

Local Impact of COVID-19 on Aging & Disability Programs in Waupaca County

By: Leah Klein

Really, what aspects of our lives has Coronavirus/COVID-19 not impacted? Beginning in late December 2019 and early January 2020, Americans started to hear news stories of a virus spreading in

the east. At that time, who could have possibly imagined that, still at the end of May 2020, our nation would primarily be on lockdown? One thing is for certain, Coronavirus/COVID-19 has touched us all in some way and changed the way we live our

daily lives – possibly forever.

Waupaca County Department of Health and Human Services staff, including the Aging & Disability Resource Unit (ADRU) team, primarily began working remotely beginning the week of March 16, 2020. Since then, the ADRU team has seen changes in the way in which services are provided, the pace at which services are provided, and the volume of need in our community. As a reminder, the ADRU team provides the following services (not an all-inclusive list): Information & Assistance for long-term care, Disability and Elder Benefits Counseling and Assistance, Senior Nutrition, Senior & Disability Transportation, Assistance with Medicaid Applications for the purposes of long-term care, and Investigations of Adult Abuse and Neglect. Below is a brief overview of how each ADRU program has handled the transition to working remotely:

Information & Assistance for Long-Term Care: Social Workers have been able to fully assist individuals needing access to publically funded long-term care. All services have been provided over the phone and no face-to-face visits have been allowed. Social distancing guidance or stay at home guidance has produced not barriers to accessing publically funded long-term care.

Eligibility for Medicaid for the Purposes of Long-Term Care: One (1) Eligibility Specialist has all the access she needs to databases and information as she works remotely. Processing Medicaid applications for the purpose of accessing long-term care is not hindered by social distancing guidance or stay at home guidance. All services have been provided over the phone and no face-to-face visits have been allowed.

Disability and Elder Benefits Specialist Counseling and Assistance: Both Disability and Elder Benefit Specialist have

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WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY JUNE 15, 2020

Each year, an estimated 5 million older adults are abused, neglected, or exploited. Older Americans lose an estimated \$2.6 billion or more annually due to elder financial abuse and exploitation, funds that could be used to pay for basic needs such as housing, food, and medical care. Unfortunately, it occurs in every demographic and can happen to anyone—a family member, a neighbor, even you. It is estimated that only one in five of these crimes are discovered.

Resource: acl.gov

Report Elder Abuse in
Waupaca County:
Call: (715) 258-6400



**Waupaca County
Dept. of Health &
Human Services:**
715-258-6300



Current and past issues of *The ADRC Connection* are available on our website www.co.waupaca.wi.us.

Visit the national website
www.yourADRCresource.org

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Aging & Disability Resource Center – Waupaca County Branch
www.facebook.com/

Our mission is to be a resourceful place of information and respectful provider of support for the elderly and disabled residents of Waupaca County and their caregivers and to help them achieve dignity and quality of life through maximum independence and choice.

PLEASE NOTE: Being an advertiser in this newsletter does not constitute an endorsement from Waupaca County Department of Health & Human Services.



SSA During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Submitted by **Karen Engel DBS**

During these unprecedented times, you may wonder how your local Social Security Administration office is continuing to provide services.

Social Security Offices are closed to the public for face-to-face service during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can still get help by using online services or calling. The number for the office in Appleton is 1-877-694-5495. You can schedule appointments to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), disability, survivors

and retirement benefits.

If you have access to the internet there is business you can do with SSA online. Online services are available from anywhere and from any of your devices.

You can:

- File a claim for retirement, disability, or Medicare benefits;
- Apply for Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drugs;
- Check your application status;
- File an appeal if you were recently denied disability benefits;
- Request a replacement Social Security

- card (in most areas);
- Print proof of your benefits;
- Explore all of the benefits you may be eligible for at [Benefits.gov](https://www.benefits.gov);
- Request a replacement Medicare card, although your healthcare provider can verify coverage if you know your Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) number;
- Print a SSA-1099;
- Change your address, if you receive benefits;
- Set up or change your direct deposit; and

- Much more

If you cannot use their online services or reach your local office, you may call the 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) where you may be able to take care of your business by using one of the automated telephone services without having to wait for a telephone agent. If you need to speak with an agent, be aware that wait times may be longer than usual, which is why they encourage you to try online services or call your local office first.

See **SSA** page 4

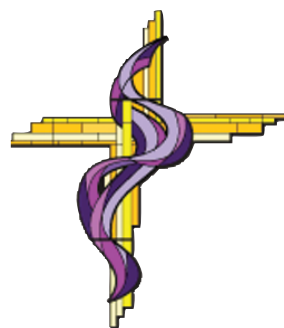
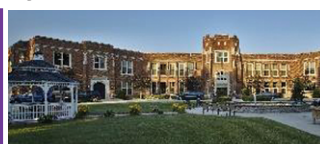
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Understanding the VA Home Loan Guaranty

WHAT IS A VA GUARANTEED HOME LOAN?

The VA Home Loan Guaranty program is a benefit for eligible Veterans looking to purchase a home as a primary residence. This includes existing homes, pre-construction homes, and the refinance of an existing home loan. You will need a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) which can be obtained via eBenefits, or through your lending institution. The VA home loan is not a one-time benefit. Once a VA home loan is satisfied, you can use the benefit again.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES TO A VA GUARANTEED HOME LOAN?

- Equal opportunity for all qualified Veterans to obtain a VA loan
- Reusable
- No down payment (unless required by the lender or the purchase price is more than the reasonable value of the property)
- No mortgage insurance
- One time VA funding fee that can be included in the loan
- Veterans receiving VA disability compensation are exempt from the VA funding fee
- VA limits certain closing costs a Veteran can pay



Jesse P. Cuff
Waupaca County Veterans
Service Officer
Courthouse,
811 Harding Street
Waupaca, WI 54981
715-258-6475
www.facebook.com/
WaupacaVeteransOffice
Hours: Monday – Friday 8am-4pm

- Can be assumed by qualified persons
- Minimum property requirements to ensure the property is safe, sanitary, and sound
- VA staff dedicated to assisting Veterans who become delinquent on their loan

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Generally, the following people

are eligible:

- Veterans who meet length of service requirements
- Servicemembers on active duty who have served a minimum period
- Certain Reservists and National Guard members
- Certain surviving spouses of deceased Veterans

Note: There are other groups of individuals who may be eligible. To determine your eligibility, check eBenefits, contact VA Eligibility Center at 1-888-768-2132, or contact our office at 715-258-6475.

Understanding these and other VA Benefits can seem daunting, but the Waupaca County Veterans Service Office can help. If you could use a little help navigating the VA Benefit system please schedule an appointment today!

Jesse P. Cuff
715-258-6475

For more information:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/index.asp>

<http://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/survivors/SurvivorsPension.pdf>

What is a Dementia Care Specialist?

Our Mission:

- To support people living with dementia and their caregivers in order to ensure the highest quality of life possible while living at home.
- Provide free information and assistance to adults with memory or

cognitive concerns, or who have been given a dementia diagnosis.

- Proved information and support to family members and friends who are caregivers.

See **DEMENTIA CARE** page 5



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f Manawa Community Living Center

DISCOVER **WHY** MANAWA SHOULD BE **YOUR FIRST CHOICE** WHEN YOU **NEED** NURSING HOME OR ASSISTED LIVING SERVICES

Make Your MARK!

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

FACT:
From the year 2018 to the year 2060, Americans 65-and-older will rise from 16% to 23% of the population!
Resource: U.S. Census Bureau

NOW WHAT?
Older Americans, time to "make your mark!"
How? By connecting with old friends, staying in touch with family, giving back to your community through volunteering, and telling your story!

ADRC
Aging & Disability Resource Center
of Collette, Outagamie and Waupaca Counties

MAY 2020

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1-833-586-0107

Wisconsin's Elder Abuse Hotline

www.reportelderabusewi.org

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Meal Delivery Service

During the recent Stay at Home, order the Waupaca County Department of Health and Human Services implemented changes to the congregate meal sites and the home delivered meal program. My name is Denise Roman and my position is Volunteer Coordinator for Waupaca County. Waupaca County asked staff members to participate in delivering meals. I was one of the staff who had the privilege of delivering meals. For most seniors that receive meals the 'Stay at Home' order had little effect on their daily lives. Many do stay home day after day with limited human contact.

During this time, Waupaca County Nutrition Site managers reached out to everyone who receives meals and talked with them to make sure they felt safe and connected. In the beginning, we were delivering only once a week. We delivered 5 days' worth of shelf stable meals. By mid-April, we began to add one warm meal. By the first of May we were delivering twice a week all fresh/frozen meals

I grew up in Waupaca and thought I knew it well. My delivery route wove through the countryside. I went to big and small houses, some living in apartments. A few married couples and many living alone. I heard many stories, met many pets and received many kind words.

One woman shared with me how she used to deliver meals. When she was younger in her 70's she is now in her early 90's. She said people would always thank her and were so grateful; she reflected back and said I never realized how much it meant until now when I am the one receiving the meals.

I am grateful that I was able to help deliver meals during this period. I think of you all daily and feel honored to have been a part of your days during this difficult time. It made me realize that many not only hunger for the food that we deliver but for also human contact.

If you are interested in volunteering to deliver meals, please contact me at denise.roman@co.waupaca.wi.us or 715-258-6277.

SSA from page 2

If you have been required to meet a deadline, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are extending deadlines wherever possible.

- If you were asked to contact them by a certain date, please **do not go to the office**. You can contact them once offices reopen to the public or you can mail your documents to them. They will follow up with you once the COVID-19 pandemic subsides.
- They are providing maximum flexibility in applying their good cause policy. This policy allows them to extend the time limits for submitting appeals and taking other actions during this pandemic.
- SSA has suspended some of their workload. Until further notice they will not be:
- Starting or complete any current medical continuing disability reviews.
 - o If you have a medical continuing disability review pending, please do not request medical information from your doctors at this time. They will follow up with you for any medical evidence once the COVID-19 pandemic subsides.
 - o If you are waiting for a hearing on your continuing disability review decision and you continue to receive benefit payments, they will schedule your hearing once offices reopen to the public. Note: If you are waiting for a hearing on your continuing disability review decision but you are not currently receiving

COVID-19 RELATED SCAMS

BEWARE OF SCAMMERS

Scammers are exploiting the fear and isolation people are feeling during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place. Beware of scammers posing as government officials, bank employees, or health professionals. They want your money and sensitive personal information, including Social Security number, Medicare number, credit card information, and bank account information.



HOW SCAMMERS CAN REACH YOU



PHONE



SOCIAL MEDIA



EMAIL



WEBSITES



IN PERSON

COMMON SCAMS



- Sell you fake respiratory masks, COVID-19 testing or vaccine kits, or COVID-19 cures.
- Ask for charity donations. You can look up charities at give.org or charitynavigator.org.
- Promise direct deposit of your stimulus check.
- Tell you your Social Security check has been cancelled due to COVID-19 and try to get your personal information to verify.
- Offer "relief money" to those affected by COVID-19.
- Say a loved one has contracted COVID-19 and needs money wired for their treatment.
- Contact you pretending to be from the WHO, CDC, or a volunteer agency.
- Ask you to download a mobile app that tracks and sends you COVID-19 updates.

REPORT SUSPECTED ELDER ABUSE

If you suspect someone you know may be a victim of elder abuse, call the **San Francisco Adult Protective Services** 24-hour/7-days-a-week hotline at **415-355-6700**.



- benefits, they will proceed with your hearing.
- They will not conduct any non-disability hearings.
- Where possible, they are suspending processing and collection of overpayments.
- They are not conducting organization or individual representative payee accountings.
- They will not be able to process a third party request for information, except from appointed representa-

- tives and representative payees.
 - They will not process any Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.
- This information is current as of May 20, 2020. Please be aware that how SSA is responding will change as guidelines, businesses and communities begin to reopen. I have found good updated information at <https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/>

RED FLAGS



- A sense of urgency. Scammers will use the words “urgent”, “act now”, “important”, and “official” to pressure you into acting quickly.
- Asking for payment via wire transfer or gift cards.
- Requesting your Social Security number, Medicare number, credit card information, or bank account information
- Links from unknown or unverified sources.
- Purported government agencies contacting you by phone, email, or social media.
- Emails from personal accounts – beware of emails from Yahoo, Hotmail, Gmail, AOL addresses, etc.
- Websites that look like important COVID-19 news and information sources. These sites could install malware on your computer that damage your computer or gain unauthorized access to your information.
- Unverified apps. These apps can lock your phone and steal data from your device. Only download apps with a verified publisher from Google Play or Apple Store.

LEGAL REFERRALS



- **Open Door Legal** – opendoorlegal.org/ 415-735-4124
- **Bay Area Legal Aid** – baylegal.org/ 415-982-1300
- **Legal Assistance for the Elderly** – laesf.org/ 415-538-3333
- **Housing and Economic Rights Advocates (HERA)** – heraca.org/ 510-271-8443
- **California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform (CANHR)** – canhr.org/ 415-974-5171
- **San Francisco Office of the District Attorney Victim Services Division** – sfdistrictattorney.org/victim-services-division/ 628-652-4000

STAY CONNECTED



- **Covia’s Well Connected and Social Call programs:** Activities and educational programs via phone, volunteer matching for social conversations – covia.org/ 877-797-7299
- **Institute on Aging’s Friendship Line:** Emotional support, well-being checks, support for those grieving loss, and referrals for people over 60 and adults with disabilities – ioaging.org/ 888-670-1360
- **Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly:** Volunteers connect with older adults – littlebrotherssf.org/ 415-771-7957
- **City of San Francisco & Shanti Project COVID-19 Emergency Response Volunteer (CERV) Program** – shanti.org/volunteer/sf-covid-19-emergency-response-volunteer-program/ 415-355-6700



Dementia Care from page 3

- Help develop dementia-friendly communities where people with dementia can remain active and safe, and caregivers can feel supported.
- Train the community on how to be dementia-capable.

• Who is the Dementia Care Specialist for Waupaca County?

Carrie Esselman
Dementia Care Specialist for Calumet, Outagamie & Waupaca Counties.
Carrie.esselman@outagamie.org
920-483-0898

COVID-19 from page 1

still been able to assist people with questions and assistance with Social Security, Medicare, and other public and private benefits. Both of these positions have databases and information that is fully accessible while working remotely. All services have been provided over the phone and no face-to-face visits have been allowed. Social distancing guidance or stay at home guidance have produced no barriers to accessing Disability and Elder Benefit Specialist services.

Transportation for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities: The Volunteer Driver Transportation Program for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities provides essential transportation services in Waupaca County for those populations mentioned. When Coronavirus/COVID-19 began impacting Waupaca County locally, we requested that all riders only ask for essential medical and essential shopping trips to reduce the amount of contact our volunteer drivers and riders had with other community members. Drivers were provided masks to wear and riders were asked to wear masks as well. So far, both riders and drivers have been very understanding and patient as the Transportation Program navigates the Coronavirus/COVID-19 situation.

Adult Protective Services (APS): The APS team is responsible to investigate reports of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and financial exploitation of adults-at-risk (18-59 years old) and elder-adults-at-risk (60+ years old). Although APS staff have not been able to perform face-to-face assessments, investigations are still conducted over the phone with the help of service providers still working in the community like Home Care, Hospice, Law Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services personnel.

Senior Nutrition Program (Senior Dining and Home Delivered Meals): The ADRU program area that has experienced the most significant and rapid change to operations is the Senior Nutrition Program. On Monday March 16, 2020, Nutrition Program staff, at the guidance of Public Health, made the difficult but safe decision to temporarily postpone senior dining services in Waupaca County. Participants in the senior dining program were offered home delivered meal service instead. Then, all Nutrition Program participants, senior diners and home delivered meals, received five (5) shelf-stable meals delivered one time per week through April 30, 2020. This allowed for the safe and controlled transition back to our catering partners for five (5) freshly prepared meals delivered twice per week beginning May 4, 2020. Nutrition program services were successfully provided throughout the entire Coronavirus/COVID-19 situation, meal service did not stop and has not stopped.

What Now? As Wisconsin, along with the rest of the nation and world, works to transition back to some sort of “normalcy,” the ADRU team will be here to ensure services are provided and adults and seniors in Waupaca County continue to get the superior care they need and deserve.

How Do I Access the Services Listed Above? Call our Aging & Disability Resource Center Monday – Friday 8:00am – 4:30 pm at: (715) 258-6400, Toll Free: (866) 739-2372 OR email: ADRC@co.waupaca.wi.us

Music Can Enhance Your Life

Jane Mahoney

Older Americans Act Consultant
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources

*"Love me tender, love me true
All my dreams fulfill
For my darling I love you
And I always will."*

Reading the words of a song you love can stir up feelings of nostalgia. Hearing the song from the first dance on your wedding day may bring some color to your cheeks and put a smile on your face. And listening to popular songs from when you were a teenager might bring back memories of the crazy things you did when you were young.

Music is a powerful tool in so many ways. Listening to music can promote memory, reduce stress, relieve loneliness and open a window to emotions such as joy, pride, sadness, laughter or tears. Music reaches into the soul like nothing else, bringing feelings to the surface that are often difficult to name but healing to release.

Music is a great way to connect with someone whose ability to communicate is affected by dementia, stroke or other disease. Listening to songs from their past can help a person feel calm and relaxed and is a pleasant way to spend time together. Playing soothing music during a meal might increase the amount eaten, or make unpleasant tasks, such as bathing or grooming,

more bearable.

It is nice to enjoy music with other people but listening to or performing a song on your own can also be meaningful. While separated from her friends due to the quarantine my daughter can be heard playing guitar and singing frequently throughout the day. She says it helps express her feelings of sadness and anxiety, leaving her feeling more settled and focused.

While staying Safer-at-Home, adding music to your day can bring some cheer and help pass the time. Consider sharing a song with someone over the telephone or video-chat as a special way to connect with when you can't physically be together. Recording a performance of a song and sending it by email or over social media is also a meaningful way to reach an isolated loved one. The goal isn't to impress anyone, just to express yourself and have fun.

Try enhancing your life by adding music to each day. Turn on some upbeat music in the morning to get you going. Try something familiar and relaxing during mealtimes. Find your old favorites to enjoy with a loved one for an extra special afternoon, then listen to soft, slow music in the evening to help prepare for a good night's sleep.

So, dig up those old songbooks, find a good radio station or look up your favorite songs online and see where the music takes you.

How the Elder Benefit Specialist Program Can Help You!

Submitted by **Megan Hintz EBS**

Hi, I'm Megan and I started as the Elder Benefit Specialist (EBS) with the ADRC Waupaca County Branch in February 2020. I recently moved to the area after completing my Master's degree at University of Wisconsin Stout and am excited to be back near my family. As the Elder Benefit Specialist for Waupaca County my role is to serve as a legal advocate to adults ages 60+ who live in Waupaca County. In my role as benefit specialist I receive ongoing training from attorneys who specialize in Elder Law. There is also an EBS in each of the 72 counties in Wisconsin. Elder Benefits Specialists across the state provide accurate and current information, advocate on your behalf with other parties, and explain legal action of public and private benefits. Listed below are some programs we can help with:

✓ Health Insurance Access

o Medicare (all parts), Medical Assistance (also known as Medicaid), BadgerCare, SeniorCare, Other Health Insurance Coverage Issues and Premium Assistance Programs

✓ Income Support

o FoodShare, Social Security (Retirement and Disability), Overpayment Issues and Railroad Retirement Benefits

✓ Housing/Utilities/Other

o Energy Assistance, Subsidized Housing Access/Tenant Rights, Utility Shutoffs, Landlord/Tenant Evictions or Security Deposit Return, Property Tax Deferral Program and Debt Collection Practices



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- Wisconsin Rapids (2 locations)
- Clintonville • Colby (2 locations)
- Montello • Nekoosa • Seymour
- Weyauwega

Income restrictions may apply. CAP Services is an equal opportunity employer/provider.

10 Tips: Smart Shopping for Veggies and Fruits

www.choosemyplate.gov

It is possible to fit vegetables and fruits into any budget. Making nutritious choices does not have to hurt your wallet. Getting enough of these foods promotes health and can reduce your risk of certain diseases. There are many low-cost ways to meet your fruit and vegetable needs.

1. Celebrate the season

Use fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season. They are easy to get, have more flavor, and are usually less expensive. Your local farmer's market is a great source of seasonal produce.

2. Why pay full price?

Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales, coupons, and specials that will cut food costs. Often, you can get more for less by visiting larger grocery stores (discount grocers if available).

3. Stick to your list

Plan out your meals ahead of time and make a grocery list. You will save money by buying only what you need. Don't shop when you're hungry. Shopping after eating will make it easier to pass on the tempting snack foods. You'll have more of your food budget for vegetables and fruits.

4. Try canned or frozen

Compare the price and the number of servings from fresh, canned, and frozen forms of the same veggie or fruit. Canned and frozen items may be less expensive than fresh. For canned items, choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice and vegetables with "low sodium" or "no salt added" on the label.

5. Buy small amounts frequently

Some fresh vegetables and fruits don't last long. Buy small amounts more often to ensure you can eat the foods without throwing any away.

6. Buy in bulk when items are on sale

For fresh vegetables or fruits you use often, a large size bag is the better buy. Canned or frozen fruits or vegetables can be bought in large quantities when they are on sale, since they last much longer.

7. Store brands = savings

Opt for store brands when possible. You will get the same or similar product for a cheaper price. If your grocery store has a membership card, sign up for even more savings.

8. Keep it simple

Buy vegetables and fruits in their simplest form. Pre-cut, pre-washed, ready-to-eat, and processed foods are

convenient, but often cost much more than when purchased in their basic forms.

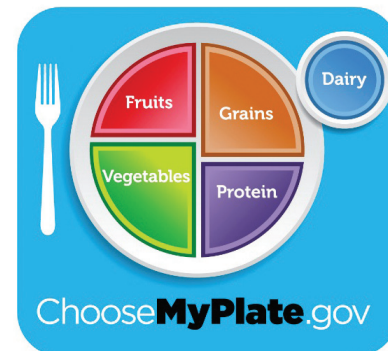
9. Plant your own

Start a garden — in the yard or a pot on the deck — for fresh, inexpensive, flavorful additions to meals. Herbs, cucumbers, peppers, or tomatoes are good options for beginners. Browse through a local library or online for more information on starting a garden.

10. Plan and cook smart

Prepare and freeze vegetable soups, stews, or other dishes in advance. This saves time and money. Add leftover

vegetables to casseroles or blend them to make soup. Overripe fruit is great for smoothies or baking.



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- Respite Care
- Veterans Benefits—Aid and Attendance
- Free Transportation (Wheelchair Friendly)
- Free Laundry Facilities
- Peaceful, Park-Like Setting on Picturesque Golf Course
- 24/7 Registered Nurse Access
- 24/7 Caregiver Staff
- Emergency Pendants Included
- Choice of Kitchen Style (Full or Kitchenette)
- Three Home-Cooked Meals Served Daily
- Social, Physical & Creative Activities
- On-Site Church Services
- Live Entertainment
- In-House Beauty Salon
- Weekly Happy Hour
- Weekly Out-of-Town Excursions

Call today for a tour!

Park Vista Retirement Living
950 Cty Hwy QQ • Waupaca, WI 54981
(715) 256-0100
www.parkvistaliving.org

Honoring the Past,
Celebrating the Present and
Providing Hope for the Future

Park Vista

— The Legacy —

Just the Facts!

- Community Nestled up to Waupaca's Crystal River
- Peaceful, Park-Like Setting
- Beautiful, Wooded, Secure Patio Area
- Secured Door System
- Emergency Pendants Included
- Emergency Pull Cords in Every Room
- Private Rooms with Full Bathroom
- Nurse Supervision 24/7
- 24 Hour Awake Staff Access
- Spa Room with Walk-In Whirlpool Tub
- Social, Physical & Creative Activities
- Free Wheelchair Accessible Transportation
- Home Cooked Meals Served Daily
- Month to Month Leases
- Respite Care Program

Call today for a tour!

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