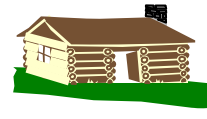


Chester County Department of Aging Services



No place like home?



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Director's Corner

Wanda Stonebraker

Director, Chester County Department of Aging Services

This newsletter will be a quarterly publication. Our goal is to provide information about the programs offered through our department, keep you informed about current issues facing older adults and introduce you to our staff.

As we begin 2009 we are faced with challenges we have not had to face before. Our goal is to meet these challenges head on in order to continue to provide services through our programs and meet our new challenges.

One doesn't have to be an economist to realize the negative impact the current economy is having on all of us. We have been seeing the effects of the economy for a few months now.

Our calls from older Chester countians requesting referrals and/or assistance with utilities and fuel oil are on the rise. During the last three months of 2008 we received 102 calls with requests ranging from, assistance with LIHEAP or other fuel assistance programs, to financial assistance.

(See Directors Corner, page 2)

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Chester County Commissioners
Terence Farrell
Carol Aichele
Kathi Cozzone

Program Spotlight!

Information and Assistance

Kelly Miehle

Supervisor, Information and Assistance

Do you have a question about services available to seniors living in Chester County?

The Chester County Department of Aging Services provides free screenings for in-home services, benefits, and entitlements. Information is available by phone, mail, fax, e-mail, or through our website, www.chesco.org/aging.

We also welcome walk-in visitors to our office located at the Government Services Center, 601 Westtown Road, Suite 130, West Chester, PA 19380. Our general office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30am-5:00pm.

Below is just a brief listing of some of the topics our Information and Assistance staff can help with, either to provide information or to help with applications:

- Completing applications, such as Pennsylvania Property Tax/Rent Rebate or LIHEAP
- Information about transportation services such as Aging Shared Ride
- Explaining the process of placing a loved one in a nursing facility or personal care boarding home/assisted living
- Programs available to provide in-home services to seniors
- Senior housing
- How to help an aging parent
- Referrals for seniors in need of legal services
- Listing of Senior Centers and Senior Groups within the County
- Weatherization and repair
- Home delivered meals
- How to obtain medical care/services
- Discharge planning, from hospital or nursing facility
- Personal Emergency Response Systems

(See Information and Assistance, page 3)

Director's Corner (continued from page 1)

During this same period we received 50 calls from older Chester countians in need of assistance with rent or mortgage, in need of housing, are facing eviction or are already homeless.

The barriers to successfully helping these residents may include:

- unwillingness or inability of family members to control finances and keep payments current
- inadequate income or inability to pay the cost of current housing and utilities
- unawareness of necessity to keep payments current
- difficulty in finding affordable housing acceptable to the resident
- reluctance of rental agent to lease to resident with poor credit
- past due bills sometimes in the thousands of dollars
- refusal of resident to cooperate

Fortunately for many Chester County residents, this department has received an anonymous donation for the last few years with instructions to use the funds on non budgeted expenses. This fund has been critical to our success in helping these residents.

Unfortunately, this fund is spread over many areas which include:

- clothing
- medical expenses and prescriptions
- transportation
- emergency shelter expenses
- food

I do not anticipate the situation for our older Chester County residents will improve any time soon. We are going to be doing some grant writing, recruiting volunteers and working on some new initiatives to help our older residents remain safe in their communities.

I welcome any comments or feedback you may have about our newsletter. You can reach me via email at wstonebraker@chesco.org. ■

Winter Weather Tips for Seniors

Eileen McKie

Registered Nurse

Winter weather can be a problem for everyone, but it poses particular challenges for the senior population. Extremely cold outdoor temperatures and changes in the weather can be a problem, especially if you have physical limitations or certain diseases. It's best to be prepared ahead of time. Here are some winter weather helpful hints for seniors:

- Keep plenty of food, water, medication, and even pet food in your home during the winter in case of severe weather. Find out if your local pharmacy and grocery store make deliveries.
- Have a battery-powered radio and flashlight with fresh batteries in case of power outages. Avoid using candles due to fire hazard.
- Remember to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids. This is something we don't normally think of in the winter but it is still important. Avoid alcoholic and caffeinated beverages. Drinking plenty of water can also help prevent dry skin problems.
- For people with certain cardiac or respiratory ailments it is probably best to stay indoors on extremely frigid and windy days.
- If you must go out, wear 2-3 layers of loose fitting clothing under a warm coat. Don't forget hat, gloves, non-skid boots, and even a lint-free scarf to cover your mouth and nose to warm inhaled air.
- In the winter your body works extra hard just to keep you warm. Shoveling snow and clearing sidewalks create added demands on your heart. It may be best to hire someone else to do the heavy work. When spreading salt or deicer, use a plastic cup to scoop and scatter the pellets instead of lifting or carrying the heavy bag.
- If you step outside to get the mail/newspaper, feed the birds, etc... always have a cell phone or cordless phone in your pocket. If you happen to fall or need assistance you will be able to call for help. If you have an emergency response system necklace or bracelet, keep it with you at all times.
- Remember that visibility indoors and outdoors may be diminished in the winter due to snowy weather and shortened daylight hours. Keep your home well lit and make sure there are clear pathways in and around your home.

As always, discuss these things with your doctor. He/she will tell you how much activity is appropriate for you during the winter months. It is most important to know your own physical limitations. Keep in mind, your body may not be as tolerant of the cold weather as it used to be. When in doubt, stay indoors and enjoy the scenes of the winter wonderland from the warmth of your own home. ■



NEW Chester County Discount Prescription Drug Card

This program, sponsored by the National Association of Counties, offers average savings of 22% on the

retail price of commonly prescribed drugs. **There is no cost to Chester County taxpayers for this program.** For more information email the Chester County Health Department at cchd@chesco.org or call 610-344-6225.

THE PEER PROJECT

Donna Eaves,
Ombudsman

The Chester County Department of Aging Services Ombudsman Program recently conducted PEER training sessions at Brandywine Hall Nursing Home, 800 West Miner Street, West Chester, PA 19382.

PEER stands for Pennsylvania's Empowered Expert Residents! The PEER Project is a concept to train resident advocates to work from the inside with facilities, staff and residents to enhance quality of care and quality of life for their "peers". The project was initiated by the Pennsylvania State Ombudsman Office to work with long term care residents who have volunteered their time and expertise to self-advocate issues that will resonate with their peers. The PEER Project encourages a partnership between residents and facility staff to work together to solve concerns and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

PEER Project participants attended five two-hour training sessions, which included titles such as "The Focus is on YOU" and "Building Self Resolution Skills". There was also a two-hour session for staff of the facility to orient them to the PEER concept.

Following the completion of the training sessions, a Graduation Ceremony and luncheon was held at Brandywine Hall on November 21, 2008 to celebrate the accomplishment of completing PEER. Participants were awarded a Certificate, a Starfish Pin, a Door Sign and a Badge. The Brandywine Hall PEERs become part of a group which now consists of over 500 PEERs from long term care facilities all over Pennsylvania. ■

Information and Assistance (continued from page 1)
We maintain a public resource library through which we can identify specific information that may assist in your particular situation. Our Information & Assistance workers specialize in catering to your individual needs. We are also available to provide speakers to provide information about the department to groups or expos and health fairs. ■

Contact us!
Information and Assistance services are always free of charge and available to all interested persons.
Call: 610-344-6350
Toll-free: 1-800-692-1100 extension 6350
TTY #: 610-344-5233 (Text Telephone for the Hearing Impaired)

601 Westtown Road, Suite 130
P.O. Box 2747
West Chester, PA 19380-0990

You may also visit our website:
www.chesco.org/aging

or send us an e-mail inquiry:
ccaging@chesco.org

ELDER ABUSE HOTLINE! 1-800-564-7000



Stop Elder Abuse! Abuse can be physical, mental, sexual, or economic. If you are a victim of abuse or suspect that an older person is being abused, contact the Chester County Department of

Aging Services at the above number. Someone is available to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

PEER graduates from Brandywine Hall are (l to r) Ellen Dettinger, Joe Hawk, Ted Eller, Terese Carr, Joe Jascewsky, Suzanne Price, Mary Gallagher, Bob Farrell, Doris Dixon, Mary Kegel.



MEET THE STAFF!!

Berta Rains
Care Manager

The Department of Aging Services Staff is organized geographically into Teams. Each Team consists of a Supervisor, Care Managers and an Assessor. The first team to be profiled serves primarily the Southwestern part of the County.

Supervisor, Stacy Barno has been supervisor for 3 ½ years after only 8 months with the Department as a care manager. Prior experience includes Nursing Home Social Work and Public Welfare, not to mention a lifelong passion to be in a helping profession. Stacy’s favorite part of her job is spending time with consumers, a rare treat in her current position.

Care Manager Carol Harkins started with Aging Services in May '07 with a background as group therapist and undergraduate teacher. Carol enjoys working with the aging population because of the satisfaction that comes from “the smile on their face when they feel that they are valued and getting the help they need.” Carol’s dream is to travel to Ireland to research her ancestry.

Colleen Kelly has been an Aging Program Assessor with Chester County for 7 years and with Philadelphia Corporation for the Aging for 5 years. She has also had experience as a nursing home social worker. Colleen loves the population she serves and enjoys getting out daily to perform assessments. She also loves animals, hockey and singing (only in the car).

Care Manager Dianna Martin came to Aging Services in June 2008 after serving an internship with West Chester University. Dianna’s quiet compassion for the elderly and her longing to make their lives brighter has earned her the Department of Human Services Vision and Values Committee award “Rookie of the Year”.

Care Manager Chris McCann made a major career change from the world of finance to that of social work. After getting his Masters degree in Social Work, he came to Chester County one year ago. Chris enjoys working with older persons and helping them find the right resources to enhance the quality of their lives. Chris likes to run, travel, collect autographs and model trains.



Stacy Barno



Carol Harkins



Colleen Kelly



Dianna Martin



Chris McCann

Health - A Resolution or A Wish?

By Michelle Schwartz, RD, LDN

Welcome January 2009! We think of the New Year as a time for change, a renewal for ourselves and our families. We have high expectations of what the New Year will bring. Every year 100 million Americans make New Year's resolutions, but only four out of every five will keep them.

What is your resolution? Do you wish to lose weight, eat less salt, eat fewer sweets, exercise more or drink less alcohol? A resolution is the act of resolving something. So why do most resolutions fail? Do resolutions fail because they are merely a wish? Do they lack a plan?

How do resolutions become a reality? Set very specific and simple details for the resolution and write everything down on paper. The resolution should be achieved in small steps. Smaller goals made along the way towards the resolution will make it seem easier to accomplish. Be determined to make the necessary changes, and do not make excuses while working towards your goals. Having support from friends and family will also make achieving the resolution more successful.

The most popular New Year's resolution is to lose weight. This goal cannot be accomplished without a plan. The only way a person can lose weight is to burn more calories than you eat. Simply move more and eat less. But how do we put this into a plan?

In order to lose weight we need to eat 500 calories less per day than our bodies need. This will result in a 1-2 lbs loss each week, which is considered a safe and healthy weight loss. So what consists of 500 calories? Five hundred calories is really not much food and really adds up quick.

For example each of these food items equals 500 calories: 2 cups of BBQ potato chips, McDonald's Cheese burger and small fry, 3oz of salted peanuts, a piece of chocolate cake with icing or a slice of apple pie with a 1/2 cup of 2% milk.

As you could see, most of us probably could easily eliminate 500 calories each day and not really miss it. These calories may be an afternoon or evening snack. The resolution plan may be to give up a usual snack and substitute it with a lower calorie snack. Fresh fruit and vegetables are a good substitute.

Along with lowering our calories, exercise is also important for a weight loss goal or resolution. The Dietary Guidelines for Healthy Americans 2005 states that adults should get 30 minutes of exercise most

days if not every day. If exercise is not part of daily activities this may seem outrageous. If you start out in small steps, it will be easier to work towards the bigger goal. No excuses! Make the time and just do it.

The exercise plan could begin as, walking for 10 minutes a day for 3 days. Once this plan can be easily accomplished then increase the time to 20 minutes a day for 3 days, and so on. The goal is 30 minutes every day of the week, but remember that a little exercise is better than no exercise.

Make sure to write progress down on paper. If the goals are not being achieved then make changes to the goals. Don't give up. Make 2009 the year that your New Year's resolution is finally accomplished! Making these steps part of your lifestyle will make 2009 the year of the healthier you! ■



Have you heard the name APPRISE mentioned and wondered what it is? This organization is Pennsylvania's statewide program of free insurance consultation supported locally by the

Chester County Department of Aging.

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging created APPRISE to help Pennsylvanians better understand their Medicare and other health insurance benefits and assist them in making sound decisions about what is best for them. In Chester County, APPRISE is made up of a small group of dedicated individuals who are specially trained volunteers. They can answer questions about Medicare, Medigap, Medicare Advantage Plans and prescription benefits. These counselors have direct access to state and federal Medicare resources.

These counselors have direct access to state and federal Medicare resources. They can:

- Explain services covered under Parts A and B
- Help beneficiaries make informed choices about Medicare coverage options, including the Medicare Advantage options.
- Help with the Medicare appeals process and assist with appeals paperwork.
- Help in the selection of a Medigap insurance policy.
- Explain the Medicare prescription benefit.
- Explain financial assistance programs that may pay for Medicare premiums, deductibles and copays and programs that can provide help with prescriptions.

(See APPRISE, page 6)

APPRISE *(Continued from page 5)*

Many people with limited income and resources do not know they may qualify for financial assistance. To find out if someone you know is eligible, you will need to know the level of income and value of savings, investments and real estate (other than their home). To qualify for extra help they must have:

- Income limited to \$15,600 for an individual or \$21,000 for a married couple living together. Even if annual income is higher, they may be able to get help if they support family members who are living with them or they have earnings from work.
- Resources limited to \$11,990 for an individual or \$23,970 for a married couple living together. Resources include such things as bank accounts, stocks and bonds. Medicare does not count a house and car as resources.

You can apply through the Social Security office or call APPRISE and we can mail an application to the beneficiary.

APPRISE counselors will meet beneficiaries one-on-one and discuss options for insurance, assistance programs or other Medicare issues. They are available at the following locations. You can call and set up an appointment at one of these senior centers. All counseling is free, confidential and without bias.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
West Chester Senior Center	610-431-4242
Coatesville Senior Center	610-383-6900
Phoenixville Senior Center	610-935-1515
Oxford Senior Center	610-932-5244
Kennett Area Senior Center	610-444-4819
Surrey Services for Seniors	610-647-6404
Downingtown Senior Center	610-269-3939
Government Services Ctr	See below

Finally, APPRISE has a call-in line/message center in Chester County at 1-800-692-1100 ext. 5004 or 610-344-5004. If you leave your name and phone number and what you are calling about, your call will be returned by a volunteer within 24 hours. ■

