

The Senior Advocate

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia • THE CENTER FOR AGING Spring 2008

New MedCare Access Program Now Serving Western Tidewater

Seniors and people with disabilities who need “extra help” have a new place to turn in the Western Tidewater area.

Funded by a \$146,460 grant from the Obici Healthcare Foundation, Senior Services has begun operating a Medication and Care Access Resource Program—called MedCare Access—and Ann Okeefe is the program specialist.

Serving residents of Franklin, Isle of Wight County, Southampton County and Suffolk, MedCare Access will help locate and assist income-eligible “extra help” beneficiaries who have not enrolled in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. Individuals can also connect with services such as meal delivery to those who are homebound and transportation and wellness programs.

Ann holds a bachelor of arts degree in psychology from Saint Leo College in Norfolk and was formerly the service center coordinator at the Western Tidewater Community Services Board. She resides in the Whaleyville community in Suffolk.

Ann will be visiting people in their homes or meeting with them in one of the Senior Services’ satellite offices serving Franklin, Isle of Wight County, Southampton County and Suffolk. Residents can reach her at 328-4217.

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Skilled Hands and Kind Hearts Help Those in Need

On a recent Wednesday, crochet needles flashed and conversation flew when Betty Oporto’s stitching group convened at the Chesapeake Recreation Center.

Through Senior Services’ Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, the ladies meet weekly to make brightly colored afghans, blue and pink baby blankets and downy-soft hats. Given to those in need, their creations have warmed the hearts of many throughout South Hampton Roads.

“We’ve made baby hats for the hospitals, hats and lap blankets for cancer patients and afghans for the military returning from Iraq,” said Betty. “One returning soldier said he keeps his afghan close to his heart every night. It’s the least we can do to support our troops.”

The group’s hand-stitched handiwork has also been given to the Seaman’s House for visiting merchant mariners and to the Hampton Roads Auxiliary Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society for military families. Afghans have also been distributed to the homeless through a national program called “Warm Up America.”

Some of the ladies have been stitching together since Betty began teaching the crochet class 14 years ago.

“When I retired, I wanted to learn how to crochet just one afghan,” said Lillian Cannaday, one of the original stitchers. “Now I’ve made ... I don’t even know how many!” she laughed. “Now I come to talk and socialize.”

And to lend some warmth to those in need.



From left to right: Dolores Lynch, Betty Oporto, Billie Dozier, Mildred Lambert.

The Experience of a Lifetime

Volunteering is a wonderful way for people of all ages to share life experiences, talents and skills. Our volunteer coordinators will match you with programs that meet the needs of countless not-for-profit organizations and agencies throughout South Hampton Roads—including Senior Services. If you’d like to learn more about our Retired and Senior Volunteer, Senior Companion and Boomerang Volunteer programs, call the Volunteer Department today at (757) 461-9481.

From the CEO



Spring is a time of beginning. We've started new I-Ride routes in Franklin and Southampton County, expanded

our Norfolk headquarters and developed a new Center for Aging (CFA) Affiliates program that will open the doors of eight Norfolk churches, The Salvation Army and the Philippine Cultural Center in Virginia Beach to services for seniors, people with disabilities and caregivers.

We have also been selected as a No Wrong Door pilot site that will bring new tools to grow our regional long-term caring capacity.

The Alzheimer's Association Southeastern Virginia Chapter is relocating its main chapter office to the CFA building in May to join Senior Services, the Norfolk Department of Human Services Adult Services and Adult Protective Services and The Up Center's Foster Care and Family Life programs, which moved in during April. Together we are sharing meeting space, providing integrated, holistic customer service and developing a regional training center to strengthen caregivers, families, businesses and advocates.

Spring 2008 events also celebrate the health and achievements of older people with senior games and events across the region. Even if you don't compete, you can renew your body, mind and spirit by setting goals and achieving them. As my Aunt Flossie used to say, "Happy Days."

John N. Skirven, Chief Executive Officer

I-Ride Rolls Into Franklin and Southampton County

After a successful launch in Isle of Wight County last year, Senior Services is now rolling its I-Ride buses into Franklin and Southampton County. Not only for seniors, residents of all ages who need a ride can board the new transit services for just \$1 a ride.

The wheelchair-accessible buses cover three new routes in Franklin, Courtland and Branchville/Boykins/Newsoms. Days of operation and hours vary, and transfers are available to other routes. All ages are welcome. Passengers 12 and under ride for free, but must be accompanied by an adult.



Transit schedules are available at locations throughout Western Tidewater. The schedules can also be downloaded online at www.ssseva.org. If your business would like to distribute transit schedules, call Senior Services Transit and Wellness Director Cindy Creede at (757) 222-4502.

Meet Janet and Ann

Before undergoing bypass surgery last August, Ann Pierce placed a call to Janet Robertson, Senior Services' care coordinator for Isle of Wight County.

Ann had a friend who had utilized Senior Services when she was recovering from an operation. And while her son, who lives in Stafford, Va., would be with her at the hospital, Ann recognized she would need help at home in the weeks following her surgery.

So, she picked up the phone.

Janet put Ann in touch with an array of offerings available through



Ann Pierce and Janet Robertson

Senior Services, allowing her to focus on her recovery from the comfort of her own home – and enjoy her son's weekend visits. "I feel so blessed to have had these people come in and help me," said Ann.

Janet and Ann's story is featured in Senior Services' 2007 Annual Report. To receive a copy, call Mary Howell at (757) 963-9220. Or, go to www.ssseva.org/about/publications.shtml to download the publication.



Communication is Key for This Ombudsman Volunteer

For 43 years, Dr. Katie Davis taught hundreds of students how to communicate – from speech and theater classes in high school to graduate-level courses on interpersonal communications. It was a subject that came naturally to the daughter of a Methodist minister. During her youth, her family moved frequently as her father ministered among the churches in the circuit.



Dr. Katie Davis

“You really had to learn to get connected quickly,” said Katie.

After she retired, she knew she wanted to put her skills as a communicator – and her faith – to good use. She found outlets for both as a Long-Term Care Ombudsman Volunteer with Senior Services.

Ombudsman is a Swedish word for “agent.” Through its Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, Senior Services trains and assigns volunteer “agents” to help resolve complaints and mediate issues for residents living in long-term care facilities.

For the past year, Katie has devoted 20 to 25 hours a month as the Ombudsman for a long-term care facility in Norfolk. On a typical day, she will stay for four hours, stopping to visit with each resident on a chosen floor.

“I introduce myself and remind them why I’m there,” said Katie.

Some residents will readily tell her about a problem, perhaps a missed doctor’s appointment or a complaint about the food.

Others, who are feebler, aren’t able to tell.

“It may be implicit,” said Katie. “You apply all your senses to see what’s going on around you. If it’s something we can handle, we do it.

If not, we’ll go to the next level to solve the problem.”

In addition to using her skills and practicing her faith, Katie has a very personal reason for volunteering. Years ago, she was the care provider for her ailing husband. He was admitted to a nursing home 17 days before he died.

“It was like you dropped off the face of the earth,” she said, noting the presence of an Ombudsman would have been a comfort.

The medical industry agrees.

According to surveys conducted by the American Medical Association, just the presence of an Ombudsman in long-term care settings improved the quality of life and care of those who live there.

“Communication sustains life, I do believe,” said Katie. “This is a heart role. It’s something you have to be motivated for, and there’s so much satisfaction and fulfillment in it.”

Would you make a good Ombudsman volunteer?

Caring individuals with good communications skills – and a few hours to spare during the week – are ideal candidates for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Volunteers must be 21 years of age, provide personal references, be able to drive and must not be employed or have a financial interest in a long-term care facility. For information, call Willie E. Alston, Jr. today at (757) 461-9481 ext. 114 or send a message to willie@ssseva.org

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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Social Security Administration Honors Jim Hutchinson

The Social Security Administration recently recognized Jim Hutchinson for his outstanding work in educating countless individuals on Medicare Part D and the "extra help" subsidy. Jim, Senior Services' community services educator, was presented the Service Award by Anita Asbell at a ceremony at the Social Security building in Norfolk. Congratulations Jim! Thank you and the Senior Services Medication Education team for a job well done.



Anita Asbell and Jim Hutchinson

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

for additional information. Medicare community service educators are available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The One-Question Interview

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



Cathy Lewis

Without doubt, the senior who made the most abiding impact on my life was my grandmother, Beulah Hedrick. For much of her adult life, she was the single mother of four children and one grandchild. During the war, she worked swing shifts on the RF&P railroad, often coming home from work just in time to get children off to school and then returning to work later in the afternoon.

She lived with severe rheumatoid arthritis for most of her adult life and faced cancer in the 1950s. As a teen-ager in the 1970s, my life was quite a lot different from hers,

but she understood me instinctually and cherished me unequivocally. She told me the truth always and had absolute faith in my ability to handle it.

When I got my driver's license, I drove her all over town so she could save 2 cents on a skein of yarn (I can't imagine how much gas it took to do this). On our trips, she happily listened to my radio station and we both reveled in providing backup voices for Gladys Knight and the Pips' "Leavin' on the Midnight Train to Georgia."

When I finished high school in Texas, she boarded a plane for the first time in her life to attend my graduation. She delighted in me – every bit of me – and while she died more than twenty years ago, I miss her profoundly every day but often feel her presence, which continues to be a great gift.

Cathy Lewis hosts the popular lunch hour radio talk show "Hear/Say with Cathy Lewis" from noon to 1 on WHRV-FM 89.5 public radio for Hampton Roads. She is also Executive Director of the CIVIC Leadership Institute.

“As a teen-ager in the 1970s, my life was quite a lot different from hers, but she understood me instinctually and cherished me unequivocally.”

To receive an IRS Economic Stimulus Payment, everyone must file a tax return this year!

Beginning in May, the IRS will issue economic stimulus payments based on 2007 tax returns. If you do not usually file a return, but have at least \$3,000 in qualified income, you may be eligible for a minimum payment of \$300 (individuals) or \$600 (married couples) when you file an IRS Form 1040A.

To find out more, go to www.irs.gov, www.ncoa.org or call:

- Tax Counseling for the Elderly 1-888-7669
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program at 1-800-906-9887
- AARP at 1-888-227-7669

Dominion Grant to Help Seniors Weatherize Their Homes

Earlier this spring, Dominion awarded Senior Services a \$50,000 grant that will soon help older residents stay cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

Thanks to a pilot EnergyShare Weatherization Program, Senior Services and The Southeastern Tidewater Opportunity Project, Inc., (STOP) will work together to identify and provide up to 40 income-eligible seniors with energy-saving equipment and materials to better insulate their homes.

Home weatherization specialists from The STOP Organization will make the improvements, which could include additional insulation, caulking, weather stripping, ductwork and new gas furnaces.

“Older people are especially vulnerable during periods of extreme heat or cold,” said Senior Services CEO John Skirven. “There’s no substitute for the comfort and safety offered by a properly weatherized home.”

The EnergyShare Weatherization Program is an extension of Dominion’s EnergyShare Program, which is supported by donations from Dominion, customers, employees and EnergyShare partners.

Eligible applicants must live in South Hampton Roads, be at least 60 years old and have a limited income. To find out more, call The Stop Organization at (757) 858-1397.



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

Web: 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

You Can Make a Difference

Senior Services gratefully acknowledges the grants, contributions and in-kind support it receives annually from federal, state and local government, individuals, foundations and corporations.

These resources are necessary for existing programs and services and to build innovative new partnerships to better serve seniors, caregivers and people with disabilities now and in the future.

Opportunities to make a difference include:

- Make an unrestricted contribution
- Designate a gift to a program or project
- Acknowledge a special person or occasion
- Consider a planned gift

If you would like information about these and other ways to support Senior Services, please contact Director of Development Mary Howell at (757) 963-9220 or mhowell@ssseva.org.



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, or call at (757) 963-9220.



Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.



A Way to Find
Community Assistance for Seniors
1-800-677-1116



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of South Hampton Roads
Community Partner

Services: Advocacy • Aging Planning • Care Coordination • Financial Assistance & Food Stamps • Home-delivered Meals & Senior Dining • Companion, Homemaker & Personal Care • Insurance, Medicaid, Medicare & Prescription Drug Assistance Long Term Community-based Care • Nursing Home Screening • Ombudsman & Care Concern Investigation • Transit and Wellness Services • Volunteer Opportunities by Seniors and for Seniors



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Just Around the Corner

May is Older Americans Month

In May, join seniors throughout South Hampton Roads and the United States in celebrating Older Americans Month! This year's theme, "Working Together for Strong, Healthy and Supportive Communities," reflects the dedication of the U.S. Administration on Aging and Senior Services to help bolster the efforts of baby boomers and older adults to achieve healthy aging.



CFA Affiliate Sites Coming Soon!

Senior Services will soon be opening The Center for Aging affiliate sites. Check the next issue of *The Senior Advocate* for details!

Eat well. Live well!

For information on this year's Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition program, call (757) 461-9481 and ask for Belvina Ellis.



Insurance Counselors Needed

Senior Services needs volunteers to help with the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP). VICAP volunteers provide advice on everything from filing or resolving Medicare, Medicaid and other medical claims to answering questions about the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefits. If you are interested, call (757) 461-9481 and ask for the Long-Term Care Department.