

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

INSIDE LINE

FALL 2013

2013 HEALTH AND EDUCATION EXPO OCTOBER 30, 2013

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging, Westmoreland Casemanagement and Supports, Inc., Westmoreland Community Action, and the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners are proud to sponsor the 2013 HEALTH AND EDUCATION EXPO. Seniors, caregivers, persons with disabilities and the general public are welcome to attend.

There will be many activities, free health screenings and information, light refreshments, giveaways, free parking and a live radio broadcast by 1480 WCNS. A variety of vendors are participating, providing their assistance and information to address every health and care issue imaginable. Those attending will have access to a bone density screen, blood pressure, oxygen levels, vision and hearing screens, massages, reiki and reflexology – **ALL FOR FREE.**

Also, **JENNIFER ANTKOWIAK** (Caregiver Coach, TV news anchor, author) will be presenting “Take Care Tips: How to Care for Yourself While Caring for Others” at 10:30 a.m. At 1:00 p.m., APPRISE (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) will present “What is the New Affordable Care Act?”

Mark your calendar for:
Wednesday, October 30, 2013
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Ramada Hotel & Conference Center
(formerly the Four Points Sheraton)
100 Sheraton Drive,
Greensburg, PA

Come anytime, stay as long as you like and bring a friend. No pre-registration is required.

Need a ride??? If you're 65 or older or disabled, you may be eligible for discounted public transportation.

If you're a Westmoreland County resident age 65 or older, you're eligible for a 95% discount for transportation to this event through Westmoreland Transit's Shared-Ride program in conjunction with the

Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging's Priority Transportation program. You must be pre-registered for both programs, and your trip must be scheduled in advance. Contact the Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging for more information at 724-830-4444 or 1-800-442-8000.

If you're a disabled Westmoreland County resident, Westmoreland Transit has the Americans with Disabilities Complementary Service and the Persons with Disabilities transportation services. Call WCTA at 1-800-242-2706 for further information.

You don't want to miss this once-a-year OPPORTUNITY to obtain all this valuable information in one place. For more details, contact the Area Agency on Aging at 724-830-4444 or 1-800-442-8000.

BLACK FRIDAY SHOPPING

The day after Thanksgiving is known as Black Friday, a day that strikes terror into some hearts as it ignites enthusiasm in others. If you

plan on braving the early morning crush of humanity in search of deals too good to be passed up, here are a few tips to consider maximizing the experience:

- **Download shopping apps:** A strong benefit of being a smartphone owner on Black Friday is the ability to grab 'must-have' applications that will help you track down those great deals. Some apps list all the Black Friday deals in one list, while others allow you to scan barcodes to check prices around town.
- **Check online first:** Before gearing up and diving in, you should hop online and scan the countless Black Friday deal sites. Most will grant you the same deals you'll find in store. BlackFriday.com is a good catch-all resource, alerting you up-to-the-minute as retailers release Black Friday ads.
- **The "Early Bird" gets the sale:** The philosophy of retailers seems to be to offer the best deals early, to lure you into their store to buy before you've spent your money elsewhere. In most cases, the sooner you get there, the better.
- **Plan your attack:** Some items (like Blu-ray movies) are marked much lower in stores

(like Barnes & Noble), while other items (such as Apple products) can be found for the prices online. A little research ahead of time will insure you spend your Christmas money wisely.

- **Remember Amazon:** Remember, Amazon offers special Black Friday deals every day in the weeks leading up to the actual day. You may find what you need at a deep discount before Black Friday even arrives, allowing you to better plan your actual trip that day.

CARAMEL

Making caramel is a very simple process. It is made by slowly boiling sugar in water to about 340 degrees Fahrenheit. The sugar liquefies and breaks down into composites with the characteristic caramel flavor and color. In the US, settlers were cooking caramel as early as the 17th century.

However, making caramel candies is a bit more complicated. Milk, sugar, butter, vanilla essence, water and glucose syrup are heated to only 250F; to avoid the sugars caramelizing, resulting in a candy too hard to chew.

Milton Hershey didn't start his *Hershey's* chocolate empire with chocolates, but with caramels. In searching for new toppings and coatings for his caramel candies, he tried

chocolate and never looked back.

HALLOWEEN'S ORIGINS

Historian Nicholas Rogers, exploring the origins of Halloween, notes that while "some folklorists have detected its origins in the Roman feast of Pomona, the goddess of fruits and seeds, or in the festival of the dead called Parentalia, it is more typically linked to the Celtic festival of Samhain." The name is derived from Old Irish and means roughly "summer's end".

The festival of Samhain celebrates the end of the "lighter half" of the year and beginning of the "darker half", and is sometimes regarded as the "Celtic New Year".

The ancient Celts believed that the border between this world and the Otherworld became thin on Samhain, allowing spirits (both harmless and harmful) to pass through. The family's ancestors were honored and invited home while harmful spirits were warded off. It is believed that the need to ward off harmful spirits led to the wearing of costumes and masks. Their purpose was to disguise oneself as a harmful spirit and thus avoid harm.

In Scotland, the spirits were impersonated by young men dressed in white with masked, veiled or blackened faces. Samhain was also a time to take stock of food supplies and slaughter livestock for winter stores. Bonfires played

a large part in the festivities. All other fires were doused and each home lit their hearth from the bonfire. The bones of slaughtered livestock were cast into the flames. Sometimes, two bonfires would be built side by side, and people and their livestock would walk between them as a cleansing ritual.

The name “Halloween” and many of its present-day traditions derive from the Old English era.

Development of artifacts and symbols associated with Halloween formed over time, encompassing customs of medieval holy days as well as contemporary cultures. The souling practice of commemorating the souls in purgatory with candle lanterns carved from turnips evolved into the making of jack-o’-lanterns.

In traditional Celtic Halloween festivals, large turnips were hollowed out, carved with faces and placed in windows to ward off evil spirits. The carving of pumpkins is associated with Halloween in North America where pumpkins are both readily available and much larger, making them easier to carve than turnips.

POMEGRANATE POWER

Pomegranates, at their peak in October and November, have been eaten since ancient times. Brought to America by European settlers, most pomegranates are now

grown in California. These exotic fruits, with their juicy, ruby-colored edible seeds, contain vitamin C and are rich in potassium. For those who prefer not to munch on seeds, pomegranate juice is available, and according to research at the University of California, it has two to three times the antioxidant power of red wine or green tea.

PROSTATE CANCER PREVENTION

In a recent study, men who had premalignant prostate lesions took 200 mg of a green tea supplement or a placebo three times daily for one year. Only 3% of the men in the green tea group developed prostate cancer, compared with 30% in the placebo group.

Green tea contains catechins, which are chemicals that inhibit a key molecule involved in the development of prostate cancer. Drinking the green tea is not practical, as 20 cups would be needed to get the level of catechins found in the supplement used in the study.

STOP CHARITY FRAUD

Generally all charitable organizations must be registered to solicit contributions with Pennsylvania. Some charitable organizations, such as those which receive contributions of \$25,000 or less annually and do not compensate any person for soliciting contributions, are exempt from registration. Professional solicitors and

professional fundraising counsels must also be registered. Professional solicitors must identify themselves as such when soliciting funds for a charitable organization.

Most charitable organizations deserve our generous support. However, there are many unscrupulous organizations soliciting in Pennsylvania that employ fraudulent or deceptive fundraising tactics to prey upon those who willingly extend a helping hand. Follow these tips to learn which charities deserve your charitable donations.

- Never give to a charity you know nothing about.
- Don’t hesitate to request written information from the charity regarding its programs and finances.
- Don’t feel pressured into giving on the spot or allowing someone to come to your house to pick up the contribution.
- Never commit to donate over the phone unless you are familiar with the organization.
- Hang up the telephone on aggressive and harassing solicitors.
- Never give cash, credit card numbers, or bank account numbers; always write a check payable to the charity so you have record of your donations.

- Be wary of “guaranteed” sweepstake winnings in exchange for a contribution. Participation in sweepstake offers is voluntary, and donors are in no better position to win the sweepstakes than non-donors.
- Ask who will benefit from your contribution.
- Find out if your contribution is tax-deductible.
- Don’t be fooled by a convincing name or one that sounds like the name of a well-known charity.
- Don’t make assumptions when you hear words like “police” or “firefighter” in an organization’s name. Although an organization claims it has local ties or works with local police or firefighters, it doesn’t necessarily mean contributions will be used locally.
- Don’t feel guilty about not supporting all the charities that ask you for a contribution.
- If solicited in person, always ask to see the solicitor’s identification.
- Be aware of statements such as “every penny will go to the charity.” All charities have expenses, so check carefully and know

where your money goes.

If you have any questions about a particular charitable organization, would like to find out if the charity is registered, or would like to file a complaint concerning an organization, professional solicitor or professional fundraising counsel, please contact the Bureau of Charitable Organizations by calling 1-800-732-0999 or online at www.dos.state.pa.us.

STRATEGIES TO HELP PREVENT ALZHEIMER’S

You cannot reverse the aging process, but you can adopt strategies now that can help you prevent, or at least delay, Alzheimer’s. Many of these brain-healthy habits are the same ones that help fend off other diseases such as, atherosclerosis, diabetes and stroke.

- **Exercise:** It’s a familiar refrain, but physical activity is as good for your brain as it is for your body. It improves the heart’s ability to pump blood to the brain and increases oxygen and glucose delivery. A daily 30 minute walk is one way, but an exercise that involves mental effort, such as table tennis, is a better way.
- **Eat Smart:** Good nutrition keeps arteries clean and maintains blood flow to the brain.

Colorful fruits and vegetables (blueberries, strawberries, plums, cherries, kale, spinach, broccoli, and red peppers) are good sources of antioxidants, which can prevent damage to brain cells caused by disease-promoting free radicals. Another good source of antioxidants are nuts. Although they contain fat, most of it is monounsaturated, the kind that helps to lower cholesterol. Eat more halibut, mackerel, salmon and tuna, all rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which have anti-inflammatory effects that may keep Alzheimer’s at bay. Limit saturated fat and cholesterol, which clogs arteries that lead to the brain.

- **Watch Your Waistline:** Studies show that people who stay at a healthy weight are generally at lower risk for developing dementia. Increased body weight is also associated with higher cholesterol and blood pressure, two other factors that may up your risk for Alzheimer’s.
- **Challenge Your Brain Every Day:** Finishing crossword puzzles gives you more than a sense of self-satisfaction. Studies suggest that

keeping the mind active may enhance brain cells, improve their connections as you age and perhaps even delay the onset of Alzheimer's. Reading, visiting museums, writing in a journal and even playing board games are all good ways to keep your brain active.

- **Keep Friends Close:** Staying involved with friends and family can stimulate your brain. Leisure activities involving mental, physical or social stimulation, such as mini golf with friends or dancing lessons with a partner; can protect against dementia. Even if you don't have a large group of friends, interacting with coworkers and volunteering also count toward social connections.

Practicing healthy habits can only do so much if you've neglected to kick the bad ones that can harm your mental health. These four habits may increase the odds that you'll get Alzheimer's down the road:

- **Smoking Cigarettes:** You already know that smoking wreaks havoc on your lungs and heart. But cigarettes also raise your risk for developing Alzheimer's. That's because smoking elevates blood pressure and cholesterol, two risk

factors for dementia, and promotes clotting while decreasing the oxygen capacity of your blood vessels.

- **Watching Too Much Television:** Not everyone who crashes in front of the TV at night is destined to get Alzheimer's. But studies show that watching more than four hours a day can put you at greater risk for disease.
- **Stress:** Chronic stress raises levels of the hormone cortisol, which can increase your risk for high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Get into the habit of reducing stress by meditating, praying, writing in a journal or pursuing another calming activity.
- **Leaving Your Head Unprotected:** Head trauma is a major risk factor for developing Alzheimer's, and the more injuries you have, the greater your risk. So take precautions to stay safe, wear a seat belt, use protective gear at work and play, and do whatever is necessary to reduce the likelihood of falling.

OPENING NIGHT

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging is pleased to announce that tickets are available for the

Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra's "Opening Night" concert on Saturday, November 2, 2013 at 8:00 p.m. at the Palace Theatre in Greensburg.

This performance features the Westmoreland Symphony Chamber Singers and musical selections from Handels' "Royal Fireworks Music", Ravels' "Le Tombeau de Couperin", and Bachs' "Magnificat".

Tickets will be distributed by a random drawing. Please send your request with the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Number of tickets (1 or 2)
- Self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Jean Healey

Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging
200 S. Main Street
Greensburg, PA 15601-3110

Your request must be postmarked no later than October 11, 2013. You must be a Westmoreland County resident age 60 or older to receive these tickets.

THE SENIOR FUND

Honor the memory of a loved one or celebrate a special occasion with a gift to the Seniors' Fund. You will support our mission by enriching lives of the most needy, and the honoree will be notified that a tribute gift has been received.

All tribute gifts are tax-deductible and can be made payable to "Community Foundation of Westmoreland County – Seniors' Fund". Please send to the attention of Seniors' Fund Coordinator, Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging, 200 South Main Street, Greensburg, PA 15601.

TURKEY TIPS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

Here are a few tips for cooking the perfect Thanksgiving turkey:

- Use a shallow roasting pan to ensure heat can flow around the turkey.
- Use a rack to hold the bird out of its own juices and to allow the heat to reach the underside. If the turkey sits on the pan, the juices will cause that portion to steam-cook rather than roast.
- Beware of disposable roasting pans. They can easily buckle and cave, causing injuries.
- Don't stuff the turkey until immediately before putting it in the oven. Harmful bacteria growth could spoil the uncooked turkey.
- Rub butter instead of vegetable oil over the outside of the turkey to ensure a brown, crisp skin.
- Add a cup of chicken broth to the pan before cooking. This will keep

the bird moist but won't prevent browning.

- Place an aluminum foil tent over the bird during the first half of cooking, and then remove the foil for the second half to allow for proper browning.
- Ensure the turkey is placed on the oven's lowest rack.
- Consider using a turkey cooking bag to ensure a moister bird (juices don't evaporate or burn and stick to the pan when using a cooking bag).
- A dark roasting pan will speed cook time versus a shiny metal one. The cook time will also be shorter if the turkey is in a cooking bag or covered with a roasting pan lid.
- Don't rely on the plastic pop-out thermometer that comes in some turkeys. Instead, insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the bird, being careful not to touch bone, as this can affect the temperature reading. The turkey is ready when the thermometer reads 170 degrees F in the breast and 180 degrees F in the thigh.
- After cooking, allow the turkey to cool for about 10 to 20 minutes before cutting. This will let the juices redistribute evenly throughout the

turkey. For best results, cut the turkey with an electric knife.

JOB TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) at Westmoreland County Community College offers paid training for unemployed county residents, who are 55 years of age and older and meet income eligibility guidelines. Public agencies, government offices, and 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organizations serve as training sites for program participants who can update skills and learn new skills while continuing their job search.

All positions earn \$7.25 per hour, 20 hours per week, and are available throughout Westmoreland County. For more information, please call Mimi Owens or Rebecca Dunn at 724- 925-4066 or toll-free at 1-800-262-2103 extension 4066.

Available Training Opportunities

Dietary Aide: Learn safe food preparation techniques.

Direct Care Workers: If you are interested in the Home Health Care field, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) may be able to provide training.

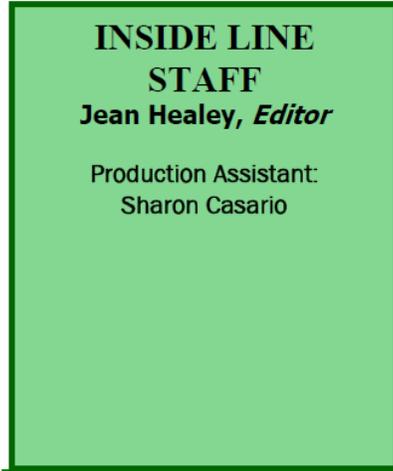
Library Aide: Individuals should possess an inquisitive, helpful attitude.

Custodial /Maintenance

Assistant: Learn methods of professional cleaning, grounds keeping, and maintenance.

Retail Associate: Learn customer service, cash handling, and display techniques.

Teacher's Aide: Assist in pre-school children's center.



INSIDE LINE is published bimonthly by the Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging, 200 South Main Street, Greensburg, Pennsylvania 15601 (Phone 830-4444), the Westmoreland County Commissioners and the PA Department of Aging.