

The Senior Advocate

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

Fall/Winter 2006

The Center for Aging Puts Pedal to Metal for Norfolk Seniors

Beginning in December, The Center for Aging will partner with Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia Inc., to provide more rides to seniors in Norfolk.

Catholic Charities manages a transportation program that is operated by more than 100 volunteers who are recruited and screened to drive low-income seniors to the grocery store, the pharmacy and medical appointments. Senior Services offers a similar program, serving about 800 people monthly.

The new partnership means Norfolk seniors can take advantage of extended operating hours, wheelchair-accessible service, coordinated schedules, extended routes – and more rides. Earlier this quarter, Senior Services had a waiting list of approximately 75 people a month in need of transportation.

“We’re excited about the collaboration because we can help more seniors – and it allows them to access both transportation services with one call,” said John Skirven. “It’s another example of The Center for Aging’s one-stop shop capabilities.”

If you live in Norfolk and need a ride, call The Center for Aging at (757) 461-9481.

The Senior Advocate is published three times a year by Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia. To subscribe, call (757) 461-9481 or go to www.ssseva.org

Annual Medicare Part D Enrollment Underway

The annual enrollment period for the Medicare Part D prescription drug program is Nov. 15 – Dec. 31, 2006. Do you know all your options?

When considering which plan is best for you, Senior Services advises that Medicare beneficiaries look at coverage, accessibility and cost – in that order.

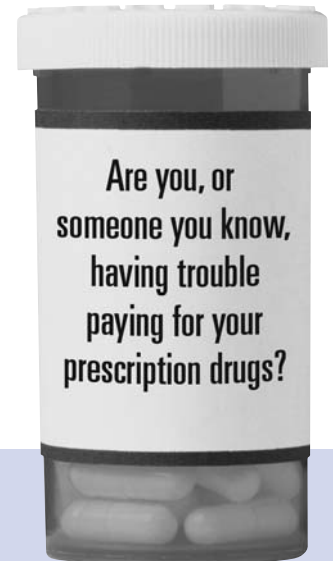
“Typically, most people will first look at cost when deciding on a plan, but don’t do it,” said Marti Wachtel, Senior Services’ medication education supervisor.

“First, make sure all of the prescription drugs you need are covered in the plan, then check to see which pharmacies stock your medicines. Traveling long distances to a pharmacy you don’t normally use can be inconvenient and expensive. Coverage and accessibility are two very important factors that will determine the cost of the plan.”

Additionally, Senior Services recommends you:

- ❖ **Do the math** when comparing plans without premiums vs. plans with premiums that will cover the “doughnut hole” gap. You may be better off paying a higher monthly premium, than 100 percent of your meds for six to seven months of the year.
- ❖ **Check to see** if your coverage includes a particular name brand of medicine or only generics. If you use a lot of name-brand prescription drugs, this could put you in the “doughnut hole” gap quickly.
- ❖ **Pay attention to deductibles and co-payments.** Some beneficiaries may prefer not to have a deductible, especially if they use a lot of generic drugs.
- ❖ **Get an unbiased opinion.** If the person assisting you is not using the Medicare Plan Finder (www.medicare.gov), they will not have a clear picture of all the options available.
- ❖ **Sign up by Dec. 8** to avoid delay in your coverage

To assist Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers in selecting Part D plans for 2007, log onto www.ssseva.org to get the latest schedule of Medicare events. Or, call Senior Services at (757) 461-9481 to make an appointment. “Walk-in’s” are welcome. The education staff is available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



If so, call Senior Services today at (757) 461-9481.

Our staff will work with you to determine if you qualify for assistance. If you do, we'll help you find a cost-saving prescription drug coverage plan.

From the Executive Director



Change is the watchword this fall. The national election results, the Older Americans Act reauthorization, new

collaborative opportunities between aging and disability communities and increased demand for home-delivered meals and rides all add up. Collectively, they compel us to better organize; to be more effective advocates; and to be more efficient in providing services.

Our Congress people support aging issues. Yet, we need more appropriations for meals and home care that match the actual need. Seniors we have assessed would require more than \$400,000 in additional funds to meet their needs in fiscal year 2008. We also need to change the Commonwealth's view that all transportation solutions revolve around cars and roads. One in five people over 65 don't drive. If we are to address seniors' lack of access, every Virginia advocate should put this issue on legislators' agendas.

Finally, Senior Services needs to change. To meet the growing demand for meals and transportation, we are reorganizing our nutrition and transportation departments into a single unit, "Transit and Wellness." By streamlining management and increasing efficiency, we will make better use of our limited resources by providing more rides and improved services for seniors.

We're excited about this change, and we'll find other ways to improve programs and services for our region's growing elderly population. In 2007, our legislators and government agencies must also change to improve.

John N. Skirven

John Skirven, Executive Director

Working Together, We Do a Better Job

To mark the fifth year of its initial five-year contract, The Center for Aging staff and Norfolk city officials met recently to reflect on the successes of the model program – and discuss next steps.

A public-private partnership between Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia and the city of Norfolk's Department of Human Services, The Center for Aging is the first "one-stop" resource and referral agency for seniors in Virginia.

"The Center for Aging is based on a simple yet powerful idea: Working together, we do a better job," said John Skirven, Senior Services' executive director.

Among the highlights of the October meeting, it was reported that:

- ❖ **The number of people served is growing.** In 2006, The Center for Aging helped more than 7,000 Norfolk seniors and their families. Of this total, more than 1,000 individuals received dual services, such as Medicaid, personal care services and home-delivered meals.
- ❖ **Partnerships continue to expand.** In 2004, The Norfolk Adult Protective Services Unit relocated its offices to The Center for Aging, furthering efforts to provide a seamless array of services.
- ❖ **Outreach efforts are increasing.** This year, The Center for Aging engaged with Catholic Charities and the Urban League to help identify and reach even more Norfolk seniors who need services.
- ❖ **Others are looking to The Center for Aging.** The Center for Aging model is encouraging new ways of thinking throughout the Commonwealth about how local and state agencies serve their senior communities.

"These accomplishments are important, but what lies ahead is even more exciting," said N. Clark Earl, director of the Norfolk Department of Human Services. "The new Center for Aging Affiliate Program will expand Senior Services' partnerships throughout the community by implementing programs with SeniorNavigator and the emerging Aging and Disability Resource Centers in Virginia.

"Our customers deserve care and respect, and our goal is to make The Center for Aging experience 'one-stop' shopping at its best," concluded Clark.

To download *The Center for Aging Report to the Community, 2005-2006*, go to www.ssseva.org/about/publications.shtml

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A Closer Look at Kinship Care

Earlier this fall, grandparents, aunts, uncles and other family members gathered at I.C. Norcom High School in Portsmouth to learn more about their roles in rearing second-generation families.

The regional conference, *In the Best Interest of the Child: A Closer Look*, brought together experts in the field of social welfare policy and practice to examine the challenges faced by kinship caregivers when raising a second family.

A Kincare Connection, a regional affiliation of agencies including Senior Services, sponsored the conference. The daylong event focused on everything from custody and foster care decisions to what happens when parents return to a child's life.

Chris Taylor, a family caregiver resource specialist with Senior Services, says kinship care is a topic that is becoming top of mind with many seniors. Without warning, older family members can find themselves in a parenting role due to a family crisis, illness, substance abuse or incarceration. And many families are under pressure to find affordable childcare.

For support with parenting, Chris encourages kinship care providers to get involved with their child's schools, faith-based outlets, extracurricular activities and organizations like A KinCare Connection, which educates providers and advocates for rights and funding on their behalf. Chris also advises kincare providers to know when and how to take a break from their duties.

"No matter what your age, parenting is a hard job," said Chris. "Everyone needs some time to themselves."

For information about A Kincare Connection, call Chris at (757) 963-9206. Or, contact Pastor Clifford Barnett at the Brighton Rock AME Church in Portsmouth at (757) 393-0570 and ministries@brightonrock.hrcoxmail.com. Check out these sites which feature additional information about kinship care:

www.aarp.org

www.gu.org (Generations United)

www.raisingyourgrandchildren.com

www.seniornavigator.com

Calling All Grandparents: Virginia Tech Wants You

Virginia Tech is conducting studies on grandparents who are raising grandchildren to learn new ways to support these families. If you are a grandparent raising a grandchild between the ages of 12 and 18 and are interested in participating, please call **866-220-4103** or send an e-mail message to grands@vt.edu. The grandparent and grandchild must each complete a one- to two-hour questionnaire. For participating, each will receive one \$20 gift card to Wal-Mart. The Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved the studies, and the confidentiality of participants will be protected.



New Senior Dining Cards

Seniors who "do lunch" at Senior Services-sponsored congregate meal sites will soon be able to swipe before dining. This quarter, Senior Choice Dining Club debit cards will be used for the first time at the Jewish Community Center and Suffolk Center For Seniors. Diners have the option to pay in advance toward meals to be purchased at their respective site. When dining, they simply show the card, which is swiped for payment. The program is being tested at the two sites mentioned, but Senior Services hopes that all meal sites throughout the region will soon have the swipe-and-dine option.

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The One-Question Interview

Can you tell us about the senior who has influenced your life the most?

The most influential senior in my life is no longer with me physically, but she was my guiding force and protector. My grandmother Frieda, who I called "Nana," owned a beauty shop that was attached to the front of her house. Every time I visited, she would tell her customers she needed to take a break for her "little Lasalle." She also told them, instead of tipping her, they should add a quarter or a dollar – whatever they could spare – to my piggy bank (which I have never opened to this day).



Lasalle Blanks
Anchor, WVEC-TV (13)

In addition to owning her own business, Nana owned one of the loveliest hearts while she was on this earth. She was the type of person who opened her door to the entire neighborhood and church community. She was truly a source of support for kids who came from broken homes and for people who felt lonely and troubled. She was the light of her church choir in Norwalk, Conn., and never let me forget how great I could be in life.

My Nana always made me smile, and I know she's looking down from heaven right now. Plus, she made the greatest sweet potato pie and macaroni and cheese that you could ever eat in your life!

One of the greatest pains of my life was when I was at her funeral. Others reminded me I should celebrate her life, and that's what I continue to do to this day. My Nana was no great celebrity or anyone famous, but she sure was kind and loving and for that, her stature rises way above the pack.

Keep Moving, Even in Winter's Chill

By Susan L. Cunningham

Winter brings lots of excitement: Holidays, special foods, family visits – and winter's chill. How should a senior best enjoy the excitement but also stay warm? No one wants to be homebound by the weather. So consider the following ideas for staying warm and enjoying the upcoming winter season:

- ❖ **Keep moving** ~ Don't allow the cold to keep you indoors. Breathe in the cold air and enjoy the change of the seasons as you enjoy moderate walks. Can't walk outside? No excuse. The malls are great places to walk during the colder weather.
- ❖ **Layer your clothing** ~ Seniors especially feel the cold. So dress in layers using wool and cotton clothing. You can add or subtract layers as your body temperature dictates.
- ❖ **Wear good shoes** ~ This is not the time to worry about being fashionable. Slippery, wet, cold sidewalks can make walking hazardous if you are wearing the wrong shoe. A good, flat heel with a non-slip sole and maybe one that is waterproof is the best bet.
- ❖ **Drink plenty of hot liquids** ~ Warm apple cider during this time of the year is delicious – and good for you. Why not share a hot chocolate with your grandchild?
- ❖ **Keep up your exercise** ~ The longer dark days and nights are no excuse for not exercising. Ask a friend to join you so you will be more inclined to keep your exercise date.

Susan L. Cunningham is the author of *Unwrapping the Sandwich Generation*, a collection of vignettes that address senior concerns and how their adult children address those concerns. Order the book (\$14.95 plus tax) at www.seniorresourcesgroup.com or www.amazon.com. Or, call the author at (757) 496-4722 for an autographed copy.



Holiday Wish List for Seniors

- Bath products, gowns, robes and pajamas
- Books, magazines or "books on tape"
- Blankets, comforters, sheets, towels
- Gift cards to favorite shopping places
- Help in putting up and taking down holiday decorations
- Invitation to share a holiday meal – or dinner fixings to enjoy at home
- A ride to see friends, family, shopping or errands



Does your senior loved one like to cook?

Consider the gift of *Senior Servings*, a cookbook brimming with delicious recipes collected by Senior Services' volunteers. To purchase a copy (\$5), call Barbara Weekly at (757) 461-9481, ext. 127. Proceeds help to offset costs of Senior Services' volunteer programs.

Board Spotlight: Martha “Marti” Blythe-Clark

Marti Blythe-Clark is the Senior Circle advisor and volunteer coordinator at Southampton Memorial Hospital in Franklin, a job she has enjoyed for nearly three years. In this role, she oversees activities of The Senior Circle, a membership organization that promotes health, wellness, lifestyle and volunteer opportunities for seniors. For the past 11 years, Marti has been a member of the GFWC Franklin Junior Woman’s Club, taking every opportunity to give back to the community in which she was raised. Newly wed, she enjoys reading, rubberstamping and scrap booking and sailing with her husband, Michael.



When did you first become involved with Senior Services?

An outgoing Senior Services board member approached me a few years ago, asking if I would consider serving. The Franklin City Council appointed me as their representative to the board in September 2005, but I was already aware of the important services that Senior Services provides for seniors in the Western Tidewater area and beyond. As an advisor working with seniors, I need to have access to a lot of resources. The first card in the “S” section of my Rolodex is Senior Services.

In your job with Southampton Memorial Hospital, you spend a lot of time organizing field trips for seniors. How important is it for seniors to stay active?

Americans are living longer, and Senior Circle is an opportunity to add quality years to seniors’ lives by giving them the tools they need to live a longer and healthier life. One of the tools is life-long learning. You do not stop learning at a certain age, and you should certainly not stop moving because you are a certain age. Whether it is a day trip, an exercise class or a lecture on a health-related topic, offering opportunities for seniors to continue their life-long learning is essential.

What opportunities exist for homebound seniors to get out and about?

The opportunities are too few! It is difficult for rural areas to offer transportation services for seniors. In the Franklin/Southampton area, Senior Services does a fabulous job assisting seniors with transportation to and from physician appointments, the grocery store or even the hairdresser. But there are so many seniors that could benefit from this service that Senior Services would have to have a whole fleet of vehicles just to meet the need. So that is why living in a small community should be beneficial. Churches, civic groups, even next-door neighbors need to take an interest in their fellow human beings. In a perfect world, with an unlimited amount of funding, imagine a center that all seniors could go to meet their most important need – the need to feel cared!

What do you feel are the most pressing concerns of seniors in the Franklin/Southampton County? And how can Senior Services better address these needs?

One of the most pressing concerns that I hear is how physically, emotionally and financially draining it is caring for your loved one 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Today, Senior Services offers respite opportunities and support to the family caregivers to relieve some of that stress. Seniors living in our rural communities need to be able to access these services just as easily as seniors that live in the metropolitan areas.

Do you have a favorite quote?

“Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be...” —Robert Browning

Where We Are

Main Office, Norfolk

Serves Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Ombudsman Program
(757) 461-9481 phone
(757) 461-1068 fax

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1-800-766-8059

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Web: www.ssseva.org

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(757) 569-7646 fax

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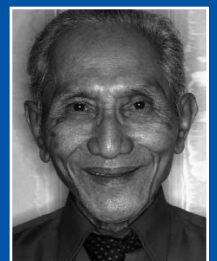
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O U R M I S S I O N

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia is the regional organization in South Hampton Roads that supports and enriches the lives of older Virginians and their families through advocacy, education, information, products and comprehensive services.



Services: Advocacy • Aging Planning • Care Coordination • Employment • Financial Assistance, Food Stamps & Medicaid • Home-delivered Meals & Senior Dining • Companion, Homemaker & Personal Care • Insurance, Medicare & Drug Discount Card Counseling • Long Term Community-based Care • Nursing Home Screening • Ombudsman Office & Care Concern Investigation • Prescription Drug Assistance/ Pharmacy Connection • Transportation Services to Medical & Other Appointments • Volunteer Opportunities by Seniors and For Seniors.

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Just Around the Corner

December

Holiday Meals for Seniors– Seniors in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach and Franklin (residents from Isle of Wight and Southampton welcome) are invited to take part in a local holiday dinner sponsored by Operation Blessing’s 12 Days of Christmas campaign. For information on dates, locations and registration, please call (757) 461-9481.

Atlantic Bay Mortgage Angel Tree – Select an angel ornament from Atlantic Bay Mortgage’s “Angel Tree for the Elderly” – and make a senior’s season bright. Each ornament reflects a list of the individual’s holiday wishes, with requests ranging from small personal care items to a microwave oven with large display numbers. Call Courtney Jones at (757) 498-6789 by Dec. 8 to select an ornament from this year’s tree. Unwrapped gifts must be dropped off at the Atlantic Bay office at 2540 Virginia Beach Blvd. (Virginia Beach, 23452) by Dec. 15.

How to help seniors in your community.

Designate Senior Services #5065 on your United Way contribution form.



 Senior Services of
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