

SENIOR CONNECTION

Information for Seniors & Caregivers

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WHEN SUMMER GIVES WAY TO FALL

The change of seasons brings different emotions. After a long hard winter, the arrival of springtime is, for me, a joyous time. But later on, when summer gives way to fall, I get melancholy. For even though fall brings many different opportunities, it also means the end of a time that is full of life.

It seems that too often here at the Area Agency on Aging, there are seasons of change as well. Many changes bring life and hope. Yet, there is the occasional change that brings the same melancholy feeling as fall.

In this newsletter, I'm reporting one such change that deals with our caregiver website, the Connection for Caregivers (CFC).

Built with a generous grant from The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, and continued by the generosity of the George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation, the Connection for Caregivers will see a change that none of us welcomed. The pieces of the CFC that helped make it a unique and innovative resource will, without much fanfare, go on a quiet hiatus due to a lack of funding. The online support groups, online/interactive training and classes, and videos (some with closed captioning) will no longer be available

to caregivers. While the chat room will stay, these other pieces that have provided much welcomed free information and training to both family and professional caregivers will become silent.



For the staff and Board of CMAA, there is a feeling of sadness. Staff here have worked hard to bring this website to life. Our Board knows that the Connection for Caregivers has given this Agency a special place here in the Commonwealth. But for all

of us in human services, there is always a bottom line that must all too often bring us back to a reality we'd prefer to ignore.

Some may ask, will the other pages of the website be gone as well? The answer is "no". Various articles and links will remain, still bringing much needed information to those who seek it. And, as mentioned above, the chat room will still be available to anyone who would want to share thoughts and feelings.

Others may ask, "Is there anything we can do to help."

To this question, the answer is yes. As I wrote, our Board knows the real value of the Connection for Caregivers. We simply cannot afford it.

So, then, what can you do? Your donations to this Agency may go a long way to bringing some of the interactive pieces of the Connection for Caregivers back to the World Wide Web. Yes, we will need a lot of donations to make it work. But without your support, nothing more can be done.

I would ask you to visit our main site, SeniorConnection, and check out the Connection for Caregivers pages. See what you think. Find out just how important this information is for caregivers. And then help us bring the CFC back to its innovative and interactive presence on the Internet.

YES! I WOULD LIKE TO HELP SAVE CONNECTION FOR CAREGIVER'S ON-LINE CLASSES, SUPPORT GROUPS AND VIDEOS

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:
 _____ \$1000 _____ \$500 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____ Other

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Phone (_____) _____

Business (if corporate donation) _____

My Contribution is made: In Memory of: _____ In Honor of: _____

Name _____

Please notify _____

Relationship _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

**Please make all checks payable to:
 Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging
 All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.
 YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR SUCCESS!**

Dementia with Lewy Bodies (DLB): The Dark Horse

DLB has recently been recognized as the second most common cause of dementia-related deaths, behind only the lead horse, Alzheimer's disease. DLB, despite this frequency and prevalence, is usually misdiagnosed or misclassified because of its similarities in symptom to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

A diagnosis of DLB requires, first, a significant degree of cognitive impairment in two or more areas (i.e. a recognized dementia) and, second, two of the following three features:

1. marked fluctuations in level of alertness,
2. developed hallucinations, and
3. Parkinsonian motor symptoms like resting tremors, rigidity, slowed and shuffling gait, etc

Patients with DLB might also suffer from a few, all, or none of the following supportive features:

1. REM Sleep Behavior Disorder,
2. unexplained falls,
3. fainting and dizzy spells,
4. alterations of consciousness,
5. systemized delusions like paranoia, and
6. sensitivity to psychotropic medications.

Dementia with Lewy Bodies has no known cause and no known cure. The progression of the dementia is relentless, racing 2 years faster than Alzheimer's and crossing the finish line 5 - 7 years after onset. Because of the sensitivity to psychotropic medications in some sufferers, drugs are rarely used for treatment. Strides have been made, however, in the development of cholinesterase-inhibitor therapies. The most effective treatment of DLB involves constant supervision and guidance. A caregiver can prevent DLB-related falls and other injury. Physical therapy and exercise classes can also be helpful in the maintenance of mobility.

Dementia with Lewy Bodies, it seems, is the newest dark horse, under-recognized and unknown, but a serious threat to all those in the aging race.

New Faces at CMAA

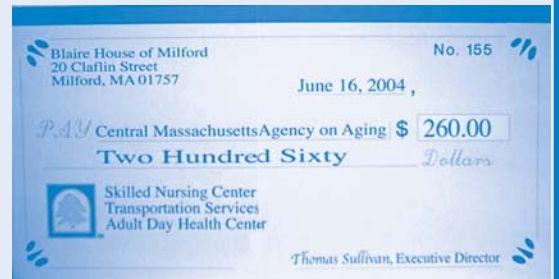


Kerry Haberin has joined the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging staff as the summer intern for Information and Referral Services, SeniorConnection. She is participating in the Holy Cross Summer Internship Program, which is funded by the Lily Foundation. Since joining CMAA, she has researched potential article topics for the website and potential agencies and programs for the database.

She is currently a student at the College of the Holy Cross, with a double major, in Political Science and Philosophy. She just spent her junior year at the National University of Ireland in Galway. Kerry hopes that an inside look at a non-profit organization wholly committed to the betterment of its community, such as the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging, will guide her along the path to law school and a career in public administration.

Kerry, originally a resident of Western Massachusetts, attended Longmeadow High School. She currently resides in Boston.

Antique's Appraisal Fair



On May 22, Blaire House of Milford sponsored an "Antiques Appraisal Fair" to benefit CMAA. Tom Sullivan, Administrator of Blaire House, later presented a check to Bob Dwyer, Executive Director, in the amount of \$260. Tom has promised that next years fair will be bigger and better than ever!

Many thanks to Tom Sullivan and the staff at Blaire House of Milford, as well as to all those who brought in their antiques for appraisal, for their generosity.



Valerie Muldoon recently joined the staff at the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging as a part-time Information and Referral Representative, SeniorConnection.

Valerie received her Bachelor of Science degree from Nichols College, where she also worked part time as a writing tutor for the Academic Resource Center. Valerie has gained most of her experience working for the Fallon Community Health Plan, where she spent six years in Member Relations, Senior Plan, and Provider Relations.

Valerie lives in West Boylston with her husband, Joe, their son, Matthew, and dog, Emma.



Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging welcomes Peggy Lands to the position of part-time Administrative Assistant. She received her Associate of Science in Business Administration from Becker College and brings with her years of administrative support experience from the Architectural/Engineering industry.

In her spare time, she raises & shows Labrador Retrievers and also runs a web-based notecard business featuring her own photographs. Peggy is a Leominster resident, where she lives with her husband John and their Labs.

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NEW OUTREACH PRESENTATION DEBUTS TO RAVE REVIEWS!

Board and Advisory Council impressed with work of Agency staff

Have you even wondered what really happens at Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging? Well, wonder no more! A new PowerPoint presentation on the work of your Area Agency on Aging provides the answer to your question.

Staff at CMAA has created this presentation to help Council on Aging members, seniors, caregivers and others interested in the aging network to better understand the role of the area agency, and the work that CMAA staff does to make the lives of area seniors and caregivers just a little bit better.

Using Microsoft PowerPoint, and integrating a taped narrative, the 15 minute outreach presentation looks at the roles of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Council, as well as the planning and allocation process that brings grants to various service providers in response to the needs voiced by seniors across the region. The work of the Information and Referral Department, and the agency's web site SeniorConnection, are highlighted.

Would you like to have some CMAA staff visit, and bring this presentation to your Senior Center or other meeting? Call Eileen O'Brien, Director of SeniorConnection/Information and Referral, to schedule a date and time.

See what CMAA can do for you!