



"Home With You"

TRI-VALLEY Current

Information from Tri-Valley Inc.

Serving people over 60, younger people with disabilities, and caregivers

Current Topics

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September/October, 2007



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DID YOU KNOW ?

Last year
Tri-Valley
served
more than
307,000 meals

Over 250,000
were delivered
directly to the
homes of frail
elders

You Can Help
—see page 4

MEET THE NEW SECRETARY OF ELDER AFFAIRS

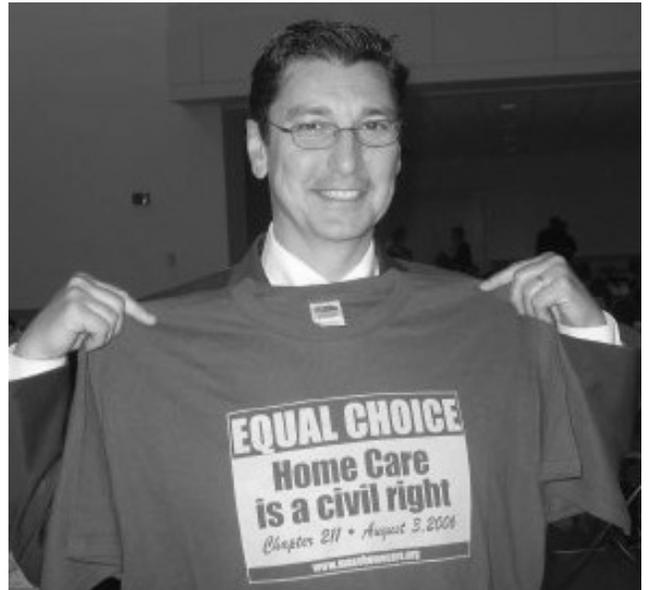
Governor Deval Patrick recently appointed Michael Festa Secretary of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

For the past eight years, Mr. Festa has represented the 32nd Middlesex district in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Since his maiden speech on the floor of the House back in 1999, Representative Festa has been the “go to” person on Beacon Hill for elderly home care issues. Festa was the lead sponsor for the landmark Equal Choice law in 2006, but before that he was a key player in the passage of the Community Choices program, which has kept thousands of people out of nursing homes. Every budget season he has vigorously fought for millions of dollars in community based funding for the elderly.

He is a passionate advocate, who is guided as much by his heart as by his head. He knows the elderly system from the inside, because that’s where he’s been for the past eight years.

Secretary Festa is committed to the principle that older people in this state have a civil right to be cared for in the least restrictive setting possible. He has been the champion of community care for his entire legislative career. We are fortunate to have Governor Patrick name someone who understands elderly services and the State House. Mike Festa will be a great asset to the Governor’s Cabinet, and a savvy negotiator for elder services. Welcome Secretary Festa!

Noteworthy finding: Home Care Lowers Risk of Nursing Home Admission — A study printed in the August, 2007 issue of the Journal of Gerontology, found that doubling a state’s home and community based expenditures for the elderly would reduce the risk of nursing home care among childless seniors by 35%.



Secretary Festa at the Mass Home Care Network Conference on October 10th.

SPOTLIGHT: Care Management **Changing Lives at Tri-Valley: One Person at a Time**

When a care manager for an ASAP (Aging Services Access Point) takes on a new client neither that elder nor the care manager can know what impact they may have on each other.

Often they derive satisfaction or help in ways they would never have guessed at the outset of the relationship.

One 90 year-old elder here at Tri-Valley who died within days of her sister managed communication with her elder sister in the last years of both of their lives through a little mechanism called a sound amplifier.

Failing hearing and in her 90's our client Ellen had to turn her television and radio volume up so high her neighbors complained and forced her to turn the volume down. As a result Ellen could not hear her programs. This isolation weighed heavily on the elder, but her care manager who was aware that Tri-Valley's Caregiver Program had purchased little sound amplifiers to assist people with failing hearing brought one to Ellen.

The sound amplifier was a big hit and Ellen was once again able to listen to television and radio at normal volumes.

To add to Ellen's difficulties her elder sister, Mae, who was approaching 90 developed throat cancer and was no longer able to speak loudly to accommodate Ellen's deafness.

The little \$100 sound amplifier was a major hit and made communication between Ellen and Mae possible with less pain for Mae and more clarity for Ellen. For a mere \$100 and a knowledgeable care manager two lives were changed in a very big way. During Mae's last days she could speak with her sister with ease and she knew her sister could hear her.

Whenever her ASAP care manager came to visit she would put her hand up to stop the care manager from talking turn and pick-up her amplifier, put it on and then with a smile tell him to go ahead and start talking.

This precious gift of communication and the care she received through her ASAP apparently meant enough to her so that when she died people were asked to send donations to Tri-Valley as opposed to giving flowers.

So, our client Ellen is "paying it forward" and someone else may receive a sound amplifier or some other needed item which may very well change their life.

And yes, the Care Manager was also touched and changed by Ellen; he tells wonderful stories of this elder so her spirit lives on, and he may through these stories give others the courage to greet each day no matter how difficult in the hope things may improve in some way for them.

Tri-Valley welcomes individual, memorial and corporate donations in any amount to help more people like Ellen.

The *Tri-Valley Current* is a bimonthly publication of:

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HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Fall Prevention

According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults in the state.

The good news is — **falls are preventable!**

Here are their recommended steps to reduce your risk of falling:

- Talk to your doctor about your medications. Some medications can affect your balance or cause dizziness
- Eat Right. Regular meals and proper nutrition will keep you on your feet.
- Get regular vision exams. Regular eye exams can determine if there are problems with your vision.
- Make your home safer. Pick up all clutter that can limit movement in walking areas. Make sure all rugs are properly secured to avoid slips and trips. Install railings and grab bars where needed.
- Stay Active. Regular exercise can help maintain balance, flexibility and strength.

Call 1-800-227-SAFE (1-800-227-7233) for more information.

Caregiver's Corner

Need Help with Long Distance Caregiving?

Caring for a frail elder when you live some distance away can be emotionally and financially challenging. Concerns about the person's health and safety can be overwhelming. The Family Caregiver Support Program is here to help with its updated Long Distance Caregiving booklet. The booklet is designed to provide caregivers with some helpful guidelines and resources.

Highlights of the booklet include, Assessing the Situation from a Distance, Getting in Touch with Local Resources, Creating a Caregiver Plan and Online Information.

For a FREE copy of the new Long Distance Caregiving booklet, contact Laura Black Silver, LICSW, Tri-Valley Caregiver Specialist at 1-800-286-6640, ext. 3079.



BIG VICTORIES IN SMALLER SPACES

When great opportunities arrive, people often realize that their entire lives have been building toward those critical moments.

But for Sister Diane P. Gaudet, those moments don't have to be any more monumental than "a smile from someone who hasn't been smiling." And for her, it has indeed all been building to that for a long time.

A 53-year member of the Sisters of St. Joseph, she has inspired thousands of younger people as a teacher, school administrator and counselor, in and out of the religious setting. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees and oversaw elementary education in over 30 Springfield-area Catholic schools at one point. Now, in retirement, Sister Diane still has big victories to count, though in smaller spaces, as a Tri-Valley volunteer.



Diane Gaudet, SSJ

Living in Southbridge, she jumped into three Tri-Valley programs with both feet over the past year and a half. Each week she visits a woman in her 80s as a Companion, works in the Southbridge senior lunch site, and travels to Webster to serve as an ombudsman in two nursing homes, advocating for patients' needs. Embracing the talents Sister Diane brought to the agency, Tri-Valley Nutrition Program Director Carol Muschler also tapped her to serve on the Nutrition Project Council that helps improve meals programs in the 25-town region. In speaking of Sister Diane, Carol Muschler said, "She has a great capacity to say yes whenever she is asked to learn a new job or volunteer for a different task. She always responds with a smile and a genuine spirit of wanting to be of service to our program and our clients. We are very fortunate she chooses to share her talents with our agency."

"I was familiar with the agency because I used to drive Elderbus, and I also worked as a counselor at the Wells Center (in Southbridge), and I used to refer people to Tri-Valley," Sister Diane said. Elderbus was her last paid work before retiring or, as the Sisters of St. Joseph refer to it, "retiring from active community."

Now she reaps personal rewards: The lunch program allows her to keep in touch with those she drove for 10 years with Elderbus, Sister Diane says. The Ombudsman program brought her to a new area, health care, where the advocacy aspect stimulated her. She says the volunteer training she received from Tri-Valley has served her well in dealing with nursing care staff. And the Companion program is "a big, big, big deal for me. We don't do anything much, talk, go to lunch — just make her feel special."

Coming from humble roots in Chicopee, service was always Sister Diane's calling, and you don't just turn that off. Tri-Valley, she said, gives her a number of ways to stay turned on. "I'm more active than I've ever been."



TRI-VALLEY, INC.
10 Mill Street
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*Serving people 60 and over,
younger people with disabilities,
and caregivers.*

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Uxbridge
Warren
Webster
West Brookfield



We're Moving

On October 26th Tri-Valley's Senior Dining Center in Southbridge will move to the Community Center at 153 Chestnut Street. Our new phone number is (508) 764-1469. Everyone is invited to stop by to say "hello" to Site Manager Bob Allard or call him to make a reservation for lunch.

You Can Make a Difference!

Tri-Valley invites you to join our team of exceptional volunteers who make a difference.

- **Deliver Meals on Wheels to homebound elders**
- **Help a senior sort mail and pay bills as a Money Manager**
- **Package or serve meals at a Nutrition Center**
- **Advocate for Nursing Home Residents as an Ombudsman**
- **Provide Socialization as a Companion**

Call Tri-Valley at 1-800-286-6640

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On the WEB www.tves.org

Have Internet access? Upcoming Help-line column:

September — Treating Incontinence

October — Elderly Gamblers

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, contact us via e-mail at info@tves.org or call the Tri-Valley office.