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## **Living Well**

Chelsea Richmond, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent  
K-State Research and Extension, Flint Hills District

### **May is Older Americans Month**

Every year since 1963, May has been the month to appreciate and celebrate the vitality and aspirations of older adults and their achievements. It is a proud tradition that shows our nation's commitment to honor the value that elders continue to contribute to our communities.

This year's Older Americans Month theme – "Unleash the Power of Age" – emphasize the important role of older adults. This May, communities across the nation will recognize older Americans as productive, active, and influential members of society.

As large numbers of baby-boomers reach retirement age, many communities have increased their efforts to provide meaningful opportunities for older adults – many of whom remain physically and socially active through their '80s and beyond.

Current trends show that people over age 60 account for an ever-growing percentage of participants in community service positions, faith-based organizations, online social networking, as well as arts and recreational groups.

Lifelong participation in social, creative, and physical activities has proven health benefits, including retaining mobility, muscle mass, and cognitive abilities.

But older adults are not the only ones who benefit from their engagement in community life. Studies show their interactions with family, friends, and neighbors across generations enrich the lives of everyone involved.

Young people who have significant relationships with a grandparent or elder report that these relationships helped shaped their values, goals, and life choices and gave them a sense of identity and roots.

While communities and organizations provide services, support, and resources to older adults year-round, Older Americans Month is a great opportunity to show special appreciation for the older adults who have influenced our lives. For more information or ideas for celebrating Older Americans Month, visit [olderamericansmonth.org](http://olderamericansmonth.org). You can also contact the Flint Hills Extension District office in Cottonwood Falls at (620) 273-6491 or the office in Council Grove at (620) 767-5136.

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