



TVES CURRENT

Information from
TRI-VALLEY ELDER SERVICES, INC.

MARCH/APRIL 2005

Volume 3, Issue 2

BUDGET SEASON IS UPON US – YOU CAN HELP!

The House and Senate Ways and Means committees are working on the 2006 budget that goes into effect July 2005. Now is the time to contact your legislators and ask them to put home care for the elderly on their priority list.

Did you know that nearly 700 seniors are on waiting lists to get into home care in Massachusetts? This is not right in a state where the Governor says elders should get “Community First” care. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that disabled people of any age have the right to be cared for in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their needs. That is their civil right. Yet we have a growing waiting list, the longest in a decade, for home care. The late Frank Manning, who helped create the home care program once said, “Being put on a waiting list for home care, is like dialing 911 and being put on hold.”

You can help! Please let your legislators know that you support home care and more funds for the following:

1. The Home Care and Care Management line items. These are the basic services, such as, homemaker, personal care, transportation and care managers who arrange and monitor services.
2. The Enhanced Community Options Program (ECOP). This is an enhanced version of home care.
3. Supportive housing for the elderly. This is a low-income form of assisted living.
4. Protective Services to resolve cases of elder abuse.
5. The Money Management program to prevent financial exploitation.
6. Meals on Wheels and Farmer’s Market coupons for elders.
7. A new “Caring Circle” program that supports relatives and friends when they take in their elders and give them 24 hour/7 days a week care as an alternative to nursing homes.

Ask for support on these issues that greatly affect you and all seniors. The Mass Home Care Association has a simple way for you to contact legislators via the Internet. Here’s how to send an **E-LERT**: Log on to www.masshomecare.org and choose **Elder E-LERT Instant Democracy**, then choose **More Home Care Funds for 2006 Budget** and follow the instructions from there. You can go on-line, on the phone, tell them every time you see them, or use the mail to let your voice be heard for funding these critical programs.

SOCIAL SECURITY CRISIS?

Q: Is Social Security going bankrupt?

A: No. The official story from the Social Security Administration is that the program today is taking in more money than it pays out in benefits. The surplus is put into the program’s trust funds. Today there are large “reserves” in the trust funds, but 14 years from now, benefits owed to retirees will begin to be greater than payroll taxes

collected from workers. Thirty eight years from now, if no adjustments are made, the Trust Funds will be depleted. At that point, Social Security would not be able to meet all of its obligations.

Today there are 52 million Americans getting Social Security. Two-thirds of them are age 65 or older, but one-third (17.5 million people) are younger disabled people, early retirees, or young survivors. Social Security is called “America’s Family Protection Plan”, because if a worker becomes disabled or dies, Social Security is a form of disability and survivors insurance. Social Security was never meant to be a person’s sole form of retirement income (the average retiree today only gets \$11,127 a year), but one in three Older Americans rely on Social Security for 90% of their income. Still, Social Security makes a big financial difference in a person’s life. A 35-year-old worker who earns \$40,000 a year and who has a spouse and children

(continued on page 4)

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A Message from Marilyn

April means spring and taxes, yard cleanup and project planning. April is a time for renewal, hope and fresh beginnings.

April to do list:

- * Contact your legislators about funding for home care and other senior programs;
- * Thank our volunteers, or at least the ones that you know;
- * Become a volunteer yourself;
- * Consider donating to the March for Meals Campaign;
- * Consider donating your car, truck or boat to benefit Tri-Valley.

Happy Spring!

Marilyn L. Travinski, Executive Director

SPOTLIGHT: March for Meals

Each March, Meals on Wheels programs nationwide set out to raise public awareness, recruit volunteers, and increase donations to this essential program. The TVES Nutrition Program is again participating in the 4th annual "March for Meals" campaign.

Meals on Wheels, a home-delivered meal program funded by the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program, provides daily meals to individuals sixty years old, homebound, and unable to prepare their own food due to illness, incapacitation, or the absence of a caretaker. In addition to public and private funding, the program depends on the generosity of hundreds of volunteer drivers. Last year the TVES Nutrition Program delivered 238,299 meals throughout its twenty-five-town service area.

Good food and nutrition can help prevent or delay many chronic diseases and disease-related disabilities that affect the elderly and homebound. The program also provides elders with social interaction while allowing older adults to stay in their homes and communities.

"In a country as prosperous as ours, none of our senior citizens should go hungry," said TVES executive director Marilyn Travinski. If you or someone you know could benefit from the Meals on Wheels program, or if you would like to volunteer your time, or make a donation, please call TVES at (508) 949-6640 or 1-800-286-6640.

CARS, BOATS & TRUCKS ... OH MY!

Supporters, volunteers and staff are joining in the "March for Meals" madness by purchasing and decorating paper cars, boats, trucks and planes. The colorful displays on the walls of the TVES office and nutrition sites, are there to raise awareness of the new vehicle donation program while raising funds for Meals on Wheels.



Donate your auto, truck or boat to receive a valuable tax deduction and help Meals-on-Wheels!

Here's How:
Call Helping Hands of America:
1-888-881-9090
1-508-384-1212
www.helpinghandsofamerica.org

Be sure to say, "Meals-on-Wheels is my charity of choice!"

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Colorectal Screening Can Save Your Life

Colon cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed form of cancer and the second leading cancer killer in the U.S. Yet, with proper screening, colon cancer is also preventable. That's why the American Cancer Society (ACS) has designated March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

When found early, colon cancer can almost always be cured. The ACS estimates that approximately one-third of all colon cancer cases are diagnosed at their most treatable stage. Therefore, they recommend that everyone age 50 and older get regular colorectal screening.

Colon cancer usually begins with a polyp — a small growth inside the colon or rectum. Screening can detect polyps, allowing for removal before cancer develops.

Factors that increase your risk of colon cancer

- Age
- Family history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer
- Smoking
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- Crohn's disease
- Physical inactivity
- Diet high in animal fats

People with colon or rectum polyps, inflammatory bowel disease, or a family history of colon cancer should consult a doctor about screening prior to age 50.

Screening tests: There are several screening tests available, and the ACS recommends one of these screening methods beginning at age 50: Yearly fecal occult blood test (FOBT), Flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years, Yearly FOBT and flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years (preferred option), Double-contrast barium enema every five years, and Colonoscopy every 10 years.

Remember, getting tested could save your life. Talk with your doctor about which colorectal screening test is best for you.

The *TVES Current* is a bimonthly publication of:

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Caregiver's Corner

Establish a "Staying Connected" Plan

Nowadays, adult children often live great distances from their elderly parents. A common concern is "How will I know Mom and Dad are okay?" Developing a "Staying Connected" plan with all the significant family members will help.

1. **Identify unsafe situations in the home.** A walk through the elder's residence should help you identify potential risks, which might include throw rugs, poor lighting, and loose handrails. Does the bathroom need grab bars and nonskid surfaces? In the kitchen, place frequently used items on easily reached shelves.
2. **Connect with community resources.** TVES offers an array of services, which are available to elders such as Meals on Wheels, homemaking, personal care, transportation and friendly visitors. Each community may have a variety of organizations such as faith groups, clubs and senior centers, which can provide social outlets.
3. **Discuss individual circumstances.** Be sensitive and considerate of your loved one's concerns and/or fears about wanting help or involving others. Talk with neighbors and friends with whom the elder socializes. Establish a priority system of emergency contacts and determine a method for the elder to contact help if needed. Consider installing a Personal Emergency Response System, which can be worn and activated to summon assistance.
4. **Put your "Staying Connected" plan in writing.** Once an agreement is reached as to who is involved in the plan, and those persons have agreed to help, list their names and contact information. Indicate their roles and the situations under which they are to be contacted. Include a list of the elder's medical professionals. Give each person a copy of the plan. *Be sure to identify at least two key contact people who will check on the elder immediately in case of an emergency.*
5. **Update the plan regularly, as situations change.**
6. **Test the plan and communicate often.**

Tri-Valley Elder Services and Whitney Place Adult Day Health and Assisted Living

are proud to offer you the following **FREE** seminar:
"After They Forget: The Thriving Spirit of Alzheimer's"
presented by The Rev. Dr. Kathleen Rusnak, M. Div., STM, Ph.D.,
Saturday, April 23, 10:30 to 1:00
at Whitney Place Adult Day Health, 65 Beaumont Drive, Northbridge, MA
RSVP by April 15th to Laura Black Silver, 1-800-286-6640

1,000 Angels among us — Volunteers Inspire by Example!

April 17-23, 2005 marks National Volunteer Week. Established in 1974 by President Richard Nixon, National Volunteer Week acknowledges all that volunteers do to improve our communities. Organizations like Tri-Valley Elder Services could not accomplish the extensive community work they do without the help of its many volunteers.

Tri-Valley has been fortunate to receive volunteer help from more than 1,000 people throughout its twenty-five-town service area. TVES is very thankful for their volunteers' generous assistance, and the agency does attempt to list and acknowledge all of its "1,000+ Angels" in the annual report each year. Yet, despite that large number of Angels, more volunteers are greatly needed for Tri-Valley's numerous programs.

Perhaps you'd like to be a Companion or a Friendly Visitor—someone who provides socialization, visits, and medical escort to area elders? Or perhaps you are good with numbers. The TVES Money Management Program provides trained volunteers who assist elders with personalized money management services including bill paying, checking account balancing, organizing the mail and bills, or establishing a budget.

Volunteer drivers are always needed to drive weekly or monthly as their schedule permits, and are assigned routes that make deliveries as quick as possible, ensuring the meals arrive fresh and warm. The Meals on Wheels volunteers take a few minutes to check on the elder and report problems or concerns to the nutrition site manager. If being on the road isn't you're cup of tea, you can help at the nutrition site by serving or packing meals.

Or maybe advocacy is your strength. The TVES Ombudsman Program enlists and trains volunteers to visit and advocate on behalf of nursing home residents, allowing the residents to voice their concerns and have their complaints addressed.

The theme for the 2005 National Volunteer Week is *Inspire by Example*. Volunteers have the power to inspire the people they help, and to inspire others to serve. Volunteers do make the difference. So make a difference in someone's life in as little as one hour a week. Call TVES to learn more about the many volunteer opportunities available in your community:
1-800-286-6640 or 508-949-6640.

Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others. - Danny Thomas



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SOCIAL SECURITY CRISIS? *(continued from page 1)*

could get about \$1,800 a month from Social Security if he or she became disabled. If that same worker were to die, his or her family could receive about \$2,300 a month from Social Security in survivors benefits.

The Social Security Administration admits “there is disagreement over what should be done” to protect the program. If Congress takes no action at all between today and the next 38 years, benefits would have to be cut by 25% thereafter. To extend the Trust Funds into the 22nd century would require additional revenues equal to less than 3% of federal spending—which happens to be less than what we're currently spending on the war in Iraq. Some analysts say to secure Social Security, all we have to do is recapture about 25% of the revenue lost each year as part of President George Bush's tax cuts that go to people with incomes over \$500,000 a year.

The White House has proposed that younger workers should be allowed to set up Personal Savings Accounts, which could be invested in stocks and bonds. But critics of this plan say that such retirement accounts mean higher financial risks for workers, a shifting of the burden from employers to employees, and a windfall for the stock brokerage industry.

Congress does not have to respond with a “crisis mentality.” The last major changes to Social Security came in 1983. Adjustments made 20 years ago raising the payroll tax rate and delaying the retirement age, have made today’s need for more adjustments that much easier. Lawmakers shouldn’t fix Social Security by breaking it.

SAVE THIS DATE
May 2nd
 10:00—11:30 am
White House
Conference on Aging
“Listening Event”
 at the Worcester
 Senior Center

 **Retirement from TVES ...** Honey Meyer recently retired after 17 years of service to TVES as Purchased Services Coordinator. TVES thanks Honey for her long-standing dedication to the agency and wishes her many happy and healthy retirement years.

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