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FTHRA

NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE ...

- *Connect Expands Service to Johnson City & Jonesborough*
- *A Deep Dive into Recovery Court: Celebrating New Beginnings*
- *A New Path Forward: How SCSEP Helped One Participant Discover Confidence, Purpose, and a New Career*
- *Behind Every Safe Ride Is a Skilled Driver - NET Trans Drivers Complete Local Roadeo*
- *Adult Day Services Now Accepting New Clients*
- *Benefits Enrollment: What FTHRA Employees Need to Know*
- *When It's Time to Hand Over the Keys, NET Trans Can Help*
- *FTHRA's Annual United Way Campaign Runs Through November 21*
- *Preventing Falls at Work and at Home*
- *More Than a Meal: The People and Connections Behind Every Delivery*
- *ACCP Hosts Second Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive*
- *FTHRA's New Website Makes It Easier to Find Help*
- *Happier Birthdays Happen Here: Celebrating National Senior Center Month*
- *Prepared Today, Safer Tomorrow: Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults*
- *Recognizing the Signs of Abuse and Knowing Where to Turn*
- *Experience Matters: Celebrating Older Workers in Northeast Tennessee*
- *A Fresh Look for the Meals on Wheels Kitchen Team*
- *Generations Making a Difference: Honoring Older Adults on October 1*

KEY DATES:

- October → National Cybersecurity Awareness Month
- 10/26 → National Tennessee Day
- 10/30 → Halloween Lunch & Costume Contest

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

— Coretta Scott King



FALLING INTO AUTUMN WITH FTHRA

As trees turn a range of colors, we're excited to share updates, stories, and highlights from across our programs. Thank you for being part of our mission to serve and strengthen our community!

Connect Expands Service to Johnson City & Jonesborough

Johnson City, September

NET Trans is expanding its Connect same-day transportation service to give more Northeast Tennessee residents another way to get where they need to go.

The expansion brings Connect to Johnson City and Jonesborough, extending access to a service that uses electric vehicles to provide convenient, same-day rides. The service is designed to help residents travel throughout participating communities without the need to schedule a trip days in advance.

With the expansion, Connect now serves Bluff City, Elizabethton, Greeneville, Johnson City, Jonesborough, Mosheim, Piney Flats and Tusculum, Tennessee. The growing service area gives more residents access to transportation for everyday needs, whether that means getting to an appointment, running errands or reaching other destinations within the service area.

Connect is part of NET Trans' efforts to make transportation more accessible while incorporating electric vehicles into its services. By offering same-day rides, Connect provides another option for people navigating their daily schedules.

Booking a ride is simple. Residents can download the NET Trans app to request transportation or call the NET Trans call center at 423-461-8233 for assistance.

As Connect continues to grow, NET Trans is bringing more transportation options to the communities it serves, helping residents stay connected to the places and services that matter in their everyday lives.

Coming soon to Hawkins County … More details coming soon.



A Deep Dive into Recovery Court: Celebrating New Beginnings

Johnson City, October

On October 2, 2026, graduates, families, court personnel, and community partners gathered to recognize an important milestone in the lives of two individuals completing Recovery Court. The ceremony marked more than the end of a program. It recognized the work, accountability, and personal commitment required to pursue a different path forward.

The ceremony opened with remarks from the Honorable Judge Johnathan Minga, Washington County Sessions Court Judge. Kate Allen, a Recovery Court alumna, then shared her perspective as someone who understands the experience of working through the program. Her participation offered graduates a reminder that the road ahead can hold new possibilities, even when the journey has been difficult.

Judge Minga and Deborah France, court coordinator, presented diplomas to graduates William "Tex" Hubbard and Randal Stanley, recognizing their progress and commitment throughout the program.

Recovery Court serves individuals with substance use disorders who are involved in the justice system. Rather than relying solely on traditional sentencing, the program combines judicial supervision with treatment, accountability, and support. Participants work through structured requirements designed to address substance use while helping them make lasting changes in their lives.

Progress takes consistent effort. Participants must meet program expectations, attend treatment, and remain accountable for their choices. The process can be demanding, but it also gives participants access to guidance and resources as they work toward recovery and greater stability.

FTHRA's Community Corrections programs play a role in connecting justice-involved individuals with structured supervision and opportunities for rehabilitation. This work recognizes that public safety and personal progress can go hand in hand. When individuals receive appropriate treatment and support while being held accountable, they have an opportunity to build healthier lives and strengthen their connections to the community.

For the graduates recognized on October 2, the ceremony marked a significant achievement. Their completion represents the time and effort invested in moving forward, along with the support of the people who walked alongside them.

FTHRA congratulates William "Tex" Hubbard and Randal Stanley on their graduation and thanks Judge Minga, Kate Allen, Deborah France, and the community partners who help make recovery and rehabilitation possible. Each graduate's next chapter will be their own to write, but the accomplishment celebrated that morning was a meaningful step toward a new beginning.







A New Path Forward: How SCSEP Helped One Participant Discover Confidence, Purpose, and a New Career

Johnson City, September

When Ray first joined the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), he was looking for an opportunity to rebuild his confidence and move forward.

Like many SCSEP participants, he arrived with barriers that made employment difficult. He had limited computer experience, few transferable office skills, and transportation challenges that made getting to work difficult. Through SCSEP, he received transportation assistance during his first month of training and used NET Trans while working toward greater independence.

His first community service assignment was in the Meals on Wheels kitchen. There, Ray quickly became a valued member of the team. Each morning, he works alongside staff and fellow participants preparing meals that help nourish older adults throughout Northeast Tennessee. Just as importantly, he found something else: friendships, encouragement, and a sense of belonging. The kitchen became more than a worksite; it became a place where he felt supported and appreciated.

At the same time, SCSEP was helping Ray prepare for new opportunities. One of those opportunities came through the program's professional development curriculum.

"I wish the class was longer," Ray said. "The class was outstanding."

Developed by FTHRA's SCSEP program, the curriculum was designed to strengthen participants' employment readiness while building confidence in today's workplace. Through lessons covering computer skills, professional communication, resume development, workplace expectations, digital literacy, and career preparation, participants are encouraged to discover strengths they may not have realized they possessed.

For Ray, those lessons opened doors he never expected. Before beginning the curriculum, he had very little experience using computers. Sitting behind a desk or working in an office environment wasn't something he imagined himself doing.

But throughout the training, SCSEP Director Erin Hartley noticed something different. She saw someone who consistently asked thoughtful questions, demonstrated a willingness to learn, and possessed a natural aptitude for working with numbers.

"Every week, you could see his confidence growing," Hartley said.

Recognizing his potential, Hartley approached Ray with an opportunity to serve as her program assistant. Initially, he turned it down. The position felt intimidating. It required skills he wasn't yet sure he had.

However, as the curriculum progressed, Ray continued developing new computer skills, completing assignments, and gaining confidence in himself. With every lesson, he began to see new possibilities for what he could accomplish. By the time he completed the curriculum, his perspective had changed. He returned to Hartley with one question: "Is the job offer still available?" The answer was yes.

Today, Ray serves as SCSEP's program assistant while continuing his morning assignment in the Meals on Wheels kitchen. His role now includes assisting with office responsibilities, learning administrative processes, and continuing to build valuable workplace skills.

"I'm still learning," Ray said. "I'm still asking questions."

For Ray, asking questions isn't a weakness, it's proof that learning never stops. He credits the curriculum with giving him the confidence to accept a position he once believed was beyond his abilities.

"I wouldn't have taken the job without the curriculum," he said.

Since joining SCSEP, Ray has continued building his independence beyond the workplace. With support from the program and his own determination, he overcame transportation barriers, obtained his driver's license, and purchased a vehicle. All milestones that have expanded both his employment opportunities and his self-sufficiency.

His journey reflects exactly what SCSEP was created to do. Rather than simply providing temporary work experience, the program helps older adults reduce barriers, develop new skills, increase confidence, and prepare for unsubsidized employment.

For Hartley, offering Ray the opportunity to become her program assistant represents the heart of SCSEP.

"We meet people where they are," she said, "but we don't leave them there."

Ray agrees. "I've always wanted to learn," he said.

Today, he encourages other participants to embrace every opportunity SCSEP offers.

"I would recommend the curriculum to anyone," he said. "It helped my confidence in myself and my abilities."

His story serves as a reminder that workforce development is about more than employment. It's about helping people recognize their potential, discover strengths they didn't know they had, and believe that it's never too late to learn something new.

For Ray, that journey began in the Meals on Wheels kitchen, grew through the SCSEP curriculum, and continues today as he develops new skills and new confidence every day. His experience is a testament to what can happen when opportunity, determination, and support come together.

Behind Every Safe Ride Is a Skilled Driver - NET Trans Drivers Complete Local Roadeo

Johnson City, September

NET Trans drivers put their skills to the test during FTHRA's annual local Van Roadeo, held in September. The event brought employees together for a friendly competition focused on the precision, knowledge, and safe driving practices required to transport passengers throughout Northeast Tennessee.

The Van Roadeo gives drivers an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in a controlled setting. Participants navigate driving courses, complete safety exercises, and work through challenges that reflect the demands of operating a transit vehicle. These skills matter well beyond the competition. Every day, NET Trans drivers are responsible for getting passengers to their destinations safely, whether they are heading to a medical appointment, going to work, or visiting family.

This year's competitors earned recognition for their performances. Pete DesJardins took first place, followed by Keith Huskins in second place and Randy Crum in third place. Brodie Blackburn received the Rookie award, while Roddy Long earned the Safety award.

Pete, Keith, and Randy will represent FTHRA and NET Trans at the Tennessee Public Transportation Association's State Roadeo in Chattanooga this November. Their advancement is an opportunity to put their driving skills to the test alongside transportation professionals from across the state.

Beyond the rankings, the Van Roadeo recognizes the preparation and attention to detail that go into providing dependable public transportation. Continued practice and professional development help drivers sharpen their abilities, learn from one another, and maintain the high standards passengers count on.

Congratulations to Pete, Keith, Randy, Brodie, and Roddy on their accomplishments. FTHRA also thanks every employee who participated and helped make this year's event a success. Their work helps keep NET Trans passengers moving safely, one ride at a time.



FIRST PLACE:
PETE DESJARDINS



SECOND PLACE:
KEITH HUSKINS



THIRD PLACE:
RANDY CRUM

Adult Day Services Now Accepting New Clients

Johnson City, September

Families looking for daytime care and companionship for an older loved one have an option close to home. FTHRA's Adult Day Services in Johnson City is currently accepting new clients, offering a welcoming place for adults to spend the day with activities, meals, and opportunities to socialize.

A typical day at the center follows a familiar routine. When clients arrive, they begin the morning with breakfast before taking part in exercise. Movement helps clients stay active, while group activities and games give them a chance to participate, share a laugh, and spend time with others.

After the morning activity, clients gather for lunch. The afternoon brings another activity or game before the day comes to a close and clients head home.

The daily schedule offers structure and opportunities for social interaction, both of which can be important for adults who might otherwise spend much of the day alone. For family caregivers, Adult Day Services can also provide time to work, manage appointments, or take care of other responsibilities, knowing their loved one has a place to go during the day.

Every family has different needs, and finding the right care arrangement can make a difference for both the person receiving care and those supporting them. Adult Day Services gives clients a place to spend time with others while maintaining a regular daytime routine.

FTHRA's Adult Day Services is now open for enrollment and welcomes new clients. To learn more about the center or ask about enrollment, call 423-928-8855.

Benefits Enrollment: What FTHRA Employees Need to Know



Johnson City, October

FTHRA employees will see a change to medical and vision insurance coverage as the agency prepares for the 2027 calendar year. The transition will take place in two stages, with a short renewal period followed by a move to the State Health Plan.

For November and December 2026, medical and vision insurance will renew with UnitedHealthcare (UHC) for a two-month period. Beginning January 1, 2027, both medical and vision coverage will transition to the State Health Plan.

Employees will receive more information about the available State Health Plan options in November. In the meantime, the Employee Benefits Guidebook, covering November 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027, is available on BambooHR. Employees are encouraged to review the guidebook as questions may arise.

Thank you to Malaika Barlow, Director of Human Resources, for coordinating benefits enrollment and helping employees navigate this year's changes.



When It's Time to Hand Over the Keys, NET Trans Can Help

Johnson City, October

For many families, there comes a time when driving becomes a concern. Maybe a parent has trouble seeing road signs, feels less confident behind the wheel, or has had a few close calls on familiar roads. Bringing up the subject of giving up the car keys can be difficult, especially for someone who has spent decades driving independently.

Aging happens to everyone, and changes in vision, reflexes, mobility, and other abilities can affect how safely a person drives. Having that conversation with a loved one is not easy, but giving up driving does not have to mean giving up independence.

NET Trans offers transportation throughout Northeast Tennessee, helping people get to appointments, visit friends, shop for groceries, and take care of everyday errands. Anyone can ride NET Trans, making it an option for older adults who no longer drive, family members who need transportation, and anyone else looking for a ride.

Arranging transportation is simple. Call the NET Trans call center at 423-461-8233 to speak with someone about scheduling a ride, or download the NET Trans app to book transportation. To review current fares and learn more about available services, visit www.NetTrans.org and navigate to the NET Trans section (on the app, you can prepay and add money to your account).

If you are worried about an older family member behind the wheel, consider discussing transportation alternatives together. Knowing there is another way to get around can make the transition easier for everyone involved.

The goal is to keep your loved ones connected to their routines, their communities, and the people they care about, even when driving is no longer the best option. With NET Trans, the journey can continue long after the keys are set aside.

FTHRA's Annual United Way Campaign Runs Through November 21

Johnson City, September

FTHRA's Personal Support Services department is coordinating the agency's annual United Way donation campaign, giving employees an opportunity to support local organizations working to improve lives throughout Northeast Tennessee.

The campaign runs through November 21 and supports six local United Ways: Bristol, East Tennessee Highlands, Greater Kingsport, Greene County, Hawkins County, and Unicoi County. Employees can choose which United Way receives their contribution, allowing them to direct their support to the community they care about.

United Way organizations bring together local resources to address needs in education, health, and financial stability. Their funding helps community programs reach children and families, improve access to services, and create opportunities for people working toward greater stability. Many of the organizations supported by United Way serve the same communities as FTHRA, and United Way funding also helps support several of FTHRA's own programs.

Employees have two ways to contribute. A one-time donation can be made by cash or check. Those who prefer to give over time can choose payroll deduction, spreading their contribution across multiple pay periods. Payroll deductions will begin with the December 4 paycheck.

To participate, employees must complete a United Way pledge form and indicate their preferred United Way and donation method. Once completed, the form can be emailed or delivered in person to Kassandra Wynn, Director of Personal Support Services, at kwynn@fthra.org.

The annual campaign is an opportunity for FTHRA employees to invest in the communities where they live and work. Contributions help local United Ways continue supporting organizations and services that address community needs throughout the region.

Employees who wish to participate are encouraged to submit their pledge forms by November 21. Every contribution helps sustain the local programs and services that make a difference for our neighbors.

Preventing Falls at Work and at Home

Johnson City, October

FTHRA recently completed a Workers' Compensation Risk Control Survey conducted by Travelers Insurance with no findings or recommendations. While this is positive news, slips, trips, and falls remain the agency's leading workers' compensation claims, followed closely by motor vehicle accidents involving injuries.

Employees can help prevent falls by keeping walkways clear, cleaning up spills, using handrails, and reporting hazards. Remember to wear non-slip shoes while working to improve traction and reduce the risk of injury. Small precautions can make a big difference in keeping ourselves and our coworkers safe.

More Than a Meal: The People and Connections Behind Every Delivery

Johnson City, September

For many older adults, the arrival of a Meals on Wheels volunteer is one of the most anticipated parts of the day. Along with a nutritious meal, the visit brings a familiar face, a brief conversation, and the reassurance that someone has taken the time to stop by.

Meals on Wheels of Northeast Tennessee helps older adults access meals while supporting their ability to remain in their homes and communities. Good nutrition is central to the program, but the work extends beyond what is packed into each meal container.

For some recipients, a volunteer's visit may be one of their few opportunities for face-to-face interaction that day. A friendly greeting, a conversation about the weather, or a few minutes spent catching up can make a meaningful difference for someone who lives alone. These small exchanges help build relationships over time, turning a delivery into a point of connection.

The visits also provide an opportunity to notice when something seems out of the ordinary. Volunteers may recognize a change in a recipient's routine, notice that someone does not appear to be feeling well, or discover that a person needs additional assistance. While volunteers are not medical professionals, their regular visits can help identify concerns and alert the appropriate people when a recipient may need help.

Behind every delivery is a network of people working to keep the program going. Volunteers give their time to deliver meals along local routes, while staff coordinate services and help ensure recipients receive the support they need. The relationships that develop along the way are an important part of the program's value.

Social isolation can affect an older adult's well-being, particularly when mobility challenges, health concerns, or limited transportation make it difficult to leave home. Meals on Wheels helps address that isolation by bringing both food and human contact directly to a recipient's door.

It is a reminder that caring for a community involves more than meeting a basic need. A meal helps nourish the body, and a familiar visitor can offer comfort, connection, and peace of mind.

Meals on Wheels of Northeast Tennessee relies on volunteers to reach older adults throughout the region. Those interested in volunteering can call 423-491-0304 or visit www.FTHRA.org to learn more. A little time out of someone's day can mean a great deal to the person waiting on the other side of the door.









ACCP Hosts Second Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive



Johnson City, October

As Thanksgiving approaches, FTHRA's Alternative Community Corrections Program (ACCP) is organizing its second annual food drive to help clients in need prepare for the holiday.

FTHRA staff are invited to donate non-perishable food items that can help families put together a Thanksgiving meal. Suggested donations include instant mashed potatoes, stuffing mix, canned vegetables, cranberry sauce, canned gravy, boxed macaroni and cheese, canned fruit and other shelf-stable holiday favorites.

Donations will be collected at FTHRA's headquarters through November 6. After the collection period, the donated items will be assembled into Thanksgiving food baskets for ACCP clients who could use extra assistance during the holiday season.

For some families, the cost of preparing a holiday meal can add pressure to an already tight budget. This drive offers FTHRA employees a practical way to help ease that burden and give families one less thing to worry about as they gather for Thanksgiving.

The food drive also reflects the care FTHRA employees bring to their work beyond their daily responsibilities. A few pantry items donated by one person may seem small, but contributions from across the agency can add up to meaningful support for families in the community.

Staff members who would like to participate are encouraged to bring in non-perishable donations before the November 6 deadline. Every contribution helps ACCP prepare baskets for clients who need a little extra support this Thanksgiving.

Questions about the food drive can be directed to Shannon Pence with ACCP at 423-565-5267 or spence@fthra.org.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to this year's drive and helps make the holiday a little easier for local families

FTHRA's New Website Makes It Easier to Find Help

Johnson City, October

Finding the right program, getting in touch with a department, or learning how to volunteer with FTHRA is now easier with the launch of the agency's updated website.

The redesigned www.FTHRA.org gives visitors a clearer way to explore FTHRA's services across Northeast Tennessee. Whether someone is looking for transportation, meal assistance, adult day services, employment opportunities, or community corrections information, the website serves as a starting point for learning what is available and how to take the next step.

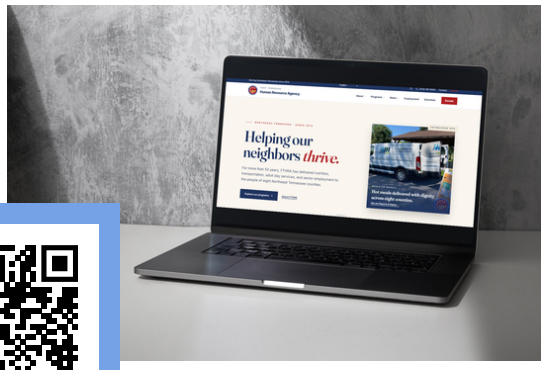
Visitors can browse program descriptions, find contact information, and explore resources relevant to their needs. The updated layout is designed to make information easier to locate, helping individuals and families spend less time searching and more time connecting with the services they need.

The website also gives community members a convenient way to get involved. Those interested in volunteering can learn about opportunities to support programs such as Meals on Wheels of Northeast Tennessee and the Foster Grandparent Program. Visitors can also find information about donating to support FTHRA's work throughout the region.

For community partners, caregivers, and residents who are new to the agency, the site offers a central place to learn about FTHRA's programs and the people they serve. Current contact information makes it easier to reach the appropriate team with questions or requests for assistance.

FTHRA's website is often the first place someone turns when looking for help. This update reflects the agency's ongoing effort to make its services easier to understand and access.

Explore the new website at www.FTHRA.org to learn more about FTHRA's programs, find resources, connect with staff, or discover ways to support the communities of Northeast Tennessee.



Happier Birthdays Happen Here: Celebrating National Senior Center Month

Johnson City, September

September is National Senior Center Month, a time to recognize the places that help older adults stay active, meet new people, and remain involved in their communities. This year's theme, established by the National Council on Aging, is "Happier Birthdays Happen Here," highlighting the role senior centers play in supporting connection, purpose, and wellness as people age.

For FTHRA, that sense of community is closely tied to the work of Meals on Wheels of Northeast Tennessee. The program partners with local senior centers that serve as congregate meal sites, giving older adults a place to gather and enjoy a hot meal together.

At these sites, lunch is about more than what is on the plate. People have the chance to catch up with familiar faces, strike up conversations with someone new, and build friendships over time. For older adults who may spend much of their day at home, having a regular place to go and people to see can make a meaningful difference.

Shared meals also create a setting where people feel welcome and included. A conversation across the table, a familiar greeting, or a laugh with friends can turn an ordinary afternoon into something to look forward to. These connections support emotional well-being and help older adults maintain ties to the communities they call home.

Senior centers provide opportunities for older adults to participate in community life, and congregate meal services are one way FTHRA helps make those opportunities possible. Through its partnerships with local senior centers, FTHRA supports access to nutritious food while helping create spaces where relationships can grow.

National Senior Center Month is a fitting reminder that healthy aging involves more than physical health. Friendship, belonging, and having a reason to get out of the house matter, too. As FTHRA continues its work across Northeast Tennessee, partnerships with senior centers, such as through Meals on Wheels, help bring those everyday benefits within reach of more older adults.



Prepared Today, Safer Tomorrow: Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults

Johnson City, September

September is National Preparedness Month, a reminder to take a few minutes to plan for emergencies before they happen. Severe weather, power outages, flooding, and other unexpected events can disrupt daily routines with little warning. For older adults, having a plan in place can be especially important when health conditions, mobility challenges, or transportation needs make it harder to respond quickly.

A little preparation now can make a stressful situation easier to manage. Here are six steps older adults and their families can take to get ready.

Keep Emergency Contacts Close

Write down important phone numbers and keep the list somewhere easy to find, such as on the refrigerator or near a home phone. Include family members, trusted neighbors, healthcare providers and other people who can help in an emergency. Do not rely on a cell phone alone, since its battery may die or the device may become unavailable.

Maintain an Updated Medication List

Keep a current list of medications, dosages, allergies, and important medical conditions. Include the names and phone numbers of doctors and pharmacies. Store the list with other emergency documents, and consider keeping a copy in a wallet or emergency bag. Ask a healthcare provider or pharmacist how to plan for medication needs during an extended emergency.

Plan for Transportation

Think ahead about how you would leave home or reach a safe location if driving were not possible. Identify trusted friends, family members, or neighbors who may be able to help. If you rely on public transportation or another transportation service, learn what options may be available during an emergency and make an alternate plan in case regular service is disrupted.

Set Aside Food and Water

Keep a supply of drinking water and nonperishable food that can be prepared with little or no cooking. Choose items that fit your dietary needs and are easy to open. Remember to include a manual can opener, a flashlight, extra batteries, a phone charger or power bank, and a battery-powered or hand-crank radio. Check supplies regularly and replace expired items.

Account for Mobility and Medical Needs

If you use a walker, wheelchair, cane, hearing aid, or other assistive device, make sure it will be accessible if you need to leave quickly. Keep essential items, such as spare batteries, glasses, and medical equipment supplies, in a consistent location. If you use powered medical equipment, ask your healthcare provider or equipment supplier about backup power options and what to do if electricity is unavailable.

Make a Family Communication Plan

Talk with family members or trusted contacts about what everyone should do during an emergency. Decide who will check on you, where you could meet if you become separated, and how you will communicate if phone service is interrupted. Choose an out-of-area contact who can help relay messages if local communication becomes difficult. Make sure everyone knows the plan before it is needed.

Emergency preparedness does not have to happen all at once. Start with one task, such as updating your contact list or gathering a few essential supplies, and build from there. Review your plan with family members at least once a year and whenever your health, living situation, or support needs change.

The FTHRA Safety Committee encourages employees, clients, and community members to make preparedness part of their routine. Taking time to plan ahead can help protect your safety, support your independence, and give you and your loved ones greater peace of mind when the unexpected happens.

FTHRA
SAFETY COMMITTEE

Make Your Voice Heard ... Vote!



The midterm elections are an opportunity to make your voice heard and take part in shaping your community and country. Exercise your right to vote by participating in early voting or heading to the polls on Election Day. Every vote is an opportunity to have a say in the future. Make a plan, cast your ballot and encourage others to do the same!

Recognizing the Signs of Abuse and Knowing Where to Turn

Johnson City, October

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time to bring attention to abuse, recognize the warning signs, and share resources with people who may need help. Abuse can affect people of any age or background, and it is not always easy to recognize from the outside. For someone experiencing abuse, fear, financial dependence, health concerns, or concern for family members can make it difficult to ask for help.

Domestic violence often involves a pattern of power and control rather than a single incident. Physical violence is one form of abuse, but harmful behavior can also be emotional, psychological, sexual, or financial. A person may be threatened, humiliated, isolated from friends and family, or prevented from accessing money, transportation, or medical care.

Older adults and people who rely on others for daily assistance can face additional barriers to seeking help. Warning signs may include unexplained injuries, sudden changes in behavior, withdrawal from loved ones, missing money or belongings, or another person repeatedly speaking for them or controlling their decisions. These signs do not automatically mean abuse is occurring, but they may warrant a closer look and a private, compassionate conversation.

FTHRA's Personal Support Services program works with clients referred through Adult Protective Services. This work brings the agency into contact with people who may be vulnerable and need assistance to remain safe and maintain their well-being. Recognizing concerns and knowing where to report them are important steps in protecting individuals who may be experiencing abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

If you are concerned about someone, listen without judgment, take their concerns seriously, and avoid pressuring them to explain more than they are ready to share. If it is safe to do so, help them connect with trained professionals who can discuss options and develop a safety plan. Avoid confronting a suspected abuser if doing so could increase the person's risk.

Help is available:

- Immediate danger: Call 911.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: Call 800-799-7233, text START to 88788, or visit thehotline.org.
- Adult Protective Services in Tennessee: Call the Tennessee Department of Human Services at 888-277-8366 to report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.
- Local support: A domestic violence service provider can help with safety planning, shelter information, counseling, and other resources.

Experience Matters: Celebrating Older Workers in Northeast Tennessee

Johnson City, September

The last full week of September marks National Employ Older Workers Week, an opportunity to recognize the skills, experience, and contributions older adults bring to the workforce. For people age 55 and older who are unemployed and looking for a way back into the workplace, finding the right opportunity can be challenging. FTHRA's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) helps participants take that next step.

SCSEP provides eligible adults with community service assignments at local nonprofit and public service organizations, where they can gain work experience, develop skills, and prepare for unsubsidized employment. Participants receive training in a real workplace setting while contributing their time and abilities to organizations that serve the community.

For participants, the program can offer more than a chance to build a resume. Returning to a regular work routine can help restore confidence, introduce new skills, and provide a sense of purpose. Participants have opportunities to learn from coworkers, become familiar with current workplace expectations, and explore career paths that match their interests and abilities.

The benefits extend beyond the individual. Host agencies gain help with important tasks and welcome people who bring years of personal and professional experience. Their knowledge, reliability, and perspective can strengthen teams and support the services local organizations provide. In turn, participants contribute to the community while preparing for their next employment opportunity.

Older workers have much to offer, but age and gaps in employment can make the job search difficult. SCSEP helps address those barriers by connecting eligible participants with hands-on training and practical experience. The goal is to help participants move toward lasting employment while supporting organizations that make a difference throughout Northeast Tennessee.

National Employ Older Workers Week is a reminder that talent does not have an expiration date. With the right opportunity and support, older adults can continue learning, working, and contributing to their communities.

FTHRA's SCSEP serves eligible adults age 55 and older who are unemployed and meet program requirements. To learn more about participation opportunities, call 423-461-7844 or email scsep@fthra.org.



A Fresh Look for the Meals on Wheels Kitchen Team

Johnson City, October



The Meals on Wheels of Northeast Tennessee kitchen team has a new look! Kitchen employees recently received branded uniforms to help identify the people working behind the meals delivered throughout the region.

Each kitchen employee received two Meals on Wheels of Northeast Tennessee branded shirts and a branded baseball cap. The head chef also received a branded chef's coat. The team was happy to receive the new apparel, which gives them a uniform look that reflects the program they work hard to support.

While the new uniforms are a welcome addition, they also serve a practical purpose. Kitchen staff help prepare meals that make their way to congregate meal sites and individual clients' homes. Wearing clothing with the Meals on Wheels name makes it easier for meal site partners, volunteers, and clients to recognize the team and connect them with the program.

Preparing and delivering meals takes coordination among many people, from the kitchen staff who prepare the food to the drivers and volunteers who help get it where it needs to go. The kitchen team's work is an important part of that process, helping ensure meals are ready for the people who depend on the service.

The new uniforms offer a simple way to strengthen the program's visibility while recognizing the employees who help keep it running. Next time you see the Meals on Wheels kitchen team at a meal site or out in the community, look for the branded shirts and caps. They represent the people working each day to put meals on tables across Northeast Tennessee.

MEALS on WHEELS
NORTHEAST TENNESSEE

Generations Making a Difference: Honoring Older Adults on October 1

Greeneville, October

October 1 marks the International Day of Older Persons, a time to recognize the contributions older adults make to their families, workplaces, and communities. Their experience, knowledge, and willingness to serve others shape Northeast Tennessee in ways that are often seen in everyday moments, from helping a neighbor to mentoring a young person.

One example of that impact is FTHRA's Foster Grandparent Program, which connects older adult volunteers with children who can benefit from extra attention, encouragement and guidance. Through service in schools and other community settings, Foster Grandparents build relationships with young people while sharing the patience, perspective, and life experience they have gained over the years.

For a child, having a trusted adult who takes time to listen, offer encouragement, or work through a challenge can make a lasting difference. A Foster Grandparent may help a student practice reading, support classroom activities, or simply provide a steady, caring presence during the school day. These relationships give children additional opportunities to learn and grow.

The benefits reach both generations. Children receive individual attention and positive role models, while volunteers have opportunities to stay active, contribute their skills, and form meaningful connections with younger people. Spending time with children can bring a renewed sense of purpose, new experiences, and the satisfaction of knowing their time matters to someone else.

Intergenerational relationships also strengthen communities. When children and older adults spend time together, they have the chance to learn from one another. Children gain insight from another generation's stories and experiences, while older volunteers see the world through younger eyes. The result is a relationship built on mutual respect, shared time, and the understanding that everyone has something to offer.

Older adults contribute to community life in many ways, through paid work, caregiving, volunteering, leadership, and the everyday support they provide to friends and family. The Foster Grandparent Program offers one path for those who want to put their experience to work in service to the next generation.

On the International Day of Older Persons, FTHRA recognizes the older adults who continue to give their time, knowledge, and care to others. Their contributions are not limited to what they have done in the past. Through programs like Foster Grandparents, they continue to influence young lives and help build stronger connections across Northeast Tennessee.

Those interested in learning more about becoming a Foster Grandparent can visit www.FTHRA.org or call 423-639-8462.

Have a Story to Share? We Want to Hear from You!

Do you have a great story, photo, or idea that highlights what's happening across FTHRA? We're always looking for content to feature in upcoming newsletters, whether it's a community partnership, staff recognition, volunteer highlight, or a behind-the-scenes look at your program. If you have any story ideas, photos, or updates, please send them to media@fthra.org.

Culinary Creations Corner: Pumpkin Chiffon Pie

Prep: 50 mins
Total: 4 hours

Yields: 8 servings



Recipe and photo from Southern Living

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups packed finely ground gingersnaps (30 to 40 gingersnaps)
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 2/3 cup, plus 3 Tbsp. granulated sugar, divided
- 1 1/4 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 4 large eggs
- 2 Tbsp. tap water
- 2 1/2 tsp. unflavored gelatin (from 2 [1/4-oz.] envelopes)
- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 (15-oz.) can pumpkin
- 1/2 tsp. grated orange zest (from 1 orange)
- 1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 Tbsp. powdered sugar

Directions:

1. Make crumb crust mixture: Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir together gingersnaps, butter, 2 tablespoons of the sugar, and 1/4 teaspoon of the salt in a medium bowl until the mixture resembles wet sand.
2. Press crust: Spoon into a deep-dish, 9 1/2-inch pie plate, and press evenly into bottom and up sides of pie plate.
3. Bake crust: Bake in preheated oven until toasted and fragrant, 8 to 10 minutes. Place on a wire rack, and let cool while preparing filling.
4. Separate eggs: Meanwhile, separate egg yolks from egg whites, placing egg yolks in a medium bowl and egg whites in a large bowl; set aside.
5. Make gelatin mixture: Whisk together tap water and gelatin in a medium saucepan. Add egg yolks, milk, pumpkin pie spice, 2/3 cup of the sugar, and 3/4 teaspoon of the salt.
6. Cook to thicken gelatin mixture: Cook over medium-low, whisking constantly, until thickened, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from heat.
7. Add pumpkin and orange zest: Whisk in pumpkin and orange zest until smooth. Pour into a large heatproof bowl, and let cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes.
8. Beat egg whites: While pumpkin mixture cools, beat egg whites with a hand mixer on high speed until soft peaks form, about 2 minutes. Add remaining 1 tablespoon sugar, and beat on high speed until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Set aside at room temperature until ready to use.
9. Fold egg white mixture into the pumpkin mixture: Add about 1/2 cup of the egg white mixture to pumpkin mixture, and stir to combine. Carefully fold in remaining egg white mixture to pumpkin mixture until incorporated and mixture feels light.
10. Add filling to crust: Pour pumpkin mixture into gingersnap crust, smoothing top into even layer. Chill, uncovered, until set, at least 4 hours or up to 12 hours.
11. Make whipped cream: Beat heavy cream, powdered sugar, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt with a hand mixer on medium-high speed or by hand with a whisk until medium stiff peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes.
12. Add whipped cream to pie, and serve: Spoon whipped cream on top of pie, and spread, leaving about 1/4-inch perimeter of pumpkin mixture exposed. Slice, and serve immediately.



Mr. Jason Cody

Executive Director at FTHRA

Director's Desk: Letter From the Executive Director

Have you thought about continuing your education? It might be easier than you think. Did you know that you could potentially do two years for FREE…?

Going back to college as an adult can be a daunting (sometimes even scary) but very worthwhile experience. We all know that there are many talented and accomplished individuals who never went to college or, for some reason or another, were not able to complete their degree. For many, earning a degree is much more than a piece of paper; it can make a significant difference in their professional and personal life. Obtaining a degree can represent the achievement of a lifetime dream for many.

Did you know that the State of Tennessee is offering scholarship money to cover the cost of the first two years of community college, like Northeast State, for any adult, or the cost of a vocational certificate program (nursing, auto mechanics, or welding, for example, at a TCAT school)? The program is called Tennessee Reconnect, and additional information can be found at www.tnreconnect.gov

Tennessee Reconnect is the "Drive to 55" initiative to help more adults complete a post-secondary degree or credential. As part of Tennessee Reconnect, all Tennessee adults can now attend and earn a diploma or certificate at any of the 27 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) completely free of tuition and fees. In addition, if you have years of valuable work, military, or volunteer experience, you may be able to receive academic credit. Many colleges and universities can recognize learning you have gained outside the classroom with credit toward your degree. Lastly, you may be able to schedule necessary classes around your work schedule. Northeast State Community College offers several night, weekend, and even some online class options. In closing, you may be closer to getting a degree than you thought.

Jason Cody

Announcement Spotlight



Volunteer with Meals on Wheels

Ready to Make a Difference?

Meals on Wheels of Northeast Tennessee invites YOU to join our incredible team of volunteers! Lend a helping hand in someone's life by delivering more than just a meal—delivering warmth, companionship, and a sense of community.

If you're ready to make a positive impact, call us today at 423-491-0304 or visit our website at www.FTHRA.org for more information on how you can become a Meals on Wheels volunteer. Your time and dedication can brighten the days of those in need.

Volunteer Now

NET Trans Mobile App Now Available!

To get started, simply download the free NET Trans app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Once downloaded, you can set up an account by calling our call center at 423-461-8233 and requesting an account. Our friendly staff will be happy to assist you with the setup process.

Download the app today and start booking your rides with ease!

Download Now

Scan the QR code to download the app!





Social Media

Stay connected with FTHRA: join us on social media!

Whether you're on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube, we've got engaging content, updates, and heartwarming stories waiting for you.

Follow us, like our posts, share, and subscribe! Your support amplifies our community impact and keeps you informed about the latest happenings at FTHRA. Scan the QR code for our social media platforms.

Connect Now

Keep In Touch!

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Connect With Us:

(423) 461-8200

www.FTHRA.org

fthra@fthra.org

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704 Rolling Hills Dr.
Johnson City, TN 37604

Open Job Positions at FTHRA:

Start a job, spark a career!

- *Probation Case Officer - Misdemeanor Probation Program - Johnson City, TN*
- *Probation Case Officer - Misdemeanor Probation Program - Greeneville, TN*
- *Van Driver - NET Trans - Kingsport, TN*
- *Van Driver - NET Trans - Johnson City, TN*
- *Van Driver - NET Trans - Bristol, TN*

We are always looking to build our team with dedicated and service-oriented professionals. Be sure to check the employment page on our website often for new positions.

View all of our job openings at: www.fthra.org/employment

SCAN ME!