



TVES CURRENT

Information from
TRI-VALLEY ELDER SERVICES, INC.

JULY/AUGUST 2005

Volume 3, Issue 4

A DECADE OF FUNDING

In 1996, the Webster Five Cents Savings Bank's newly formed foundation made its first award to Tri-Valley. This initial grant from the Webster Five Foundation gave the agency's new Money Management Program the boost it needed to get off the ground and begin assistance to seniors needing help with financial management.

Now, ten years later, and consistently each year since 1996, the Webster Five Foundation continues its support of a program that is thriving and allowing seniors to maintain their financial independence. "Webster Five is an exemplary example of community support and involvement. A decade of support is tremendous recognition of the value of this service," said Marilyn L. Travinski, Tri-Valley Executive Director. "Further, many of the Webster Five staff have volunteered as Money Managers throughout the years, continued Travinski, and recently, when we desperately needed some volunteers to bring home-delivered meals to Webster seniors, they stepped up again and helped." **THANK YOU, WEBSTER FIVE!**



Richard C. Lawton, President and CEO of Webster Five Cents Savings Bank presents the check to Marilyn L. Travinski, Tri-Valley Executive Director.



ATTORNEY GENERAL'S ADVISORY

**Attention Medicare Beneficiaries:
DO NOT GIVE OUT YOUR FINANCIAL OR MEDICAL
INFORMATION OVER THE PHONE**

Since the passage of the Medicare Modernization Act in 2003, seniors have reported that they have received telephone calls from people claiming to be representatives from a Medicare Drug Discount Card sponsor, or from a government agency, and then asking the seniors to give them information about their bank accounts or medical records.

If you get a call from someone asking for your financial or medical information over the phone, just hang up. The Federal Government has not directed ANYONE to get consumers' financial or medical information over the phone in connection with either the Medicare Drug Discount Card program, or the Medicare Part D drug benefit that will be available in January, 2006. No company is allowed to sign you up for the Medicare Part D drug benefit at this point in time. In fact, the various companies who will offer Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit plans have not even been announced yet. Enrollment in the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit will start in October of 2005.

Through the end of August 2005 the Social Security Administration will be mailing application forms to Medicare beneficiaries it believes may qualify for low-income assistance under the new Medicare Part D coverage plan. A large number of Medicare beneficiaries will receive these applications, which do ask for certain financial information but do NOT ask you to provide your bank account numbers.

For information about the Medicare Part D drug benefit or the Medicare Prescription Discount Card program, you can call the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services at 1-800-633-4227. If you receive suspicious calls or suspicious materials in the mail about these programs, please call Attorney General Reilly's Elder Hotline at 1-888-243-5337 (toll free).

A Message from Marilyn

As surprising as it seems, Tri-Valley began its 30th year of service to seniors and their caregivers with the July 1st start of our new fiscal year. Thousands of client visits and millions of meals from our beginning, we continue to expand our program offerings with Caring Homes and new programs for caregivers. Tri-Valley is also offering services to the under sixty disabled population.

More programs and expanded staff have crowded our office space. We searched for larger quarters for several years. Over a year ago we started actual plans for the new office space and we expect to move in September to the Steven's Mills Complex, now being renovated, in Dudley. There, we will have adequate room for all our current programs as well as room to grow.

The past twelve months have been extremely busy and exciting for all of us. Now we are focused on the seemingly endless details of completing our space and moving. Look for more information in the next issue of the *CURRENT*.

Marilyn L. Travinski, Executive Director

—UPCOMING EVENT—



Taste of Milford

August 31, 2005

From 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

at

Blaire House of Milford

Come taste the finest cuisine in the Milford area, as local restaurants come to Blaire House of Milford and we dine al fresco.

**All proceeds from this event will benefit
TRI-VALLEY ELDER SERVICES.**

**TICKETS: \$10.00 ADULTS, \$5.00 SENIORS/CHILDREN
For more information, call Tri-Valley at 1-800-286-6640
or Blaire House of Milford at 508-473-1272**

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HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Safeguard Against Food Borne Illness

Ah, summertime...time for picnics, barbecues, and all those delicious warm weather foods like potato and macaroni salad, fresh fruits and vegetables. With this in mind, here is a little refresher course on safe food handling and preparation.

Disease-causing bacteria is found in raw and cooked meats, salads, dairy products and seafood. Fresh produce carries hidden risk that even thorough washing may not remove. Even safely cooked, ready-to-eat foods can become cross-contaminated if not handled properly.

Food borne illnesses can take days to incubate. Often you don't connect the flu-like symptoms with the offending food. Symptoms may include abdominal cramps, headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, sore throat, malaise, a rash, or even stiff neck, confusion or convulsions. Always see your doctor if you suspect any form of food borne illness.

The good news is that most food borne illness can be prevented. Here are a few steps for safe food handling.

1. Wash your hands (for a minimum of 20 seconds) and food-handling surfaces often with hot, soapy water.
2. Avoid cross-contamination. Never use the same knife or surface when cutting raw meats and fruits and vegetables.
3. Heat and cook foods to safe internal temperatures.
 - Beef, pork, eggs, fish, and shellfish – 145 degrees minimal internal temperature.
 - Ground beef – 155 degrees minimum internal temperature.
 - Poultry, stuffed meats, casseroles, and all microwave-cooked foods – 165 degrees minimum internal temperature.
4. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, including ready-to-eat foods, within two hours.
5. Reheat all foods to an internal temperature of 165 degrees for 15 seconds.

And remember: Observe all food expiration dates.

SPOTLIGHT: Community Support Services

TVES could not be as effective without the assistance of its army of volunteers. As the needs of elders flourish, people willing to help as friendly visitors or companions, or through telephone reassurance and money management programs fill vital roles.

“Some elders who are widowed, whose family members live out of town, or who are housebound sometimes have little contact with people. A weekly visit from a companion, friendly visitor, or a telephone call with someone from our telephone reassurance program makes a difference in their lives,” said Sandra Courtney, Community Support Services Program (CSS) program manager.

CSS recruits and places volunteers with elders in each of TVES’ twenty-five towns. Coordinating the needs of elders and the volunteers to assist them is no small task. “We are always on the lookout for volunteers,” said Courtney. “Right now we have a substantial waiting list of people needing a companion or friendly visitor.”

Finding the right client/volunteer match takes time. Courtney meets with the elder to discover his or her needs, hobbies, and interests. She also interviews all prospective volunteers. “I look for people who are empathetic and have good listening skills. We provide printed materials that offer conversations starters and teach how to ask open-ended questions.” Once Sandra thinks she has a good match, she joins the volunteer and elder on the initial visit. Sandra is a good matchmaker, as evidenced in the 2004 annual satisfaction survey with clients. From 19 completed responses, 19 of 19 found the volunteer to be easy to talk with, to be good listeners, and graded a high level of satisfaction. Comments include:

- “Don’t know what I’d do without her, as my children all live far away.”
- “Reliable, helps me get my errands done so I don’t have to bother my neighbors.”
- “A guardian angel...a good find...”
- “No complaints...he’s a peach!”
- “My companion is easy to talk to, encourages me, lifts my spirits. Takes me shopping so I can pick out my own greeting cards.”

People interested in volunteering who are organized and good with figures may consider the Money Management Program (see related story on page 1) to assist elders with bill paying and checkbook management. Accounting or bookkeeping experience is welcome, but not necessary. Training is provided. Three references and a CORI check are required. Seniors who are homebound themselves may consider volunteering with the telephone reassurance program. To volunteer in a CSS program, call Sandra Courtney at 508-949-6640 or 1-800-286-6640.

Angels among us — Teens Who Serve

Each summer hundreds of young people from around the United States and Canada spend one week at various Serve projects around North America. TVES has been fortunate to have a Serve group located in the Blackstone Valley that has volunteered services to its elder clients.

Robert “Bob” Wood, a deacon at the Pleasant Street Church in Whitinsville, contacted TVES about its Early Teen Ministry (ETM) Serve program. “Each summer we look for locations where the ETM Serve teams can help people in the community by doing outdoor cleaning projects, yard work, painting and small construction, and other household chores,” explained Wood, who also serves as the work site coordinator.

Tri-Valley was an obvious source to contact. Many elders need help with yard work and other household projects. There is no cost to the elder for any of the services provided by ETM Serve. The teams bring their own supplies and “we have our own funds for purchasing anything that might be needed. Of course it’s not always possible for us to anticipate every job that might come up. The team might ask to use some tools the elder already has, such as a broom, hose, or hedge trimmer.”

This year, the Pleasant Street Church ETM Serve team worked at a number of locations in the Blackstone Valley. The young volunteers pictured came from Michigan and several nearby communities.



The Early Teen Ministry Serve group is specifically geared for youth eleven to fourteen years old. “They spend the day at the project work site and the evenings are for play and fellowship,” said Wood. The group also takes one day off mid-week to enjoy sightseeing in Boston. “The Duck Tour was really cool!” the kids all agreed.

*A retentive memory is a good thing,
but the ability to forget is the true token of
greatness. ~ Elbert Hubbard*



TRI-VALLEY ELDER SERVICES, INC.
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**SAVE THIS
 DATE!** 

Friday, September 16, 2005
 Registration—8:30 to 9 a.m.
 Program—9 to 11:30 a.m.
 Pleasant Valley Country Club, Sutton

**WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF US?
 THE CHANGING FACE OF ELDERCARE**

Featuring
 Bob O'Toole, LICSW

*A Free Program for Caregivers and Professionals
 Sponsored by: Tri-Valley's Caregiver Support Program*

RSVP by September 8th
 to Laura Black Silver, LICSW, Tri-Valley Caregiver Specialist
 1-800-286-6640

**TRI-VALLEY
 IS MOVING IN
 SEPTEMBER**



**New Address:
 10 Mill Street
 Dudley, MA 01571**

**All telephone and FAX
 numbers will remain the same.**

Watch for further information.

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- July — Medicare's Drug Subsidy
- August — Financial Abuse of Elders

Send your e-mail address to info@tves.org and keep up-to-date with TVES legislative alerts.