



NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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AAA7 and Shawnee State University “Fall-Free Fridays” Episode Features Information About “Working Smarter, Not Harder to Prevent Falls”

According to the National Council on Aging, falls remain a leading cause of injury for people aged 65 and older. Falls threaten older adults’ safety and independence and generate enormous economic and personal costs. The good news is that they are preventable and there are proven steps people can take to reduce their risk.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) features “Fall-Free Fridays”, a live, weekly interview with two Shawnee State University (SSU) Occupational Therapy graduate students who provide community education on a falls-related topic and information about falls, risk factors, and helpful prevention tips. The series takes place every Friday at 10:00 am through December 11th on the AAA7 Facebook page.

The latest episode on December 4th featured the topic “Working Smarter, Not Harder to Prevent Falls”, presented by SSU Master of Occupational Therapy (OT) students Makenzie Fox and Zach Shope.

Occupational therapy is a profession that helps people of any age do the things they want and need to do in a day.

The students discussed energy level and how low energy and fatigue can cause falls. The concept of “energy conservation” was shared as a way to help. This consists of reducing motions that cause muscle fatigue, as well as habits and patterns that decrease your endurance, or aggravate any health conditions that include fatigue as a symptom.

Conserving energy with simple habits in daily living can help. Examples were:

- Using scissors in the kitchen to cut up food when prepping meals rather than using your whole arm to prepare with a knife.
- Sit while doing food prep or other tasks rather than standing.
- Using a rollator with a seat to navigate through your home or public places so you can take a rest break on the go. A “rollator” or “wheeled-walker” consists of a frame with three or four large wheels, handlebars, and a built-in seat to provide the opportunity for stopping and resting when on the go. This can also be used to sit things on the seat so that you do not have to carry heavy items.
- A “grabber” or “reacher” can be used to help pick things up that are above you or on the floor.

- Use a shower seat in the shower to take a break. Also, extended brushes or sponges can be used to help reach better.
- When brushing your teeth, switch arms while brushing or use an automatic toothbrush.
- Plan ahead to budget the energy you have and identify your “best” time of day.
- Make a list of the things you want or need to do and think about how much energy you will need for each item on the list – prioritize and think realistically about what you can accomplish in a day.
- Take rest breaks when needed – don’t wait until you are overly tired to take a break!

If you missed the episode, the broadcast can be viewed by watching a recorded version that is available on the AAA7’s Facebook page or at the AAA7’s website at www.aaa7.org. At the Home Page, click on the “Fall-Free Fridays” promotional ad and then find the “December 4th” episode information.

The final Fall-Free Fridays episode on Friday, December 11th at 10:00 am will feature the topic of “Putting it All Together – My Plan for Preventing Falls”. Two new SSU Master of Occupational Therapy students will present on the topic and be available for questions during the live presentation.

For more information about Fall-Free Fridays, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277 or info@aaa7.org, or Dr. Christine Raber with the Shawnee State University Occupational Therapy Program at (740) 351-3530 or craber@shawnee.edu.

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7’s Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a specially-trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an in-home assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on www.aaa7.org, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org. The Agency also has a Facebook page located at www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7.

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