A variety of locations across all three counties provide a delicious, nutritious meal and social activities. Reservations are highly encouraged. Call Ashley at 231-577-4825.

**Meals on Wheels:** To learn more about meal options and set up home delivered meals for yourself or someone who needs support, contact Annette or Cindy at 231-755-0434.

**SafeSeniors:** With our partners, we offer a variety of programs to help seniors recognize telephone and online scams. Contact Chris at 231-726-7104.

**Senior Activities:** Fun and engaging activities are slowly being re-introduced at locations across Muskegon County. A schedule of dates, times and events is available on the AgeWell website or call Kaytie at 231-354-2215.

**Volunteer:** What better way to stay engaged than by sharing your time or your talents. Contact Jessica at 231-733-8643 to learn more about the process of becoming a volunteer for AgeWell Services.

**Wellness Center at Tanglewood Park:** Exercise classes, weights and more are available in six-week courses for seniors of all abilities. For more details and additional sign-up information, contact Renee, Fran or Jessica at 231-733-8643.

# From the Director...



Developing relationships is the key to any successful business. AgeWell Services prides itself on community partnerships from all over the United States. But, it starts right here at home.

As stated in the previous article, 66% of our funding comes from our local municipalities, state and federal government. The number of charitable grants we receive has increased over time, up to 14% according to our last financial audit. The other 20% comes from our generous individual donors and our program participants through program income and cost sharing.

These relationships are not taken lightly. Neither are the relationships we hold with the individuals we serve. We hear from clients like Lillian often who express their gratitude for team members who, literally, show up. They come with a meal. They show up to give a ride to medical appointments.

They greet them at Lunch & Activity Centers with a warm smile and, soon again, the return of friendly hugs. And when times get hard, we are here to refer them to our fabulous community partners or seek justice for them if they are treated maliciously. We are here first and foremost for their morale.

Please join us! The better connected we are to the needs of the community and the partnerships that drive our mission to help aging adults, the more we can do to reduce social isolation and protect our most vulnerable population. You can help by volunteering your time to drive, serve on the Board of Directors, and help make connections within the three counties we serve. Your talent is just as valuable as the treasure you so generously give. Contact me at [kris@agewellservices.org](mailto:kris@agewellservices.org) or 231-733-8630 so I can help you get connected. Join us!

Yours in Service,

Kris Collee  
Executive Director



## Wish List

This issue's Wish List asks for the most valuable gifts of all: Your time and your talent! Volunteers are critical to helping AgeWell Services fulfill its mission and helping our neighbors redefine age. Current volunteer options include the following:

- Delivering meals during the lunch hour to homebound seniors.
- Serving on the AgeWell Board of Directors.
- Driving seniors to medical appointments.
- Dispatching duties and other administrative office support.
- Connecting AgeWell Services to strategic partnership and grant opportunities.
- Joining a 2022 Heels for Meals planning advisory committee.

If you have a professional skill or a special talent you'd like to offer to AgeWell Services, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Jessica at 231-733-8643.

### Board of Directors

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Karla Betten

### Mission Statement

AgeWell Services invites you to redefine age! We provide vital connections to keep you nourished, active, learning and living independently.

**AgeWell Services of West Michigan**  
275 W. Clay Ave., Suite 100  
Muskegon, MI 49440  
Phone: (231) 755-0434  
[www.agewellservices.org](http://www.agewellservices.org)

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[twitter.com/AgeWellServices](https://twitter.com/AgeWellServices)

## (Social Isolation Continued)

agency with the ploy that the senior is in “trouble” or at risk of losing access to benefits. Without support from family or loved ones, the adult might not realize a scam is happening.

Isolation can also make seniors more vulnerable to traditional kinds of abuse by caregivers, including family members. If they aren't participating in social activities like religious services or other social gatherings, there are fewer chances for a caring friend to notice changes in behavior caused by emotional or physical abuse. Financial abuse by caretakers also may be more likely, as isolated seniors rely on others for shopping and banking errands.

As things begin to open up and in-person activities can resume safely, isolation may continue to be an issue for seniors. If anyone suspects an aging adult is being abused, call the Adult Protective Services Centralized Intake Line at 855-444-3911. The line is staffed 24/7.

## Grants Provide Vital Support for AgeWell Services Programs

If we were playing a round of Jeopardy, the board would read: *An award of funds to an organization or individual to undertake charitable activities.* The winning answer: “What is a grant?”

That's the Council of Foundations' simple definition. In action, grants can be much more complex and vital for an organization like AgeWell Services.

We categorize grants by two main sources: government and charitable. Government grants, which made up 66% of our 2019/20 revenue, include federal, state and local agencies. Examples of government grants include the Older Americans Act (OAA), Michigan Department of Transportation and Muskegon County Senior Millage.

Charitable grants made up 14% of our 2019/20 revenue includes charitable donations from individuals, businesses, community organizations and foundations. Examples of charitable grants include Women's Division Chamber of Commerce, DTE Energy Foundation and Meals on Wheels America.

While every grant is unique, AgeWell Services follows these five basic steps for each grant

- **Research:** Internally, we collaboratively define a need, whether for current or new initiatives. Externally, we research the funder, the proposal requirements and how the grant fits with our mission.
- **Application:** Extensive effort goes into creating, reviewing and submitting the grant proposal.
- **Accepting Grant Requirements:** Before accepting any grant, we ensure we understand requirements such as spending, marketing and reporting.
- **Award Management:** Along with expending the grant funds only as agreed, we also track key metrics. Most grants are restricted to specific programs, such as Senior Transportation Program, or a particular program focus, such as purchasing food for Meals on Wheels. None of our current grants are unrestricted.
- **Final Report:** This is our opportunity to share the impact made by the grant, which is a favorite step by many team members.

## Current 2020 – 2021 Charitable Grants (Public Support)

Our sincerest thanks to the below charitable grant making organizations since October 1, 2020.

- Community Foundation for Holland/Zeeland Area
- Consumers Energy Foundation
- DTE Energy Foundation
- JSJ Foundation Fund
- Leonard & Edna K. Blomdahl Fund of the Community Foundation *for* Muskegon County
- Meals on Wheels America
- Michigan Health Endowment Fund
- Nelson Neighborhood Improvement Association
- PNC Bank Foundation
- The Samuel L. Westerman Foundation
- The Shaw and Betty Walker Foundation
- United Way of the Lakeshore
- Women's Division Chamber of Commerce



## Healthy, Fresh Produce for Seniors with Project Fresh

Summertime along the Lakeshore brings fresh, healthy produce, and AgeWell Services' Senior Project Fresh helps older adults enjoy the bounty.

Low-income adults 60 with a total income of \$22,459 or less for an individual or \$30,451 for a couple can qualify for \$20 in coupons. The coupons can be redeemed at farmers markets and road-side stands for fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods from May 1 to October 31. The goal of the program is to support healthy eating while promoting local communities.

AgeWell Services organizes the distribution of these coupons at more than 10 locations throughout Muskegon and Oceana County in June and July. Muskegon and Oceana County residents aged 60 or older and low income are eligible to apply for the program.

Generous donors have supported this program since 2017, raising \$1,680 which covered an additional 84 coupon books. The program is very popular with 90% of all coupons redeemed in Oceana County and 76.26% in Muskegon County.

For more information about Project Fresh and how to find out if you or someone you know qualifies, call the Wellness Office at 231-733-8643.