

SENIOR CONNECTION

Information for Seniors & Caregivers

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Home for the Holidays?

by Robert P. Dwyer, Ph.D., Executive Director

These are tough times. No, I'm not talking about changes in Medicare, or issues around my retirement account. I'm referring to the "holiday season," be it Christmas, Kwanzaa, Channukah, Ramadan or Thanksgiving.

Over the years, studies have shown that the holiday season brings about depression and anxiety for a lot of us. And since our lives are already filled with this anxiety from trying to balance work and home and kids and who knows what else, holiday time means extra stress.

Now, if we take work, home and kids and add in the duties of caregiving for an elder, then the reality hits even harder. Caregiving offers many challenges. The responsibility of being sure that this older person we love is bathed and dressed, has a good meal, takes his or her medication properly, is safe and not wandering in the cold-well, you know the drill. It isn't easy. It is a great responsibility.

During the holiday season, the stresses of caregiving increase exponentially. Caregivers, like all of us, need to prepare for the holidays, prepare for celebrations, buy the gifts for the kids or the Aunt in Florida. There is the desire to be out and about, but the

real need to stay at home. We may wish to spend time with friends, yet are obligated to tend to caregiving duties. Maybe our tradition is to be out on New Year's Eve. But not this year.

So much to do; so little opportunity.

Yes, at this time of year when stress is already at an all time high, caregivers have even more than they might normally have. But the message here is this:

"You don't have to go it alone!"

More than ever before, there are opportunities for caregivers to get some help, whether its through respite services or support groups. One important piece is the "Connection for Caregivers," an exciting and vital page of our website, www.SeniorConnection.org. Family caregivers will find articles, peer support in a 24/7 chat room, and monthly support groups facilitated by a social worker. There are videos to help us all understand important pieces of elder care, and myriad other resources to assist caregivers in day to day issues, helping them with their special holiday stress.

I invite all of you who are family care-

Holidays con't on page 2



givers, whether you have an outside job or not, to visit www.SeniorConnection.org and stop in to the Connection for Caregivers. You will find help there. And maybe even a friend.

From all of us here at CMAA, may this holiday season be a special one for you and for all those you care for and love.



Kudos !!!!!

On 17 November, 2003 at the State House, our very own SHINE Counselor Carolyn Bellil received the Governor's Award for Outstanding Health Benefits Counseling (SHINE) honorable mention. Her citation which is signed by Governor Romney is presented to Massachusetts residents who represent the highest level of volunteer service and commitment to providing Medicare beneficiaries with accessible and helpful information pertinent to their health care needs. Carolyn graces CMAA consumers with her counseling skills every Tuesday.

Way to go Carolyn!!!

The Four Corners Needs You!

If you are a professional in the aging or caregiver network and would like to write a 2-3 page article about a topic that would help educate caregivers we want you.

Articles may be written from a Community Leader perspective or may deal with issues of Well-being (holistic, spiritual, or financial) or Medical topics (disease or disorder diagnosis, treatment,) or may be a Resource explanation (any program that provides a worthwhile service to caregivers of elders). You may also be a caregiver who has experienced the role and would like to share some of your coping tricks with other caregivers who are just starting out. We are booking now for 2004! Don't let this opportunity pass you by.



Free Resources from the Central Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program.

The Central Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program is a collaborative effort of four agencies, Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging, Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc, Montachusett Home Care Corporation and Tri-Valley Elder Services, Inc. The program was developed to help individuals manage the enormous personal, social, and economic challenges of caring for an elderly parent, relative, or friend-either locally or from a distance.

We are pleased to announce the introduction of The Caregiver's Organizer. The organizer is designed to help caregivers keep both critical and general information about the elders they care for close at hand. The pocket-sized organizer comes with a protective vinyl cover and includes a three year calendar. To learn more about how to use this resource tool or obtain a free Caregiver's Organizer, please call 1-800-244-3032. V/TDD



Look what's been going on at Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging!

Melissa Shea has recently accepted the position of Assistant Planner for Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging. She began her career at CMAA as the Administrative Assistant/Information & Referral Representative, in the Spring of 2002.



Melissa obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Urban Studies from

Worcester State College, as well as an Associate of Science in Human Services from Quinsigamond Community College.

Congratulations Melissa!

The Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging has welcomed Karen Millay as the new Bookkeeper. Karen has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, specializing in Accounting, from Nichols College.



Prior to spending several years at home raising her three sons, Karen has

worked in private industry, completing various accounting functions, as well as serving the position of Church Treasurer for a local UCC Church.

Karen is a resident of Auburn where she lives with her husband Mark and their sons, Ryan, Randy and Riley.

Kelley Oakley-Handy recently joined the staff at Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging as the new Administrative Assistant/Information & Referral Representative. In addition to assisting the front office, Kelley will also handle requests for Information and Referrals.

Kelley received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Suffolk



University. Kelley has worked in Health Care and Human Services for the past 8 years in a variety of settings.

Kelley is a resident of Worcester where she lives with her spouse, Mark and her two children, Jeremy and Jared.

Have You Heard About Our Lending Library?

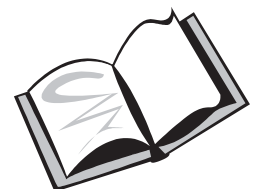
**BECOME A
MEMBER TODAY!**



The mission of the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging's Lending Library is to provide residents of Central Massachusetts with free and open access to relevant aging and caregiving network information. The Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging Lending Library is a work in progress. The library serves a population of nearly 792,000 Central Massachusetts residents. The resources are truly tailored for the benefit of the 60,000 caregivers and 127,500 seniors. The collection is singularly attuned to the caregiving experience. The scholarly collection of caregiving books and videos are by a variety of authors and publishers. This collection contains self-help, intergenerational and other books, videos, audiocassettes, brochures, pamphlets, magazines, newsletters from aging and caregiving agencies and more.



It is our hope to continue to build upon our collection of resources. You could be part of our efforts. The Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging Lending Library will graciously accept the donation of caregiving books. If you would like to donate a resource book or video to CMAA in memory of someone, please contact our staff. We can provide you with our wish list of aging and caregiver resources.



Central Massachusetts
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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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Why support CMAA's Connection for Caregivers?

We are beginning our annual appeal to request financial support for our organization, Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging's most special program, the "Connection for Caregivers" website. Our SeniorConnection website and its "Connection for Caregivers" have received over a half-million visits this year, bringing invaluable information into the homes and offices of caregivers on nutrition, stress reduction, mental health, and financial planning. Caregiver training and support have been made available, and countless articles on myriad issues are online at the touch of a mouse! Yet, licensing, bandwidth, and maintenance are all costly, and require funding beyond our Title III money. Your donation will help keep this program going, and help us continue to seek funding for it. Please remember that no amount is too large or too small. Whatever you may see fit to give will be appreciated and of course is tax deductible.

_____ \$10 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ Other

Please make checks payable to: and mail to: Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging,
360 West Boylston Street, West Boylston MA 01583.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____