



Senior Update

Commission
on
Aging

Published by the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging

Senior Update

April/May/June 2005

Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay Designs an Individual Program of Family Support

by Micheal Pope

What does a family do when faced with the redesign of their family due to the diagnosis of Alzheimer's and related dementias? Where does a family turn to understand and navigate the services available? How does a family cope with the caregiving needs of their loved one and themselves?

Families all over the Bay Area are faced with these and other questions when a loved one is diagnosed with Alzheimer's or a related dementia. Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay (ASEB) diligently works to assist families who are seeking a partnership with an organization who can assist them from the time of diagnosis throughout the course of the disease process. Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay partners with each family to ensure that they get the support that they need. A Family Support client can expect a personal guide who assists in the creation of a long-term family care plan that is comprehensive and lessens the stress that can accompany caregiving.

When family caregivers find a safe place that fulfills the need of their loved one with Alzheimer's disease or a related condition, they are able to maintain employment as well as manage the day-to-day activities that it takes to care for a family. Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay is privileged to support these families. We serve all of Alameda County from the following locations: Call (510) 644-829 in Berkeley or (510) 888-1411 in Hayward.

Mark your calendars!

The *Senior Rally*, Sacramento, is scheduled for
Wednesday, May 18, 2005

The *White House Conference on Aging*,
Washington, D.C., is scheduled
for October 23-26, 2005

Senior Center Without Walls

by Terry Englehart

Bingo? *On the telephone?* Yes! Senior Center Without Walls, a new program jointly sponsored by Senior Resources at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Oakland and the Episcopal Homes Foundation, offers bingo and other activities through free telephone conference calls.

Homebound elders who are unable to go to a community senior center have the opportunity to participate in group activities, take classes, enjoy friendly conversation, and form new friendships. Inspiration for this program comes from the highly successful University Without Walls program operated by DOROT, to homebound seniors in New York City.

Our current offerings include Funny Bones Humor Group, Reminiscence, Senior Support Group, Bingo, Cultural Exchange, Brain Aerobics, Stress Reduction, and Singalong. All teachers and group leaders are volunteers. A number of other groups will be added for the summer session, including presentations by senior service agencies on such topics as nutrition, falls prevention, changes in Medicare, consumer protection, and other topics.

Here's how it works:

1. A schedule of upcoming classes and groups is distributed to prospective participants.
2. Participants register for their selected sessions either by telephone or by mail.
3. If appropriate, a packet of class materials is mailed to each participant prior to the start of the class.
4. Participants are given the conference call number and a code number to connect them to the chosen classes at the scheduled times. No charge is added to their phone bills.

Prospective participants and volunteer group leaders are invited to contact Terry Englehart via e-mail at srresources@yahoo.com or by phone at 510-444-0243 for more information, or to receive a schedule of groups starting in June.

Alameda County Library Brings programs to Your Home

by Larry Epstein

If you are home-bound or institution-bound of any age, or you live in senior housing facilities in Albany, Castro Valley, Dublin, Fremont, Newark, San Lorenzo, Union City and additional unincorporated areas in Alameda County, volunteers will cheerfully deliver books and other materials on a schedule to you.

This service is **not** limited to seniors—it includes anyone you know who is unable to come to the library. If you or someone you know would benefit from this service, or if you would like to be a *Homeward Bound* volunteer, call 510-745-1499. Currently there are 60 volunteers, but more are needed.

The Alameda County Library offers a large collection of regular and large print books, CDs and audio and video tapes—feature films, documentaries and descriptive videos with background narration during breaks in dialogue for those who are blind or have poor vision. “Talking Books” – book on tapes and cassettes are available from the State Library for the Visually Impaired. Applications are available at all Alameda County Library branches, or call 510-745-1499 or the State Library at 800-952-5666.

The County Library also offers classes in computer use. Their Teen-Senior Internet Program pairs teens with senior citizens who want to learn how to use the Internet and/or the library catalog. One-on-one tutoring will be arranged between the tutor and senior and will take place in the library, currently offered in Albany or Fremont. Teenagers should call Gary Morrison 510-745-1438 in Fremont or Julie Winkelstein 510-526-7866 in Albany or their local library branch to offer their assistance.

Other popular senior programs include travel films, speakers, refreshments, and a chance to talk with old and new friends. Contact your Senior Services representative at your local branch for more information.

Subtle Self-Neglect

by Joanna Selby

I have been busily attending many meetings and learning lots of new valuable information and mingling with new people to network in aging, long-term care, social services, and legislative areas. It’s wonderful for me to meet new friends and acquire their professional experiences. I have been very happy with my busy and blooming life. When anyone looks at me, I appear to be functioning very well.

But I have been subtly self-neglecting myself in self-grooming, nutrition, physical exercises, mental relaxation/meditation, and social/entertainment areas. Some of these situations may have developed by living alone. Had my husband lived, he certainly would have touted for me to go walking, to movies, eating out, shopping for new clothes, etc.

First, I have not done enough exercises so I gained weight and I comfortably accepted it, not even realizing I was becoming overweight. I was not wearing decent clothing as I naturally grew out of the suits and many clothes I had. I paid no attention, happily fitting into larger dress sizes. When I started to walk two blocks, I realized I was short of breath, my footsteps were very slow and heavy, and my hips pulled me back. So I got scared of my physical condition.

As far as nutrition is concerned, I had not cooked decent balanced meals for myself for a long time. Cooking for a single person is really a chore. Once in a while I would cook for friends so we could have good food over titillating stories—a real treat for me.

Although I was busy attending meetings or helping out other people, I did not take time for self-reflecting meditation for a long time. If anyone asked me whether I saw such and such movies, I had no idea what they were talking about. I had somehow become isolated from the reality of day-to-day living.

Now I walk at least 40 minutes up and down the hills in my area everyday. By walking I lost a few pounds so I was able to fit into my old clothes. For balanced meals I now try to cook healthy foods for myself to live to be 95 years old. Meditation is done at night before I go to bed to bring peace of mind. Getting old does not require an eight-hour sleep—at least for me. I still have to make time to go to movies or to other entertainment. I used to dance a lot. One day someone suggested that I dance and I did. Then I realized how much of my life was cut off being single and faint yearning feeling for dance and singing is slowly surging out of my heart. *(continued on page 3)*



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A Statistical Profile of Americans Aged 65+

The older population (65+) numbered 35.6 million in 2002, an increase of 3.3 million or 10.2% since 1992. This is expected to more than double by 2030 to about 71.5 million. Minority groups are projected to represent 26.4% of the 65+ in 2030.

The number of Americans aged 45-64 who will reach 65 over the next twenty years increased by 38% during this decade. Over 2.0 million turned 65 in 2002. The 85+ population is projected to increase from 4.6 million in 2002 to 9.6 million in 2030.

Older women outnumber older men at 20.8 million to 14.8 million. Half of older women age 75+ live alone. Older men are much more likely to be married than older women (72% of men vs. 40% women). Almost half of older women in 2002 were widows (46%).

Persons reaching age 65 have an average life expectancy of an additional 18.1 years (19.4 for females and 16.6 for males). Almost 400,000 grandparents age 65+ had the primary responsibility for their grandchildren who live with them.

Most older persons have at least one chronic condition and many have multiple conditions. Among the most frequently occurring conditions of the elderly in 2000-2001 were: hypertension (49.2%); arthritic symptoms (36.1%); all types of heart disease (31.1%); any cancer (20%), sinusitis (15.1%), diabetes (15%).

There were declines among the leading causes of death from heart disease (3%), stroke (3%), accidents/unintentional injuries (2%), and cancer (1%).

However, mortality rates increased for Alzheimer's (up 5.8%), influenza and pneumonia (3.2%), high blood pressure (2.9%), and septicemia or blood poisoning (2.6%).

The Social Security Administration reported the major sources of income for older people was: Social Security (reported by 91%); income from assets (58%), public and private pensions (40%), and earnings (22%).

About 3.6 million 65+ lived below the poverty level in 2002 (10.4%); another 2.2 million or 6.4% were classified as "near-poor" (income between the poverty level and 125% of that level). The federal poverty level for 2005 is \$9,579/yr/single and \$12,830/yr/couple. Want more? Go to: aoa.gov/prof/Statistics/profile/profiles.asp.

The Oregon Center for Applied Science, Inc., is seeking the help of men and women to participate in a research study to help improve a new family caregiver web program. If you are juggling a part or full-time job and helping out an aging friend or family member, you may qualify for the "Caregiver's Friend" research study. Participants receive up to \$85 for submitting 4 on-line surveys and trying out a new website designed to provide support and information for family caregivers. To find out if you qualify, go to: <http://CaregiversFriend.com>.

Jewish Family and Children's Services of the East Bay (JFCS)

by Efrat Stark

Jewish Family and Children's Services of the East Bay's new **Center for Older Adult Services** have opened offices at 828 San Pablo Ave., #104, in Albany, 94706. The offices are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. JFCS serves people of all backgrounds in the entire East Bay. They provide: *Information and Referral; Geriatric Case Management; Geriatric Consultations; Counseling (Individual, couple, family); Support Groups (Bereavement Group, Older Women's Group, Group for Long-Distance Family Caregivers); and free Workshops (call for schedules).*

They specialize in working with families who are helping their aging relatives. Consultations and counseling are offered both to older adults and to their family members.

For more information, call (510) 558-7800, (925) 927-2000, or go to www.jfcs-eastbay.org.

...*Subtle Self-Neglect, continued from page 2*

I wonder how many of us out there live like this. We always think of self-neglect as showing obvious signs of disheveled clothing, a "don't care" attitude, etc., but I found that *subtle self-neglect* is equally important to look out for as an individual. We must live a wholesome life, not a half-full life. Think—as we live to be 95 years old—we must be creative and find healthy ways of living to fulfill our remaining golden years with health and happiness. Living is precious—enjoy every minute of it.

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Alameda County Area Agency on Aging
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April, May, June 2005

SENIOR INFORMATION by Mary Kaufmann

Supplemental Security Income (SSI/SSP) benefits were increased April 1, 2005. Single persons (aged or disabled) can receive up to \$812/month and a blind individual can receive up to \$877/month. Couples may receive \$1,437/month, and if both are blind the amount is \$1,664/month.

Eligible individuals who do not have cooking facilities and those residing in Residential Care Facilities can receive higher benefits (from \$896 to \$991. Those living in a household of another will received a reduced amount. Since these benefit programs are complex, please contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213.

Immigrants who are not eligible for Federal SSI/SSP may apply for the state ***Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)***. Benefits are generally \$10 less than the SSI/SSP program for singles and \$20 less for couples. Information is available at 1-800-648-0954.

Spousal impoverishment limits affecting married couples who are seeking Medi-Cal support when one needs to go to a nursing home has been raised to \$95,100 for 2005. Go to www.CANHR.org for detailed information on this.

Be sure to check with your Senior Center and get involved in ***Older Americans Month*** activities. The theme this year is "***Celebrate Long Term Living.***" The centers will also have information regarding the ***Senior Rally*** coming up on Wednesday, May 18.

The 5th annual ***California Senior Injury Prevention Conference*** will be held at the UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento on Thursday, May 19. Questions: Call Colleen Campbell, 510-577-3535.

The ***Marine Community Center*** (15301 Wicks Blvd., San Leandro) will celebrate National Senior Health & Fitness Day on Thursday, May 26 from 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Call 510-577-3462 for information.

The ***United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County (510-729-0852)*** will hold a ***Healthy Living Festival*** at Lake Merritt in Oakland on Friday, July 8.

The San Jose Mercury News reports that Consumer Reports has launched a new web site that compares drugs for high cholesterol, pain relief and heartburn. The site, www.crbestbuydrugs.org, chooses a "best buy" in each category. To be considered a "best buy," the drug must have a safety record as good as others in the same category and be priced significantly lower than the most costly drug.