

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

INSIDE LINE

MARCH/APRIL 2006

FROM COMPUTERS TO HEARING AIDS TO RAMPS ... ASSISTIVE DEVICES CREATE INDEPENDENCE

By the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation

As we grow older, many of us need a bit of support to complete everyday activities. Whether it's a ramp to replace steps, a seat-lift chair to ease the transition from sitting to standing, a stair glide to help you travel up and down stairs – it falls under the category of “assistive technology”. Assistive technology includes those devices and services that help older adults overcome many everyday obstacles we experience as we age.

The Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF) has been helping people purchase assistive devices and services since 1998. This statewide program now offers two loan programs to serve older adults and Pennsylvania residents who have any type of physical, cognitive or mental health disability.

Insurance does not cover many assistive technology devices and services. So, PATF has become a vital resource for

people who otherwise would have done without the assistive technology they need. Adaptive vans, home modifications and stairglides can cost thousands of dollars. Wheelchair cushions or batteries, computers, low-vision aids, portable ramps, and some types of hearing aids cost hundreds of dollars. PATF helps make them affordable.

With lower interest rates than traditional banks and extended repayment terms, PATF serves people of all income levels by providing low-interest loans for assistive technology costing more than \$1,000. The current interest rate is 4%. PATF routinely extends loans to people who receive Social Security Income, or rely upon another fixed income source. And PATF has the ability to extend loans to some people who do not qualify for a loan through a traditional bank. PATF looks at a person's ability and willingness to repay a loan, not just their credit score.

There are many assistive devices that cost more than \$100, but less than \$1,000. That can be too much money to pay out-of-pocket, but too little for a traditional bank loan.

PATF has a new mini-loan with 0% interest for assistive technology costing between \$100 and \$1,000. For people who meet specific low-income guidelines, PATF can also provide a partial grant in conjunction with the loan.

Both programs offer free consumer credit counseling, and an opportunity to rebuild credit. PATF can also assist with identifying additional potential funding sources. For more information about PATF, call toll-free 1-800-744-1938. Or visit the PATF website at www.patf.us.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY SENIOR GAMES MAY 2 – 12

For over twenty years, the Westmoreland County Senior Games has grown by leaps and bounds. The slogan for the games has been “Bring a Friend for Fun and Fitness”. The senior population has taken that to heart as the Senior Games have had more athletes than ever in recent years. The ultimate goal of the games is to encourage an active lifestyle and continued participation in recreational activities beyond age 50.

The 2006 Senior Games will take place May 2 – 12 at Mammoth Park and several other Greensburg area locations. Anyone age 50 and over is eligible to participate. Registration cost is \$10. A few of the events include bocce, bowling, cycling, golf, horseshoes, and swimming. Medals will be awarded to the top three finishers of each event in each age bracket.

Those who have participated in the event for many years always get excited when Senior Games time arrives. “I really enjoy the Senior Games,” said 2005 Senior Sportswoman of the Year award winner Barb Malone of Ruffsedale. “You get to have a lot of fun and be with a lot of great people. I try to talk more people into joining the games every year, because most people don’t realize how much fun it is!”

The Games are more about fun and fitness than serious competition. “Most of the seniors that participate in the Games are not drawn to it for the competition,” said Dan Carpenter, Program Coordinator for Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation. “It’s about staying active and having a good time! A lot of people think that they have to be a super athlete to come to the Games. That is not true at all.” This will be the second year coordinating the Senior Games for Assistant Program Coordinator Matt Bruno, who added, “The Games offer a great opportunity for our local seniors to experience sports, entertainment, and recreation combined with fun and fitness.”

The Westmoreland County Senior Games are sponsored in part by Excelsa Health, 1480 WCNS, Inspiring Times in Westmoreland, SuperValu, the First National Bank of Pennsylvania, and Unison Advantage. To receive a registration booklet, call the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation at 724-830-3950 or request one via e-mail by visiting the County Parks’ website at www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/parks.

ATTENTION PACE CARDHOLDERS

Individuals who are currently enrolled in the PACE (Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly) and PACENET (PACE Needs Enhancement Tier) programs will not have to complete a renewal application for 2006. Individuals who have cards that expire on March 31, 2006 should receive a new PACE card in the mail two weeks before their card expires. Cardholders with later expiration dates should receive a new card in the mail 4 to 5 weeks prior to their card’s expiration date.

If you have any questions regarding the PACE program, please call PACE Cardholder Services at 1-800-225-7223.

EDUCATIONAL SERIES FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging, along with Penn State Cooperative Extension, are offering “Practical Help for the Caregiver”, a series of four

educational workshops for **FAMILY CAREGIVERS** of the elderly. The series will be held at the Cooperative Extension Office of Penn State, Donohoe Center, Donohoe Road, Greensburg, for four consecutive weeks beginning April 25, 2006 and ending May 18, 2006. The series will include speakers, demonstrations, discussions, videotape presentations, and participants will receive resource materials. Participants should bring a notebook and pencil, and **reservations are required**. For further details and reservations, contact the Area Agency on Aging at 724-830-4488; 724-830-4489 or toll-free 1-800-442-8000. The reservation deadline is April 18, 2006. The following is an outline of the sessions:

Session I: Tuesday, April 25, 2006 – 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Introduction – Psychological Aspects of Caregiving, Dealing with Stress, Relaxation Exercises, Feelings of the Caregiver and Carereceiver, Prescription Drug Program/Medicare Part D.

Session II: Tuesday, May 2, 2006, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The Aging Process, Feeding & Nutrition for the Elderly.

Session III: Tuesday, May 9, 2006, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Personal Care, Transfer & Lifting, Community Resources.

Session IV: Thursday, May 18, 2006, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Alzheimer’s Disease, Evaluation & Certificates.

**DOMICILIARY CARE
HOME PROVIDERS
NEEDED IN
WESTMORELAND
COUNTY**

- Are you a caring and compassionate person?
- Are you looking for a way to become involved in a good cause?
- Have you ever considered sharing your home and time with a person in need?
- Would you like help with paying household expenses?

Consider becoming a Dom Care Home Provider!

What is a Dom Care home?

A Dom Care home is a private residential home certified by the *Area Agency on Aging (AAA)*. Every home provides a 24-hour supervised living arrangement for individuals referred by the AAA. The program is for individuals who do not need nursing home or hospital care but do have mental, physical, or emotional impairment(s) that prevent them from living independently. All Dom Care homes retain a home-like setting and will have no more than three (3) dependent care residents at one time. Each consumer is provided a single or double occupancy bedroom.

The goals of Dom Care are:

- To provide a safe, supportive, community-based living arrangement for individuals who cannot live independently in the community;
- To encourage and assist individuals in improving or maintaining their

current level of functioning in a home-like setting;

- To provide an alternative to institutionalization.

The AAA certifies Dom Care homes after complying with regulations established by the *PA Department of Aging*. The homes are monitored and inspected on a regular basis to ensure local fire and safety standards and Dom Care home standards.

Who can be a Dom Care Home Provider?

Individuals who wish to open their homes to others and provide a safe and nurturing environment may be a home provider. Providers must also meet the following requirements:

- Be a resident of Pennsylvania and 21 years of age or older;
- Has never been convicted of a crime involving assaultive behavior or moral turpitude;
- Has the experience and capacity to accept persons with physical, mental or age-related difficulties;
- Is willing to work with the AAA and consumers;
- Has the physical health and stamina to be a provider.

All Dom Care Home Providers must meet eligibility requirements yearly. Valid CPR and First Aid training are required for Home Providers. The home must be the residence of the provider and cannot have an employee of the AAA residing in it.

What are Dom Care Home Providers paid?

As of January 2006, the consumer (or their representative) pays the provider \$849.80 per month. Home Providers are also eligible to receive a portion of a rent rebate allowance, up to \$250 per year. Home Providers are not employees of the Area Agency on Aging or Westmoreland County.

If you are interested in learning more

Call us at 724-830-4444 or toll-free

1-800-442-8000

**INTRODUCING THE
AFFORDABLE
APARTMENT LOCATOR**

Finding a better place to live starts with finding a better place to look.

Developed by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), the Apartment Locator is a link for consumers with modest incomes who are searching for affordable apartments – and for property managers and developers who have affordable vacant units. This free and easy-to-use service offers information about apartment locations, rental prices, features and amenities, current vacancies and waiting lists.

Looking into affordable housing options? Look into

www.phfa.org/pal.

**PREPARING FOR YOUR
DOCTOR VISIT**

You get ready for a date. You prepare for meetings and presentations at work. But most people don't think to prepare for visits to the doctor. If you're one of them, you're

missing out on an important way to help ensure you get the best possible health care.

“I don’t think any of us prepare for our medical visits, and I think that’s a big mistake,” Dr. Margarita Alegria, director of the Harvard-affiliated Center for Multicultural Mental Health Research at Cambridge Health Alliance, said at a recent talk at NIH. Alegria investigates disparities in mental health care services among people from different populations.

Research like Alegria’s may lead to solutions to health disparities, but in the meantime, researchers do know that no matter what ethnic background you have, one key to getting good health care is good communication between you and your health professionals. That’s something you can do something about right now.

The first step in good communication is finding a doctor you feel comfortable talking with. Talking about your health means sharing information about how you feel, both physically and emotionally. Having a good relationship with your main, or primary, doctor is one of the best ways to ensure your good health. This doctor knows you and your particular health history. He or she can help you make medical decisions that suit your values and can guide you toward other medical specialists and health care providers you may need.

A basic plan for your visit can also help. Before going to the doctor, make a list of the things you want to discuss. Think about how you’re going to describe your

symptoms. Put your questions in order so you’re sure to ask about the most important ones first.

During your visit, make sure you understand what the medical tests you are getting are for. When a doctor makes a diagnosis, make sure you understand your condition and fully discuss your treatment options.

If you’re not comfortable or unable to do these things yourself, consider bringing a family member or friend and let them know in advance what you want from your visit. Make sure you play your part to get the best health care possible.

Talking to Your Doctor:

www.nei.nih.gov/health/talktodoc.asp

Talking With Your Doctor: A Guide for Older People:

www.niapublications.org/pubs/talking/index.asp

or
1-800-222-2225

Conversando con su Médico:

www.niapublications.org/pubs/conversando/index.asp

or
1-800-222-2225

From the National Institutes of Health

EAT 5 TO 9 A DAY FOR BETTER HEALTH

National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually by the American Dietetic Association.

No doubt you’re familiar with the “5 A Day” logo featured in the produce section of your supermarket.

The logo now has a new look, encouraging Americans to eat not just 5, but 5 to 9 daily servings of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy, active lifestyle.

The “5 to 9” recommendation comes from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and reflects a growing body of research about the important role fruits and vegetables play in health promotion and disease prevention. Depending on your calorie needs, the Guidelines advise eating 5 to 9 servings daily by choosing 2 to 4 servings of fruit and 3 to 5 servings of vegetables.

What is a serving?

A serving is smaller than most people think. For example, a large salad is often 2-4 servings, and a standard 12 oz. carton of 100% orange juice is 2 servings. With such small serving sizes, it’s easy to reach the 5-9 a day recommendation by eating 2-3 servings at a time.

Fruits and Vegetables Connected to Health

Fruits and vegetables deliver vitamins, minerals, and fiber your body needs to stay healthy. They’re also packed with hundreds of disease-fighting phytochemicals – natural substances that work as a team and may protect good health. Only fruits and vegetables, not pills or supplements, can provide all of these nutrients together.

A growing body of research offers even more good reasons to eat your fruits and vegetables:

- **Lower your risk of certain cancers:** People whose diets are rich in fruits and

vegetables (5 or more servings a day) may have a lower risk of developing certain types of cancers.

- **Lower your risk of heart disease:** Some studies indicate that people who eat 9 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, as part of a heart-healthy diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, are less likely to develop some types of heart disease than people who eat only 2 to 3 servings a day.
- **Lower your risk of stroke:** A recent study found that eating 10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, as part of a healthy diet, was associated with a significantly lower risk of stroke. People who ate at least 3 servings of fruits and vegetables per day had lower rates of stroke than people who ate little or no fruits and vegetables. Stroke rates declined even further with each additional serving of fruits and vegetables.
- **Reduce high blood pressure:** According to the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) study, when people with high blood pressure ate 8 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day and low-fat dairy products, as part of a healthy diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol, they

lowered their blood pressure within a month.

- **Help you manage your weight:** When combined with a healthy, active lifestyle, eating fruits and vegetables can help you manage your weight. Most fruits and vegetables are low in calories and fat, and many contain lots of water and fiber to help you feel full. Eating larger portions of fruits and vegetables at meals, and fewer high calorie foods, can reduce calorie intake while still satisfying your appetite. For the best calorie control, fruits and vegetables should be eaten raw, steamed, or boiled, and without any added sauces, butters or oils.

Eat for Color

The National Cancer Institute recommends eating a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Try fruits and vegetables from each of these color groups regularly:

Green – Leafy greens, lettuce, green pepper, broccoli, green beans, peas, green cabbage, green apples, green grapes, honeydew, kiwifruit.

Orange/Yellow – Carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut and winter squash, cantaloupe, oranges, lemons, nectarines, peaches, mangoes, papayas.

Red – Tomatoes, spaghetti sauce, tomato juice, red peppers, red onions, kidney beans, red lentils, apples, pink grapefruit, red grapes, strawberries, cherries,

watermelon, raspberries, cranberries.

Blue/Purple – Eggplant, purple grapes, plums, raisins, blueberries, blackberries, purple figs, dried plums, black currants.

White – Cauliflower, mushrooms, onions, garlic, parsnips, shallots, turnips, ginger, jicama, bananas, pears.

Center meals around fruits and vegetables

To help reach your goal of 5 to 9 daily servings, make fruits and vegetables the focus of each meal. Create your plate around vegetables – like broccoli and cauliflower – instead of including them only as a side. Think about a variety of fruits and vegetables as the main dish, with meat and starches as accompaniments. Eating fruits or vegetables as part of most meals makes it easy to eat 5 to 9 servings a day.

Easy ways to enjoy fruits and vegetables

Start your day with a serving of fruit like a banana, a large handful of berries, or a small fresh fruit smoothie. Snack on fruits throughout the day, like plums, pears, or melons. Eat a big salad at lunch – try a bed of baby spinach with carrots, peppers, and broccoli. Try raw vegetables with low-fat dip. Enjoy your favorite beans and peas as a side dish or on a salad. Add fresh or frozen vegetables to your favorite pasta sauce or main dish. Try fruit, like berries or a mango for dessert. Remember, dips or dressings and food preparation such as frying or breading adds additional calories.

For more information, visit www.eatright.org and www.5aday.gov.

This fact sheet is sponsored by the National Cancer Institute's 5 A Day for Better Health Program and the Department of Health and Human Services. The contents have been reviewed by the American Dietetic Association's Fact Sheet Review Board. The appearance of this information does not constitute an endorsement by ADA of the sponsor's products or services. This fact sheet was prepared for the general public. Questions regarding its content and use should be directed to a dietetics professional.

SEARCHING FOR A JOB?

If you are 55 years of age or older, a resident of Westmoreland County, and your income falls within our guidelines, you may be eligible for our training program.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) at Westmoreland County Community College enrolls low-income older adults to update old skills or get training in new skills, allowing you to earn while you learn in preparation for re-entering the job market. All positions earn \$5.15 per hour, 20 hours per week.

For more information, please call Mimi Owens at 724-925-4098 or Rebecca Dunn at 724-925-4231 or toll-free 1-800-262-2103 and ask for the Lifelong Learning Center.

Available Training Positions

Clerical Trainee – Office work, familiarity with office machines helpful but not required. Primary duties may include receptionist activities, copying and collating materials for mass mailings, assisting

with fundraising activities, and maintaining information areas. Positions available throughout Westmoreland County.

Dietary Aide – Positions available in Monessen and New Florence. Must be knowledgeable in minimal food preparation techniques and have the ability to work with senior citizens.

Docent – Training provided in archiving, researching, and preserving local history. Positions available in Scottdale and Ligonier.

Library Aides – Positions available throughout Westmoreland County. Individuals should possess an inquisitive, helpful attitude.

Maintenance/Groundskeeper – Positions available in the Monessen, Greensburg, Ligonier and Scottdale areas.

Shop keeping – Learn aspects of retail sales and shop management in non-profit setting. Positions available in Scottdale, Ligonier and Greensburg areas.

NEW MINI-EXPO IN NEW KENSINGTON

Please watch your local newspapers and senior center calendars for upcoming information on a new HEALTH AND EDUCATION EXPO to be held on Wednesday, May 24, 2006 at the New Kensington Senior Center.

This mini-expo will provide the same variety of information, activities and health screenings as the HEALTH AND EDUCATION EXPO that has been held in October at the Four Points Sheraton in Greensburg.

The New Kensington Senior Center is located at 1039

Third Avenue, New Kensington.

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