

The Senior Advocate

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

Fall 2005

Help for Hurricane Katrina Evacuees Here in Hampton Roads

You've seen the dramatic television footage and read the heart-wrenching stories about families displaced by Hurricane Katrina. It didn't take long for South Hampton Roads to respond. Communities, businesses and individuals came together to aid the evacuees—including staff at Senior Services and The Center for Aging.

Soon after Katrina pummeled the Gulf Coast and the levees broke in New Orleans, care coordinators and adult social workers from Senior Services and The Center for Aging reported to work at the American Red Cross headquarters in Norfolk. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, they counseled evacuees as they waited to meet with Red Cross officials.

Some had immediate needs for shelter, nutritional supplements, prescriptions and benefits. Others were looking to relocate permanently to Hampton Roads and needed help finding jobs and a place to live.

"We've counseled about 45 elderly evacuees and helped seniors find permanent housing," said Cathy Spriggs, Senior Services' director of long-term care. "But we're helping more than just seniors. We're assisting families who need basic information about employment, housing, transportation."

continued next page

Senior Services Kicks Off New Fiscal Year with more than \$307,000 in Grants and Gifts

If the first month of the new fiscal year is any indication, it will be a good year for seniors in South Hampton Roads. During the first quarter 2005, which began Oct. 1., Senior Services received a bounty of gifts that will help older Virginians live independently – longer.

Altria Group, Inc., awarded Senior Services and Suffolk Meals on Wheels a two-year \$200,000 renewal of a grant to address the problem of hunger and special nutritional needs among the frail, homebound elderly in rural Suffolk city, Franklin and Isle of Wight and Southampton counties. The funds

will go toward the continued expansion of delivery meal routes, volunteers and delivered fresh foods. Altria Group, Inc., is the parent company of Kraft Foods, Philip Morris USA and Philip Morris International. The gift will be divided between fiscal years 2006 and 2007.



to continue to educate lower-income beneficiaries about the new Medicare prescription drug benefits.

A VISTA volunteer position will be posted at Senior Services to work with Medicare Part D outreach and education through the next six months of transition into the prescription drug program.

Senior Services is expanding its respite care program with a \$19,495 grant from The Virginia Department for the Aging, in addition to \$16,005 in local funding. The funds, totaling \$35,500, will help cover the cost of in-home care for caregivers so that they can take a break from looking after their loved ones.

An \$11,000 grant from Portsmouth General Hospital Foundation is earmarked for The Pharmacy Connection, which helps qualified people receive free medicines from participating pharmaceutical companies.

"We couldn't do it without the generosity of these partners – and to them we are truly grateful."

—Executive Director John Skirven

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

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From the Executive Director



Cool temperatures signal the start of the legislative season. Citizens have made their choices for leaders, and now our leaders

will address issues affecting our elders.

Even as seniors and their families struggle to understand Medicare, pay for heating fuel and get home care and care in facilities, funding for services is the core issue of concern in Hampton Roads. Changes in Virginia's intrastate funding formula caused by the 2000 Census will trigger a loss of \$236,000 to Senior Services for direct services next year, beginning July 2006. Governor Mark Warner can prevent this, and we can advocate that he do so.

The Governor can include recommendations from the *Final Report of the Funding Task Force to the Governor and the Chairman of the Senate Finance and House Appropriation Committees** in his fiscal year 2007 budget.

Please write or e-mail the Governor and advocate that he include funds in his budget to preserve services for the elderly and their families. But remember that preventing cuts is not enough. Virginia has 7,500 people on waiting lists for meals on wheels.

Senior Services is doing its part to increase non-state revenues as we report in the lead story in this edition of *The Senior Advocate*. We call on our elected leaders to help keep seniors at home and warm this winter.

Contact the Governor at: Office of the Governor, Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor, 111 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219.

To send an e-mail message, go to: www.governor.virginia.gov to reach the "Contact the Governor" link.

John Skirven
Executive Director

* Read the report at www.sseva.org

Grants and Gifts *continued from page 1*

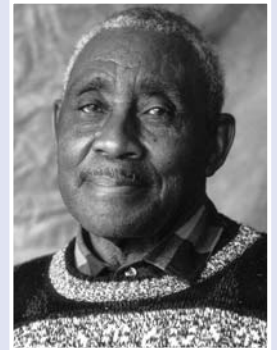
These gifts will fill the gap left by consecutive years of state budget shortfalls and flat federal dollars. Senior Services is bracing for additional cuts this year. That, along with fuel price increases, will impact programs that provide transportation and emergency fuel assistance to seniors.

"Even in times when federal and state budgets are tight, resource development enables us to continue to provide much-needed services for our seniors, along with creating new and innovative ways to help," said Senior Services Executive Director John Skirven. "We couldn't do it without the generosity of these partners – and to them we are truly grateful."

How You Can Help – Fuel Assistance For Seniors

This winter, rising fuel prices may force seniors to choose between heating their homes and eating nutritious balanced meals. Please consider contributing to **Senior Heating Assistance**, a new program that will help seniors pay for heating bills. Some gifts may qualify for Virginia Neighborhood Tax Credits, and all contributions are tax deductible.

For information, please contact Cindy Creede at (757) 963-9220 or creeede@sseva.org



Help for Hurricane Katrina Evacuees *continued from page 1*

Milcah Wade, Senior Services' assistant director for Clinical Services, agrees. The work with Red Cross has taken staff beyond the scope of working with seniors, she said. "They're holding babies, talking to young people," said Milcah. "I think this experience has made every worker a better worker."

Katrina has been a wake-up call for service-oriented organizations all along the Gulf and East coasts. And while Senior Services engages its hurricane preparedness plan – delivering shelf-stable meals, loading up on supplies, checking in on senior clients – prior to each storm, the group is now looking at things differently.

Currently, Senior Services is hosting a human resources disaster planning and response group, organized by the city of Virginia Beach. It is also meeting with other individual municipalities and response organizations.

"Our region must assure that transportation, information and resettlement planning are the best they can be," said Senior Services' Executive Director John Skirven. "We're looking more closely than ever at what seniors and their families need and how to keep them safe."

Board of Directors: Willar M. Baum, Willie Biggs, Jr., Eleanor F. Bradshaw (Chairman pro tem), Walter D. Brown, III, Gary S. Cofield, Arthur L. Collins, Margie Connor, Herbert W. DeGroft, Sarah L. Elam, Mary J. Eley, Lakita S. Frazier, Col. Cornell Fuller, Ret., David M. Gist, Arthur B. Harris, Jr., Alon M. Holmes, Kitty Manlove, William A. Murden, David A. Price, Sr., Kevin Rack, Haroleen D. Ray (Treasurer) *Effective 10/31/05*

Medicare Part D Update

There is good news for seniors coming out of the federal government. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently announced that a review of the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan would be offering lower-than-expected monthly premiums and deductibles, as well as coverage that goes beyond the Medicare standard benefit.

"These are compelling reasons why seniors and other beneficiaries should enroll in Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage," said Susan Everett, regional coordinator for Medicare Today, a non-profit, grassroots advocacy organization.

In September, Medicare Today released a new study by Price Waterhouse Coopers showing that seniors who earn approximately \$14,500 or less (150 percent of the federal poverty) and do not qualify for Medicare will see their out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs drop from \$1,657 to \$180 a year.

"Seniors are savvy consumers," said Mary R. Grealy, president of the Healthcare Leadership Council, a founding member of Medicare Today. "They want to see hard evidence that a new program is going to be a good deal. That evidence is mounting. Not only will low-income beneficiaries see their out-of-pocket costs cut by as much as 90 percent, but all beneficiaries will see tremendous value."

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"Not only will low-income beneficiaries see their out-of-pocket costs cut by as much as 90 percent, but all beneficiaries will see tremendous value."
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WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

Thank you for sending me *The Senior Advocate*. I am always interested in what is going on at Senior Services because you have helped me so much. Without home-delivered meals and other home services when I needed them, I would not have been able to stay in my little home. My husband and I built this little house room by room, and I want to live here all my life. Senior Services and Bonnie Ellick (case manager) have helped me do it.

—Mrs. Umphlett, Chesapeake, Va.



Do You Know of Loving Caregivers?

In our next issue of *The Senior Advocate*, be sure to look for the "Caregivers Corner." This regular feature will introduce you to caregivers and their loved ones who have interesting or unusual stories to share. Or, we may tell you about a business, club or organization that reaches out to seniors through special projects or volunteer work. Can you help us get started? If you know of an individual or group that would be a good candidate for our first feature (Winter/Spring 2006 issue), please contact Cindy Creede at (757) 963-9220 or ccreede@ssseva.org. We'd love to hear from you!

Volunteers Needed

Senior Services is seeking applicants for its Senior Companion program. At first glance, this volunteer position offers people 60 and over with modest incomes a stipend for providing companionship and respite care to homebound and disabled senior adults. Ultimately, the program serves both the senior companion and the senior in need.



"Senior companions do what friends do for friends," said Senior Services' Volunteer Director Millie Aven.

In addition to making a difference in a senior's life, the program delivers some great benefits: a tax-free hourly stipend, transportation reimbursement, supplemental insurance, a free annual physical examination, paid holidays and earned sick/vacation leave with pay. Senior companions must be 60 years or older and able to work 20 hours a week.

"This is a wonderful example of what active seniors can do in their own communities to provide a helping hand to others in need," said Senior Companion Coordinator Julia Melvin.

To apply, contact:
Senior Companion Coordinator
Julia Melvin at (757) 461-9481 ext. 124
or Julia@ssseva.org

Staff Spotlight: Meet Milcah Wade

Milcah Wade joined Senior Services this summer as the assistant director to Clinical Services, a role she embraces.

"I love it. I love clinical work," said Milcah. "It's in every fabric of my body."

Milcah supervises the adult services workers, care coordinators and intake specialists for both Senior Services and The Center For Aging. On a typical day, she screens calls for people seeking services, assigns cases, checks referrals for Adult Protective Services and makes sure that the staff has the support and direction they need to get the job done.

"I love working with seniors, working with people," she said.

Milcah is more than prepared for her job at Senior Services. She holds master's degrees in social work from Norfolk State University and in criminal justice



from Boston University, as well as a master's degree in business administration from American Intercontinental University in the Chicago area. She completed her undergraduate studies in psychology at Baldwin Wallace College in Berea, Ohio. Originally, Milcah hails from Cleveland.

She knows all about seniors and their needs, having worked previously as a social worker with Beth El Temple in Suffolk. Milcah was also director of their senior day care center for 15 years.

When she's not doing the work she loves at Senior Services, Milcah likes nothing better than hitting the highway; she has traveled extensively in the United States. She's also an avid reader, naming John Grisham as one of her favorite authors. And she adores caring for her five nieces and nephews, who are between 4-14 years old.

Next time you're at the headquarters office in Norfolk, stop in and say hello to Milcah, a caring new face at Senior Services.

Balancing the Workplace with Care Giving

By Sue Cunningham

Fact: More than 50 million people provide care for a chronically ill, disabled or aged family member or friend during any given year

Fact: Care giving is no longer predominantly a women's issue. Men now make up 44 percent of the care giving population

Fact: American businesses lose between \$11 billion and \$29 billion each year due to employees' need to care for loved ones 50 years of age and older.

How is the average worker able to balance the needs of the job with the needs of an elderly parent? According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), family and friends provide most caregiving tasks for older adults. On average, the caregiver is 46 years old, employed and has children at home. The average age of the person receiving the care is 78 years old.

Being in the middle of these two generations is the reason this group has been named the "Sandwich Generation."

There are some excellent considerations to help both the Sandwich Generation/Caregiver who works and their employer:

The caregiver can request:

- ❖ a flex schedule that allows them to work four, 10-hour days. Or, they can request to come in to work later and leave later.

- ❖ reducing their number of working hours or consider job sharing with another employee

The employer can offer:

- ❖ discounts on senior related products and services, such as appropriate books through human resources and after hours support groups

- ❖ the services of senior care advisors to employees

As the parents of the Sandwich Generation age, it is imperative that solutions be found to accommodate the employee/caregiver.

Sue Cunningham, Certified Senior Advisor, is founder and president of Senior Resources in Virginia Beach. She is the author of Unwrapping the Sandwich Generation, available for \$14.95 at www.speakingonaging.com or by calling (757) 496-4722 or 1-866-496-4727, toll free.



Cooling Assistance Update

As temperatures soared in Hampton Roads this summer, Senior Services was feeling the heat in more ways than one. A huge demand for air conditioners for seniors had depleted all of the money available through its Cooling Assistance program, funded annually by the Department of Social Services. Yet there were still folks who needed relief from the summer dog days.

Instead of cooling its heels, Senior Services called on the media to see if the public might assist in raising funds to extend the program.

As a result of a WVEC-TV broadcast and a compelling story that ran in *The Virginian-Pilot*, the public response was overwhelming.

Concerned individuals and businesses contributed more than \$12,300 to the cooling program, allowing Senior Services to continue to distribute air conditioning units and help pay electricity bills through the end of the unusually long heat spell. Funds remaining will go toward the 2006 Cooling Assistance program.

..... T H A N K Y O U !

Senior Services gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and businesses that contributed to its 2005 Cooling Assistance program. Collectively, more than \$12,300 was raised to help keep seniors cool.

L. E. and S. G. Alderman
Edward T. and Mary J. Bailey
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Lynne E. Bassett
Charles F. Field and William J. Bryant
Larry A. Buckman
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Ms. Carol Wessman
Juanita F. White
Katherine P. Williford
James and Lula Wilson
Alfred L. and Doris B. Wood
Charles P. and Carolyn S. Woodward

Please Note: Senior Services has made every effort to acknowledge our generous contributors. Please contact Cindy Creede at (757) 963-9220 or ccreede@ssseva.org with additions or corrections. We will print these in our next newsletter.

Where We Are

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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 Cindy Creede at ccreede@ssseva.org, or call at (757) 963-9220.

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



November

November is National Caregivers Month – One of the greatest challenges facing caregivers is maintaining one’s own physical and emotional health; too often caregivers neglect their own needs. Senior Services has the tool to help give you support, reduce stress and give you time to rest and recharge your batteries. Our Caregiver Support Program provides overnight respite care for seniors in a nursing home or assisted living facility for up to seven days. You can choose from a list of participating facilities in our service delivery areas. Please contact our intake specialists at (757) 461-9481.

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 socks to a microwave oven with large display numbers. Call Juliet Meredith at (757) 498-6789 by Dec. 9 to select an ornament from this year’s tree.

Thank You Oceanfront Jaycees!



On behalf of the Oceanfront Jaycees, it is my honor and privilege to inform you that your organization has been chosen to receive a donation from our year-long fundraising efforts. Please find our donation of \$500 to your worthy organization enclosed. One of our members requested that we donate to Senior Services because of the help she received from you concerning her grandmother. We thank you on her behalf.

Sincerely,
Jackie Julien
Vice President, Management
Development, Oceanfront Jaycees

