One of the Real Joys of the Holiday Season is the opportunity to wish you the Very Best for the New Year!

Yaushica Aubert, President CEO and all of the Staff at Valley Area Agency on Aging

For more news and updates check out our Facebook page!
POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS WORKSHOP

Caring for a relative or a friend with a chronic illness can be stressful physically, emotionally and financially. Join our Powerful Tools for Caregivers six week class that is designed to provide you, the family caregiver, with the skills you need to take care of yourself.

**Powerful Tools for Caregivers will help you:**
- Reduce Stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Balance your life
- Better communicate your feelings
- Increase ability to tackle tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources

**Upcoming Classes:**

**Turrill Elementary – Lapeer**
**Mondays:** January 7 – February 11, 2019  
**Time:** 6:00pm – 7:30pm  
**Location:** Turrill Elementary 785 S Elm Street Lapeer, MI 48446  
To register call: Jennifer Joyner, VAAA at (810) 239-7671 x 281

**Lapeer Senior Center**
**Fridays:** January 11 – February 15, 2019  
**Time:** 2:00pm – 3:30pm  
**Location:** Lapeer Senior Center 287 W Nepessing St. Lapeer, MI 48446  
To register call: Jennifer Joyner, VAAA at (810) 687-7260

**Burton Senior Center**
**Wednesdays:** February 27 – April 3, 2019  
**Time:** 1:30pm – 3:00pm  
**Location:** Burton Senior Center 3410 S Grand Traverse Burton, MI 48529

CREATING CONFIDENT CAREGIVERS

A program for family members caring for a loved one with dementia and/or memory loss.

**Learn About:**
- Dementia and its effects on the brain
- Caregiver Resources
- Managing behaviors
- Improving caregiving skills
- How to handle everyday activities more easily
- Taking care of yourself to better care for your loved one

**Upcoming Classes:**

**Clio Area Senior Center**  
2136 W Vienna Rd Clio, MI 48420  
**Fridays:** January 25 – March 8, 2019  
10:00am – Noon  
To register call: (810) 687-7260

**Cost:** A $10.00 Donation is requested, but not required, to assist in paying for the Creating Confident Caregivers class workbook.

This class is being paid for by the Valley Area Agency on Aging (VAAA) and Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA). If you would like additional information, please call Abbie Mars at VAAA at (810) 600-0633 or marsa@valleyaaa.org.
Many older adults experience concerns about falling and restrict their activities. A Matter of Balance is an award-winning program designed to manage falls and increase activity levels.

You will learn to:
- View falls as controllable
- Set goals for increasing activity
- Make changes to reduce fall risks at home
- Exercise to increase strength and balance

Who should attend?
- Anyone concerned about falls
- Anyone interested in improving balance, strength and flexibility
- Anyone who has fallen in the past
- Anyone who has restricted activity because of falling concerns

Cost: $10.00 is requested to cover the cost of the participant manuals, but not required to participate in the class.

Upcoming Classes:

**Forest Twp Senior Center**
130 E Main St. Otisville, MI 48463
Mondays: January 14—March 11, 2019
10:00am—noon
To register call: Forest Twp Senior Center at (810) 631-3407

**Imlay City Senior Center**
395 East Third Street Imlay City, MI
Tuesdays: January 15—March 5, 2019
1:30pm—3:30pm
To register call: Imlay City Senior Center at (810) 724-6030.

**Grand Blanc Senior Center**
12632 Pagels Drive Grand Blanc, MI
Mondays, January 28—March 18, 2019
12:30pm—2:30pm
To register call: Grand Blanc Senior Center (810) 695-3202

**Genesee Gardens Retirement Community**
4495 Calkins Rd Flint, MI 48532
Tuesdays: March 5—April 23, 2019
10:00am – noon
To register call: Genesee Gardens at (810) 720-4159

If you know of a site that would be interested in hosting A Matter of Balance workshop, please contact Abbie Mars, Valley Area Agency on Aging at (810) 600-0633.

Paid for with funding from Valley Area Agency on Aging (VAAA) and the Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) and the Partners in Aging Strategy and Training (PAST). If you would like additional information, please call Abbie Mars, Valley Area Agency on Aging at (810) 600-0633.
The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program is a low-impact physical activity program proven to reduce pain and decrease stiffness. The routines include gentle range-of-motion exercises that are suitable for every fitness level.

Benefits to You

The Exercise Program will help you:

- Keep joint flexible and muscles strong
- Sleep Better
- Increase Energy
- Improve your overall outlook

Current Classes include:

Mondays: Loose Senior Center: 2:00pm

Tuesdays: Grand Blanc Senior Center: 10:00am
Tuesdays: Burton Senior Center: 9:00am
Tuesdays: 800 Court Street Village: 10:30am

Wednesdays: Davison Area Senior Center: 10:00am
Wednesdays: Forest Township Senior Center: 12:15pm

Thursdays: Grand Blanc Senior Center: 10:00am
Thursdays: Lapeer Senior Center: 3:00pm
Thursdays: Burton Senior Center: 9:00am
Thursdays: Hasselbring Senior Center: 9:00am

Fridays: Swartz Creek Area Senior Center: 11:00am
Upcoming Events:
Save the Date

**March 25, 2019**
Valley Area Agency on Aging’s 13th Annual Meeting and Awards Breakfast
Genesys Banquet & Conference Center

**May 15, 2019**
Older Michiganian’s Day
Capitol Lawn - Lansing, MI

**May 22, 2019**
Senior Power Day
Crossroads Village

Mark your calendar!
Another successful open enrollment season has come to an end for 2018 and once again, the volunteers of the MMAP program have worked extremely hard serving the Medicare eligible population with their questions and concerns as they shop for new coverage. As we close in on the end of this calendar year, I want to share with you something new that is happening for the MMAP program.

This year, the State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP) is performing a telephonic customer satisfaction survey. If you received counseling from one of our certified MMAP counselors during open enrollment then you may have gotten a phone call from Salt Lake City Utah with the phone number (385) 770-7018. This was the Satisfaction survey hotline number. They will not repeatedly call you and they will not leave a message. If you answer the phone they will ask you about your counseling experience and you will not have to provide any sensitive personal information during this phone call. This information will help to make positive improvements to the MMAP program based on client feedback.

As always, the MMAP program is able to function primarily by the work of volunteers. These volunteers give countless hours of their time to the program to assist with counseling individuals with their Medicare and Medicaid needs. Their hard work and dedication never goes unnoticed. If this is something that you would be interested in learning more about please contact (800) 803-7174 and let us know that you are interested in volunteering with the MMAP program. Our annual local training is fast approaching and we would love to add new volunteers to our team!

Thank you,

Allyson Ramos

Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program Regional Coordinator, Region 5
RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) of Genesee, Lapeer and Shiawassee Counties

PUT YOUR EXPERIENCE TO WORK!

Volunteer Opportunities for Men and Women age 55+

RSVP, sponsored by Valley Area Agency on Aging and other generous donors, shows you how you can apply the wisdom and knowledge you’ve acquired throughout your lifetime to make a positive difference in the lives of others…right in your own community!

Opportunities Include:

- Assisting in public school classrooms
- Student & Adult Tutoring/Mentoring
- Respite for caregivers/Companionship
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Calls to senior living alone for a well-being check
- Keeping Independent Seniors Safe (KISS)
- Food Pantry assistance
- Meals on Wheels (Senior nutrition programs)
- Other Community Priorities

Benefits Include:

- No-cost liability and excess auto liability insurance
- Fuel Reimbursement (Limits apply)
- Improved Health
- Membership in the largest senior volunteer program in the county!
- Make your own schedule!

For more information on volunteer opportunities, please call Valley Area Agency on Aging at (810) 239-7671 ext. 269 or visit our website at [www.valleyareaaging.org](http://www.valleyareaaging.org) and Click on the “Volunteer” tab

RSVP of Genesee, Lapeer & Shiawassee Counties has created partnerships with 35 local agencies that need your help! There is something for EVERYONE! Call soon for a one-on-one meeting to discuss the many opportunities to serve your community through National Service!
Beware of scammers pretending to be from Social Security
By Vonda Vantil, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

In the digital age, frauds and scams are an unfortunate part of doing business online. During the holiday season, Social Security has traditionally seen a spike in phishing scams, and we want to protect you as best we can.

We urge you to always be cautious and to avoid providing sensitive information such as your Social Security Number (SSN) or bank account information to unknown individuals over the phone or internet. If you receive a call and aren’t expecting one, you must be extra careful. You can always get the caller’s information, hang up, and—if you do need more clarification—contact the official phone number of the business or agency that the caller claims to represent. Never reveal personal data to a stranger who called you.

Please take note; there’s a scam going around right now. You might receive a call from someone claiming to be from Social Security or another agency. Calls can even display the 1-800-772-1213, Social Security’s national customer service number, as the incoming number on your caller ID. In some cases, the caller states that Social Security does not have all of your personal information, such as your Social Security number (SSN), on file. Other callers claim Social Security needs additional information so the agency can increase your benefit payment, or that Social Security will terminate your benefits if they do not confirm your information. This appears to be a widespread issue, as reports have come from people across the country. These calls are not from Social Security.

Callers sometimes state that your Social Security number is at risk of being deactivated or deleted. The caller then asks you to provide a phone number to resolve the issue. People should be aware the scheme’s details may vary; however, you should avoid engaging with the caller or calling the number provided, as the caller might attempt to acquire personal information.

Social Security employees occasionally contact people by telephone for customer-service purposes. In only a few special situations, such as when you have business pending with us, a Social Security employee may request the person confirm personal information over the phone.

Social Security employees will never threaten you or promise a Social Security benefit approval or increase in exchange for information. In those cases, the call is fraudulent, and you should just hang up. If you receive these calls, please report the information to the Office of the Inspector General at 1-800-269-0271 or online at oig.ssa.gov/report.

Remember, only call official phone numbers and use secured websites of the agencies and businesses you know are correct. Protecting your information is an important part of Social Security’s mission to secure today and tomorrow.

_Vonda VanTil is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at vonda.vantil@ssa.gov._
Caring for children
By Vonda Vantil, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

During the holiday season, most of us, regardless of our beliefs, focus on the children we love. Children are our future — we share our knowledge and talent with them — we pass on our values to them knowing they will share those gifts. Social Security safeguards children all year long, but we’d like to take this opportunity to share information about our programs that provide direct support to children.

In 2017, Social Security distributed an average of $2.6 billion each month to benefit about 4.2 million children because one or both of their parents are disabled, retired, or deceased. Those dollars help to provide the necessities of life for family members and help make it possible for those children to complete high school. When a working parent becomes disabled or dies, Social Security benefits help stabilize the family’s financial future.

Children with disabilities are among our most vulnerable citizens. Social Security is dedicated to helping those with qualifying disabilities and their families through the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. To qualify for SSI:

- The child must have a physical or mental condition, or a combination of conditions, resulting in “marked and severe functional limitations.” This means that the condition(s) must severely limit your child’s activities;
- The child’s condition(s) must be severe, last for at least 12 months, or be expected to result in death; and
- The child must not be working and earning more than the Substantial Gainful Activity limit ($1,180 a month in 2018 and $1,220 in 2019).

If the parents of the child or children have more resources than are allowed, then the child or children will not qualify for SSI. You can read more about children’s benefits at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10026.pdf.

Social Security also covers many chronic illnesses and conditions. Compassionate Allowances are a way to quickly identify diseases and other medical conditions that, by definition, meet Social Security’s standards for disability benefits. Thousands of children receive benefits because they have one of the conditions on the list at www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances/conditions.htm.

Visit www.ssa.gov/people/kids to learn more about all we do to care for children. Social Security is with you and your children throughout your life’s journey, securing today and tomorrow. If you know a family who needs our help, please share these resources with them.

Vonda VanTil is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at vonda.vantil@ssa.gov.
Understanding Social Security Disability Benefits
By Vonda Vantil, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

Disability is something most people don’t like to think about, but the chances that you’ll become disabled probably are greater than you realize. Studies show that a 20-year-old worker has a 1-in-4 chance of becoming disabled before reaching full retirement age.

Social Security pays disability benefits through two programs:

- The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program and;
- The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.

Social Security Disability Insurance is funded through payroll taxes. Social Security Disability Insurance recipients have worked for years and have made contributions to the Social Security trust fund in the form of Social Security taxes – either FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) for employees or SECA (Self-Employment Contributions Act) for the self-employed.

SSI is a means-tested program, meaning it has nothing to do with work history, but provides payments to people with disabilities who have low income and few resources. Social Security manages the program, but SSI is not paid for by Social Security taxes. Social Security pays benefits to people who can’t work because they have a medical condition that’s expected to last at least one year or result in death. Federal law requires this very strict definition of disability. While some programs give money to people with partial disability or short-term disability, Social Security does not.

It's important that you know which benefits you may be qualified to receive. You can read more about Social Security Disability Insurance at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10029.pdf and more about SSI at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-11000.pdf.

When you apply for either program, we’ll collect medical and other information from you and make a decision about whether or not you meet Social Security's definition of disability. In addition to meeting our definition of disability, you must have worked long enough — and recently enough — under Social Security to qualify for SSDI benefits.

To see if you meet the requirements for disability benefits, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/disability/qualify.html.

Social Security covers millions of people, including children, wounded warriors, and people who are chronically ill. And this is just a part of what we do. Remember, you can also apply for retirement, spouse's, Medicare, or disability benefits online at www.socialsecurity.gov/forms/apply-for-benefits.html.

Vonda VanTil is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at vonda.vantil@ssa.gov.
**Dates to Remember**

- **December 18, 2018:** Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **December 21, 2018:** Board Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **December 24, 2018:** Christmas Eve, VAAA Closed
- **December 25, 2018:** Christmas Day, VAAA Closed
- **December 31, 2018:** New Year’s Eve, VAAA Closed
- **January 1, 2019:** New Year’s Day, VAAA Closed
- **January 21, 2019:** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, VAAA Closed
- **January 22, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **January 25, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **February 18, 2019:** Presidents Day, VAAA Closed
- **February 19, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **February 22, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **March 25, 2019:** VAAA Annual Meeting
- **March 19, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **March 22, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **April 19, 2019:** Good Friday, VAAA Closed
- **April 23, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **April 26, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **May 14, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **May 15, 2019:** Older Michiganian’s Day, Lansing 10:30 a.m.
- **May 17, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **May 22, 2019:** Senior Power Day, Crossroads Village
- **May 27, 2019:** Memorial Day, VAAA Closed
- **June 18, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **June 21, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **July 4, 2019:** Independence Day, VAAA Closed
- **July 23, 2019:** Legislative Committee and Advisory Council meetings (Tentative)
- **July 26, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **August 23, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **September 2, 2019:** Labor Day, VAAA Closed
- **September 24, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **September 27, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **October 14, 2019:** Columbus Day, VAAA Closed
- **October 22, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **October 25, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **November 11, 2019:** Veterans Day, VAAA Closed
- **November 12, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **November 15, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **November 28, 2019:** Thanksgiving Day, VAAA Closed
- **November 29, 2019:** Day after Thanksgiving, VAAA Closed
- **December 17, 2019:** Legislative Committee 10:00 a.m. and Advisory Council Meeting 11:00 a.m.
- **December 20, 2019:** Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- **December 24, 2019:** Christmas Eve, VAAA Closed
- **December 25, 2019:** Christmas Day, VAAA Closed
- **December 31, 2019:** New Year’s Eve, VAAA Closed

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**Valley Area Agency on Aging**

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Shiawassee County Senior Representative  
Genesee County/VAAA Appointee  
Shiawassee County Senior Representative  
Lapeer County Senior Representative  
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