

## Upcoming Events

Hartselle Career Fair

**DATE:** January 18

**LOCATION:** Hartselle, AL

EDAA Winter Conference

**DATE:** January 29-January 31

**LOCATION:** Montgomery, AL

ALDOT RAA Grant Deadline

**DATE:** February 2

**INFO:** Contact Joey Hester for more information

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# Spreading Holiday Cheer

As we conclude the holiday season, NARCOG would like to take a moment to appreciate our community and partnering organizations' help supporting our Region.

The Annual Holiday Drive benefitted low-income SSI clients and SSI clients with disabilities of any age in Lawrence and Cullman County. NARCOG was able to collect 415 blankets, exceeding the original goal of 275. Several organizations provided extra holiday goodies outside blankets, including canned

food, hygiene products, socks, and coats. These were given out with the discretion of the case manager and the client's needs.

Home Instead in Huntsville played a crucial role in ensuring the well-being of Morgan County seniors during the holiday season. As part of a thoughtful initiative, community members were allowed to shop for specific senior wish lists, allowing them to purchase holiday essentials and treats for elderly residents. Seniors could request various

items, ranging from clothing, books, and cleaning supplies to hygiene products. Some even expressed a desire for larger items such as microwaves and vacuums. Home Instead served 147 Morgan County seniors!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the community for their generous holiday giving, which significantly impacts the lives of older adults in our Region. With immense appreciation, we look forward to continuing our service and support to those in our community in 2024.

## Previous Aging Events and Activities

Renae Reynolds, the NARCOG Alabama Cares Coordinator, recently coordinated a Virtual Dementia Tour (VDT) welcoming NARCOG employees, family members, and friends. Recognized as "a window into their world," this unique experience was designed to offer participants a profound insight into the daily challenges faced by individuals with dementia. The tour utilized sensory

tools and simulations to recreate the cognitive and physical difficulties associated with dementia. It served as a powerful opportunity for participants to step into the shoes of those affected, fostering compassion and a deeper understanding. Organizations interested in participating in a VDT are encouraged to contact Renae Reynolds at 256-355-4515 or email rreynolds@narcog.org.

NARCOG recently hosted a Christmas Movie Day for our senior centers, assisted living, and other partnering organizations, bringing together 150 people from the community for a day filled with joy and laughter. This event was tailored for older adults 60 and above and individuals with disabilities of any age.

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Guests were treated to popcorn and soda while watching a timeless classic, "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

The Christmas Movie Day provided entertainment and a delightful opportunity for the community to come together, share laughter, and create lasting memories. NARCOG remains committed to fostering inclusivity and joy within the community, particularly during the holiday season.

Kylie Bolyard, NARCOG Outreach Coordinator, commented, "The movie day was a blast! We shared a lot of laughs with the moviegoers, and we appreciated a chance to get together and relax, even if it was just for a few hours. We look forward to more fun times next year!"

On December 15, at Stone Bridge Farms, the Browne Stone Centre hosted the Cullman Area Senior

and Retiree Christmas Party. About 835 attendees gathered for a holiday celebration organized by the Cullman County Commission on Aging and the Donald E. Green Active Adult Center. COA Executive Director Stephanie Lawson noted the event's success, with reservations reaching capacity weeks prior. The morning included a quiet prayer by Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry, and then the event began. Gratitude was expressed for the senior community's essential role in Cullman County.

Nearly 100 volunteers, including elected officials, staff, and local athletes, began to help distribute Christmas lunches. It took roughly 30 minutes to get all 835 meals passed out, and the hard work of volunteers and kitchen staff did not go unnoticed. After lunch, prizes and gift cards were awarded by the

luck of the draw and raffle tickets. Lawson acknowledged the collective effort, thanking elected officials, volunteers, and supporters for making the event a highlight of the holiday season.

NARCOG looks forward to attending and hosting more events in 2024 for the community to enjoy!



## Free Senior Legal Services Offered By NARCOG

NARCOG is in partnership with Legal Services of Alabama (LSA) to offer crucial, free legal assistance in Estate Planning and Elder Law. Targeting individuals aged 60 and above, as well as those with disabilities residing in Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan counties, this collaboration aims to empower seniors in navigating the complexities of their

golden years. "Our goal is to assist our Region's older adults in maintaining independence and dignity as they navigate their Senior years," stated Justin Graves, NARCOG Director of Aging. "We understand the unique challenges faced by seniors and individuals with disabilities, and through this partnership, we hope

to provide invaluable support in legal matters related to estate planning and elder law."

- The services offered include:
- Simple Estate Planning**
    - Powers of Attorney (Health and Financial)
    - Advanced Directives
    - Simple Last Wills and Testaments
  - Advice and Assistance**

- Elder Abuse
  - Housing Disputes and Evictions
  - Consumer Issues
  - Medicaid and Medicare Disputes
- Individuals seeking assistance and services should contact the NARCOG office at 256-355-4515 and ask to make an appointment with LSA Staff Attorney, Chiriga Vinson.

**December Anniversaries**

**Frances Palmer**  
Case Manager  
1 year of service

**Nicole Compagner**  
Case Manager  
1 year of service

**Dietrich Schaefer**  
Human Resources Generalist  
2 years of service

**Neal Nash**  
Case Manager  
7 years of service

## Continuing Higher Education

NARCOG extends heartfelt congratulations to two exceptional team members, Taylor Brann and Latrice Smith, for achieving a significant milestone in their professional journey.

Both currently serving as Case Managers, Taylar and Latrice, demonstrated dedication and commitment by earning their Master's of Social Work from the University of North Alabama earlier this month.

Their tireless efforts and outstanding contributions to the community exemplify NARCOG's

commitment to maintaining the highest standards of service.

Kim Dove, the Director of Administration, expresses deep pride on behalf of the entire NARCOG team, stating, "We wholeheartedly celebrate Taylor and Latrice's hard work, success, and remarkable academic achievements. Congratulations, graduates! Your accomplishments are a testament to your dedication and the positive impact you make on our community."

