

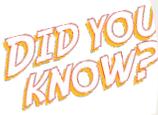
January | 2022



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# ASPEN happenings

## **The Pet Boost: Furry Friends Help Seniors Feel Less Lonely**

(NewsUSA) — Many older adults experience feelings of loneliness and isolation as they age, but pets can provide the companionship and love seniors desire. A new survey conducted by Home Instead, Inc., franchisor of the Home Instead Senior Care Network, found regular interaction with animals can help to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness in older adults.

The most frequently cited benefits of pet ownership are company, comfort, un-conditional love, entertainment and improved mood. In fact, 86 percent of pet owners agree they would be lonelier and less happy without their pet and 58 percent agree that they would not be as physically healthy without their pet. The companionship and love provided by a pet can be especially meaningful for those most at risk for isolation. Home Instead found that pet owners who live alone are significantly more likely to report increased benefits of pet ownership.

Owning a pet can also be an important factor for seniors deciding where they will live as they age. According to the survey, 82 percent of older adults say they will not consider moving to a senior living community without their pet.

While interaction with animals has been shown to improve mental and physical well-being in older adults, research from Home Instead confirms that seniors don't need to own pets to experience the benefits. Those who regularly interact with, but don't own, pets report feeling better just spending time with animals owned by family, friends, and



neighbors. There are many ways seniors can interact with animals without taking on the responsibility of pet ownership. Here are a few ideas:

**Volunteer at a rescue organization or animal shelter.** Many rescue organizations and animal shelters could use an extra hand. Seniors can help provide care for animals, including feeding, watering, restocking supplies, washing dishes, walking dogs, cleaning cages and enclosures or socializing with the animals. Volunteers experience the benefits of interacting with pets, and they can provide some care to an animal in need.

**Get to know your neighbors' pets.** Seniors who regularly walk their neighborhoods will likely see pet owners walking their dogs. Asking to join them for a walk might lead to new friendships with neighbors and dogs.

**Connect with a therapy animal.** Pet Partners therapy teams, made up of a pet owner and his or her registered animal, go into many locations where seniors are living or being treated, such as hospitals, hospice centers and care communities (*continued on page 3*).

## Exercise Lowers Injury Risk

Physical activity is one of the key components of a healthy lifestyle. Though physical activity benefits people of all ages, it can be especially helpful for seniors by making it easier for them to overcome some of the obstacles associated with aging.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, physical activity supports daily living activities and independence. That's a significant benefit for seniors who are worried that age-related physical decline might compromise their independence and increase their risk for falls. The CDC also notes that physical activity lowers the risk for early death, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.

Warm up before working out. Seniors may think they don't need to warm up before exercising because their workouts are not as high-intensity as they might have been when they were younger. But Harvard Medical School notes that warming up pumps nutrient-rich, oxygenated blood to the muscles and helps increase heart rate. The American Council on Exercise reports that warming up helps reduce workout-related injury risk by improving tissue elasticity. So prior to beginning

a workout, regardless of how moderate- or low-intensity that regimen will be, seniors should warm up for five to 10 minutes.

Start with a routine that's commensurate with your abilities. After getting approval from their physician, seniors should begin slowly and gradually build up their exercise tolerance (*continued on page 3*).

## *a look back at December*



## *Making memories...*

- Group Exercise
- Devotion
- Birthday Bash
- Bingo
- Make an Ornament
- Drive Thru Nativity
- Community Coffee Club
- Milk & Cookies w/Santa
- Tylertown Lights
- Toy Drive
- Beauty Shop
- and more!



**Furry Friends Help Seniors Feel Less Lonely (continued)**



**Visit a pet store.** Some pet stores sell small animals, such as guinea pigs, hamsters, chinchillas, gerbils, mice, certain geckos, bearded dragons, snakes, and specific types of frogs, birds and fish. Visiting can provide a pet fix! With so many options available, finding the right animal interaction for each individual should be as easy as a walk in the dog park. To help older adults determine what type of pet interaction is right for them, the Home Instead Senior Care® network is offering free information and tips to help seniors incorporate animals into their lives. To learn more about how older adults can bring animals into their lives, visit [PetsandSeniors.com](http://PetsandSeniors.com) or contact your local Home Instead Senior Care office or [www.homeinstead.com](http://www.homeinstead.com).

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Getting your ZZZs helps boost immunity?**

Even one night of lousy sleep has been shown to destroy some natural killer cells, which you need for good immunity. One 2021 sleep study published in the journal *Sleep Health* found that people who got less than 5 hours of sleep a night were 44 percent more likely to report a head or chest cold than those who slept for 7 to 8 hours. For better sleep, try to maintain the same schedule every day so that you wake up and go to bed at the same time, says Guibin Lee, MD, PhD, a geriatrician at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. This keeps your circadian rhythms running smoothly, which may improve

**Do the teas that are supposed to help you sleep really work?**

Herbal sleep aids often contain botanicals chamomile, lemon balm, and/or passionflower, which are shown to increase calmness, says Shannon Smith-Stephens, DNP, assistant professor of nursing at Kentucky’s Morehead State University. They help some people sleep. Try sipping a cup about an hour before bed, giving you time to urinate, so you aren’t awakened later needing to go to the bathroom. Don’t combine with other sleep remedies, that could leave you drowsy the next day.

**Is getting outside in the light good for a ‘down’ winter mood?**

An hour of natural light each morning can help lift winter blues, says Sonia Ancoli-Israel, PhD, professor emeritus of psychiatry at the University of California, San Diego. Skip sunglasses: Light boosts mood by resetting your body clock and making organ and cell functions work in sync and has to activate cells at the back of your eyes to do that. If this doesn’t help, ask your doctor whether you might have seasonal affective disorder. If you do, natural light alone might not lift it, Ancoli-Israel says. Your doctor may recommend that you use a special light box, often along with counseling and/or antidepressant drugs.

*Source: Consumer Reports On Health, Jan 2022*

**Happy BIRTHDAY.**   
**L. Wilson, 23<sup>rd</sup>**



**January Events**

- 1— New Years Day
- 11— MS Blood Svcs Blood Drive
- 11— Community Coffee Club
- 18— Family Night

For full Aspen activity calendar visit [aspenofbrookhaven.com](http://aspenofbrookhaven.com)

**Exercise Lowers Injury Risk**

*(continued from page 1)* Don't skip strength training. Seniors may think lifting weights is for young people who want to look buff, but the AARP® notes that muscle strengthening activities protect the joints, reducing seniors' risk for injury as a result. The Department of Health & Human Services recommends seniors who have been cleared to exercise engage in strength training at least twice per week.

Stretch after your workout. Harvard Medical School reports that efforts to cool down after a workout, including stretching, can prevent muscle cramps and dizziness and lengthen muscles throughout the body, which improves range of motion. Harvard Medical School recommends holding each stretch for 10 to 30 seconds, as the longer a stretch can be held the more flexible individuals' muscles will be.

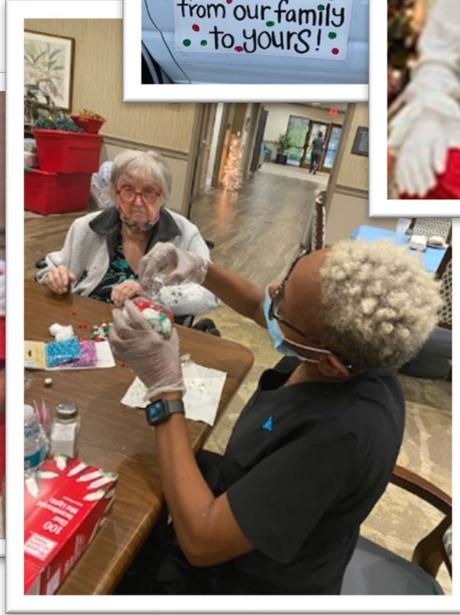
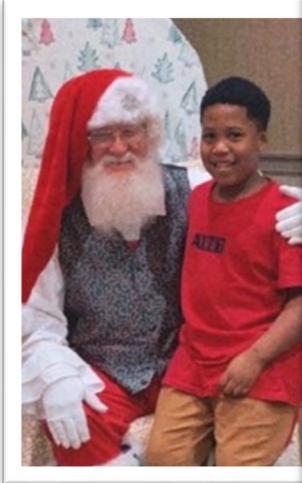
**UNSCRAMBLE**

**KEORIERW**

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Answer: firework

*More memories...*



500 Silver Cross Drive  
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*A community enriched by you.*

