



**AREA  
ECHO  
FEBRUARY  
2026**

*Join us:*

*February 16*

*10:30 Social, 11:00 Program*

*At Heritage Ranch, Fairview*

*Judi Oehler, Newsletter Chair*

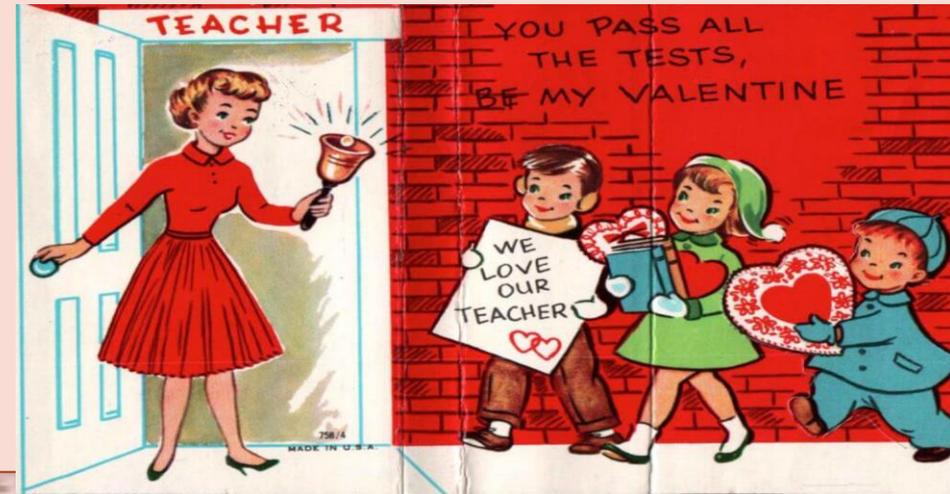
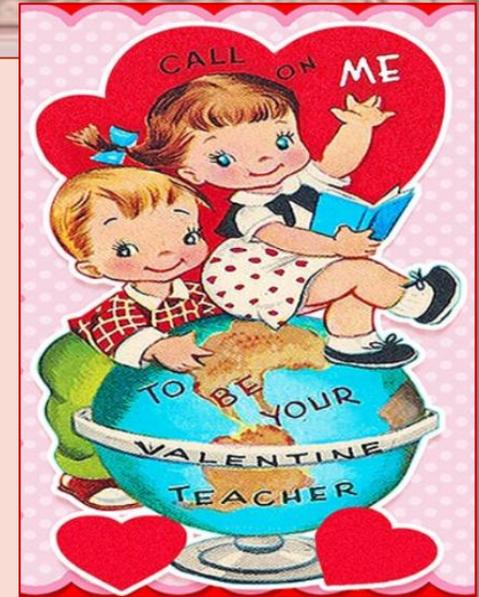
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear AREA Friends,  
Welcome back to AREA, and best wishes to all of you for a happy and fulfilling 2026!  
Thank you for your continued support, dedication, and the meaningful work you do on behalf of the more than a half-million retired educators.  
Your commitment, experience, and willingness to stay engaged makes a lasting difference in our community, and it is truly appreciated!

I look forward to another year of connection, collaboration and shared purpose.  
Thank you again for all that you do and for the support you generously provide!!

Always,  
Donna

**Donna Jones**  
**Allen Retired Educators Association**  
**AREA President 2024-2026**  
[dkjones812@gmail.com](mailto:dkjones812@gmail.com)

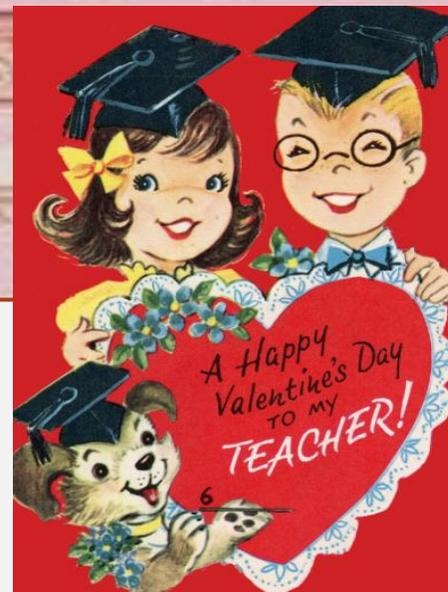




Scholarship Committee  
Chair – Carole Smithwick

## GAME DAY 2026

At Allen ISD Service Center



GAME DAY is fast approaching; **Monday, February 23!** If you were unable to purchase a ticket (\$30) and would like to attend, please contact [Carole Smithwick@gmail.com](mailto:Carole.Smithwick@gmail.com) or 469-585-3862.

If you are unable to attend and would like to support our Scholarship project, you can make a **donation with cash, door prizes or raffle items.**

Your support will be greatly appreciated.



## Legislative Committee

Upcoming **Voting** Opportunities

**Tuesday, March 3, 2026** - Primary Election for  
US Senator,  
US Representatives,  
Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General,  
and other statewide offices. T

here are also County and Local Offices that will be on the ballot.

**Early voting Feb 17 - Feb 27**

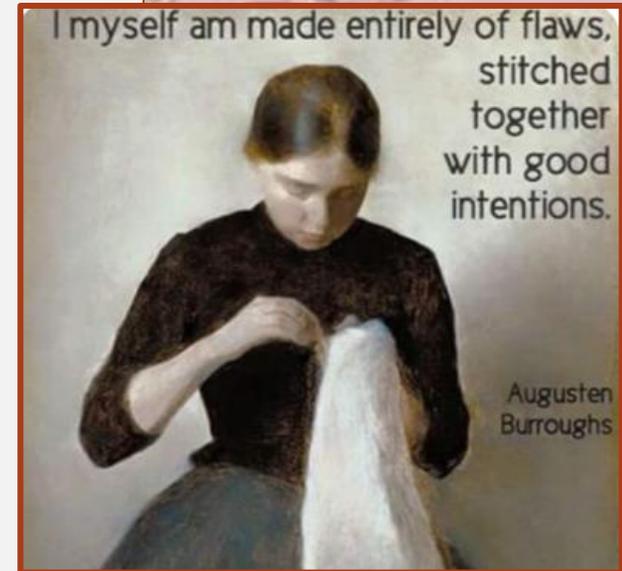
Saturday , May 2 - Uniform Election for Municipal Offices

May 26 - Primary Runoff Election if needed for March 3 results

June 6 - Uniform Runoff Election if needed for May 2 results

November 3 - Uniform Election for offices listed for March 3

Nancy Lessner



### ***Volunteer hours***

***(church, AREA, babysitting, helping neighbors & friends...)***

***Volunteer, have a purposeful life and report those hours!***

***Linda Wood at [mousblu@hotmail.com](mailto:mousblu@hotmail.com)***

## Walk Across Texas (February 16 - April 12)

AREA has 4 teams participating this year and team members are excited to be more active and establish the habit of regular physical activity. Although this is a team-based event, members log their individual miles. Other physical activities count toward the miles with a simple conversion chart.

Way to go - AREA All Star Walk Across Texas Teams!

*Cindy Blair  
TRTA District 10  
Corresponding Secretary*

Studies show that short, novel experiences – a day trip, an unplanned hike, exploring a new street – boost dopamine and reset mood.

You don't need a grand vacation. You need interruption.

The brain thrives on small doses of novelty.

Routine keeps you alive.

Novelty makes you feel alive.



### AARP update on Scams:

The caller said he worked for a relief check company. "Our records show you may have \$5,286 waiting in a relief check that's already been issued in your name, but it has not yet been collected. This could be from relief programs or federal assistance payments ... Search your name and collect it before it's returned."

The call was a scam. The supposed relief-payment site asked you to enter personal information as a way to collect your data and flood you with spam. Over a two-month period in the fall of 2025, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) received more than 800 complaints about the calls.

This could include scams ranging from health insurance to job offers.

So, when you get a [message] that says, 'Hey, apply here, just send us this information,' and it's all of their personal information, including checking account, you'll be vulnerable.

Fraud is rampant. Since 2020, the number of adults age 60 and older who reported a loss of \$10,000 or more from impostor scams more than quadrupled in 2024, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Reported losses of \$100,000 or more jumped from \$55 million to \$445 million, but because fraud is known to be vastly underreported, the actual numbers are far higher.

"The sophistication level of AI will make it that much harder for people to discern legitimate from illegitimate, real from fake: **adopt a zero-trust attitude.**"

## The Velveteen Rabbit

"You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

by Margery Williams

@edelweisstomorrow

BOOK CLUB



# Take Action



Every second  
of every day, an  
older adult falls.

## Fall Prevention

From CDC:  
STEADI



### Speak Up

**Talk openly with your loved one and their healthcare provider about fall risks and prevention.**

- Tell a healthcare provider right away if your loved one has fallen, or if they are worried about falling, or seem unsteady.
- Keep an updated list of your loved one's medications. Show a healthcare provider or pharmacist all of their medications, including over-the-counter medications, and supplements. Discuss any side effects, like feeling dizzy or sleepy.
- Ask their healthcare provider about taking vitamin D supplements to improve bone, muscle, and nerve health.



### Keep Moving

**Activities that improve balance and strengthen legs (like Tai Chi) can prevent falls.**

- Exercise and movement can also help your loved one feel better and more confident.
- Check with their healthcare provider about the best type of exercise program for them.



### Have Eyes and Feet Checked

**Being able to see and walk comfortably can prevent falls.**

- Have their eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year.
- Replace eyeglasses as needed.
- Have their healthcare provider check their feet once a year.
- Discuss proper footwear, and ask whether seeing a foot specialist is advised.



### Make the Home Safe

**Most falls happen at home.**

- Keep floors clutter-free.
- Remove small throw rugs, or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.
- Add grab bars in the bathroom—next to and inside the tub, and next to the toilet.
- Have handrails and lights installed on all staircases.
- Make sure the home has lots of light.

Things to do, people to meet, places to go:

SHARING GARDENING KNOW-HOW IN COLLIN COUNTY

## Upcoming Events

### Tomato Workshop

Feb 21 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM @ The Landing at Myers Park (7117 Co Rd 166, McKinney, TX 75071)

### Ask The Master Gardener Booth @ Collin County Spring Home & Garden Show

Feb 27 - Mar 01 @ Credit Union of Texas Event Center, 200 E Stacy Rd #1350, Allen, TX 75002

### Ask The Master Gardener Booth @ Smith Library in Wylie

Mar 07 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM @ 300 Country Club Rd #300, Wylie, TX 75098



**The Garden Show 2026**  
**March 14 10am - 5pm | March 15 11am - 4pm**  
Save the date!

The Garden Show showcases Earth-Kind® gardening principles for North Texas. Visit with local vendors offering plants and garden-related products for sale. This annual event is held in the Show Barn at beautiful Myers Park & Event Center in McKinney, Texas.



## Senior Resources



### Allen Senior Recreation Center (ASRC)

451 St Mary Drive  
Allen, TX 75002

214.509.4820

[Email Our Team](#)

[View Facility Hours](#)



# Allen Senior Recreation Center



## About the Center

Offering unique programs, classes and trips, Allen Senior Recreation Center (ASRC) proves that at age 60 and better, life's just getting started! Members enjoy a variety of free and low-cost programs, trips, special events, activities and classes. Other amenities include a fully furnished fitness room, computers, billiards, ping pong tables and a library.

## Transportation

Transportation is provided to and from ASRC to Allen resident members who do not have transportation or cannot attend the facility by any other means. Transportation is provided on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Please call [214.509.4820](tel:2145094820) for more information.

# Services for seniors

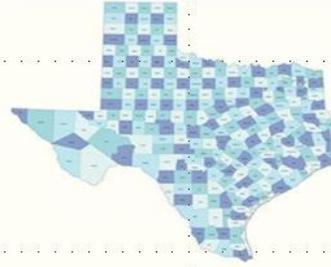
## Apply for Benefits



Each state has rules about who is eligible for Medicaid and what it covers. Some people qualify for Medicaid, Medicare or both. Find out if you're eligible for Medicaid in Texas.

[Visit Your Texas Benefits](#)

## Find Service Offices



Locate aging, disability, behavioral health, and intellectual or developmental disabilities service offices near you.

- AAA = Area agency on aging
- ADRC = Aging and disability resource center
- LIDDA = Local intellectual and developmental disability authority
- LMHA = Local mental health authority

[Search for Services](#)

## Care for People 60 and Older



These services are available if you are 60 or older or care for a person who is older:

- Call [800-252-9240](tel:800-252-9240) for AAA services.
- Help also may be available to grandparent who are raising grandchildren.

[Get Help](#)

## Long-Term Care



These services could help you continue living in your own home or with family:

- Personal care
- Medical
- Transportation
- Caregiver

## Know Your Rights



- Ombudsmen advocate for clients.
- Investigators look into reports of fraud, waste and abuse.
- Civil rights staff help make sure clients receive services and benefits.

## Support for Caregivers



Caring for a loved one takes strength. Learn about ways to care for yourself while strengthening the support you provide as a caregiver.

- Care for yourself.
- Prepare for the present and the future.
- Find support.



## Programs for Seniors and Aging

**I'm looking for long-term care services, and I want to know what my options are.** Call 2-1-1, our hotline service for people looking to get help and find the services they need.

[Aging and Disability Resource Centers \(ADRCs\)](#) can help you find and apply for long-term care programs for seniors and people with disabilities.

[Texas Health Information, Counseling and Advocacy Program](#) can help you find information and enroll in Medicare, Medicaid, and long-term care.

[Area Agencies on Aging \(AAA\)](#) can help you find services for people age 60 and older and their family members and caregivers.

**I am 65 or older, don't have health insurance and need help in the home.**

Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities (MEPD) provides health coverage to adults who are aging or who have disabilities, including long-term care services.

• [Learn more about Medicaid](#)

• [Apply for Medicaid](#)

**I get Medicare, but I'm not able to pay my premiums, co-pays and deductibles.**

Medicare Savings Program can help pay for all or some of your Medicare premiums, co-pays and deductibles.

• [Learn more about the Medicare Savings Program](#)

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/aging>



# Senior Resources

## Senior Citizen Resources

- Meals on Wheels service is provided by Collin County Committee on Aging and is available to homebound individuals by calling 972-562-6996.
- Meals on Wheels is also delivered to the Senior Recreation Center. Meals are served at the Senior Recreation Center, Monday through Friday at 11 a.m. Advanced signup is required by calling 972-547-7491. The cost is \$6 for ages 50 to 59 and a \$5.50 suggested donation for ages 60+.

Test

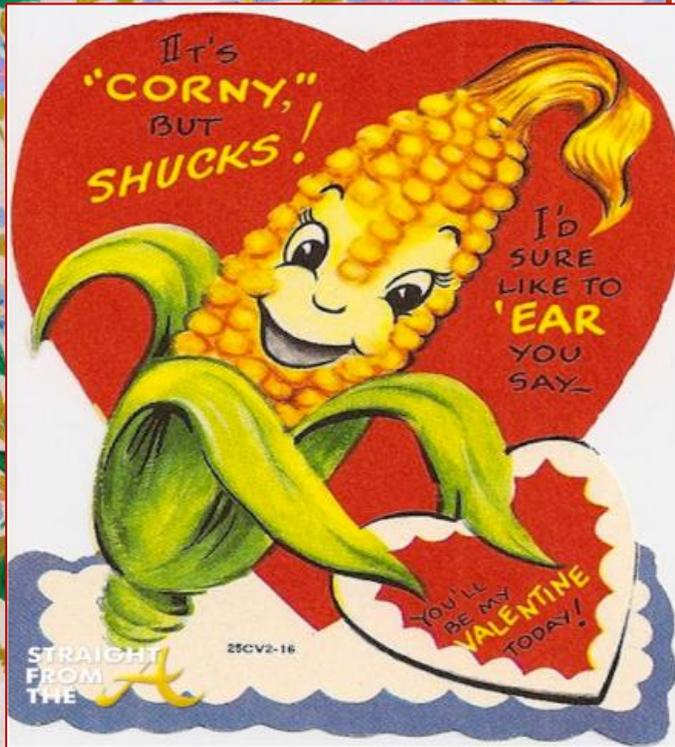
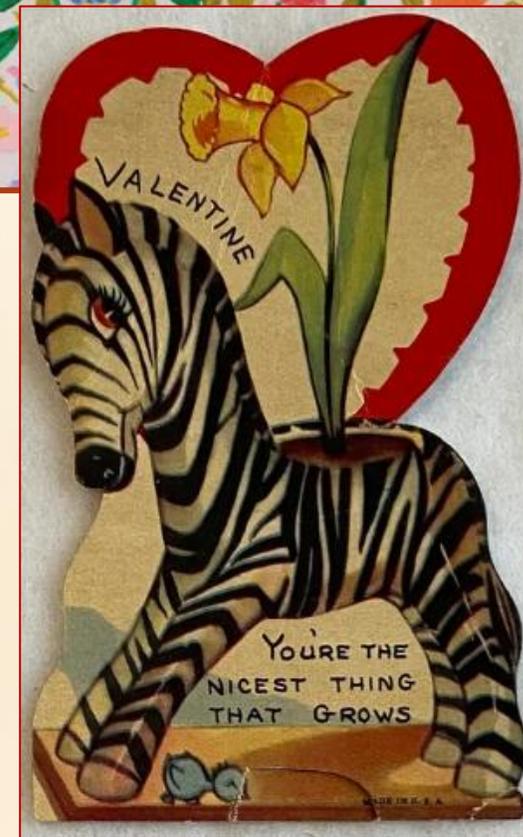
- [Administration on Aging](#)
- [Alzheimer's Association \(McKinney\)](#)  
Ph 800-272-3900
- [American Association of Retired Persons \(AARP\)](#)  
Ph 888-687-2277
- [Area Agency on Aging \(AAA\)](#)  
Toll-free 1-800-272-3921  
Ph 817-695-9194
- [Collin County Committee on Aging \(CCCOA\)](#)  
Ph 972-562-6996
- [Collin County Health Department](#)  
Ph 972-548-5500
- Dental Hygiene Center (Collin College)  
Ph 972-548-6537
- [Collin County Transit by DART Mobility Service](#):  
Senior Transportation Assistance  
Ph 214-749-2844
- Eldercare Locator  
Ph 1-800-677-1116  
Find services for an older person in his or her locality
- Lawyer Referral Service  
Ph 214-220-7444
- Legal Hotline for Older Texans  
Ph 1-800-622-2520
- [McKinney Housing Authority](#) For individuals with low to moderate income.  
Ph 972-542-1003

## Resources for seniors



- [Medicare](#)  
Ph 1-800-MEDICAR (633-4227)
- [North Central Texas Area Agency on Aging](#)  
Ph 817-695-9194
- [Retired Senior Volunteer Program \(RSVP\)](#)  
Ph 214-823-5700
- [Social Security Administration](#)  
Toll-free 1-800-772-1213  
Ph 1-866-931-2731
- Tel-Assistance  
Ph 1-800-343-8353  
Assistance with monthly telephone bills for low-income seniors
- [Texas Adult Protective Services \(APS\)](#)  
Ph 1-800-252-5400
- [Texas Health & Human Services Dept. | Aging](#)
- [Texas Health & Human Services Dept. | Disability](#)
- [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services](#)  
Ph 1-800-252-5400
- [The National Council on the Aging \(NCOA\)](#)
- [Wellness Center for Older Adults](#)  
Ph 972-953-7669

when i say happy new year  
i'm really wishing you  
more happy days than sad  
more joy than misery  
more laughter than tears  
more bravery than fear  
and the wisdom to accept  
that they all belong



Donna Ashworth