

Caregiving: Communication Matters



by Michelle Haub, Special Programs Leader

For the third article in our series highlighting November as National Caregiver Month, communication is the goal. We all use communication in some form or fashion numerous times a day. This communication might be made with our hands, face, spoken words or sounds, writing and typing, pictures, and/or emojis. We also need to be able to understand and interpret these expressions from others in order to have true communication. What happens, though, when part of this system is challenged by speech, language, hearing, or cognitive difficulties? This article provides supports for these changes.

A key principle of effective communication is connectedness. We are able to share our thoughts, ideas, fears, needs, and wants with others and listen to theirs. When we are heard and understood, and we, in turn, hear and understand our loved ones, we feel confident and more comfortable in these relationships. What can we do to help increase the likelihood of these positive interactions? The first thing is to examine environment to maximize input. The list at right provides the key environmental components and issues to consider, especially if your loved one has difficulties with communication or cognition.

Once the environment is ideal for communication, then we need to also consider *how* we communicate. Think about non-verbal communication first...get on the same level as your loved one (if he/she is in a wheelchair, sit beside), make eye

Environmental Considerations to Optimize Communication

- ☐ Lighting: Is the space well lit? Is the sun shining in his/her eyes? Is he/she wearing glasses? Are there shadows that confuse or distort one's perceptions (for example a coat rack in a corner may be perceived as person)?
- ☐ Sound: Limit distractions like a loud TV or music playing. Is he/she wearing hearing aids and are they working?
- ☐ Visual Clutter: Can he/she see what you are sharing, or are there stacks of papers or other items that interfere with visibility? Are there too many busy pictures on the walls?
- ☐ Temperature: Is the environment too hot or cold in so that one is unable to fully focus on communication?
- ☐ Personal Comfort: Is the person seated in a comfortable manner? Is he/she hungry or thirsty? Does he/she need to use the restroom? Are his/her clothing items comfortable? Is he/she in pain? It is hard to focus when uncomfortable.

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EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Thank You!

submitted by the Employee Gift Committee

Thank you to the residents, Passport members, and friends of Meadowlark for your contribution to the Gift Committee fund to provide to our staff. Thank you checks have been written for 482 staff members. Your support is appreciated, and another year begins now for the fund drive in 2024. Gift committee members include residents Karen Matthews, Yvonne Crawford, Jo Lyle, Larry Parsons, Forrest Chumley, and Leo Lake.

Thanksgiving schedule changes

The Hospitality Desk will close at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 22, and will remain closed through Thanksgiving. The desk will open at 8 a.m. Friday, Nov. 24.

Parkinson's Voice Class will not meet Monday, Nov. 20.

Mat Yoga will not meet Tuesday, Nov. 21, and Thursday, Nov. 23.

Steady Yourself, Chair Yoga, Parkinson's Exercise, Meadowlark Singers, Caring Conversations for People with Pd, and Care Partner Support Group will not meet Thursday, Nov. 23. Select Thursday exercise classes are available on Channel 1960. See page 7 for the listing.

Prairie Star Restaurant will be closed for dinner on Thursday, Nov. 23. Boxed dinners will be available. Please sign up in the Blue Book at the Hospitality Desk to reserve a boxed dinner.

Rock Steady Boxing at Body First, Seated Strength, Weights 101, and Sit and Be Fit will not meet Friday, Nov. 24. Select Friday exercise classes are available on Channel 1960. See page 7 for the listing.

Worship Service

Sunday, Nov. 19, at 10:30 a.m.

Join Pastor Melanie Nord for worship at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 19, in the Community Room/Chapel. The November worship series is titled "How to Live a Life of Blessing." The sermons will provide a practical guide to walking in the blessings of God. We'll use the book of Romans to examine how we can be a blessing to others. This

week's sermon is titled, "Asking Small and Receiving Big." All are welcome to attend.

Heart Strings Band

Friday, Nov. 17, at 7 p.m.

Meadowlark welcomes back Heart Strings Band at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17, in the Event Center! Joe and Kathy Hopeck are a husband-wife duo who have been performing in the Topeka, Kansas City, Manhattan, and Wichita areas for more than 10 years. They play a variety of songs from the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, including favorites from the Beatles, Elvis, Eagles, Jimmy Buffet, and many other artists. All are welcome!

KSU Football Watch Party

Saturday, Nov. 18, at 6 p.m.

You're invited to cheer on the Wildcats during the away game vs. the KU Jayhawks on Saturday, Nov. 18. Kick-off is set for 6 p.m. Watch Party festivities will occur in the Game Room, Bison Room, Grosh Cinema, and Verna Belle's Lounge.

Thanksgiving Gratitude Devotion

Monday, Nov. 20, at 10 a.m.

Join Pastor Melanie at 10 a.m. Monday, Nov. 20, in the Bison Room for a special time of devotion, conversation, and reflection as we explore the theme of gratitude and thankfulness. This time of year, we are reminded to be thankful ... but what does that really mean? We'll use the epistles of the Apostle Paul to explore this theme while sharing and reflecting on our own lives.

Target & Great Clips Transportation

Tuesday, Nov. 21, at 9:45 a.m.

Transportation will be provided to Target and Great Clips on Tuesday, Nov. 21. Appointments for Great Clips are encouraged. The bus will depart from the Village Entrance at 9:45 a.m. and return at 12 p.m. Please sign up in the Blue Book to participate in these opportunities.

Prairie Star Writers Group

Tuesday, Nov. 21, at 2 p.m.

Interested in joining the writing group at Meadowlark? Prairie Star Writers invites you to attend the next meeting at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 21, in the Patriot Room.

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contact, and listen with your heart. It can be challenging as a caregiver to focus on these details when you have so many other demands for your attention (i.e. medication, safety, fatigue, daily tasks); however, these details set the tone for interactions. Additionally, when the ability to process and understand language becomes more challenged, these non-verbal actions are things that bring feelings of safety, security, and comfort to your loved one. Below are suggestions for improving communication with an individual who has a neurological deficit such as dementia.

~ *Stay calm and give yourself grace*—you don't have to be perfect to show you care. Be patient with yourself and your loved one.

~ *Use gestures or show what you mean to improve understanding.* For example, if assisting with teeth brushing, model or even brush your teeth at the same time.

~ *Use short sentences, questions and/or instructions:* Tell him/her what to do rather than what not to do. For example say "Please turn down the TV" rather than "Please don't turn up the TV."

~ *Use a gentle, audible voice with positive uplift.* Consider how the tone of voice affects how one feels and perceives language.

~ *Use writing, pictures, and simple gestures* as much as possible with spoken words. To help supplement verbal information and assist with memory (recall), write down important details. This increases understanding and enables one to process and even remember better. If hearing or memory are challenged, text and pictures provide another form of input and increase connection and understanding. Gesturing is mentioned again as it is such a strong partner to speech.

~ *Validate your partner:* Engage with your loved one where he/she is now. BE with him/her in the moment. When cognitive challenges increase, one's recall or orientation does not have to be accurate. For example, if he/she is living in a memory of childhood, engage. Ask questions about emotions and activities rather than trying to orient to the current environment...his/her brain may not have the capacity for processing the present.

The above topics all help to encourage person-centered communication and set the tone for

interactions. Realize that there are times when we can't establish all of those principles in settings or interactions, and that is part of life. However, keeping them in mind and practicing them is what helps us grow.

The next part of communication is *what* we say to our loved one. It is important to use specific language. These suggestions can help improve understanding.

~ *Ask simple questions:* "Would you like a cookie or a donut?"

~ *Provide gentle instructions with context:* "It's time for the service to start; I'll walk with you to church."

~ *Provide one question or direction at a time.*

~ *Pause:* Count to yourself for five to 10 seconds to allow your partner time to process and respond.

~ *Repeat:* Try to repeat verbatim rather than changing the wording.

~ *Adjust:* If he/she persists with difficulties responding, use visuals or yes/no questions. As cognitive challenges advance, making decisions and choices are more overwhelming and confusing. Therefore, if one is not able to answer a binary choice (cookie or donut), then present both items for seeing, smelling, touching to make the choice. Additionally, you could ask "Would you like a donut?" which may be easier to answer with a yes/no.

Daily communication between the caregiver (care partner) and person with a disability is fluid, keep swimming and adjust your stroke for different environments. Try evaluating the items discussed here over time. If something doesn't "work" one time, try again later. No two experiences are going to be exactly the same, so keep trying.

Other areas of communication to address are caregiving from afar and relationships with others (other family members, friends). In regards to caregiving from a distance, it is critical to establish connections with other local people who are involved with your loved one. For example, neighbors, doctors, and church members may have more frequent contact with your loved one. Additionally, consider all of the items for improved communication noted earlier in this article. When

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The Nov. 21 session is titled “A Feast! A Feast!,” and we will gather to share Thanksgiving memories. Writers is led by Cathy Hedge. The group meets on the first and third Tuesdays.

KSU Football Watch Party

Saturday, Nov. 25, TBD

Cheer on the Cats as they finish up their regular-season play against Iowa State in *Farmageddon* on Saturday, Nov. 25. The time of the game has yet to be determined.

Friends of College Ave. UMC

Thursday, Nov. 30, at 12 p.m.

The November Fellowship Luncheon for friends of College Avenue United Methodist Church will begin at 12 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30, in the Manhattan Room. All are welcome.

Falls Prevention Presentation

Thursday, Nov. 30, at 2:30 p.m.

Residents and Passport members are invited to attend a Falls Prevention Presentation. Join Summit Care therapist Kaitlynn Walker from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30, in the Community Room to learn more about how to implement fall prevention tactics in your daily life.

Little Women at the Columbian Theater

Sunday, Dec. 3, at 2 p.m.

Meadowlark Special Programs, in conjunction with the Page Turners Book Group, is coordinating a trip to Wamego to see the play *Little Women* at the historic Columbian Theatre at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3. This award-winning adaptation of Louisa May Alcott’s novel is being directed by Brent Sigman (Katie’s husband). Tickets are \$25 each.

Please sign up in the Blue Book by Monday, Nov. 27, if you would like us to arrange purchase of your ticket(s). You will be responsible for the cost of the ticket(s).

Transportation from Meadowlark will be provided for up to 12 people. The bus will leave Meadowlark at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 3. If you would like transportation, please indicate this when you sign up for your ticket(s) in the Blue Book. All are welcome to join us on this excursion!

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engaged in phone or video conversations, ensure your loved one has materials needed to take notes of the conversations and ask him/her to read it back to you. Too often, caregivers will call with multiple questions or instructions, and the loved one isn’t able to remember all the details or misunderstand a date, time, or other important detail. By asking one to take notes, you are empowering your loved one to be more independent, confident, and engaged. Lastly, model the positive communication strategies discussed here to friends and social groups. This can help alleviate some of their worries or insecurities of how to communicate with your loved one with a communication or cognitive difficulty. Leading by example is powerful in every part of life. *Your loved one is still the person you have known and loved, however his/her ability to interpret the world and react to it may have changed...join him or her in the moment and remember, **keep heart at the center of communication.***

A festive poster for the Meadowlark Holiday Classic. The top and bottom are decorated with strings of colorful lights and small blue starburst ornaments. On the left side, there is a stylized illustration of a Christmas tree with several wrapped gifts at its base. The text is centered and reads: "PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE" in a small, sans-serif font, followed by "Meadowlark" in a large, elegant, cursive script, and "Holiday Classic" in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this, the date and time are listed: "FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1" and "3:00 PM" in a bold, sans-serif font. The venue is "MEADOWLARK HILLS PRAIRIE STAR EVENT CENTER" in a smaller, sans-serif font. The host is "HOSTED BY: THE TRUST COMPANY", with "THE TRUST COMPANY" in a large, bold, serif font and a small logo of a classical building below it. The RSVP information is "RSVP TO PRAIRIE STAR HOST STAND OR 785-323-3820" in a bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, it says "REFRESHMENTS & HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!" in a small, sans-serif font.

Art Engagement *from the* Beach Museum of Art

Curatorial Challenge: There is space set aside in the gallery for three artworks. It is your job to decide which three from the five shown here will hang in the space. How will you choose? Do you look for connecting color or related shapes? What about compositions that are the same. Maybe you choose three that do not seem alike at all. After you choose your first set, choose three more. Enjoy!



[top left] Oscar Vance Larmer
Unknown, 1990

Watercolor with charcoal on
paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach
Museum of Art, gift of the
artist, 2019.249

[top right] Hashimoto Okiie
Lakeside in the Fall, 1967

Color woodcut on Japan paper
KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach
Museum of Art, gift of Richard
D. Olson, 2005.433

[middle left] Diane Curtis
Cloud Series/Fall, 1997

Kansas Artists' Postcard Series
XX, Photomechanical
reproduction on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art,
CM18b.2023

[middle right] Undetermined
Unknown, 1929

Watercolor on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of C.E.
Denman, 2008.506



[bottom left] Eleanor Crank
Kansas Fall Jewels, 2000

Kansas Artists' Postcard Series XXIII
Photomechanical reproduction

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, M21p.2023

RESTAURANT **SPECIALS**

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Sunday, Nov. 19 | Sunday Brunch Brunch Menu available from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. | Dinner \$14 Homemade Chicken Tenders Herb-Roasted Potatoes Honey-Garlic Carrots |
| Monday, Nov. 20 | \$11 Lunch Roasted Pork Sandwich Sweet Potato Fries | \$13 Dinner Carnitas Pork Tacos Cilantro-Lime Rice Black Beans |
| Tuesday, Nov. 21 | \$12 Lunch BBQ Meatballs Cheesy Potatoes Cucumber Salad | \$15 Dinner Beef & Noodles Caesar Side Salad |
| Wednesday, Nov. 22 | \$11 Lunch Chicken Pot Pie Zucchini Fries | \$16 Dinner Steak Fajitas Mexican Corn Salad |
| Thursday, Nov. 23 | Lunch Thanksgiving Dinner <i>Reservations required.</i> | \$10 Dinner Boxed Dinner Delivery <i>Advanced registration required.</i> |
| Friday, Nov. 24 | \$11 Lunch Taco Bar | \$16 Dinner Lemon Linguine <i>with Sautéed Shrimp</i> House Side Salad |
| Saturday, Nov. 25 | \$11 Lunch Clam Chowder Bread Bowl Strawberry Feta Side Salad | \$15 Dinner Chicken-Fried Steak Mashed Potatoes & Gravy Corn |

Weekly Opportunities Calendar Nov. 19 to Nov. 25

Sunday • Nov. 19 *Put your trash at the curb!*

10:30 a.m. ~ Worship Service, CR
10:30 a.m. ~ Transportation to FUMC, VE

Monday • Nov. 20 *Trash & recycling pick-up*

9:30 a.m. ~ Seated Strength, CR **or 1960**
10:00 a.m. ~ Gratitude Devotion, BR
10:00 a.m. ~ Tuttle Creek Men's Group, MR
10:00 a.m. ~ Tuttle Creek Women's Group, BR
10:30 a.m. ~ Weights 101, CR **or 1960**
11:30 a.m. ~ Sit & Be Fit, CR **or 1960**
1:00 p.m. ~ Parkinson's Exercise Class, CR **or 1960**
1:30 p.m. ~ God Talk, KSU CL
2:00 p.m. ~ Change & Loss Support Group, FHR
5:30 p.m. ~ 5th Floor Supper, MR
7:00 p.m. ~ Community Bingo, CR

Tuesday • Nov. 21

9:45 a.m. ~ Target & Great Clips Trip, VE
10:00 a.m. ~ ARTFul Memories, KSU CL
10:30 a.m. ~ Steady Yourself, CR **or 1960**
11:15 a.m. ~ Chair Yoga, CR **or 1960**
2:00 p.m. ~ 10-Point Pitch, GR
2:00 p.m. ~ Prairie Star Writers, PR
5:30 p.m. ~ 2nd Floor Supper, BR

Wednesday • Nov. 22

9:00 a.m. ~ Messenger Team, KSU CL
9:30 a.m. ~ Seated Strength, CR **or 1960**
10:00 a.m. ~ Walmart/Dillons Shopping Trip, VE
10:00 a.m. ~ Mem. Care Partners Supp. Grp, FHR
10:00 a.m. ~ Memory Café, KSU CL

Wednesday • Nov. 22

10:30 a.m. ~ Weights 101, CR **or 1960**
11:30 a.m. ~ Sit & Be Fit, CR **or 1960**
12:00 p.m. ~ Rock Steady Boxing, **BF**
3:00 p.m. ~ Sing-a-Long, FHR
3:00 p.m. ~ Rock Steady Boxing, CR

Thursday • Nov. 23

10:30 a.m. ~ Steady Yourself, **1960 only**
11:15 a.m. ~ Chair Yoga, **1960 only**

Friday • Nov. 24

9:30 a.m. ~ Seated Strength, **1960 only**
10:30 a.m. ~ Weights 101, **1960 only**
11:30 a.m. ~ Sit & Be Fit, **1960 only**

Saturday • Nov. 25

9:30 a.m. ~ Band Bust Exercise Class, **1960 only**
TBD ~ KSU  Watch Party, GR, BR, GC, & VBL

Room Abbreviations

1960, TV Channel 1960
BF, Body First
BR, Bison Room
CR, Community Room
CY, Courtyard
EC, Event Center
FHR, Flint Hills Room
GC, Grosh Cinema
GR, Game Room

KSU CL, KSU Classroom
MM, 120 Scenic Drive
MR, Manhattan Room
PR, Patriot Room
PS, Prairie Star Restaurant
MSC, Manhattan Sr. Center
VBL, Verna Belle's Lounge
VE, Village Entrance

Gifts to Meadowlark Foundation

Gifts benefiting Good Samaritan Fund, Helping Hands Fund, Meadowlark Parkinson's Program, and Wroten House were received by Meadowlark Foundation during the month of October.

Memory of

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Wayne Bailie | June Johns |
| Sandra Emley | Vernon "Ray" Kutrz |
| Rodney "Rod" Franz | Elaine Manges |
| Steve Fryer | Jill Orr |

Contact Becky Fitzgerald at (785) 323-3843 to learn more about Meadowlark Foundation.



Employee of the Month



Giana Santana, HIM Clerk

Sponsored by





GROSH CINEMA SHOWTIMES

MONDAY TO SATURDAY 1:00 P.M. / 4:00 P.M. / 7:00 P.M.
SUNDAY 2:00 P.M. / 6:00 P.M.

SUNDAY: Nov. 19

THE ODD LIFE OF TIMOTHY GREEN (2012) PG, 1 hr. 46 min. *Drama, Family, Fantasy*

Cast: Jennifer Garner, Joel Edgerton, & Dianne West

Cindy and Jim Green desperately want to start a family, but they can only dream about what their child would be like. When young Timothy shows up on their doorstep one stormy night, Cindy and Jim learn that sometimes the unexpected can bring some of life's greatest gifts.

MONDAY: Nov. 20

RESIDENT REQUEST

THE BURIAL (2023) R *for language*, 2 hr. 6 min. *Drama*

Cast: Jamie Foxx, Tommy Lee Jones, & Jurnee Smollett

Inspired by true events, a lawyer helps a funeral home owner save his family business from a corporate behemoth, exposing a complex web of race, power, and injustice.

TUESDAY: Nov. 21

CINDERELLA MAN (2015) TV-PG, 1 hr. 27 min. *Family, Comedy, Fantasy*

Cast: Russell Crowe, Renee Zellweger, & Paul Giamatti

Jim Braddock garners boxing glory during the Great Depression, arriving on the scene at a time when Americans were woefully in need of a hero.

WEDNESDAY: Nov. 22

THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS (1993) PG, 1 hr. 19 min. *Family, Fantasy, Musical*

Cast: Danny Elfman, Chris Sarandon, & Catherine O'Hara

Bored with the same old scare-and-scream routine, Pumpkin King Jack Skellington longs to spread the joy of Christmas. But his merry mission puts Santa in jeopardy and creates a nightmare for good little boys and girls.

THURSDAY: Nov. 23

TURKEY HOLLOW (2011) PG-13, 1 hr. 45 min. *Exciting, Thriller, Romantic*

Cast: Mary Steenburgen, Jay Harrington, & Graham Verchere

Recently divorced father Ron and his kids, Tim and Annie, head to the town of Turkey Hollow for a rustic Thanksgiving at the farm of Ron's eccentric Aunt Cly. The kids soon find themselves swept up in tracking the "Howling Hoodoo," an elusive monster that Turkey Hollow residents have long dismissed as mere legend.

FRIDAY: Nov. 24

MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET (1947) PG, 1 hr. 37 min. *Drama, Family*

Cast: Maureen O'Hara, John Payne, & Edmund Gwenn

An elderly gentleman named Kris Kringle creates a stir when he's hired as Macy's in-store Santa Claus for the holiday season.

SATURDAY: Nov. 25

UP IN THE AIR (2009) R *for language & some sexual content*, 1 hr. 50 min. *Witty, Romantic*

Cast: George Clooney, Vera Farmiga, & Anna Kendrick

A charming consultant who flies around the country to fire employees must train a new hire whose business proposal could permanently ground him.