

# ADVOCATES *for* Senior Issues

## YOU'RE INVITED

### AFSI Membership Meeting

September 19, 2025 | 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

**WHO:** The Advocates for Senior Issues Members, Guests, and Sponsors.

**WHAT:** An opportunity to advocate, learn, and grow together.

There will be a continental breakfast so be sure to arrive early and bring a guest!

**WHEN:** September 19, 2025  
10:00am to 12:00pm


**WHERE:**

*Prince Conference Center*  
1800 E Beltline Ave SE,  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

**QUESTIONS?**

Please contact AAAWM  
Advocacy & Planning  
Director, Sheri Harris.

 SheriH@aaawm.org

 616-222-7015

*Advocates for Senior Issues* is a non-partisan organization, affiliated with the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan. Learn more at [www.aaawm.org/afsi](http://www.aaawm.org/afsi).

### Legislative Speaker

#### REPRESENTATIVE STEPHEN WOODEN

Stephen Wooden is a graduate of Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School and Michigan State University. He's also an Eagle Scout from Troop 271. He lives with his wife, Adelyn, and their son, Sam. They spend their time going to Riverside Park, reading storybooks, and trying to get Sam to bed on time. Before serving in the Legislature, he worked at the Dwelling Place of Grand Rapids for seven years and served as a Kent County Commissioner from 2019 to 2024.

### Program Presentation

#### BEING MINDFUL ABOUT STRESS

Maureen McKenzie has worked for Gilda's Club Grand Rapids for 3 years, in addition to her MSW internship. She facilitates support groups in both grief and cancer memberships and mindfulness programming. Being Mindful About Stress addresses how stress can present itself and impact life, with mindfulness techniques to help manage it.

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## MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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10:00am to 12:00pm

### WHERE:

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1800 E Beltline Ave SE,  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

**AGENDA:** Call to Order & Announcements:  
Margaret Howard, President

### LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATION:

#### Representative Stephen Wooden

Stephen Wooden is a graduate of Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School and Michigan State University. He's also an Eagle Scout from Troop 271. He lives with his wife, Adelyn, and their son, Sam. They spend their time going to Riverside Park, reading storybooks, and trying to get Sam to bed on time. Before serving in the Legislature, he worked at the Dwelling Place of Grand Rapids for seven years and served as a Kent County Commissioner from 2019 to 2024.

### PROGRAM PRESENTATION:

#### Being Mindful About Stress

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## SPONSORS



**Revive & Thrive Project**  
Nourishing the community, one meal at a time.



**Blue Cross  
Blue Shield**  
of Michigan



**Health Care Associates**  
**Community Care Givers**





**GOLD**

Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM)  
AARP | Beacon Hill at Eastgate | Beth A. Swagman  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan | Elders' Helpers  
Giving Back Realty | Reliance Community Care Partners

**SILVER**

Kelso Homes | Life EMS | MKD Funeral Homes  
Parents Empowering Network | Pine Rest | Priority Health  
Revive and Thrive Project | West Michigan Credit Union

**BRONZE**

Care Resources PACE | Fair Housing Center of West Michigan  
Grand Rapids Elderly Care | Health Care Associates  
Leslie Sanford | Lody and Joanne Zwarensteyn  
Ofield Funeral Home | Porter Hills Village  
Primary Home Care | The Village of Heather Hills

**FRIEND**

Beth Mans Greenridge Realty | Chris Becker Kent Co. Prosecutor  
Faith Hospice | Gauthier Family Home Care  
Grand Rapids Savvy Senior Learning Series  
Hulst Jepsen Physical Therapy | Joel Jason | Kristyn Vander Zouwen  
Lois Carey | Luv Doula | Meals on Wheels Western Michigan  
Neptune Society | Oasis Senior Advisors | Phil and Judy France  
Safe Home Michigan | Senior Neighbors | Tom Appel





# ADVOCATES *for* Senior Issues

JOIN US MONTHLY TO...

ADVOCATE | LEARN | BUILD COMMUNITY

## 2024-2025 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

3RD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

*Except July, August, & December*

THE SALVATION ARMY KROC CENTER

*(Unless otherwise noted)*

10:00 AM MEETING CALL TO ORDER

September 19th

*Prince Conference Center*

October 17th

November 21st

January 16th

February 20th

March 20th

April 17th

*Blanford Nature Center*

May 15th

June 26th

*TBD*

AFSI is open to the public and free to attend for first time guests.

**QUESTIONS?**  [www.aaawm.org/afsi](http://www.aaawm.org/afsi)



[SheriH@aaawm.org](mailto:SheriH@aaawm.org)



616-222-7015



## THE LOCAL SENIOR ADVOCACY GROUP GIVING VOICE TO OLDER ADULTS

**THE WHY:** The Advocates for Senior Issues (AFSI) is the premier older adult advocacy group in the state of Michigan. AFSI is a non-partisan group that strives to be inclusive of all of Kent County's diverse senior communities.

**THE WHO:** In addition to learning how to advocate, members are centers, and retirement communities, bringing the estimated reach of the group to over 10,000 people. AFSI members have various backgrounds, affiliations, and work histories, but many have a history of service, volunteerism, and/or activism.

**THE IMPACT:** In addition to learning how to advocate, members are educated on topics of importance to seniors. Programs include elder abuse and scams, healthy aging, senior driving issues, aging in place, Medicare, and more. State Senators and Representatives, as well as local County Commissioners and other special guests, are also invited to present to the group & answer questions.

**THE HISTORY:** In addition to learning how to advocate, members are *Citizen Senate*. Founded and led by Sister Agnes Theil, the group originally started with just a few dozen members. In 2001, its name was officially changed to *Advocates for Senior Issues*. The group was instrumental in bringing the Medicaid Waiver program to Kent County in 1992, making it one of the first counties in the state to have this cost-efficient program. AFSI played a major role in the Kent County Senior Millage campaign in 1998, as well as the millage renewal and increase in 2006 and 2014.

**THE LEGACY:** Two members have earned the Blue Cross Blue Shield Claude Pepper award for advocacy, and three members have received the Maggie Fegel Award. Additionally, three members have received the Governor's statewide Senior Leadership Award, and five members from the group have been awarded a Medal of Merit by former U.S. Congressman Vern Ehlers.

**THE ACTION:** In addition to learning how to advocate, members are the exception of July, August, and December. These meetings take place on the third Friday of the month, from 10:00 am-12:00 pm, with an average attendance of 125 members. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend a meeting to witness AFSI in action.

# FOOD DRIVE



**JOIN US ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2025**

**Prince Conference Center**

**1800 E Beltline Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546**

**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**PLEASE BRING NONPERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS.**

Nonperishable foods are shelf-stable and include: oats, crackers, pasta, canned beans, dry cereals, nut butters, canned fruits & vegetables, granola bars, dried fruit, canned meat, oil, nuts & seeds, etc.

**ADVOCATES**  
*for Senior Issues*

*This food drive benefits Meals on Wheels Western Michigan.*