

SENIOR CONNECTION

Information for Seniors & Caregivers

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SPRING 2008

It Happens Each May

By Robert P Dwyer, PhD,
Executive Director



The Month of May means different things to different people. In my family, there are several birthdays that occur. In some faith communities, May takes on a particular flavor of devotion. There are political systems that view May as a yearly celebration of the “working class.”

For those of us in the Aging Network, May is Older Americans Month, a time to celebrate what makes growing older meaningful and a call to recognize the work that needs to be done.

How did it all start? It goes back some 45 years to the late President John Kennedy, who instituted “senior citizens month” in 1963. Then, in 1980, President Jimmy Carter renamed the celebration as “Older Americans Month.”

Each year since 1963, the sitting President offers a proclamation to honor the contributions of Older Americans as this great nation moves forward, creating an example of how to care for young and old alike. And, each proclamation offers a theme.

For 2008, the theme is Working Together for Strong, Healthy and Supportive Communities.

This theme pulls together both the personal responsibility that we each have to be sure that we remain healthy and strong into our older years, but also the work that must be done within our communities to support not only a healthier approach to old age, but also the need to support those within our communities who are not as capable to help themselves.

This is particularly true of so many elders who choose to stay living in their homes or apartments and not go to nursing facilities. Community assistance as provided by area agencies on aging (AAAs) and aging services access points (ASAPs) is critical, as are so many of the programs that are offered through federal and state resources. Older Americans Act funding, the State Home Care program and other State programs such as the Enhanced Community Options Program, Choices, and others show that providing services in the home is critical. Yet, the funding for all of these programs falls well short of the need.



Another important piece of this puzzle is you, John and Joan Q. Public. Looking out for aging parents, friends and neighbors is key to all of us being able to move forward, building the strong, healthy and supportive communities we all need now and in the future. Our role as caregivers, even for small things, ought never be diminished for each small gesture can make a huge difference in someone's life.

Have a great spring!

Officers Reelected



Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging has announced its officers for the coming year. Elected at the Annual Business Meeting on March 27 were:

- President: Gene O'Rourke of Uxbridge
- Vice-President: Mary Rice of Uxbridge
- Treasurer: Richard Burke of Holden
- Secretary: Margaret Barry of Worcester.

Also, Ann Nordfors and Lynne Alexandrowicz were reelected for additional terms. Members Anthony Feroci and Joseph DeMarkey retired after their years of service.

Congratulations to all, and thanks for their good efforts on behalf of CMAA!

Volunteer Administrative Receptionist for Friday Afternoons

Are you looking to enhance your skills and/or abilities and meanwhile build upon your resume? Expand your knowledge of the aging and caregiver networks? Develop professional contacts? Be recognized for your involvement and have fun doing all of this?

If you are looking to volunteer your services, our agency, Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging, is the right place for you!

If you have any type of administrative or computer background, we would like to talk to you! Make the call now to (508) 852-5539. Or send in your resume to Administrative Coordinator at CMAA, 360 West Boylston Street, West Boylston MA 01583.



ElderCare 2008

Working Together for Healthy Communities
Tuesday, May 13, 2008 * 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

The Manor

42 West Boylston Street West Boylston MA

Free Event for Seniors and Caregivers
**60 Exhibiting Companies! Giveaways!
Raffles! Refreshments!**

FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS

Bone Density, Cholesterol, Glucose, Blood Pressure, Video Oscope

INFORMATIVE SEMINARS

Tips and Tools for Talking to your Doctor
Going Green: Saving Money for Seniors
Safety First: Home Adaptations to Help

ENTERTAINMENT

Silver Sneakers Interactive Fitness Demo
Ballroom Dancing Performance
Live Music with New Orleans Jazz

WORKSHOPS

Wii Interactive Video games at Radius booth
Cooking Demo with Chef Eggy from The Manor

For over 15 years, we have been mailing our SeniorConnection Newsletter to you via the United States Postal Service (USPS). Over the course of time, the cost to print and mail the newsletter, has risen considerably which has forced us to cut an issue. Instead of four issues a year, we now print and send out three. In order for us to continue to keep you informed of elder and caregiver issues, we would like to send you the newsletter electronically.

If you would like to receive our newsletter via email, please provide us with your email address by filling out the coupon below and sending it to CMAA, or give us a call at 1 800-244-3032 V/TDD or 508-852-5539 V/TDD and let us know your email address. You can also email us with the info to CMAAging@SeniorConnection.org.

Of course, if you still want to receive our newsletter via postal mail as you always have, we will be glad to continue to send it to you that way.

Name:	_____
Email Address:	_____
Mailing Address	_____
Phone:	_____

ARE YOU READY FOR DIGITAL TELEVISION?

A Notice from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs

The MA Department of Telecommunications and Cable has issued a notice regarding the upcoming conversion from analog to digital television. Elder consumers are a large audience that may be affected by this change.

At midnight on February 17, 2009, full power broadcast stations will be required to stop broadcasting in analog format. Digital TV will replace the analog system. There are several ways to prepare for this:

- Buy a new TV that has a built-in ATSC tuner.
- Buy a Digital-to-Analog Converter Box.
- Subscribe to a Cable TV or Satellite TV service.

Since VCRs and DVD players also have built-in analog NTSC tuners, they are also subject to the effects of the analog cut-off date.

To help curb the cost impact for analog TV owners, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the U.S. Department of Commerce developed a converter box program to allow analog TV owners to request coupons towards the purchase of a digital-to-analog converter box.

The coupons will be available from January 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009. All households that own a TV using over-the-air analog reception are eligible. Coupons, which will look like plastic gift cards, will be redeemable through local electronic stores. Households may request two \$40 coupons toward the purchase of digital-to-analog converter boxes by calling 888-DTV-2009, (1-888-388-2009) or on-line at www.DTV2009.gov, which also provides answers to frequently asked questions.

Coupons will be forwarded via U.S. mail.

Central Massachusetts
Agency on Aging
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To Contact CMAA, V/TDD (508)852-5539 or (800)244-3032 FAX (508)852-5425 E-Mail CMAAging@SeniorConnection.org

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Spring 2008

Programs that PAY Family Caregivers

Many family caregivers do not realize that there are programs that will allow them to receive some compensation for their work with loved ones. Two Massachusetts programs that help pay you for your service are the Adult Family Care Program and the Personal Care Assistant program.

Adult Family Care (AFC) is a residential program for people age 16 and older who because of medical, physical, cognitive or psychiatric problems cannot safely live alone. Clients live in the homes of skilled caregivers called "hosts." Nurse management, social work support and supervised daily personal care are provided. Clients live in community homes instead of institutional settings. Clients receive a private room and all meals. They are assisted with personal and medical care as needed, as well as transport to appointments.

Host families are provided initial and ongoing training by the AFC program. They receive a tax-exempt, monthly stipend and receive two weeks' paid vacation a year. AFC staff are available to clients and host families twenty-four hours a day. Family members can apply to become host providers unless they are the parents of a minor child who would be the AFC client, the spouse of the client or a legally responsible relative (such as a guardian) of the client.

The Personal Care Assistance program fosters independence in individuals with disabilities who receive MassHealth to: retain self-direction and control over personal care, hire and train his/her own assistant(s), and remain in his/her own home. PCA staff help the individual gain approval from MassHealth for PCA service, provide training to consumers to become employers of Personal Care Assistants, provide ongoing support to consumer who is the employer.

Note: A volunteer surrogate (family member or friend) can be designated to help with any or all aspects of employee management. Also, family members other than spouses and guardians may apply to become a PCA for their loved one.

If you are interested in either of the above two programs, contact your nearest Aging Services Access Point (ASAP) for more information.