

AZ LINKS NEWSLETTER

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Monsoon Season Arrives!

I probably shouldn't make weather predictions, but I'm happy to predict that you are going to enjoy this summer version of the newsletter! Up front I want to recognize Laura Guild as a friend and colleague: GREAT JOB! If you or your agency works with the blind or visually impaired, be sure to check out the article on the Assistive Technology Expo taking place in Glendale on September 30th. Last but not least, a message to family caregivers: please visit the website of the [Arizona Caregiver Coalition](#) to learn how to take a short break using a Respite Voucher!

David Besst - Arizona ADRC Project Director

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2016 Thrive Award Honoree:

Laura Guild

Submitted by Tammy Pankey, Aging and Disability Specialist, DES/Division of Aging and Adult Services

The Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence hosted the sixth annual Thrive Awards Gala and Dinner. This event is the only event of its kind in Arizona to honor and celebrate sexual and domestic violence survivors, advocates, and allies. Each award category symbolizes a plant native to the Sonoran Desert that has adapted and even thrives in the harsh climate. Laura Guild, with the Department of Economic Security, Division of

Aging and Adult Services, received the Saguaro Award in honor of a lifetime dedicated to ending sexual and domestic violence. The Saguaro Award is representative of an individual who has planted the seeds of change through their work to end domestic violence in the lives of the survivors. Like the saguaro cactus, the recipient of this award has left her mark on the changing landscape of the sexual and/or domestic violence – related systems in Arizona. Laura has been working in the field of violence against women since 1982. She has spent the last 25 years as a domestic violence advocate in state service. *Congratulations* Laura, on this outstanding achievement, and thank you for all you do in your efforts to coordinate services for victims of domestic violence!

For more information on the domestic violence program and available resources click on <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/domestic-violence-program>.



Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo

Submitted by Christine Tuttle, Special Services Supervisor, Outreach Librarian, Talking Book Library

Hey, Phoenix! What are your plans on Friday, September 30th? This is an awesome event to attend for those who are blind, visually impaired or blind/deaf. This expo is going to be great because we have all the latest products and services available to learn about.

This is going to be the best year yet!! Join us for Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE) at the Glendale Civic Center, located at 5750 West Glenn Drive, Glendale, AZ 85301. The expo is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

What to do at the Expo? There will be a full day of **FREE** lectures, workshops, and panel discussions. A wide array of organizations that support our community will also be available on the expo floor. Participants are also able to browse and purchase assistive technology from on-site vendors. NASA will be at the expo conducting tactile astronomy sessions (still free, but seating is limited and registration is required).

It is a free event! Registration is free! Parking is free! Contact us if you need transportation help!

Sponsorships are currently available. Donations are always accepted. For the most current information, go to www.vrate.org. Like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#).

Virtual Dementia Tour Shows What it Might be Like to Have Dementia

Submitted by Laura Falender, Program Development Specialist WACOG Area Agency on Aging

On June 8 and 9, 2016, the Western Arizona Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging (WACOG-AAA) partnered with the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging, to offer the Second Wind Dreams Virtual Dementia Tour® at Beatitudes Campus in Phoenix. WACOG-AAA facilitates the Virtual Dementia Tour® to build awareness of what daily life might be like with dementia, in order to better serve the senior population. The Virtual Dementia Tour® is an individual experience through simulated dementia, created in order to better understand the physical and mental challenges of adults with dementia. The Virtual Dementia Tour® was created by Atlanta-based Second Wind Dreams®, a national non-profit organization founded by Virtual Dementia Tour® author, P.K. Beville, M.S. in 1997, to fulfill dreams for those living in elder care communities and to research ways to improve their quality of life. Participants in the tour included Department of Economic Security Director, Timothy Jeffries, Senator Don Shooter, and staff from AARP, the Alzheimer's Association, Arizona Department of Health Services, Arizona Registrar of Contractors, the Governor's Office of Constituent Services, Adult Protective Services, and Police and Fire Departments throughout the Phoenix metro area and Tucson.



WACOG-AAA staff with the Governor's Office on Aging. Left to right: Ginia Robles, Grace Shields, Gigi Ruppel, Laura Falender, Melinda Kemp, Laurie Wanzer, Randall Adams, Cathy DeLisa, Lizette Cordero.

ANNOUNCEMENT

ABILITY360

Did You Know That Ability360 Offers Medicare Counseling the Third Wednesday of Every Month?

*Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, Vice President
Advocacy, from the Ability360 Publication Empower*

The benefits counselors will assist Ability360 participants and the general public with all Medicare and Medicaid related needs and questions including enrollment assistance, problem solving, and general information. All counseling is independent, unbiased, and offered without charge. The services are part of the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP), a federally funded state program, designed to assist beneficiaries.

The Benefits Assistance Program is one of many services available from the Area Agency on Aging, Region One, Inc. to support seniors (60 years and older) and individuals with disabilities. To learn more about all programs and services call the Area Agency's 24-Hour Senior HELP LINE at 602-264-4357(HELP). You can also go online at www.aaaphx.org. For general questions or to schedule an appointment for the **third Wednesday**, email advocay@ability360.org or **602-443-0738**.

ABILITY360



Be on the Lookout for *New Horizons Disability Empowerment Campus* Grand Opening Events!!

*Submitted by Jean Lasher, Community Information
Coordinator/Outreach New Horizons Disability
Empowerment Center*

New Horizons Disability Empowerment Center (NHDEC) is in the process of renovating a nearly 10,000 square foot building that will become Prescott Valley's first ever Disability Empowerment Campus! Be on the lookout for grand opening events as early as August, however, we will be having a GRAND OPENING and Gala Dinner celebration, tentatively planned for October. This year we will be showing off our new facility and speaking about our next stage – a time of exciting growth and change – designed to propel NHDEC as the premier provider of services that transform the lives of people with disabilities across Northern Arizona. We have exciting news to share about our Veterans Service Center, Sports and Nutrition Center, and our rapid growth! We also plan on getting you excited to be an integral part of NHDEC efforts to empower people to live the life they choose. Please give us a call at **928-772-1266**, if you have questions or comments. NHDEC, 8085 East Manley Drive, Prescott Valley, AZ 86314; www.newhorizonsilc.org.



Updates from the Social Security Administration

Submitted by Jack Burns, Public Affairs Specialist in Arizona, Social Security Administration

Although I stopped working a few years ago, I had additional seasonal earnings after my retirement. Will my monthly Social Security retirement benefit increase?

Answer: Possibly. And, you can get Social Security retirement or survivors benefits and work at the same time. Each year, we review the records for all working Social Security recipients to see if additional earnings may increase their monthly benefit amounts. If an increase is due, we calculate a new benefit amount and pay the increase retroactive to January following the year of earnings. You can learn more about how work affects your benefits by reading our publication, *How Work Affects Your Benefits*, at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs.

How do I apply for disability benefits? And, how long does it take to get a decision after I apply for disability benefits?

Answer: You can apply for disability benefits online at www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi/apply.html. Getting a decision on your disability application usually takes three to five months. The time frame can vary depending on:

- The nature of your disability;
- How quickly we can get your medical evidence from your doctor or other medical source;
- Whether it's necessary to send you for a medical examination; and
- Whether we review your application for quality purposes.

Will my eligibility for the *Extra Help* with Medicare prescription drug plan costs be reviewed and, if so, how often?

Answer: If you get the *Extra Help*, Social Security may contact you to review your status. This reassessment will ensure you remain eligible for *Extra Help* and you are receiving all the benefits you deserve. Annually, usually at the end of August, we may send you a form to complete: *Social Security Administration Review of Your Eligibility for Extra Help*. You will have 30 days to complete and return this form. Any adjustments to the *Extra Help* will be effective in January of the following year. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp for more information.

Seniors, Take Charge of Your Prescriptions

Submitted by Adina Wingate, Director Marketing and Public Relations, Pima Council on Aging

In Tucson at Pima Council on Aging (PCOA), the local Area Agency on Aging has launched a new public health initiative, aimed at increasing awareness about the dangers of medications misuse and abuse, and about increasing awareness about local resources for safe storage and disposal. The program is funded by Cenpatco Integrated Care, our regional behavioral health agency, and the Arizona Department of Health Services. In an article for the Arizona Daily Star in May 2016, (below) the issue and local resources are spelled out. The article reached 220,000 readers of the daily newspaper.

We've all heard about people abusing prescription pain medication, but other Rx-related dangers lurk, especially for older people. Geriatricians and researchers have warned for years about the potential hazards of polypharmacy, defined as taking five or more drugs concurrently. Yet it continues to rise in all age groups, achieving disturbingly high levels among older adults. Many older adults have multiple chronic health conditions, so they take more drugs, putting them at higher risk of serious interactions. Even when taken alone, some medications have dangerous side effects, such as making a patient dizzy and more prone to fall. Researchers say patients do not pay enough attention to how their prescriptions and even over-the-counter medications and supplements can interact with harmful results. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adverse drug reactions result in more than 700,000 visits to hospital emergency rooms each year. Many of those reactions can be prevented.

To lower the chances of over medication and adverse drug reactions, the American Geriatrics Society recommends the following tips for safe medication use:

- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about possible interactions before taking an over-the-counter (OTC) medication.
- Make a list: Compile and keep updated. Include all the medications you take, OTC drugs, vitamins, supplements, or herbal or other remedies their doses, and how often you take them.
- Review: Once or twice a year ask your primary care health care provider to review your list of medications, vitamins and supplements.
- Ask questions: Whenever you are prescribed a new medication or your dosage is changed, ask why and ask your provider or pharmacist to check any new medications in a drug interaction database, especially if you're already taking five or more medications.
- Organize: Consider using a weekly medication organizer. A pill box or boxes (maybe one for morning medication and one for evening) can help. If you have vision problems, your pharmacist can put large print labels on your prescription bottles. Ask your pharmacist for tips on how to organize and keep track of your medications.
- Follow directions: Take your medications exactly as directed by your health care providers. Be sure you understand how, when and for how long you should take the medication. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about bad reactions you've had to medications in the past.
- Report problems: If a new health problem begins after starting a new medication, you may be having a

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reaction to the medication. If this happens, tell your health care provider right away.

- Medication don'ts: Don't take medication that is not prescribed to you; don't use medication that is past its expiration date; don't stop taking medications just because you feel better; and don't drink alcohol when you take medication for sleep, pain, anxiety or depression.

Some things to keep in mind:

- During normal aging, physical changes in body weight, circulation and metabolism alter how the body processes medications.

- Caregivers and health care providers may miss signs and symptoms of a substance use disorder; doctors may not ask the right questions when older adults get checkups.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In 2013, 41 percent of prescription drug-related deaths in Arizona involved opioids or opiates (including the drugs Vicodin, Percocet and OxyContin).

- The other 59 percent of drug-related deaths were due to fatal complications. (Source: Arizona Department of Health Services)

DISPOSE OF MEDICATION SAFELY

In an effort to get the word out to the public about why it is important to properly dispose of medications and provide an easy, secure and responsible way to dispose of unused medications, permanent prescription drug drop boxes have been installed throughout Arizona. For a list of drop boxes go online to <http://bemedsmart.org/>.

The Prescription medication drop boxes accept unused, unwanted or expired medications. Leave medicines in containers; black out any personal information on labels. You can also dispose of pet medications, medicine samples and over-the-counter medication (no syrups, fluids or creams).

ABILITY360

Disability Culture and Etiquette Diversity Training

*Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, Vice President
Advocacy, from the Ability360 Publication Empower*

Ability360 offers Disability Culture and Etiquette Diversity Training for your school, organization or business. For more information on this wonderful opportunity contact Amina Donna Kruck at Aminak@ability360.org or call **602-443-0722**.

What is Produce On Wheels – With Out Waste?

*Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, Vice President Advocacy,
from the Ability360 Publication Empower*

Produce On Wheels – With Out Waste (P.O.W.W.O.W.) disperses fresh produce to communities at churches, schools and other entities throughout Northern and Southern Arizona including the metro Tucson and Phoenix areas.

Anyone can contribute \$10.00 to shop for up to 60 pounds of fresh nutritional rescued produce. Share with your neighbors, friends, family, or those in need.

For current information about P.O.W.W.O.W. please visit our [website](#) or check us out on [Facebook!](#)



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New Horizons is Seeking Stroke Mentors

Submitted by Jean Lasher, Community Information Coordinator/Outreach New Horizons Disability Empowerment Center

Take our mentoring courses to become a mentor where your knowledge and experience can be of help to another. Your skill and ability to overcome challenges will help others with brain injury, stroke, MS and other disabilities. Training provided. Please contact Mary H. at **928-772-1266**, with your questions or for more information.



Free Mental Health Support Groups Sponsored by the Mental Health Guild

Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, Vice President Advocacy, from the Ability360 Publication Empower

Peer Support Groups provide empowerment, support, information, education and socialization for individuals diagnosed with a mental illness, family members and loved ones. The groups are located throughout the greater Phoenix metropolitan area (Maricopa County), and there is also a group in Yarnell (for adults 18+). Call Andy at **480-994-4407**.

Newsletter Submissions

Dear AZ Links Partners,

We are always interested in hearing about programs and services available throughout the state. Highlighting staff and volunteers that make things happen is of great interest as well. Any announcements, staff changes, events, and information are welcome. Photos and brief notices can also be included. Please send newsletter items to: TPankey@azdes.gov.

This is your newsletter – let us know what you would like to see included.

Next newsletter: October 2016

Deadline for submissions: September 15, 2016

Past issues of the AZ Links Newsletter are available on our website at www.azlinks.gov.



Fact Sheet on Alzheimer's Disease and Down Syndrome

Submitted by Tammy Pankey, Aging and Disability Specialist, DES/Division of Aging and Adult Services

The National Institute on Aging has released a fact sheet on Alzheimer's disease and Down Syndrome. The fact sheet is for adults with Down Syndrome, their family members, and caregivers. It discusses the connection between Down Syndrome and Alzheimer's disease, as well as Alzheimer's disease symptoms, Down Syndrome and Alzheimer's research, and resources. Click link below for more information.

https://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/publication/alzheimers-disease-people-down-syndrome?utm_source=20160705_downstipsheet&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ealert