

DEL LAGO *Home Care*

For The Care You Deserve

Proud Member of the Seniors Choice Network



The Senior's Choice

Welcome to the Summer Newsletter

CAREGIVER PROFILE



Our caregivers are totally committed, highly qualified and carefully selected individuals who are personally and thoroughly screened, bonded and insured.

Most importantly our caregivers are dependable and extraordinarily caring of others. In addition to their previous experience, our caregivers receive continuous training that includes a specialized curriculum exclusive to The Senior's Choice that results in them becoming Certified Companion Aides™. These highly qualified and trained caregivers are ready to help you and your loved ones with a variety of daily activities such as:

- Caring companionship
- Meal planning and preparation
- Incidental transportation
- Running errands
- Light housekeeping
- Medication reminders
- Assistance with bathing and grooming
- Assistance with bill paying
- Information and referral services

Our personalized and affordable services are available 7 days a week and can range from a few hours a day to 24 hour and live in care.

Welcome to the Summer issue of *The Senior's Choice Connection*.

Today we're happy to present another wonderful caregiver who will join the ranks of Caregiver of the Season. We are excited to be profiling a male caregiver this time! We thank him for his exceptional efforts in caring for his senior clients.

Congratulations to José Silva of *Northshore Family Care*.

When José came to us for an initial interview, he brought a large ring binder with him. When I asked what was in the binder, José said that it was his caregiving experience. The binder contained a complete photo history and documentation of his first "client," his own wife, Martha. She had been diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's years earlier. At that time, José left his job as an electrician and took on a variety of other jobs that gave him the flexibility he needed to spend more time taking care of this wife in their home. This adoring husband was born with a heart for caregiving.

During our interview, José, in his unassuming way, asked if he could buy our caregiver training materials just in case I felt that he would not make a good caregiver. I immediately knew that I was interviewing a very special person. Since that time, José has successfully completed our Certified

Companion Aid program as well as our Certified Hospice Aid program, and he continues look for knowledge to improve his skills.

In his years with us, José has exhibited every good quality that we look for in our caregivers; compassionate caring, unmatched integrity, a strong work ethic, flexibility, and a positive attitude. José has always become very much a part of his clients' families. He loves his work, his clients, and their families.

When he is not working for us, José continues to visit and look after his wife who now must receive her care in a facility. He remains dedicated to her care, spending time with her every day.

José is the proud father of three sons and one grandson. He spends his free time reading about developments in medical research and neurology.

We are blessed to have José as a part of our family of caregivers, and we are proud to have him as a friend!

Bob Caldwell
Northshore Family Care

Best wishes for a prosperous 2012.

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FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES

Tracking Down Financial Assistance Programs for Seniors

Millions of seniors in the U.S. are missing out on more than \$20 billion in aid that could help pay for food, medicine and utilities, simply because they don't know it's there.

To help with this ongoing problem, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) are promoting two key resources to help seniors track down government benefits and financial assistance programs that they might be eligible for, and will show them how to apply.

Online Search

If you have access to the Internet, the easiest and most convenient way to search for benefits for seniors is at benefitscheckup.org.

Created by the NCOA 10 years ago, BenefitsCheckUp is a free, confidential, web-based service that helps low-income seniors and their families identify federal, state and private benefits programs that can help with prescription drug costs, health care, utilities, and other basic needs. This site contains more than 2,000 programs across the country.

To help identify benefits that could help you, you'll need to fill out an online questionnaire. Once completed, you'll get a report detailing all programs and services you may be eligible for. You can also apply for many of the programs online, or you can print an application form, fill it out and mail it in.

Phone Help

If you don't have Internet access you can get help over the phone by calling the Eldercare Locator (800-677-1116), which will assign you a counselor to review your situation, and provide you with a list of possible programs you may be eligible for, and who to contact.

Types of Benefits

Depending on your income level and where you live, some of the different benefits that may be available to you include:

Food Assistance: Programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can help pay for your groceries. The average monthly SNAP benefit is currently \$119 for seniors living alone. Other programs that may help include the Emergency Food Assistance Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

Health Assistance: Medicaid and Medicare Savings Programs can help or completely pay for out-of-pocket health care costs. And, there are special Medicaid waiver programs that provide in-home care and assistance.

Prescription Assistance: There are hundreds of programs offered through pharmaceutical companies, government agencies and charitable organizations that help lower or eliminate prescription drug costs, including the federal Low Income Subsidy known as "Extra Help" that pays premiums, deductibles and prescription copayments for Medicare Part D beneficiaries.

Heating and Cooling Assistance: There's the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), as well as local utility companies and charitable organizations that provide assistance in lowering home heating and cooling costs.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): Administered by the Social Security Administration, SSI provides monthly payments to very low income seniors, age 65 and older, and to those who are blind and disabled. The average SSI payment is around \$500 per month.

In addition to these programs, there are numerous other benefits such as HUD housing options, home weatherization assistance, tax relief, various veteran's benefits, transportation, respite care and free legal assistance.

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http://www.savvysenior.org/article_20120430.htm



ROTATING TOPIC:

Ten Great Free Activities For Seniors

Who doesn't like free activities? Whether you're saving for retirement, living on a fixed income, or just looking for new ways to be smart about how you spend your money, consider the following 10 ways that you can trim your entertainment budget and actually increase your fun.

Gallery openings and art walks. Attend art gallery openings, free activities which often include wine, hors d'oeuvres, and a chance to meet the artists and gallery owners. Many communities also host monthly "art walks," which allow you to join other art lovers to tour a number of local galleries on the same evening.

Open mic nights. Check out local coffee houses and pubs that regularly provide an open microphone and performance venue to amateur and aspiring musicians. At these free activities you can support local artists and hear some of the freshest sounds around—or maybe even sign up and share your own musical, comedy, or poetry talents.

Free activities at museums. Many museums offer free admission at least one day or night each week. Same art, same exhibits, but no admission fees.

Volunteer to usher. By volunteering to pass out programs and helping the paying customers find their seats, you will receive free admission to the performance.

Literary readings. When authors go on tour to promote their books, they may be heading to a bookstore near you. Check your local newspaper, public library, and bookstores for free activities like readings, where you'll have a chance to meet the authors and sample their new work.

Free lectures and community events. Colleges and universities, especially those that receive public funding, are great community resources for free activities, or events and services at little

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Hospitalizing a Loved One with Dementia: “First Steps”—#1 in Dementia Series

Whether it's for a planned procedure or a medical crisis, hospitalization can be chaotic and confusing for both family caregivers and a patient with dementia.

Hospital admission is the process of getting the patient set up for a room and bed, and clinically with the right medical orders and care plan. The admissions desk takes care of the first part: paperwork regarding insurance, contact information, and internal hospital planning.

The clinical admission is then done by the hospital doctors. This includes taking the patient's history and conducting a physical exam. Next, orders for monitoring and treatment are written based on the patient's needs. If your loved one begins in the emergency room, these evaluations will first be done there. But if an overnight admission to the hospital is necessary, the steps will be repeated, because the hospital itself has a different structure and staff, as well as a longer-term treatment vision than the emergency room. Although this process can seem confusing and redundant, think of it as dealing with two separate entities.

To help get your loved one's hospital stay off to the best start, take these steps during the admissions process:

1. Explain the person's dementia status.

Make sure it's clearly marked in your loved one's patient chart that he or she has dementia as well as the stage of dementia. It can also be helpful to explain what your loved one can usually do and not do for himself or herself.

2. Bring a summary of ongoing medical conditions.

Be sure to make an up-to-date list of all of your loved one's conditions, which you can give to medical personnel. Hospital doctors need to understand which other conditions and treatments might affect care.

3. Bring all medications the person has been taking.

An up-to-date list (including the drug's name, purpose, dosage, and timing of doses) is important, but much better is to bring the actual containers with the medications. Don't forget any regularly used over-the-counter meds, herbs, or supplements.

4. Stay available to give needed information.

Especially throughout the admission

process, but also afterwards, it's best for a patient with dementia to have a caregiver (or other person familiar with his or her case) around at all times to provide an accurate history and to answer hospital staff questions.

5. Make clear who the medical decision makers are, and specify a point of contact for the hospital.

Be sure to let staff know which family member has been helping to make medical decisions. If your loved one has paperwork related to a durable power of attorney for healthcare, an advance directive, or a living will, bring copies to the hospital staff.

If your loved one has never filled out paperwork designating a durable power of attorney for health care, in most states the default surrogate decision-maker is the legal spouse. If there's no spouse, it's the next of kin, usually adult children or siblings. Especially when there's no paperwork on hand, specifying which family member has been taking on the medical-decision

support role is helpful. Streamline the process—and avoid dangerous crossed wires or missed information—by identifying one spokesperson.

6. Let hospital staff know what should be done in the event of a life-threatening medical emergency.

Most hospital doctors will check at admission to see if a person prefers to be “DNR,” or “do-not-resuscitate.” This means that if the heart stops, the person does not want to have CPR. (The alternative is usually to be “Full Code,” which means that CPR, defibrillation, and breathing machines can be used if needed to revive a person.)

If you have any other paperwork providing guidance about medical care, such as an advance directive, living will, or POLST form, be sure to give a copy to hospital staff.

First of an 8-part series by Leslie Kernisan, M.D. and Paula Spencer Scott, Caring.com.

www.senioritylifecare.com/caring-checklist/



SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

Free Activities, *continued from page 2*

or no cost. Community and nonprofit organizations also host many free activities. Check libraries, newspaper listings, and neighborhood bulletin boards for schedules.

Free lunchtime concerts. During nice weather, many communities offer free lunchtime concerts in pleasant locations where there is a high concentration of office workers and a lot of pedestrian traffic. For these free activities, pack a picnic or a brown bag lunch, grab a friend, and tap your feet to some good music while you enjoy the sunshine.

Join a book club or discussion group. Whether you organize your own with a small group of friends, discover an established group through your local library or bookstore, or plug into a national movement like the Socrates cafés, book clubs and discussion groups are free activities that offer a great way to exchange ideas and gain new insights.

Be a tourist at home. We all establish routines and patterns, get into ruts, and eventually see only a narrow slice of our own community. Make a conscious effort to step off your usual path, and take a day to explore a neighborhood or nearby attraction that you have never visited or haven't seen lately. You may find a wealth of free activities, close to home.

Go to the library. Still the single greatest resource in almost any community, the public library offers a rich collection of books and magazines, research and reference materials, and free Internet access. Whether you just drop in to check out a book you can read on the bus, attend a public meeting about a critical local issue, or spend a rainy afternoon surfing the Web, your local library is a great place to find free activities.

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SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

A Caregiver Bill of Rights...

- To take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my loved one.
- To seek help from others even though my loved ones may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- To maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can for this person, and I have the right to do some things just for myself.
- To get angry, be depressed, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.
- To reject any attempts by my loved one (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt, and/or depression.
- To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance for what I do, from my loved ones, for as long as I offer these qualities in return.
- To take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my loved one.
- To protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my loved one no longer need my full-time help.
- To expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, similar strides will be made towards aiding and supporting caregivers.

By Jo Horn
www.caregiver.com

http://www.caregiver.com/articles/caregiver/caregiver_bill_of_rights.htm