

The Caregiver's Voice

For People Caring for Family, Friends, and
Neighbors

Volume 1, Issue 1

Winter 2008

The Caregiver's Voice is a quarterly publication of the AA County Department of Aging & Disabilities' National Family Caregiver Support Program. Contact us at: 410-222-4464 ext 3094, at caregiver_support@aacounty.org

Inside this issue:

Medicare Resources	2
Disposing of Unused Items	2
Save the Date!	2
Support for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren	2
Safety Tools	3
Caregiver Support Groups	3
Asking for Help	3
DoAD Programs	4

Respite-Relief for the Caregiver

Caregivers face many challenges. Care giving is a demanding task, and it is easy to neglect your own health and well being when you are involved with your loved one's needs. Effective, sustainable care giving depends on meeting the caregiver's own needs for nurture, reassurance, support and periodic respite. Respite care provides time off for family members who care for someone who is ill, injured or frail. It can take place in an adult day center, in the home of the person being cared for, or even in a residential setting such as an assisted living facility or nursing home. Although there are different approaches to respite care, all have the same basic objective; to provide caregivers with *planned* temporary, intermittent, substitute care, allowing for relief from the daily responsibilities of caring for the care recipient. Depending on the level of care needed, the respite care person may need different skills. Some facilities such as nursing homes or assisted living offer to house and care for a family member for a day, a weekend or when the caregiver takes a vacation. If your family member is mobile, an adult day care center once

(continued on page 2)

Save the Date!

Saturday
April 26, 2008



16th Annual
Conference for Caregivers
Annapolis Senior Activity Center

*Continental Breakfast, Lunch, Exhibits & Free Respite Care
Provided*

Registration forms to be available in March 2008!

Spring Workshops



Workshop 1: *Is there help out there? Resources & Services*
Workshop 2: *Elder Speak: When a loved one won't listen*
Workshop 3: *I'm not Waving, I'm Drowning: Emotions & Coping Skills*

For more information, or to register for the Workshops, call 410-222-4464, ext 3043.

Annapolis Senior Center

119 South Villa Ave.
Mondays Feb 4, 11, 25
2-4 pm

Arnold Senior Center

44 Church Road
Mondays Mar 17, 24, 31
6:30-8:30 pm

Brooklyn Park Senior Center

202 Hammonds Lane
Thursdays March 13, 20, 27
1-3 pm

Maryland City Activity Center

Resurrection of Our Lord
8402 Brock Ridge Road Laurel
Tuesdays Apr 22, 29 & May 6
1-3 pm

O'Malley Senior Center

1275 Odenton Road Odenton
Wednesdays January 16, 23, 30
6-8 pm

Pasadena Senior Center

4103 Mountain Road
Wednesdays May 14, 21, 28
1-3 pm

Pascal Senior Center

125 Dorsey Road, Glen Burnie
Tuesdays Apr 15, 22, 29
6:30-8:30 pm

South County Senior Center

27 Stepney's Lane, Edgewater
Thursdays Apr 3, 10, 17
6:30-8:30 pm

Medicare Resources



Anne Arundel County Department of Aging & Disabilities
Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)
410-222-4464, ext 3042/3091/3080

Senior Information and Assistance
410-222-4464

1-800-MEDICARE (1-800--633-4227)
www.medicare.gov
www.MyMedicare.gov

Maryland Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program (SPDAP)
1-800-551-5995
www.marylandspdap.com

Disposing of Unused Items

- ◇ Take towels, sheets, and linens to animal shelters and veterinarians.
- ◇ Take used durable medical equipment to the Food Bank's Loan Closet (410-923-4255) or contact your local Senior Center to see if they are accepting donations.
- ◇ The Food Bank will also accept donations of non-perishable food items.
- ◇ Sell—estate sales, auction, consignment shops, E-Bay, Pennysaver, Craig's List...
- ◇ Bulk trash pick-up (where available).
- ◇ Junk pick-up services.



Respite-Relief for the Caregiver

(continued from page 1)

or twice a week provides a good respite for a tired caregiver. Home health care services may be provided by home health agencies, hospices, and home care aide agencies. Independent providers may also provide home care. The Respite Care Referral Program at the Anne Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities maintains a list of self-employed Certified Nursing Assistants and Companion Caregivers who provide home care. Caregivers on the registry are required to have a "clean" background check and successfully complete a training program at the Department. The program can also provide a list of home care agencies serving AA County. For information, contact the Respite Care program at 410-222-4464 ext. 3045/3094 or at www.respite_care@aacounty.org.

If you are caring for a family member or friend 60 years of age or older, The National Family Caregiver Support Program may be able to help with your respite care costs. For information, call 410-222-4464, ext. 3043, or contact the program at www.caregiver_support@aacounty.org.

The Alzheimer's Association offers financial reimbursement for respite services, based on income. Contact the association at 410-561-9099 or 1-800-272-3900.



Mix old medications with coffee grounds and dump in the trash.

Hints provided by Senior Transitions, Inc.
www.seniortransitionsinc.com



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Are you a grandparent or other relative caregiver who has given up your retirement or your own plans in order to take on the diapers, daycare, teacher conferences, driver's education, and everything else that comes along with raising children? Many grandparents—and other family members—are stepping in to raise their grandchildren when the children's own parents are not able or willing to do so. In fact, the U.S. Census of 2000 found that over 2.4 million grandparents have

responsibility for their grandchildren. If you are one of these grandparents or other family relative caregiver, age 55 or older and have sole responsibility for children under the age of 18, contact the NFCSP Coordinator at 410-222-4464 to see what support services are available.

The Hospice of the Chesapeake offers a six-week support group (Stepping Stones) for children and teens who are grieving the death of a loved one. Hospice also

offers weekend programs during July and August for grieving youth. Phoenix Rising is a weekend retreat for 9th through 12th grade teens and Camp Nabi is for children 6 to 13 years. For more information, call the Hospice's Spiritual and Bereavement Care Center at 410-987-2129 or 1-800-745-6132.

You're not alone... 2.4 million grandparents report they are totally responsible for their grandchild(ren)

Life is a Bowl of Cherries (Mary Fridley, RN, BSN, BC)

The immortal Erma Bombeck wrote the book *If Life is a Bowl of Cherries what am I Doing in the Pits?* Her humorous look at life's ups and downs brings true meaning to the saying 'attitude is everything'. We have all chewed on a fair amount of pits along the way and it is the foolish person who thinks they never will - just ask a caregiver.

Caregivers are remarkable people doing a job they never imagined. Most come into it unexpectedly with neither tools nor a handbook. They learn through experience to spit out the pits of distress and enjoy the sweet flesh; becoming adept at savoring the flavor and hanging onto loving memories.

Cherries abound in

caregivers' everyday lives whether it is Mom wearing her bra over her blouse or a husband using the flower pot as a urinal. I have heard many a caregiver story and am always heartened by their sense of wisdom and humor. Granted, the humor of a situation isn't always realized until later. During one of my workshops a woman in the group had a revelation about the cause of her husband's shocking behavior. They had traveled to a seaside resort and were relaxing from a long journey when he got up and started checking all the doors and windows. He opened the sliding door and walked out to the balcony. She didn't think much of his action until she saw him urinating over the railing and heard a ruckus

from below. She now understands that he had been looking for a bathroom and couldn't find it. We laughed with her at the mental image of her reaction but she said it wasn't so funny when the police arrived! This brave woman could have chewed on the pit of embarrassment but chose to spit it out and enjoy the juicy fruit of humor.

A veteran caregiver told me the story of her father. He had always been a proud man in full control of every situation; traits that didn't make him a very warm person. In the final stage of dying from Alzheimer's disease he gave her a gift she will never forget. By allowing her to feed him, comfort him, and nurture him she felt a connection that she had never felt before. The memory now makes her smile and gives her peace. Although the bitter pit of losing her father was unpleasant, the sweet nectar of the gift was, and still is, delicious.

Not long ago I lost a dear friend to cancer who struggled to survive while caring for her

elderly mother. She had her good and bad days but always kept her sense of humor. One evening she called me to vent her frustration with trying to keep her mother on track - she was packing for them to go to a wedding. During our conversation her mother descended the staircase clad in nothing but a pair of pantyhose and asked her daughter if she thought they matched her outfit. My friend didn't miss a beat. She whistled and said, "Yes, mother they're nude, they match just fine. My friend could have focused on the pit of frustration but chose instead to enjoy the sweet flavor of absurdity. A positive attitude allows us to find humor in the ridiculous, embrace those special moments, and enjoy life. So, while journeying through your bowl of cherries don't waste precious time chewing on pits - life is just too short.

Caregiver Support Groups



Mary Fridley, RN, BSN, BC, facilitates a monthly support group at the Department of

Aging and Disabilities office at 2666 Riva Road, Suite 400 in Annapolis. These sessions are held on the third Tuesday of the month from 1-2:30 pm. Fall sessions are scheduled on October 16th, November 20th, and December 18th.

Please note: If AA County schools are closed, or close early due to inclement weather, there will be no meeting that day. For more information, call Patty Brandenburg at 410-222-4464.

Pam Cullen, LCPC, will be facilitating a support group that meets once a week for

1½ hours for six (6) weeks. Sessions will be held at the Department of Aging and Disabilities office at 2666 Riva Road, Suite 400 in Annapolis. For more information, or to register for a 6-week session, contact Pam Cullen at 410-222-4366. Additional support groups are held in the community:

Seton Parish Church
1800 Seton Drive
Crofton, MD 21114
Mary Fridley, 410-266-9666
1st Tuesday, 7:00 PM

The Tate Center, BWMC
305 Hospital Drive
Glen Burnie, MD 21061
Courtnee Tate, 410-553-8129
2nd Wednesday, 10:00 AM



Asking for Help

- ✓ Make a list of what you need & prioritize it. Do you need physical support, like food or respite? Do you need a shoulder to cry on?
- ✓ Do you need help just once or do you have an ongoing need?
- ✓ Keep a list of phone numbers handy for unexpected needs.
- ✓ Family, friends, neighbors & churches/synagogues are great resources.
- ✓ Be direct and make specific requests - "Can you make dinner for Mom tomorrow?"
- ✓ Consider asking a friend to call others for you.
- ✓ Learning to ask for help takes practice!

*Mardi Richmond
Melanee Barash, MSW*

Anne Arundel County Department of Aging & Disabilities
National Family Caregiver Support Program

2666 Riva Road, Suite 400
Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: 410-222-4464
Email: caregiver_support@aacounty.org

We're on the web!
www.aacounty.org



The Anne Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities

County Executive
John R. Leopold
Arundel Center
44 Calvert Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Sheryl E. Banks, Director
Department of Aging and Disabilities
Heritage Office Complex
P.O. Box 6675
2666 Riva Road, Suite 400
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone: 410-222-4464
Fax: 410-222-4360
www.aacounty.org/Aging

- Senior Information and Assistance
- Adult Evaluation and Review Service (AERS)
- Foster Grandparents
- Handy Cab Program
- Senior Centers & Senior Center Plus
- Respite Care Referral Program
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- Medicaid Waiver Program
- Community Care Partnership
- Friendly Visitors Program
- Senior Housing Assistance
- Adult Public Guardianship
- Senior Legal Assistance
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- Senior Nutrition Program
- Telephone Reassurance
- Van Transportation
- Pets on Wheels/MOM AND ME
- Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)
- Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)
- Medical Assistance Personal Care Program (MAPCP)
- Carrier Alert
- Disabilities Information & Awareness Line
- National Family Caregiver Support Program

National Family Caregiver Support Program Staff

Jeffrey Balentine, MPA, Assistant Director, Long Term Care
Mary Chaput, Program Director
Patricia Brandenburg, NFCSP Coordinator
Dee Scharff, Coordinator