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# Age Spots by Jackie Dover - The Center of a Community

FEBRUARY 03RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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## **The Center of a Community**

Aging Matters covers 18 counties in Southeast Missouri. That is a lot of miles when you need to drive it for meetings, presentations or to meet with clients.

Recently a new employee and I were in Van Buren for a meeting and realized it was time for lunch. If you know me, you know I do not like to miss lunch, but I also wanted something better than a quick fast food stop. We opted to dine at the local Nutrition Center, lucky for me it was fried chicken day. We had a delicious meal of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, salad, veggies and even dessert, all for a very reasonable price. As we sat there enjoying the meal my co-worker stated she was surprised by the bright and inviting dining room and the lively conversations around us, it was not what she had thought a senior center would be.

In the Aging Matters area there are 32 centers that provide over 1.5 million meals a year. That is a lot of food and nutrition going to seniors. These meals are nutritious and menus are overseen by a registered dietician. But meals are really just the beginning of what the centers offer.

According to the National Council on Aging, research shows that older adults who participate in senior center programs can learn to manage and delay the onset of chronic diseases and experience improvements in their physical, social, emotional and economic well-being. That is reason enough to go to your local center, but if not there

is a lot of fun things to do.

Nutrition Centers, OAKS or Senior Centers as they are known, have come a long way in the last few years. Many offer educational and informational programs to help keep seniors in touch with programs in their community. They all offer a chance to meet with old friends and develop new friendships and each center offers something unique to the community. From BINGO, to crafting classes, to exercise groups to dances, there is something for everyone at the center. Today's centers are reinventing themselves to meet the needs of the baby boom generation. Some centers even offer an evening meal and movie. Date night anyone?

If you think senior centers are for old people sitting in rocking chairs all day, think again. Times have changed and so have the centers. Contact your local center today, by phone or on the internet, to see what activities they offer that might interest you. Give them a chance to show you what makes them special. All ages are welcome and you might just be surprised by how much fun you have.

Aging Matters has centers in the following communities:

Arcadia/Signer	Bismarck	Bonne Terre	Campbell	Cape Girardeau
Caruthersville	Chaffee	Charleston	Dexter	Doniphan
East Prairie	Ellington	Farmington	Fredericktown	Hayti
Jackson	Kennett	Malden	Marble Hill	Naylor
New Madrid	Park Hills	Perryville	Poplar Bluff	Portageville
Puxico	Quilin	Ste. Genevieve	Scott City	Sikeston
Van Buren	Williamsville			

LAST UPDATED ON FEBRUARY 03RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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