



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

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AAA7 and Shawnee State University

OT Program to Present “Fall-Free Fridays”

During the month of September, National Falls Prevention Week is observed, a national campaign to educate older adults, their caregivers, and health professionals about the dangers of falling and the steps 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.

Historically, the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) and the Shawnee State University Occupational Therapy (OT) Program have worked together to provide falls prevention education to the community through the AAA7’s “Matter of Balance” falls prevention program. Students have become trained in the program and help to facilitate the course to interested community members in the district as a part of their class requirements. At the present time, due to social distancing recommendations and health protocols in place during the current pandemic, in-person wellness classes with the AAA7 have not been able to be held; therefore, not making the opportunity possible for OT students to participate in providing education to the community as a part of their class requirements.

Thankfully, a solution was developed to provide this education through a virtual format on the Area Agency on Aging District 7’s Facebook page. Starting on Friday, September 11th at 10:00 am, the Area Agency on Aging District 7 will feature “Fall-Free Fridays”, a live, weekly interview with two Shawnee State University OT students who will provide community education on a falls-related topic and information about falls, risk factors, and helpful prevention tips. The AAA7 plans to share this information on their website at www.aaa7.org and also offer a “Fall-Free Friday Fact” weekly on the AAA7 Facebook page and website.

“The opportunity for our students to partner with AAA7 to provide health promotion activities to older adults has always been an incredible learning experience,” said Christine Raber, PhD, OTR/L, Professor, Master of Occupational Therapy Program at Shawnee State University. “We are very excited and grateful that technology will allow these real-life experiences to continue, and look forward to helping the community learn about ways to prevent falls.”

“We have often heard that “Necessity is the Mother of Invention” and this pandemic has provided ample opportunity to find new ways to continue to provide services and information to older adults, persons with disabilities and those who care for them,” stated Nina R. Keller, Executive Director of the Area Agency on Aging District 7. “We are extremely grateful that the Occupational Therapy Program at Shawnee State University (SSU) has joined us in developing and carrying out innovative ways to reach individuals in the community with critical guidance on falls and their prevention. Innovation is key and we value our ongoing partnership with SSU.”

Fall-Free Fridays will be featured for thirteen weeks starting September 11th and ending December 4th. If you have questions about how to access the virtual education or recording, or for more information about falls prevention, contact the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail info@aaa7.org.

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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