

# The Senior Advocate

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

Fall 2007

## Senior Services and Dominion Help Keep Seniors Cool

The region's seniors have long relied on Senior Services for relief against the summer's heat through its annual Fan Care and Cooling Assistance programs. This year, Dominion Virginia Power delivered another cool option: EnergyShare – Cooling For Seniors.

An expansion of Dominion's Energy Share winter heating assistance program, Cooling For Seniors provides a maximum, one-time payment of up to \$200 toward electric bills of seniors aged 60 and older who meet the program's guidelines. Dominion contributed \$50,000 to fund the pilot program, which is managed by Senior Services in South Hampton Roads and the Peninsula Area Agency on Aging on the Peninsula. The program began June 5 and will continue until the funds are spent.

To find out about eligibility requirements, call the Senior Services "Cooling Hotline" at (757) 963-9231.

► *Find out why Senior Services is in the national spotlight. See page 2.*

*The Senior Advocate is published three times a year by Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia. To subscribe, call (757) 963-9220 or e-mail [mhowell@ssseva.org](mailto:mhowell@ssseva.org)*

## Meet RSVP Volunteer Carolyn Ayers

Carolyn Ayers is known for giving Lake Taylor Rehabilitation Center patients that warm and fuzzy feeling.

Once a month, she and her golden retriever Seraphina – a registered therapy dog – pay friendly visits to the center's extended care patients.

"A lot of them have pets at home that they miss, so it gives them a chance to interact with a pet that's warm and fuzzy and loving," said Carolyn.

Carolyn's visits are managed through Senior Services' Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. Referred to simply as RSVP by the 1,300 local seniors who participate, the program places retired volunteers with not-for-profit organizations, community centers and city and county agencies that need the help.

Carolyn began volunteering with RSVP earlier this year when Bob Jarrell, a friend and the Norfolk RSVP coordinator, urged her to become involved. "He talked about it so much," said Carolyn. "He suggested I join."

Carolyn had been managing therapy dog visits in the region for the past seven years, and it seemed a good fit to bring the outreach program to RSVP.

Seraphina is registered with Therapy Dog International. That means both Carolyn and her four-legged friend have been trained and tested to visit nursing homes, hospitals, institutions and wherever therapy dogs are needed.

In addition to the visits at Lake Taylor Rehabilitation Center, Carolyn and Seraphina are frequent visitors of the Veteran's Hospital in Hampton and the Southeastern Training Center in Chesapeake.

Carolyn also volunteers at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, where she does something Seraphina would really love: digging in the dirt.

For that volunteer job though, she must leave Seraphina at home. "No dogs are allowed!" she laughs.



### Volunteers Needed!

Volunteering is a wonderful way for seniors to stay active and involved. If you have a few hours a week to help seniors in your community, please consider these volunteer positions:

- Medication Education Counselors
- Ombudsman Volunteers
- Retired and Senior Volunteers
- Senior Companions

For information, please call Director of Volunteers Millie Aven at (757) 461-9481.

## From the CEO



It's time to have serious conversations with the candidates for the Virginia General Assembly about the fastest growing segment of

their potential constituencies:

*Older Virginians and Virginians with disabilities.* One in five Virginians has a disability and more than one in six are over 60. That's 35 percent of voters. And they have families.

Successful candidates will take the time to learn or refresh their understanding of the challenges faced by these voters and the contributions they make. Local advocates across the state have united. We are presenting a shared message about actions required to address today's needs and how Virginia can use state funds to: produce real efficiencies in Medicaid; generate greater tax revenue through increased employment; and, most important, provide choices for independence to prevent nursing home placement and move people out of institutions into their own homes with supports.

Senior Services and The Center for Aging is embarking on a "community visioning" process to prioritize limited resources, identify services that can be leveraged by strengthening collaboration among local aging and disability organizations and create the regional blueprint to increase our capacity to care for our elders, people with disabilities and their caregivers.

We look forward to discussing these issues with the candidates.

P.S. Plan now to attend the Greater Hampton Roads Coalition on Aging Legislative Event, Oct. 29 at the Hampton Marina Inn, from 8 to 11 a.m. For tickets, call (757) 846-5541.

John Skirven, Chief Executive Officer

## Senior Services supports:

- Ongoing funding of \$140,000 per Area Agency on Aging to ensure that every region has a lead agency that is accountable and developing an integrated resource center for community-centered caregiver supports across service providers
- Dedicated funding of \$100,000 for transportation to allow successful aging in place
- Area Agencies on Aging should be recognized in Code as the "Disability and Aging Resource Center" for their respective planning and service areas
- The Disability Issues Platform that addresses lifelong opportunities for choices for education, employment, independent living

For more information visit [www.sseva.org/advocacy](http://www.sseva.org/advocacy)

## Senior Services in National Spotlight with Two Aging and Innovation Achievement Awards

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) presented Senior Services with two Aging and Innovation Achievement awards at its annual conference in San Francisco this summer.

Both The Center for Aging (CFA) and Senior Services' "Tell A Neighbor, Tell a Friend" Medicare outreach program are now recognized as national best practice models.

A public-private partnership between Senior Services and the city of Norfolk's Department of Human Services, the CFA is the first "one-stop" resource and referral agency of its kind in Virginia. Its mission is to combine the strengths and assets of organizations in South Hampton Roads to create a regional community where seniors, their families and people with disabilities live independently.

The CFA has established additional partnerships with The Norfolk Adult Protective Services Unit, Catholic

Charities and the Urban League to help identify and reach even more Norfolk seniors who need services. n4a lauded the CFA model as one that could be replicated by any Area Agency on Aging.

Implemented in the spring 2006, the "Tell a Neighbor, Tell a Friend" Medicare outreach campaign targeted individuals in South Hampton Roads' rural areas who had not yet enrolled in the Medicare Part D prescription drug program and were eligible for the Social Security Administration's low-income subsidy. To help get the word out, and to enroll eligible individuals, Senior Services organized and hosted a series of application fairs, mailed letters to area churches and local barber and beauty shops and distributed placemats to Senior Services' home-delivered meals customers, as well as other Meals on Wheels clients.

The efforts enabled Senior Services to exceed its enrollment goals, while educating hundreds more about the federal government's landmark prescription drug coverage.



## Senior Services Welcomes Mary E. Howell and William H. Wade



Mary E. Howell

Mary E. Howell has joined Senior Services as director of development, and William H. Wade is a long-term care capacity planner.

With an extensive background in the planning and management of annual fund, capital and endowment campaigns, Mary is a former director of development of Virginia Stage Company, Center Stage (Baltimore) and The Chrysler Museum of Art. Her recent work as a consultant included collecting stories from families and eldercare professionals about the challenges of aging for the Virginia Stage Company adaptation, *King Lear – The Storm at Home*.



William H. Wade

Before joining Senior Services, William was a contract attorney with Update Legal, Inc., where he provided litigation support services, and a staff attorney with Neighborhood Legal Services. He has extensive experience in the construction industry where he has served for many years as the CEO of Vision Construction International. As the first long-term care capacity planner at Senior Services, William will be principally responsible for developing a regional land use plan for the overall residential demands of the region's growing senior population.

## Support Seniors Through United Way

Would you like to help seniors in your community? Simply designate Senior Services #5065 on your United Way "Combined Charities Campaign" and "Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign" forms or #47980 on your United Way "Combined Federal Campaign" form.

For seniors, your gift will mean more rides to medical appointments, more home-delivered meals, more free or reduced prescription drugs and more hours of homecare.

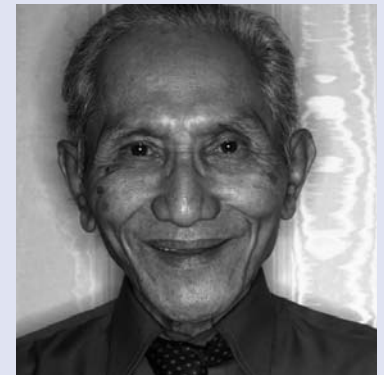
For additional information about your United Way contribution – and other ways to support seniors – please contact Director of Development Mary Howell at (757) 963-9220 or mhowell@ssseva.org

**For seniors, your gift will mean more rides to medical appointments, more home-delivered meals, more free or reduced prescription drugs and more hours of homecare.**



## OUR MISSION

*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.*



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## Are You a GrandDriver?

In 2000, there were more than seven million Virginians. Of those, 15 percent (1 in 6) were 60 or older. In 2030, there will be more than nine million Virginians and 25 percent (1 in 4) will be 60 or older.

While many older motorists may be good drivers, there are physical changes that come with aging that can affect their ability to drive safely.

GrandDriver, an educational resource provided by The Virginia Department for the Aging and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, was developed to provide Virginia residents with information and resources about staying safe and mobile as they age.

Who is affected? Everyone – from grandchildren traveling in their grandparents' cars, to a community's most senior drivers who are beginning to notice that driving to the grocery store or to the doctor's office is more of a challenge.

Get to know GrandDriver today by going to [www.GrandDriver.net](http://www.GrandDriver.net) or call 1-800-552-3402.

## Driving Tips for Seniors

- Check your vision on a regular basis.
- Take a driving refresher course specifically designed for older drivers.
- Avoid driving in bad weather and when visibility is limited.
- Plan your route ahead of time and travel the roads you know.
- Limit left-hand turns.
- Explore alternatives (friends, family, public transportation) to driving before the need arises.
- Avoid busy highways.
- Choose a "senior friendly" vehicle, such as one with power steering, power and anti-lock brakes, daytime running lights, rear window defrosters and power-adjust side mirrors.

## The One-Question Interview

Tell us about the senior who has influenced your life the most.



Don Roberts  
WAVY-TV

I've always contended that everyone is a news story. We reporters just have to ask the right questions. I've had the honor and privilege of meeting quite a few people since I began working at WAVY-TV in 1989. Each one, especially the wise and "seasoned" senior, touched me in some special way.

First there's Wally "Famous" Amos, the entrepreneur who made a killing with his chocolate chip cookie business. For my book, *Hey Daddy Read This*, I asked him to talk about his father in the form of a letter to him.

"For a long time I held a lot of stuff against you, wishing you had been different," he wrote. "I was able to let a lot of that go when I had children ... It occurred to me that you were doing the best you could with what you had to work with ... and I was able to let all that stuff I was holding onto melt away."

Then, there is the Rev. Dr. Milton Reid, former publisher of the *Journal and Guide* newspaper, pastor and a local organizer and host for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the 1960s. He told me in a letter to his father (also featured in the book) that he remembered driving past a horrible accident scene on Military Highway in Norfolk. Milton later found out the man who died in the accident was his dad. His lesson was basically from the Bible passage, "You don't know the day nor the hour ..."

The third person is the first man in my life, my dad. At 75, Nathaniel Roberts and my mother have been married 57 years. That kind of commitment was one of the most important lessons my dad taught me.

'Work it out,' 'Never let the children see you two argue,' 'Be a man about it,' are other lessons he taught that, I confess, I'm still trying to master.

Now, he's teaching me a new lesson, one that we are learning together and one I am resisting with all my being: how to die.

My dad has congestive heart failure, diabetes and high blood pressure. His oldest sister Juanita died last year of complications from diabetes, and I know I'm at risk for it. Dad's basically teaching me how *not* to deal with those challenges. He is taking it easy, following the doctor's orders and taking his meds. But every time I go home to Baltimore to see him, I also see the pork sausages in the 'fridge and evidence of iced Danish, diet Cokes and fried chicken.

He did stop smoking. Hurray!

Dad could have written the scripts and acted in the popular do-it-yourself television shows. But in his declining years, he's reluctantly come around to accept the fact that he can't remodel the kitchen, rewire the house or drive.

It's hard on him. I can't catch a dead-on, over-my-head fly ball like I used to. And I'm trying to accept that, with dignity – like my dad.

*Don Roberts co-anchors WAVY-TV's "Today" and "Midday" newscasts and is host of the talk show, "Bottom Line."*

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## Web-based Medicare Training Begins Sept. 5

The Internet is a powerful learning tool, and Senior Services is hoping more Web-savvy seniors will use it to stay actively involved in their healthcare decisions.

Starting Sept. 5, Senior Services and The Center for Aging will offer personal Web-based training sessions for beneficiaries who want to learn more about their Medicare coverage and other health care offerings. Individuals who have basic computer knowledge (required) may call (757) 461-9481 to make an appointment through Nov. 14, 2007.

During the appointments, Medicare community service educators will meet with individuals one-on-one to show them how to access and use Web sites that feature Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage options. They will learn how to review their current plan online and find out more about preventive services that are available.

In addition to being educational, the training sessions are timely as well; the annual enrollment period for Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage is Nov. 15 – Dec. 31, 2007.



**The annual enrollment period for Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage is Nov. 15– Dec. 31, 2007.**

“It’s important that beneficiaries resolve any questions or problems they may have about their current prescription drug coverage before they switch or select plans for 2008,” said John Skirven, CEO of Senior Services.

The Web-based training program is funded with a grant from My Medicare Matters Navigator, a comprehensive community-based outreach and education program to help Medicare recipients and their families understand Medicare prescription drug coverage. The National Council on Aging and the Access to Benefits Coalition sponsors My Medicare Matters Navigator, with support from Astra Zeneca Pharmaceuticals LP.

## Need Help Paying for Meds?

If you know of someone who needs help paying for their medicines, call Senior Services and The Center for Aging at (757) 461-9481 or go to [www.ssseva.org](http://www.ssseva.org) for additional information. Medicare community service educators are available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



## Where We Are

### Main Office, Norfolk

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

### Ombudsman Program

1-800-766-8059

E- Mail: [services@ssseva.org](mailto:services@ssseva.org)

Web: [www.ssseva.org](http://www.ssseva.org)

### Franklin

(757) 569-8206 phone  
(757) 569-7646 fax

### Isle of Wight

(757) 357-4050 phone  
(757) 357-4050 fax

### Southampton

(757) 653-2105 phone  
(757) 653-2849 fax

### Suffolk

(757) 925-1449 phone  
(757) 925-1448 fax

## Spread the News!

We hope you are enjoying your subscription to *The Senior Advocate*. If you know of someone who would like to receive this newsletter – or if you would like to receive it via e-mail – please drop a line to Mary Howell at [mhowell@ssseva.org](mailto:mhowell@ssseva.org), or call at (757) 963-9220.



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## Just Around the Corner

### October Medicare Part D Info Presentations

The annual enrollment period for Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage is Nov. 15 – Dec. 31, 2007. To assist Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers in switching or selecting 2008 Part D plans, Senior Services will host a series of free October Medicare Part D information presentations:

- **Oct. 17, 10 a.m.**  
Norfolk Senior Center, 7300 Newport Ave., Norfolk
- **Oct. 18, 10 a.m.**  
Chesapeake Central Library, 298 Cedar Road,  
Chesapeake
- **Oct. 23, 10 a.m.**  
Virginia Beach Central Library, 4100 Virginia Beach Blvd.,  
Virginia Beach
- **Oct. 24, 10 a.m.**  
The Smithfield Center, 220 N. Church St., Smithfield
- **Oct. 29, 10 a.m.**  
Portsmouth Social Services, 1710 High St., Portsmouth

### The Hampton Roads Task Force Kinship Care Conference, Oct. 20

This event addresses issues facing grandparents and other relative caregivers. Held at Norfolk Department of Social Services Workforce Development Center, 9 a.m. to 3:30 pm. Call Brighton Rock AME Church at (757) 393-0570 or Chris Taylor at (757) 963-9206.

### Senior Conference, *Aging in Place: Designing Our Future*, Oct. 25

This conference for seniors and policy makers will examine how Norfolk can achieve a full range of housing, transportation/mobility, healthy lifestyle and access to services for residents. The city of Norfolk hosts from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Visit [www.ssseva.org](http://www.ssseva.org) for information.

### Fall Festival for Caregivers, Oct. 26

Caregivers can learn about “Building Skills to Improve Care” at this special event featuring Dementia Care and Education Specialist Teepa Snow. The Hampton Roads Caregivers’ Coalition hosts at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Virginia Beach. Call at (757) 420-5448.

