

Age Matters

**Newsletter of the Aging Services Division, State Unit on Aging
State of Connecticut Department of Social Services
Special Edition: Older Americans Month: May 2007**



From the Director

By Pamela Giannini, DSS

As you know May is national Older American's Month. In Connecticut May 2007 is a very special Older American's Month. It is special because in Connecticut we celebrate 50 years of serving older adults at the state level. Connecticut officially recognized the needs of our older citizens at the state level in 1957 when the State Legislature established the Commission on Services to Elderly Persons. This was the first separate state unit created in the nation to address aging issues. This Commission was designated the official State Unit on Aging in 1965 in order to accept federal money under the newly passed Older American's Act. In 1969, the Commission became the State Department on Aging with the addition of state dollars. In 1993 the State Department on Aging was merged with other human service agencies and became the Elderly Services Division within the umbrella agency of the Department of Social Services (DSS). Presently, the State Unit on Aging is housed within DSS in the Bureau of Aging Community and Social Work Services.

As this issue of Age Matters will illustrate the State Unit on Aging has accomplished Herculean tasks over the past fifty years, of which we are very proud. The State Unit on Aging started very small but was the impetus for the creation of what we now recognize as the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, the ConnPACE Program, the CHOICES Program, Elderly Nutrition Programs, Adult Day Care Centers, Infoline, the Alzheimer's Respite Program, Caregiver Support Programs and much more. None of this would have been possible without our community partners especially the Area Agencies on Aging, Senior Centers, Municipal Agents and our Elderly Nutrition Providers.

As you review the information provided in this issue that describes our present programs and activities, please think about how far we have come and how far we have to go in

addressing the needs of our new population of elders. As the Administration On Aging's 'Choices for Independence' program unfolds over the next few years we hope to achieve as many or more innovations as were attained in our first 50 years.

Thank you for letting us be a part of this wonderful adventure ~ designing and implementing programs for the citizens of Connecticut. Here's to another successful 50 years!!

Emergency Preparedness

April showers bring May flowers! Let's hope so ~ all this rain should help in bringing in a bountiful crop of flowers as long as the bulbs and seeds didn't float away! All this rain and the Governor's solicitation to the President for Federal Emergency Management Assistance (FEMA) to help restore areas in Connecticut that were affected by the April 15th flooding reminds me of how important it is for all of us to be prepared for any natural disaster whether it be a snow or ice storm, a hurricane or tornado, or a 'noreaster' pouring tons of rain and wind upon us.

The Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) has a wonderful website and booklets on how to prepare yourself for a disaster. I recommend that you visit the website at www.ct.gov/demhs and then click on the icon on the left of the front page that says 'CT Guide to Emergency Preparedness'. This document is available in English and Spanish. Video discussions of preparing for a disaster are also available on the site as well. The Aging Services Division has been working with the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and other state agencies in sharing information and developing protocols on how to better reach the populations we serve. We are hoping with your assistance to educate all our citizens no matter their age or disability to be prepared should a disaster hit Connecticut. The information on the DEMHS website illustrates what an individual or family would need to shelter in place without outside assistance. The amount of bottled water suggested to be reserved in case of a disaster is one gallon per person per day. That amount may vary depending on the condition of the people or the location of the disaster (in hotter climates more water would be needed, older people may need more water). Please take the time to visit this website, request information and take responsibility for preparing yourself and your family in case of a disaster. Please don't wait until the disaster hits.

A component of our State Plan on Aging for Connecticut includes activities requiring us to work with our partners, the Area Agencies on Aging and the public in developing an emergency plan for the older population in Connecticut. It also requires that we ensure that the needs of this population are included when providing disaster services in the state. Recently, the Aging Services Division has worked on providing guidance to emergency managers across the state along with disability advocates and DEMHS on the goal of providing universally accessible shelters in every town in the state. Admittedly, we are not there yet but everyone understands the need to allow people of all ages and

abilities to enter a shelter if they can provide for themselves or have assistance from family, friends or personal assistants.

In an effort to continue this dialogue with interested parties including the general public, the Office of Protection and Advocacy along with the University Center for Excellence in Disabilities is sponsoring a series of forums around the state to discuss emergency preparedness. The first session is being held on **Saturday, May 5, 2007 from 9:45-3:00 at the Southeastern Mental Health Authority**, Thames Valley Council for Community Action, 401 West Thames Street, Building 301, Norwich, CT. To register for this event contact Elanah Sherman at 860-842-7303 or by e-mail at Elanah.Sherman@po.state.ct.us. Registration deadline is April 30, 2007. There is no fee for this event and lunch will be provided.

It is hoped that representatives from the aging community will attend this session and provide input about the concerns and issues faced by this population when there is a disaster. In this way, governmental responders will learn how to be prepared to assist in providing appropriate and necessary services informed by those who actually will use those services.

Here's to a dry and disaster free Spring!

From the Editor

By Cynthia Grant, DSS

In recognition of Older American's Month, staff is presenting summaries of the Aging Services Division programs that they monitor. Please feel free to contact the appropriate staff person if you would like further information concerning a specific program.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for articles in future editions, please contact Cynthia Grant at Cynthia.grant@ct.gov.

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Older Americans' Month 2007: Making Choices for a Healthier Future

Reprinted from AoA.gov.

Never has it been more evident that one of the biggest challenges facing the United States is how we will care for our grandparents, parents, and loved ones as they age. Views may vary on how to prepare for what will be a diverse wave of seniors, whose ranks are growing due to the aging of 78 million baby boomers who will begin to turn 65 in 2011. But all agree that this shift in our nation's demographics will have profound implications for our economic and social landscapes at the national, state and community level.

Federal, state and community leaders are witnessing sweeping fundamental transformations in the way we think about and deliver health and long -term care in this country. More and more we hear that the overwhelming preference of the American people is to remain at home for as long as possible and to have choice and control over how and where they live as they age. The nation's national aging services network, led by the U.S. Administration on Aging and comprised of State, tribal and area agencies on aging, as well as more than 29,000 community service providers, caregivers and volunteers, know this and have worked hard to carry out their mission under the Older Americans Act to provide for and protect the independence and dignity of our older citizens.

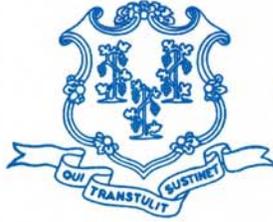
For 44 years, our nation has paused to honor older Americans during May. During this special month, the ongoing contributions of our older citizens are highlighted with a national proclamation issued by the President of the United States, and activities and events planned in communities across America.

The theme for Older Americans Month 2007 is "Older Americans: Making Choices for a Healthier Future." This theme encourages us to think differently about health and long-term care, and work together to rebalance and modernize our current systems so that we may adequately plan for and address the needs of current and future generations. Older persons are entitled to live lives of dignity and independence through:

- Streamlined access to information as well as to home and community services, including information that will enable people to plan ahead for long term care
- Information about cost-effective prevention practices and activities that will improve health and quality of life and reduce risk of disease, disability and injury, and,
- Innovative, affordable and flexible options of care and support that will provide an array of choices about how and where to live.

We urge people of all ages to seize upon the occasion of Older Americans Month to plan, promote and participate in activities during May and throughout the year that reflect the tenets of the national theme. We must all work together to ensure that every older person in this great country is treated with dignity and respect and moreover, has the opportunity to make the choices they desire to enjoy a healthy and rewarding future.

State of



Connecticut

By Her Excellency M. Jodi Rell, Governor: an

Official Statement

*W*HEREAS, Connecticut is home to more than 601,835 citizens 60 years of age or older; and

*W*HEREAS, the older citizens of Connecticut represent a dramatic trend in our nation's demographic make-up; and

*W*HEREAS, older persons are diverse, respected citizens who continue to contribute to our nation's social and economic well-being; and

*W*HEREAS, a growing number of baby boomers are rapidly becoming older citizens, and the number of individuals providing care to family members and friends is expanding significantly; and

*W*HEREAS, the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead require us to think differently about health and long term care, and work together to rebalance and modernize our current systems so that we may adequately plan for and address the needs of current and future generations; and

*W*HEREAS, older persons are entitled to live lives of dignity and independence through: streamlined access to information and community services, information about cost-effective prevention practices and activities that will improve health and quality of life, and innovative, affordable options of care and support that will provide an array of choices about how and where to live; now

*T*HEREFORE, I, M. Jodi Rell, Governor of the State of Connecticut, do hereby proclaim the month of May 2007, as

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

in the State of Connecticut and urge all citizens to honor older adults, and those who care for them, during May and throughout the year. I urge all to promote and participate in activities that contribute to helping older Americans make choices for a healthy and rewarding future.



M. Jodi Rell
Governor

Program News

The Statewide Respite Care Program, and the Brain G.Y.M.M. Program

By Cynthia Grant (860) 424-5279, Cynthia.grant@ct.gov

The Connecticut Statewide Respite Care Program offers short-term respite care for persons with Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias. Related dementias include Multi-Infarct dementia, Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus dementia, Lewy Body Dementia and dementias associated with Parkinson's Disease, Huntington's Disease or Pick's Disease. The program provides in-home assessments, the development of care plans, and the purchase of necessary services to give caregivers a break from the physical and emotional stresses associated with caregiving. Services that may be offered include companions, homemakers, adult day care, transportation, the personal emergency response system, medication monitoring, private-duty nursing or short-term inpatient care in a nursing facility, residential care home or assisted living community. Families may receive daytime or overnight respite services. The following case summary, submitted by Betsy Wieland, the Respite Care Manager from the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut, presents an example of how this program helps older adults.

Dr. S. is 85 years old with a previous medical history of Coronary Heart Disease, Diabetes, Hypertension and Alzheimer's Disease. His progressive cognitive and physical decline were very difficult for his wife to cope with. Initially, the Respite Program assisted with one day of adult day care per week. When Mrs. S developed pneumonia, the program paid for a homemaker to shop for groceries, clean and prepare lunch. Later in the year, Dr. S. was scheduled for surgery on his gall bladder. During a previous hospitalization, he continually pulled out his tubes. His daughter feared a recurrence of this behavior and requested a companion to sit with him to keep him calm and oriented. The program paid for three 8-hour shifts of sitters for 4 days. This 24- hour coverage gave the family the peace of mind they needed. Dr. S. was comforted by their continual presence and the hospital staff was very grateful for the help!

The New England Cognitive Center's Brain G.Y.M.M. (Get Your Mind Moving) is a non-pharmaceutical approach to treating Alzheimer's patients that consists of two primary interventions that may be used independently from one another or in combination. Both programs are comprised of exercises that target specific areas, including attention, memory, problem solving, planning, and language. The *Mind Aerobics Program* provides hands-on cognitive training in a small group or workshop environment, and the *Adaptive Computerized Cognitive Program* provides a cognitive "workout" on the computer. As Mr. S., the son of a program participant wrote in a letter to the DSS Commissioner, "...I can speak first hand as to the benefits of the program. My father, currently residing in an assisted living facility in West Hartford, has been participating in this program for the past five months and the results have been nothing short of miraculous. He is forgetting far fewer words than before starting the program and is more engaged in conversation with myself and the other residents. Perhaps best of all, he eagerly looks forward to the sessions, referring to them as 'going to school.' He is

not alone in his enthusiasm for his program as many other residents there are just as excited to participate.”

Preliminary results from this program have shown improvements in nine separate areas of cognition, including overall cognitive functioning, cognitive efficiency and cognitive fluency.

The National Family Caregiver Support Program and the GAPS Program

By Roberta Gould, Field Representative, (860) 424-5199, Roberta.gould@ct.gov

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) provides services to family members caring for relatives aged 60 and older as well as grandparents or older relatives caring for children 18 years old or younger. The program offers an opportunity for family caregivers to receive respite and/or supplemental services, such as assisted living, adult day care, home health aide, skilled nursing care, and one-time health-related items or services to improve the quality of life for the care recipient and help to alleviate the strain on caregivers. This program is funded by an amendment to the Older Americans Act and is operated in partnership with the DSS Aging Services Division and the 5 CT Area Agencies on Aging. The following is an example of a client who has benefited from this program.

A 68 year- old man is caregiver to his 64 year- old wife, who has Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. The wife’s deteriorating condition has made it necessary for her husband to leave his full time job. Due to the family’s drastically reduced income and the wife being totally dependent and home bound, the husband finds himself ill equipped and frustrated in his role as caregiver. Through the NFCSP the services of a home health aide are provided 3 times per week. The husband now looks forward and is able to address options for more suitable housing for the couple as well as complete an application for the Connecticut Homecare Program for Elders.

The Grandparents As Parents Support Network (GAPS) is a network of over 100 organizations and support groups in Connecticut dedicated to providing information and assistance to grandparents and relative caregivers who have taken on the role of primary caregiver for a grandchild or family member. This network was established under a grant to the CT Department of Social Services Aging Services Division from the Brookdale Foundation. The story below summarizes the experience of a grandparent who benefited from this resource.

A 59 year- old grandmother received custody of her 5 year- old disabled grandson and her infant granddaughter after her daughter abandoned the two children. On a fixed income and with very little resources, she contacted 2-1-1 Infoline, who referred her to the Dept. of Mental Retardation, the Department of Social Services, and her Area Agency on Aging. She now receives financial and medical assistance for her grandchildren, and regularly attends a grandparent caregiver support group. She has become a strong advocate for other grandparents and relative caregivers as well.

The CHOICES Program

By Roberta Gould, (860) 424-5199, Roberta.gould@ct.gov

(Editor's Note: Jennifer Throwe (860) 424-5862, Jennifer.throwe@ct.gov is the staffperson who is currently on leave)

The CHOICES program is Connecticut's state health insurance assistance program, providing information about Medicare, Medicare Savings Programs, Medicaid, long-term care, ConnPACE, the Connecticut Home Care Program and more to seniors and persons with disabilities. It is a collaboration between the Department of Social Services, the five Area Agencies on Aging, and the Center for Medicare Advocacy and is comprised of both staff and volunteers. Listed below is an example of a client case in this Program.

A 77 year- old client and her husband both receive ConnPACE and through the CHOICES program were enrolled into a Prescription Drug Program (Medicare D) that best suited their individual needs. Because they are recipients of the State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program, the Department of Social Services had been paying their premiums for Medicare D. However, Medicare D plan premiums were incorrectly deducted from each of their Social Security benefits, cutting into their limited monthly incomes.

As a direct result of the CHOICES program intervention, their full benefits have been restored and they have been fully reimbursed.

The Medi\$ave Program

By Marie Peck-Llewellyn, (860) 424-5244, marie.peck.llewellyn@ct.gov

The Medi\$ave project is one of the CHOICES programs designed to address issues of health care fraud, errors, abuse and other health care scams. Staff and volunteers provide education, assistance, and advocacy to Connecticut residents in order to identify, report and prevent Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse. This program was developed to provide one-on-one counseling, to assist seniors in reviewing their cases, and to report fraud to the proper authorities.

The DSS Rx-Xpress

By Fred Diggs, (860) 424-5245, Fred.diggs@ct.gov



The *DSS Rx-Xpress* is a mobile, Medicare Rx assistance center operated by the Connecticut Department of Social Services and CHOICES: Connecticut's programs for Health assistance, Outreach, Information and referral, Counseling and Eligibility Screening.

The “bus” serves as an outreach resource in rural, urban and suburban communities throughout Connecticut, providing Medicare Rx assistance and eligibility screening for benefits to older adults and persons with disabilities. The bus travels to senior centers, community health centers, educational seminars, faith-based events, libraries, health fairs and expos, farmers markets, elderly/disabled housing, pharmacies, as well as other locations.

DSS Rx-Xpress is equipped with four computer workstations with high-speed Internet access, monitor and SMARTBoard technology, booths that ensure privacy during counseling and interviewing process, information station which features brochures, applications, forms for various programs administered by DSS and other agencies, and a wheelchair accessible lift.

Recently we had Mrs. S. of East Hampton visit our Bus. She was seeking information about the new Medicare Rx program. By the time she left, we were able to determine her plan eligibility and provide enrollment assistance into a plan. In addition she was determined eligible for Food Stamps. Application assistance was provided, the application was then taken for her and submitted to the regional office where it was processed and granted. After our consultation Mrs. S. had problems with her balance, we were then able to utilize the wheelchair lift for her safety when she was ready to go home.

Elderly Health Screening Program

By Sarah Gauger, (860) 424-5233, sarah.gauger@ct.gov

The Elderly Health Screening Program provides health screening services, follow-up care and programs related to health promotion and wellness to persons age 60 and over at various locations throughout Connecticut. Services offered range from screening tests for breast, colorectal and prostate cancers to screenings for dental disease, mental health issues, nutrition counseling and physical activity programs. The Health Screening partners offer a variety of services both on and off site. The following is a health screening success story, as reported by Marion Pollack from the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging.

On February 1, 2007, the Western CT Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) had scheduled a free health screening for residents and seniors at a senior housing site in Torrington. Podiatry, bone density and vision screening were among the tests being provided.

A 61year-old resident from Torrington was driven to the site by her son for the vision screening because of poor eyesight. After the testing a technician from Prevent Blindness, Tri-State, noted that she had little vision in both eyes and asked if the Agency could assist the client since she had no health insurance and was not eligible for Medicare. She had also previously been diagnosed with cataracts and had to give up her job as a CNA because of her vision. The RN Coordinator knew that the Western CT AAA could help in this situation and a referral was made to a special Ophthalmologist who had also done pro bono surgery on another client. The Physician booked cataract surgery for both eyes—3 weeks apart-- assured her that her vision could be restored and that she could

return to work as a CNA. Mrs. M. broke down and cried at the Dr.'s office—she thought that she needed to wait 3 more years until she could go on Medicare to afford this procedure.

Mrs. M. learned about the vision screening in her town by calling Infoline (211) who referred her to the health-screening vendor, Prevent Blindness Tri-State. They told her that the WCAAA would be testing in Torrington the following week and the rest is history.

This State Program made a difference in the quality of life for this individual and helped her to return to a productive job of helping others. Mrs. M's vision in one eye has now gone from 20/200 to 20/40. She is now waiting for the surgery on her other eye.

The Congregate Housing Services Program

By Salvador Vazquez, (860) 424-5876, Salvador.Vazquez@ct.gov

The Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP) is a federally funded program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that provides meals and supportive services to eligible residents in rural areas. It enhances frail elders and persons with temporary and permanent disabilities access to support services. In addition, it ensures the long-term provision of services and prevents unnecessary institutionalization. Services are provided by Area Agencies on Aging in Eastern and Western CT. The following is an example of a typical client participating in this program.

A resident at Spruce Bank Farm in Western CT was told she needed 24 hour care or she would have to be placed in a nursing home. There were many ways we were able to help, but ultimately she had a family member stay with her part of the time and the CHSP Program assisted the rest of the time. She was then successfully referred to the Ct Home Care Program and is now able to stay in her own apartment.

The Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care, Project Homeshare, and the Seniors Helping Seniors Programs

By Yvette Mickenberg (860) 424-5023, Yvette.mickenberg@ct.gov

The Connecticut Partnership for Long Term Care is a State of Connecticut program that helps people to plan ahead for future long-term care needs. Using Partnership approved long term care insurance policies, people can pay for long term care costs without impoverishing themselves. The State does not sell long term care insurance, but the CT Partnership for Long Term Care's Information and Education program, which is managed by the Aging Services Division of DSS, can provide Connecticut residents with the information they need to determine whether long-term care insurance is right for them. The Aging Services Division offers free, easy –to-read information packets, including policy comparisons; one-to-one counseling with trained volunteers and staff; plus six semi-annual public forums around Connecticut. A toll-free information line is available to request information packets, register for forums, ask questions, and request speakers

for outside organizations. The following is an example of how this program assists individuals.

Recently, a distraught family was faced with a confused relative and did not know anything about her personal arrangements or preferences. One relative remembered that she had bought a CT Partnership approved long term care insurance policy years ago. He called our toll- free number and the program was able to refer him to the appropriate company to get the necessary information he needed regarding his aunt's policy.

The Aging Services Division of DSS funds two programs that provide Connecticut residents aged 60 or over in need of home maintenance services, companionship or supplementary income, with the opportunity to share their homes with another Connecticut resident who seeks low cost housing in return for such services or companionship. Project Home Share is a housing program that matches homeowners who are willing to share their homes with people who are searching for housing. The benefits can be independence, companionship, security and financial security. One person in the match must be 60 years old or older in order to participate. Beverly Kidder, of the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut, submitted the following story about a successful match.

Mrs. S. was a recent widow, living alone in a large home in South Central Connecticut. Her late husband was a retired college professor and prolific author. For more than fifty years, Mrs. S. planned her days around Professor S's writing schedule. When she contacted Project Homeshare she acknowledged she was having difficulty finding a center to her daily activity now that she was alone. She wanted someone in the house to provide companionship and some transportation. Although she owned a car, she never learned to drive. Mr. K was a postgraduate student in history who was working on a book. He needed low cost housing and a quiet atmosphere conducive to his writing. Mrs. S. and Mr. K. were an ideal match. She enjoyed the prospect of having someone sitting at her late husband's desk and writing. She looked forward to planning her outings around his writing schedule, much as she had when her husband was alive. Mr. K. enjoyed the luxurious home she provided and seemed to also enjoy the companionship. They remained together for approximately three years during which time Mr. K. completed his book and accepted a teaching position and Mrs. S. made the decision to move into a continuing care community.

Seniors Helping Seniors matches New London County residents aged 55+ with frail/homebound clients aged 55+ who are in need of various kinds of support that will enable them to continue living in their homes independently. Using a volunteer service credit program, Seniors Helping Seniors arranges support in the form of transportation to medical appointments, assistance with or transportation for grocery shopping, personal assistance and fix-it, and minor respite (friendly visiting), and telephone "check-in care." The following article, by Marilyn Anderly, of the Program, summarizes one particularly helpful volunteer.

Mr. T. volunteers his time and resources to make a difference for the Senior Helping Seniors Program, having volunteered for the Senior Helping Seniors Program for the past eight years. He provides assistance to seniors 55 and older to help prolong their ability to remain in their homes and communities.

Mr. T. provides transportation to medical appointments, friendly visits, grocery shopping, and handy-fix-it. He spends several hours a week helping out with Dialysis runs, which require eight runs a day to ensure his clients well being.

He has been extremely helpful to one client for the past eight years who has not left his home. Mr. T. has been his advocate, has helped with home repairs, groceries, clothing shopping and has just been a great friend.

The Elderly Nutrition Program

By Jannett Haughton, (860) 424-5299, jannett.haughton@ct.gov

The Elderly Nutrition Services Program is federally funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Administration on Aging (AOA) and State funds that total about \$11million.

There are currently 13 Elderly Nutrition Projects funded by The Aging Services Division in Connecticut. Nutritionally balanced meals are provided to individuals 60 years and older and also to their spouses and or care providers. (Meals may also be provided to persons with disabilities living in senior housing facilities that have Senior Community Cafés.) Meals are delivered to homebound or otherwise isolated older persons at lunchtime. These often include evening and weekend meals. Congregate or Café and homebound meals are available free of charge to eligible participants, although donations are encouraged. These donations provide additional meals through the Elderly Nutrition Project.

There are 187 Senior Community Cafés around the state located in senior centers, schools, churches, housing projects and other settings. Providing meals at the community cafés and home delivered meals enables seniors to socialize and remain in their communities, avoiding hospitalization and nursing home costs. It also allows participants to have at least one nutritious meal per day that they would otherwise not be able to prepare.

Our nutritionists provide education on various topics throughout the year at the cafés where seniors gather for meals and various activities. They also provide information through newsletters to those at home. Having recently acquired the position of Nutrition Consultant, one of my goals for The Elderly Nutrition Program is to ensure that our elders live high quality and healthy lifestyles.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

By Cheryl Jackson, (860) 424-5640, Cheryl.jackson@ct.gov

“The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) provides a dual purpose of engaging persons 55 and older in volunteer service to meet critical community needs; and to provide a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers.”

~Operations Handbook, April 2000

Seniors in our state provide a wide range of services in our communities. Some seniors have volunteered for more than a decade. One of those seniors is Mrs. B. At age 95, she has been volunteering for RSVP since she retired in 1975. Mrs. B.’s volunteer assignments over the years have included keeping families fed in her town by keeping the food pantry stocked, assisting in large group mailings, and volunteering in the kindergarten classroom.

Most recently, Mrs. B. has had some mobility issues, but this has not deterred her from volunteering. She is now sewing items that are donated to organizations that service women and children. RSVP linked her with a volunteer who provides her with the cut patterns so that she may sew by machine.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

By Dee White (860) 424-5293, dee.white@ct.gov

Editor’s Note: Jennifer Gorman (860) 424-5643, Jennifer.Gorman@ct.gov is the newly assigned contact person for this program)

The Senior Community Service Employment program (SCSEP) offers on the job employment training opportunities for older persons, ages 55 years and older. SCSEP will match a prospective employee’s interests and abilities with a position in a community services agency. Job opportunities average 15 hours a week.

The goal of the program is to assist the older worker with the transition into unsubsidized employment. To be qualified for this program, an individual must not have an income exceeding 125% of the federal poverty level, which is \$1,063.75 for a single person.

SCSEP is a valuable program which provides seniors with opportunities to continue and enhance their work experience, as well as break down age related prejudices and myths. SCSEP is the only federal workforce program targeted to low-income older workers, age 55 and older. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration administer the program through grant agreements with states and eligible organizations.

Although some older workers are enthusiastic about retiring at the age of 55, there are many older workers who find themselves in a stressful situation seeking work to meet financial needs or just trying to fulfill a desire to remain productive in the workforce.

Mrs. G. previously worked for a medical equipment company but, unfortunately, was laid off. For four years, she independently struggled to find suitable work, accepting

temporary low-paying jobs at times in order to help pay household bills. When she interviewed with employers, she felt that several were reluctant to hire her due to her age and distinct accent, since English was not her native language. Unemployed and realizing that her age (60) was a barrier in obtaining permanent employment, she enrolled in the Senior Community Service Employment Program sponsored by the CT Department of Social Services and operated by Jewish Family Service located in Stamford.

As a result of the SCSEP experience which included community service assignments, training, job search assistance, and supportive services, Mrs. G. successfully transitioned from SCSEP to a permanent unsubsidized job at the CTWorks Career Center in Stamford where she now assists people who have encountered similar experiences in their job search.

In her new position, Mrs. G. enjoys helping job seekers of all ages. She looks forward to staying active and maintaining economic sufficiency.

Transportation Initiatives

By Jennifer Gorman, (860) 424-5643

The Department of Social Services is proud to be supporting the development of four new community based regional transportation programs for seniors. These grants have been awarded to The Town of Enfield, The Middlesex Central CT Chapter of the American Red Cross, St. Luke's Home, Inc. in Middletown and the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging. Three of these agencies are planning to work with ITNAmerica to bring that exciting and innovative program to much of Connecticut. The Red Cross is looking to expand its existing program to increase its service to seniors in the New Britain area. These programs will provide individuals, 60 years and older, access to a ride at any time of day to social events, religious activities, work, medical appointments and more.

These regional programs will be serving a significant portion of the state. The Town of Enfield is working to create the North Central Transportation Network including towns from Granby to Somers and Suffield to Windsor. The Red Cross is working to serve the New Britain area, providing service in Newington and Plainville. St. Luke's Home plans to bring this service to the Middletown area including Portland, Middlefield and East Hampton. WCAAA is working with the Town of Torrington to serve nine towns in Litchfield County.



Commission on Aging Older Americans Month Event Explores Civic Engagement Opportunities

Coinciding with Older Americans Month, the Connecticut Commission on Aging and several co-sponsors, including the Department of Social Services-Aging Services Division, will present “Exploring Civic Engagement,” an educational and networking forum, May 3 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Farmington Marriott, Farm Springs Rd., Farmington.

Forum participants and representatives from business and government, non-profit agencies, service providers and professionals will explore the challenges and opportunities of attracting older adults and the burgeoning baby boom generation.

“It’s fitting that this event is taking place during Older Americans Month because millions of older adults and baby boomers offer our state and nation an extraordinary resource of skills and talent and they want to do meaningful work that serves the greater public good. Unfortunately, this huge pool of talent remains a grossly underutilized resource in a state and nation that desperately need their help,” said Commission on Aging Executive Director Julia Evans Starr.

The forum registration fee is \$20 per person and includes a continental breakfast. Further information may be obtained by calling the Commission on Aging at (860) 240-5200.

Judy Goggin, senior vice president and director of San Francisco-based Civic Ventures, is the keynote speaker. A nationally recognized think tank, Civic Ventures is “reframing the debate about aging in America and redefining the second half of life as a source of social and individual renewal.” Her appearance is sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel (CASCP).

“As Connecticut’s one million baby boomers reach their mid-60s many will have the opportunity to engage in paid and unpaid positions in countless numbers of ways,” said Commission on Aging Vice-Chair Christine M. Lewis, who led a Commission on Aging subcommittee that planned the event. “The challenge is to develop new and diverse civic engagement channels for boomers before Connecticut loses forever the chance to tap this vast and experienced resource,” she said.

Special guests at the forum will include former Lt. Gov. Kevin B. Sullivan and Connecticut Department of Labor Commissioner Patricia H. Mayfield, a Commission on Aging member, who will offer their views on civic engagement and participate on the panel. Constance Todd, director of the National Council on Aging’s Institute of Senior Centers, will also speak and serve on the panel.

Panel discussion participants will also include University of Connecticut professor, author and lecturer Dr. Waldo C. Klein, Ph.D., chairman of the Commission on Aging’s

Redefining Retirement Years subcommittee, and Patti Cohen-Hecht, executive director of the Volunteer Center of Western Connecticut.

In addition to CASCP and the DSS- Aging Services Division, forum co-sponsors include the Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging; Connecticut Community Care, Inc.; the Connecticut Coalition on Aging; and AARP-Connecticut.

The commission, located at the state capitol, is the non-partisan, independent state agency solely devoted to advocacy for older adults. It serves as an objective source of information and works directly with the state legislature, executive branch and other state agencies to shape effective public policy.

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Did You Know?

Bill Bechill, America's First Commissioner on Aging, Passes Away

Reprinted from NCOA Week at www.ncoa.org

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is sad to report that Bill Bechill, a tireless advocate on behalf of seniors for more than 40 years, passed away on March 23, 2007. Bechill died at age 78 due to injuries from a fall on the ice in February.

Bechill was the nation's first commissioner on aging, appointed by President Johnson in 1965 to oversee the work of the new Administration on Aging. Bechill played a critical role in writing the Older American's Act and was one of the nation's leading experts and advocates on Social Security, long-term care, and senior centers. Bechill also worked closely with Arthur Fleming as an officer with the Save Our Security Coalition and helped craft NCOA's positions opposing privatizing Social Security. A former NCOA board member, Bechill was an active member of NCOA's Public Policy Committee for the past two years.

NISC Presentations Available Online

Reprinted from NCOA Week at NCOA.org

The National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) has posted several presentations from its sessions at this year's joint conference of NCOA and the American Society on Aging. Presentations available for download include: *Designing for Aging, Everything You Wanted to Know about Senior Centers-But were Afraid to Ask, New Models for New Times: 21st Century Senior Centers, and Senior Center Sites for Successful Evidence-based Programs.*

Coming Events

May 3, 2007

The Connecticut Commission on Aging Presents:

Exploring Civic Engagement: A Statewide Educational and Networking Forum

8:00am-12:30pm

Farmington Marriott Hotel

\$20 Registration Fee

Contact Deb Migneault at (860) 240-5200 or coa@cga.ct.gov

May 5, 2007

The Office of Protection and Advocacy and the University Center for Excellence in Disabilities presents:

Emergency Preparedness Forum

9:45am-3:00pm

Southeastern Mental Health Authority

401 West Thames Street, Building 301

Thames Valley Council for Community Action

Norwich, CT

This event is free and lunch is provided.

Contact Elanah Sherman at (860) 842-7303 or Elanah.Sherman@po.state.ct.us to register.

May 8, 2007

The State of Connecticut and the Connecticut Partnership for Long-Term Care presents:

The Missing Link in Retirement Planning: Why and When to Consider Long-Term Care Insurance

7:00pm-9:00pm

Old Saybrook High School Auditorium

1111 Boston Post Road

Old Saybrook, CT

To reserve a seat, call 1-800-547-3443

No Insurance Sales or solicitations will be allowed.

These forums are presented in cooperation with: Milford Adult Education, Wethersfield Adult Education, and Old Saybrook Public Schools.

May 11, 2007

The Connecticut Coalition on Aging and Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Mental Retardation, and the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities presents:

Aging Innovations

8:30am-3:00pm

Artist Collective

Hartford, CT

\$35 by April 23, 2007, \$40 at the door registration

Contact Beth Aura Miller at bethaura.miller@po.state.ct.us

May 14, 2007

The Department of Social Services, Aging Services Division presents:

Empowering Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Elmwood Community Center

West Hartford, CT

This event is free and includes lunch

Contact the Aging Services Division at (860) 424-5274 or email your name, phone number and e-mail address to: agingservices.dss@ct.gov.

May 18, 2007

The Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut and the City of New Haven present:

Mind, Body & Spirit

10:00am-2:00pm

New Haven Athletic Center

480 Sherman Parkway

New Haven, CT

Contact Sue Hamilton at (203)-785-8533 ext 3158 for more information

May 18, 2007

Senior Resources presents:

Senior Living Expo

9:30am-12:30pm

Dayton Arena at Connecticut College

Contact Joyce Gootkin at 1-800-690-6998 for more information.

May 22, 2007

The North Central Area Agency on Aging, with OxyGenesis Institute and the Town of Glastonbury Social Services presents:

Laughter Yoga

9:00am-2:00pm

Riverfront Community Center

300 Welles Street

Glastonbury, CT

RSVP to Damaris DeLeon at (860) 724-6443

June 15, 2007

The Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) and the North Central Area Agency on Aging (NCAAA) present:

Eye Openers: Helping Older Adults with Severe Vision Loss

8:30am-3:00pm

Hilton Gardens Inn

Windsor, CT

Contact Demaris DeLeon at (860) 724-6443 for more information.

June 18, 2007

The Alzheimer's Resource Center of Connecticut, Inc. presents:
The 7th Annual Dementia Care Conference Designed for Frontline Staff
Contact Nancy Leonard, LCSW at (860) 628-9000 or nleonard@arc-ct.org

Resources

Websites

The Aging Services Division of DSS
www.ct.gov/agingservices

The Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging
www.ctagenciesonaging.org

The Connecticut Commission on Aging
www.cga.ct.gov/coa

Long Term Care Services and Supports Information
www.ct.gov/longtermcare

DSS Energy Services
www.ct.gov/staywarm

The CT Partnership for Long-Term Care
www.Ctpartnership.org

The Connecticut Elder Law Newsletter
www.CTElderLaw.org

The Center for Medicare Advocacy
www.medicareadvocacy.org

The NCOA Benefits Checkup Eligibility Screening System
www.benefitscheckup.org

The ConnPACE Program
www.ConnPACE.com

The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR)
www.infoaging.org

AARP
www.AARP.org

The Administration on Aging



www.aoa.dhs.gov

The Alzheimer's Association

www.alz.org

The Alzheimer's Association, Connecticut Chapter

www.alzct.org

National Family Caregivers

www.nfcacares.org

Today's Caregiver

www.Caregiver.com

The National Council on Aging

www.ncoa.org

The Seniors and The Law Program

www.jud.state.ct.us

The Bettor Choice

www.dmhas.state.ct.us

The CT Council on Problem Gambling

www.ccpvg.org

DSS Phone Numbers

Aging Services	1-866-218-6631	(860) 424-5274
CADAP Program (CT Aids Drug Assistance Program)	1-800-233-2503	
CT Partnership for Long-Term Care	1-800-547-3443	(860) 424-4943
Child Care	1-800-811-6141	(860) 424-5645
ConnPACE	1-800-423-5026	
CHOICES Program	1-800-994-9422	
Connecticut Commission on Aging		(860) 240-5202
Energy Services	1-800-842-1132	

Fraud Hotline	1-800-842-2155	(860) 424-4934
General Assistance	1-800-842-2159	(860) 424-5250
Home Care Program	1-800-445-5394	(860) 424-4904
Katie Beckett Waiver	1-800-445-5394	(860) 424-5536
Medical Transportation:		
South Central/Southwestern CT	1-888-248-9895	
North Central/Eastern/Western	1-888-743-3112	
PASARR		
Pre-Admission Screening and Annual Resident Review	1-800-445-5394	(860) 424-4904
CT Child Support Call Center	1-800-228-5437	
Public Information	1-800-842-1508	(860) 424-4908
Rehabilitation Services	1-800-537-2549	(860) 424-4844
	TDD/TTY	(860) 424-4839
Self-Directed Care	1-800-445-5394	(860) 424-4904
Support Payment Information	1-888-233-7223	
TDD/TTY	1-800-842-4524	(860) 424-4975