



# fiftyfive Forward

A publication of Senior Services, Inc. of Wichita

SPRING 2015

## Fire Closes Meals on Wheels Kitchen, Downtown Senior Center

Three months after the Nov. 22 fire that shut down the Meals on Wheels kitchen and the Downtown Senior Center, repairs are underway. Fire crews were able to contain the blaze, but the extent of the smoke and water damage is nearing \$200,000 in repairs.

Authorities confirmed the fire originated from the breaker box located in the kitchen. The fire affected the south building which also houses Downtown Senior Center, In-Home Respite Care and the Senior Employment programs. The following information represents the most current status of all programs affected:

Meals on Wheels Kitchen found a temporary location at Premier Catering, 10109 W York St located southwest of Mid Continent Airport. Volunteers are reporting to this area and the staff has done a phenomenal job of working in adverse conditions.

Downtown Senior Center Director Gerald McCoy is at the administration building and can be reached at 267-0302 or email [GeraldM@seniorservicesofwichita.org](mailto:GeraldM@seniorservicesofwichita.org)

Staff members in the Senior Employment Program are working out of the north administration building in the old church sanctuary. The weekly Job Club meetings are being held at Westside Baptist Church on the corner of Burton and Walnut. This church is across the street from Seneca Park and Senior Services, Inc. For more information please call 267-1771. Job seekers can visit 200 S. Walnut to pick up weekly job listings any time be-



tween 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday.

In-Home Respite Care has continued to provide services without interruption. The program can be contacted at 267-1771.

“The fire came at a challenging time of year for the over 900 seniors who receive Meals on Wheels,” says Laurel Alkire, executive director of Senior Services. “The potential for inclement weather leaves the homebound especially vulnerable. Even under normal circumstances this time of year sees a decrease in active volunteers due to holiday vacations and unexpected snowstorms.”

If you or someone you know can help deliver Meals on Wheels during this transition period, please call 267-0122.

Senior Services thanks everyone for your continued support. We hope to reopen in March!

## Roving Pantry Expands Services To Residents Of Bel Aire

Roving Pantry is a grocery shopping and delivery service program operated by Senior Services, Inc. of Wichita. The program takes grocery orders over the phone then shops for and delivers those groceries to people who are age 60+ and cannot easily get to the store and shop for themselves. The program currently delivers as far north as the 3400 block of North Woodlawn and realized those routes could be extended to serve the residents of Bel Aire.

“We know the need is out there,” said Opal Smith, program coordinator. “In the past we really haven’t had the funds needed to expand. Now we see that we can provide our service to the closest surrounding communities.”

The service is a key component for Senior Services, Inc.’s efforts to meet the nutritional needs of the older and homebound populations of Wichita. When a participant couples the Roving Pantry service with Meals on Wheels, Senior Services, Inc. is able to meet all nutritional needs for that individual. This in turn helps the tax paying public save thousands each year. Proper nutrition



helps reduce the need for placement in a state funded nursing facility.

“I couldn’t live by myself without it,” said Wichitan Lola Squires, who has used the Roving Pantry for about two years. “I don’t have anybody to go buy groceries, so I really appreciate the Roving Pantry.”

Customers pay for food and other items they may order. There is no charge for the delivery, but donations are welcomed and encouraged. Participants place grocery orders a couple of days in advance of their scheduled delivery. Participants then pay for their groceries at the time of delivery. The service can be utilized on a temporary or permanent basis.

For more information, please call Roving Pantry at 267-4378.



**The Senior Centers delivered 936 suitcases to the Salvation Army for foster children. It took 3 pickups, 1 SUV and the Roving Pantry van to transport the generosity of our center participants and those in the community who heard about the project through the media. The staff of the Salvation Army was overwhelmed as the suitcases were being unloaded. Connie, the Orchard Park member who came up with this wonderful idea, is busy thinking about what we can do next year to top this awesome project!**

## Senior Employment Program Job Fair Set For March 17

**2015 Job Fair  
Tuesday, March 17th  
9:00 am - 11:00 am  
American Red Cross  
1900 East Douglas  
Must pre-register at 200 S. Walnut**

For more than 30 years, the Senior Employment Program (SEP) has helped thousands of people 55 and older find jobs.

“Many people can’t afford to retire or don’t want to sit home,” says Cherie Wenderott-Shields, SEP director. Each Monday she creates a list of available jobs for Tuesday’s Job Club.

In a tight economy and even tighter job market, Wenderott-Shields says she still identifies 100 open positions a week. Many employers contact her directly. Others she finds on the Internet or from job placement centers.

Job seekers must go through a two-hour orientation.. Wenderott-Shields counsels them on jobs that would be a good fit for their skills and desires.

The program receives approximately 800 requests for employment a year, and it places at least 500. It has received awards from the State Department of Commerce for its high placement rate and has consistently been recognized by the *Wichita Business Journal* as the city’s most successful job placement program.

“It’s a win-win situation,” says Laurel Alkire, executive director of Senior Services. “Seniors are able to remain active, contributing members of society.”

The program is currently funded by the Kansas Department of Commerce’s Older Kansas’ Employment Fund and Sedgwick County mill levy funds administered by the Department on Aging.

There are three job areas: In-Home Support Services finds jobs for people interested in working for a private family or individual in private



care giving, handyman and lawn care services, electricians, painters, drivers, etc. In-Home Respite Care provides a trained worker to give rest and relief to 24-hour caregivers. Senior Employment Program helps those age 55 and older find general employment.

SEP offers help preparing a resume. interview strategies. computer training and quality job leads, in addition to the weekly job club and annual job fair. Call 267-1771 or visit [seniorservicesofwichita.org](http://seniorservicesofwichita.org).

### What Can The Senior Employment Program Offer You?

- Quality Job Leads
- Weekly Job Club
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Computer Training
- Annual Job Fair
- Networking
- Resume Enhancement
- Interview Strategies
- 32 Years Of Proven Success
- Much, Much More!



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*of Wichita*

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*A Galaxy  
of Stars*  
2015

A Celebrity Roast  
and Tribute To

**Jack DeBoer**

Friday, June 26, 2015

6 p.m.

Wichita Hyatt

Call 267-0302, ext. 216, for ticket and sponsorship information