



Generations


RESOURCES FOR AN IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

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Summer 2013 • Volume 45



Inside:
GentleCare's Lucky G
Lakewood's Furry Friend
Miss Purl's Girls



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Generations

RESOURCES FOR AN IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

Volume 45

Summer 2013

Generations, affiliated with Vincennes University, is a not-for-profit agency which serves older adults and disabled individuals of all ages, in the counties of Daviess, Dubois, Greene, Knox, Martin and Pike, without regard to race, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, and/or sexual orientation by providing resources that foster personal independence while assuring individual dignity and an enhanced quality of life. Generations' mission is to offer people choices as they age to live a better life with independence and dignity.

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Generations Magazine is published by Vincennes University's Community Services/GENERATIONS.

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Generations Magazine is published three times a year for older adults in Daviess, Dubois, Greene, Knox, Martin and Pike counties.

Please send all communications to: GENERATIONS, c/o Jane Hall, P.O. Box 314, Vincennes, IN 47591 or jhall@vinu.edu.

To report a change of address or to be removed from our magazine mailing list, call 1-800-742-9002

or email generations@vinu.edu.

Printed by Ewing Printing • www.ewingprinting.com • Vincennes, IN

About the Cover: Research has shown that the presence of dogs is both physically and psychologically beneficial to individuals of all ages. Ever since Lucky G was adopted by GentleCare in Vincennes, Richard Spangle has been enjoying the little pup's visits to his room. Inset, Ty actually adopted the residents of Lakewood Home just outside of Petersburg and Thomas (Skip) Marsee is one of his biggest fans.

Letter from the Generations Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Sequestration – have you heard of it? It is a word that keeps me up at night and I am going to tell you why.

Sequestration is an obscure budgeting gimmick from Washington, D.C. that slashes supports for seniors in our community.

Sequester refers to automatic spending cuts in particular categories of federal outlays. This wave of \$85.4 billion in automatic cuts took effect on March 1st of this year.

Although I am concerned about the total impact sequestration is having on this country, Generations is working to figure out how to handle the sequester's effect on the most vulnerable older adults in our six-county service area. For many seniors in Daviess, Dubois, Greene, Knox, Martin and Pike counties, their ability to remain independent and healthy at home is dependent on programs such as Meals on Wheels.

AARP reports that nearly 9 million Americans 50+ are at risk for hunger every day – a staggering 79 percent increase in just 10 years. The sequester means substantial cuts to senior meal programs across the state jeopardizing thousands of seniors' ability to continue living in their own homes. For Generations this means cutting services to at least 37 clients or 9,100 meals. We will also have to put folks on a waitlist – something we've never had to do in the 37 years we have offered a nutrition program for older adults.

It also means Generations will be making cuts to other essential Older Americans Act services such as rides to doctor's appointments, assistance with medication management, access to home health and personal care services, as well as the ability to participate in exercise and injury prevention programs that have evidence to prove that they keep seniors healthier thus avoiding unnecessary and costly hospital and nursing home stays. The cuts to transportation providers will result in approximately 1,700 fewer trips for older adults.



Laura A. Holscher
Executive Director

Funding cuts for the National Family Caregiver Support Program are going to hurt our family caregivers who are doing their best to help Mom or Dad continue to live at home. Our caregiver program will remain closed for at least the first three months of the fiscal year. We already have 39 people on our waitlist and that number will probably double in six months. Reduced services mean more work, financial strain and worry for family caregivers. These are services that help family caregivers care longer for their loved ones. Given that family caregivers are the single largest source of long-term care, we must find every possible way to support their efforts, not undermine them.

While deficit reduction is a worthy goal, arbitrarily cutting critical programs to the most vulnerable population groups will not result in savings for taxpayers, but it will cause great pain and anxiety to those who can least handle it. When at-risk older adults don't get the help they need to remain in their homes and communities, the next option they face is usually going to a nursing home.

Nationally, home and community-based services cost about one-third as much as nursing home care on average. Few older adults have the resources to fund institutional care out-of-pocket for very long, which means even middle class seniors often end up spending down their resources and going on Medicaid, which is paid for with federal and state dollars.

If there are fewer rides for seniors to the doctor or fewer nutritious meals delivered to the homebound elderly, the negative health outcomes will not only be suffered by these vulnerable older individuals and their families, but also felt by taxpayers in the form of higher Medicare and Medicaid expenditures.

Years of stagnant or reduced funding have already sliced into our client services, especially home meal delivery. Our agency has nothing left to squeeze out of our budget. We have already cut staff and reduced our meal delivery from five days a week to just three. We have to rely on client attrition just to absorb these cuts so we are unable

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Be proactive when driving instead of reactive

JESSICA SCHULTHEIS, OTR, CDRS
Occupational Therapist
Certified Driver Rehab Specialist



Driving offers a great sense of independence and feeling of self-worth. There are many positive effects of driving including interaction with peers both physically and mentally which can lead to improved health and emotional support. Retirement from driving, although sometimes necessary and the best option, can lead to negative consequences such as social isolation, depression and declined health status.

In general, older adults (over 65) have the fewest number of crashes per year, partially because they tend to drive fewer miles. However, per mile driven, they have a greatly increased crash risk and the highest rate of fatal crashes. This is generally due to higher frailty compared to younger drivers. Injuries also tend to be more severe and more difficult to reverse. This is one reason why it is so important to be proactive with

driving instead of reactive. If we wait to be reactive to a situation, it might be too late.

Some general skills involved with driving include but are not limited to: visual acuity, peripheral vision, visual perception, attention, memory, problem solving, quick decisions, and of course good movement and strength in our arms, legs, neck and trunk. The main difficulty arises in that these skills all have to happen simultaneously. A deficit in any of these areas can cause serious consequences if not addressed.

There are many things a person can do to keep their driving health at a good level. One of the most important is to keep your general health good. Unaddressed medical issues can lead to increased symptoms involving any of the skills previously mentioned which, in turn, can lead to unsafe driving and increased danger for the individual as well as other drivers on the road. This is also true with vision as many older adults begin to have age related visual deficits including cataracts and glaucoma.

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Medicare urges seniors to join the fight against fraud

New health care summaries help seniors identify improper payments

In mailboxes across the country, people with Medicare will soon see a redesigned statement of their claims for services and benefits that will help them better spot potential fraud, waste and abuse. These newly redesigned Medicare Summary Notices are just one more way the Obama Administration is making the elimination of fraud, waste and abuse in health care a top priority. Because of actions like these and new tools under the Affordable Care Act, the number of suspect providers and suppliers thrown out of the Medicare program has more than doubled in 35 states. "The new Medicare Summary Notice gives seniors and people with disabilities accurate information on the services they receive in a simpler, clearer way," said CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner. "It's an important tool for staying informed on benefits, and for spotting potential Medicare fraud by making the claims history easier to review. The redesigned notice will make it easier for people with



Medicare to understand their benefits, file an appeal if a claim is denied, and spot claims for services they never received. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will send the notices to Medicare beneficiaries on a quarterly basis.

"A beneficiary's best defense against fraud is to check their Medicare Summary Notices for accuracy and to diligently protect their health information for privacy," said Peter Budetti, CMS deputy administrator for program integrity. "Most Medicare providers are honest and work hard to provide services to beneficiaries. Unfortunately, there are some people trying to exploit the Medicare system." Medicare beneficiaries and caregivers are critical partners in the fight against fraud. In April of this year, CMS announced a proposed rule that would increase rewards—up to \$9.9 million – paid to Medicare beneficiaries and others whose tips about suspected fraud lead to the successful recovery of funds.

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Be proactive when driving . . .

Continued from Page 3

Another factor is making sure the vehicle “fits” the driver. This can involve checking the drivers’ position in the car to verify that there is a clear visual field and room for good mobility. Some guidelines to keep in mind include:

1. Make sure the chest is at least 10 inches away from the airbag (steering wheel) to avoid possible injury.

2. Make sure the level of the eyes is three inches above the top of the steering wheel.

3. Make sure the driver can activate both pedals without using just their toes. This will ensure good control of the gas and brake.

4. Make sure the driver can activate additional controls without problem or strain. These include turn signals, wipers, and lights.

5. Make sure seat belts are worn properly and adjusted for comfort if possible. Participating in a CarFit event is an excellent way to verify these factors as well as many others. CarFit is an educational program that was created by the American Society on Aging and developed as collaboration between AARP, AAA, and AOTA (American Occupational Therapy Association). The process takes around 20 minutes and is a way to verify a good fit in a vehicle as well as to obtain local resources to ensure continued safe driving.

There are several low cost adaptations that can be used to help with positioning and visibility as well. A cushion can raise the driver up enough to improve visibility out the wind shield as well as to help with the position of the seat belt. A sheepskin wrap can be placed on the seat belt to cushion along the upper chest and neck. A panoramic mirror can be placed over the factory mirror to allow for a bigger visual field behind and to the sides of the vehicle. Small convex mirrors can also be added to the side mirrors to reduce blind spots. The items can all be purchased at local auto stores as well as in the automotive section of larger retailers.

If more extensive problems arise, a driving evaluation may be appropriate. This can involve a clinical evaluation which specifically addressed the individual skills for driving and a behind the wheel evaluation to evaluate how the individual skills work

simultaneously and how the driver can deal with other traffic and various traffic situations. Although medical insurance generally doesn’t cover these evaluations, they can be very well worth the cost for peace of mind with possible recommendations.

References: American Medical Association/National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration. (2003) The Physicians Guide to the Assessment and Counseling of Older Drivers. Chicago.

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September event offers inspiration and information

The Dubois County Public Health Partnership's 4th annual Healthy State of Mind program on September 10th at the Shiloh United Methodist Church Family Life Center will offer information and inspiration for adults to improve their physical, mental and social fitness.

Donna Oeding, Dubois County Health Department Administrative Director, noted that the program, targeting men and women, 50 and over, will feature speakers, a vendor fair, lunch and door prizes.

Topics will include "Treat Me Right:" by Joan Knies, a Community Education Specialist For Crisis Connection, Inc., "Be a Go-Go" by Ken Schulz, a national speaker with Humana, and "Aging – Master Work of Wisdom" by Pat Evans, a motivational speaker retired from Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center. An exercise demonstration will be provided by Chelsea Brewer of Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center.



Healthy State of Mind

Registration opens at 8:30 a.m. The day wraps up around 1:30 p.m. with door prizes.

"The goal of this annual program is to offer information to encourage individuals to make proactive choices as they

age," Oeding added. The committee is expecting a large turnout as over 125 people and 20 vendors attended last year's event.

Registration is \$10 and must be made in advance by calling the Arnold F. Habig Center by August 27th at 812-482-4455. Catering by Meyer will be serving lunch.

Sponsoring agencies include: Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center, TRI-CAP, Older Americans – Arnold F. Habig Community Center, Dubois County, Generations, Crisis Connection and the Dubois County Health Department.

If you wish to be a vendor, please contact Donna Oeding at the Dubois County Health Department at 481-7050 for additional information.



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Miss Purl's Girls

Shared hobby more than a pastime for this crafty group of friends

BY JANE HALL

Generations magazine editor

Some may find the rhythmic, repetitive movements of knitting to be tedious and boring. But for a close-knit group of fiber enthusiasts, this hobby is a tremendous source of fun and fellowship.

Known as Miss Purl's Girls, the women gather on Saturdays at Atkinson Farm Yarns in the rolling hills just east of Vincennes. Owner and master knitter Cheryl Atkinson opened her yarn shop nine years ago in what was originally her husband Bill's boyhood home.

The number of knitters varies between five and 20, depending on the weather. They take their places around a big oak table where they practice a centuries-old craft and connect with conversation and camaraderie. Cheryl circles the table demonstrating stitches, interpreting patterns and joining in the chitchat.

But there is more than a shared hobby that binds these women together. There is a spirit of generosity that runs through the knitters inspiring them to use their time and talents to give back to their community. For the past four years, they have devoted their charitable efforts toward helping older adults served by Generations Area 13 Agency on Aging.

The idea originated when Cindy Bailey of Petersburg, a member of



the knitting group and a Case Manager at Generations, shared her concern that many of the older adults she sees on a regular basis had basic needs that fell beyond the scope of state and federal funding. Cheryl especially liked focusing their efforts on this age group because she had been a geriatric nurse prior to starting her

Above, Terri Gislason adds new items to the display of hand-made doll clothes at Atkinson Farm Yarns. At left is a "Hello Kitty" sweater. Below, left, are shoes and a purse crafted out of duct tape, and below right is a skirt featuring the hip moustache motif.



yarn business.

The group began by filling 10 to 12 laundry baskets each year with everyday necessities for Generations' Build*A*Basket Christmas project. According to Cindy, one year they focused on each basket having new towels, another year they made sure each

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Exercise: One of the Healthiest Things You Can Do

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Like most people, you've probably heard that physical activity and exercise are good for you. In fact, being physically active on a regular basis is one of the healthiest things you can do for yourself. Studies have shown that exercise provides many health benefits and that older adults can gain a lot by staying physically active. Even moderate exercise and physical activity can improve the health of people who are frail or who have diseases that accompany aging.

Being physically active can also help you stay strong and fit enough to keep doing the things you like to do as you get older. Making exercise and physical activity a regular part of your life can improve your health and help you maintain your independence as you age.

BE AS ACTIVE AS POSSIBLE

Regular physical activity and exercise are important to the physical and mental health of almost everyone, including older adults. Staying physically active and exercising regularly can produce long-term health benefits and even improve health for some older people who already have diseases and disabilities. That's why health experts say that older adults should aim to be as active as possible.

BEING INACTIVE CAN BE RISKY

Although exercise and physical activity are among the healthiest things you can do for yourself, some older adults are reluctant to exercise. Some are afraid that exercise will be too hard or that physical activity will harm them. Others might think they have to join a gym or have special equipment. Yet, studies show that

"taking it easy" is risky. For the most part, when older people lose their ability to do things on their own, it doesn't happen just because they've aged. It's usually because they're not active.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health, inactive people are nearly twice as likely to develop heart disease as those who are more active. Lack of physical activity also can lead to more visits to the doctor, more hospitalizations, and more use of medicines for a variety of illnesses.

PREVENT OR DELAY DISEASE

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Miss Purl's Girls

Continued from Page 9

basket had a new set of sheets and bed pillows.

Last year the group decided it would be nice to have money on hand throughout the year to help clients in desperate need so they held a very successful "De-Stashing Sale" at the Farmers Market in Vincennes. As Terri Gislason explained, the sale offered members a way to unload some of the yarn that they have acquired over time with the intention of making a wonderful knitted object.

"Every knitter has a "stash" and they know they're never going to do anything with it," Terri added, so the benefits were two-fold.

Now when Cindy has a client with a special need the group can respond quickly. They recently purchased socks and bath towels for one client, a weather radio for a gentleman who was fearful of storms and covered the cost of repairing another client's lift chair. The money has also been used to purchase blood pressure cups and bathroom scales for clients with chronic diseases that require daily monitoring.



Members of Miss Purl's Girls gather around the table on a recent Saturday morning to work on their latest projects.

Cindy has been overwhelmed by her fellow knitters' generosity.

"They do whatever they can to help," she said.

Cindy was especially touched by their concern when

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Lakewood Home's "Forever" Friend

Terrier works his way into the house next door and into the hearts of its residents

BY JANE HALL
Generations magazine editor

Pet adoption stories generally involve compassionate individuals opening their hearts and homes to an animal in need. But in rural Pike County, it was a tiny and determined Jack Russell terrier named Ty who decided there was a group of people living nearby who needed him.

It all began when Jenny and Terry Knepp began the process of turning her parents' home into a senior assisted living facility in 2010. During the construction phase, Ty, who actually lived next door with Jenny's brother and his family, began showing up on a regular basis. When residents began moving into what is now known as Lakewood Home, the dog decided he wanted to stay with them.

"We tried taking him home," Jenny said adding that her brother even tried restraining him with a shock collar and an electric fence between the properties, but the crafty little pup took the long way around and found a spot where he could allude the fence and make his escape. The back and forth went

on for about six months until both families decided it was futile to try and keep Ty away from his new friends at Lakewood.

One friend in particular, Thomas (Skip) Marsee, a dog lover from childhood, was helping Ty from the inside in his quest to relocate. Jenny said it was Skip who started letting the little dog come inside and then invited him to stay in his room. And now it's Skip who takes Ty for long walks around the pond behind the house and through the wooded grounds of Campbelltown in search of squirrels to chase and tree.

When it's time to relax, Ty can be found sitting on the back porch that overlooks the pond or snoozing in his bed in the family room. And he knows just who to sit by at the dinner table if he hopes to get a table scrap.

Jenny said the arrangement has worked out well for both families because her brother and his family are gone a lot.

"There are people here constantly," Jenny said, referring to the staff and her 14 residents. "You can't blame the dog for wanting to stay."

Ty, who is now 12 years old, has been a permanent resident at Lakewood Home for a year now and seems totally at peace with his decision to relocate. Being an older dog, he has some arthritis in his back legs, but Jenny said you would think he was still a pup when he is outside chasing the squirrels.



Top Left: Ty enjoys spending time on the patio with the residents. He is pictured above with Skip Marsee and Mary Markham and her rescue dog Andy.

Bottom Left: Skip likes to take Ty on walks around Lakewood's pond and woods. The tiny terrier is always on the lookout for a squirrel to chase.



"We just say Ty decided to retire along with the rest of the residents and this is where he plans to do that," Jenny said. "This is his home now."



Top Right: Ty's dog bed is strategically placed in the family room where he can keep a watchful eye on all the activities.

Bottom Right: Administrator Jenny Knepp takes a moment to pet and praise her littlest resident.

GentleCare's Lucky G

Discarded like trash, this little puppy is now a treasure

BY JANE HALL

Generations Magazine Editor

“Happiness is a warm puppy.” That’s how Charles Schulz, creator of the comic strip Peanuts, so aptly described the positive effect a small four-legged bundle of soft fur can have on our emotions.

And if you have any doubts as to the validity of his statement, just ask the residents and staff of GentleCare in Vincennes for proof. Ever since a puppy named Lucky G came into their lives in January, their daily routine has definitely been brightened by the presence of this tiny dachshund mix.

But it’s hard to say who is happier with this arrangement – the dog or all his new friends. Terry Bottoms, the nursing homes’ director of social services, knows all too well that this sweet puppy’s life could have taken a much darker turn.

According to Terry, when he arrived at work early on the morning of January 9th, he heard the sounds of a puppy whining nearby. Despite the cold and rainy conditions, he followed the sounds to the dumpster outside the facility.

When he peeked inside, he spotted the tiny dog, scared and soaking wet, on top of the trash.

“I scooped him up and brought him into the building,” Terry said. “The nurses quickly took charge and dried him off and then began taking him around to the residents’ rooms to show him off.”

By the time GentleCare's Administrator Jerry Melvin arrived for work that morning, the staff and residents, including his own mother, Hazel Melvin, had fallen in love with the tiny dog and were in agreement that they should keep him. Realizing that he was outnumbered, Jerry went along with the idea.

Lucky G watches over the residents from the comfort of his dog nest.



Middle: Beverly Duffey keeps a stash of pretzel rods in her room to share with Lucky G when he stops by to visit.

Bottom Left: Lucky G enjoys retrieving any item that happens to fall on the floor.



Top Right: Patty McNeece, Director of Nursing, and Lucky G entertain residents in the lobby of GentleCare.

Bottom Right: Always curious, Lucky G follows a staff member down the hall to check on a resident.

A dog lover himself, Jerry, began the process of getting Lucky G a clean bill of health from a local veterinarian and coming up with a formal pet policy ensuring the safety of the residents. Once the State Board of Health put its stamp of approval on the policy, Lucky G became an official member of the GentleCare family.

During the day, Lucky G goes full throttle running down the polished hallways, visiting with the residents and doing tricks in the lobby. According to Terry, the pup pretty much has the run of the place except during meal times when he must be kept in his cage.

During the night, he goes from room to room checking on the residents. There are a few residents he is especially close to and he jumps up on their beds for a short snooze before moving on down the hall.

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Continued from Page 11

she suggested they send cheer cards to a young woman who had moved to a skilled nursing center when she suddenly became bedridden. Rather than just send cards, the group decided to adopt the woman and began sending her care packages through Cindy. They have no idea what her name is, but they have nicknamed her "Angel."

This year their big fund-raiser is making doll clothes and accessories that fit American Girl dolls and according to Cheryl, Terri is the mastermind of the project. There is currently a wide selection on display at the yarn shop.

Hello Kitty items are their biggest sellers right now, according to Terri, but she added that the recent mustache mania is making it impossible to keep anything featuring the hippest motif of the moment in stock.

Terri, a stickler for details, even lines the doll sweaters with fabric so the doll's fingers won't get

caught in the knitted fabric and frustrate the small child trying to dress it.

This fall they are planning a raffle that will feature a wide assortment of handmade doll clothes and a gift certificate to purchase an American Girl Doll to wear them. Terri said the drawing will be held before Thanksgiving so the winner will know in time for Christmas.

Terri has been knitting since she was 12 years old, but she said lots of people take up the hobby later in life. "What helps is being out here with all the other knitters," she added.

Recent studies have shown that knitting is good for your health because the repetitive action it requires promotes relaxation. Miss Purl's Girls would agree that their shared hobby is a wonderful stress reliever, but for this special group of ladies it is so much more. They have also found that reaching out a hand to lift someone else up is one of the greatest gifts for the heart.



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Exercise

Continued from Page 10

treatment for many chronic conditions. For example, studies show that people with arthritis, heart disease, or diabetes benefit from regular exercise. Exercise also helps people with high blood pressure, balance problems, or difficulty walking.

MANAGE STRESS, IMPROVE MOOD

Regular, moderate physical activity can help manage stress and improve your mood. And, being active on a regular basis may help reduce feelings of depression. Studies also suggest that exercise can improve or maintain some aspects of cognitive function, such as your ability to shift quickly between tasks, plan an activity, and ignore irrelevant information.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OR EXERCISE?

Some people may wonder what the difference is between physical activity and exercise. Physical activities are activities that get your body moving such as gardening, walking the dog and taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Exercise is a form of physical activity that is specifically planned, structured, and repetitive such as weight training, tai chi, or an aerobics class. Including both in your life will provide you with health benefits that can help you feel better and enjoy life more as you age.

For more health and wellness information, visit their website at www.nihseniorhealth.gov

On Your Mark!

The third annual Generations Trailblazer 5K – Blazing the Trail in Healthy Aging - is set for Saturday, August 24, on the Vincennes University campus.



Registration begins at 7 a.m. and the run/walk starts at 8 a.m. The starting line is located next to the VU outdoor Track & Field Facility, corner of Red Skelton Blvd. and Chestnut St.

Entry fee is \$25 before August 10th & \$30 after that date. Early registrants are guaranteed a moisture management T-shirt. A 1/2 mile Fun Run will follow the 5K.

This year, we are introducing the Phantom Runner category for those who want to support Generations but are unable to participate in the race.

Contact Alma Kramer at 888-4527 or akramer@vinu.edu for a 5K or Phantom Runner registration form or sign up by visiting www.trailblazer5k.com.

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Hearing Loss: It's a Family Affair

PROVIDED BY THE
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Age-related hearing loss often comes on slowly, so it can be easy to miss. People often think that other people are just “mumbling.” Here are some warning signs to look for:

- Always turning up TV or radio volume
- Problems hearing on the telephone
- Cupping hand to ear or leaning closer in conversation

Hearing loss can be hard on relationships

Hearing loss can be exhausting and frustrating. It can mean misunderstanding words or saying the wrong thing. People with hearing loss may give up struggling to listen, and their spouses, children, grandchildren, and friends may stop talking to them.

Untreated hearing loss can cause isolation and depression. It can also hurt the emotional and physical health of the spouse, particularly a wife. In some cases, it can even lead to divorce. Sex life can also be affected.

What causes hearing loss?

In age-related hearing loss, hair cells in the inner ear that carry sound waves to the brain become less sensitive over time.

Sounds become distorted. Certain letters become hard to hear and hard to tell apart, such as S, T, and P. So the word “time” might sound like “dime.” High-pitched sounds, like a woman’s or a child’s voice, are harder to hear.

Hearing loss can be caused by:

- Aging
- Exposure to noise
- Damage to the auditory nerve
- Infection



“It’s his hearing loss, but it’s our problem.”

- Ear wax build-up
- Changes in the blood supply to the ear because of heart disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes
- Head injuries or tumors
- Side effects from some medicines, including aspirin and some antibiotics

It’s important to get help

Start with a hearing test. Ask your health care provider to check for ear wax buildup, which can impair hearing.

Your health care provider can help you determine your best options. While hearing aids cannot restore normal hearing, more than 90% of people with hearing loss can benefit from hearing aids.

Hearing aids work by amplifying the kind of sounds that are hardest to hear. Thus, when you start wearing hearing aids, you may notice that sounds will sound different. Be patient while your brain gets readjusted with hearing the sounds you have been missing.

Special telephones and TVs, radio listening systems, and other amplifying systems also can help. Safety is also an

issue—consider whether you need a special smoke alarm that you can hear.

Using effective communication strategies and choosing settings that are “hearing friendly” could make listening easier. For example, close the distance between you and the speaker. Choose restaurants that are relatively quiet, and go at times that are less busy. Choose a table along a wall or in a corner, which will cut down distracting background noise.

Explore more facts of hearing loss for older adults at ncoa.org/HearingLoss where you can download a free brochure - “Hearing Loss - It’s a Family Affair.”

Taking Care of Your Teeth and Mouth

PROVIDED BY NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING

No matter how old you are, you need to take care of your teeth and mouth. When your mouth is healthy, you can eat the foods you need for good nutrition. You will also feel better about smiling, talking and laughing.

Teeth are meant to last a lifetime. There are a number of problems that can affect the health of your mouth, but good care should keep your teeth and gums strong.

TOOTH DECAY

Teeth are covered in a hard, outer coating called enamel. Every day, a thin film of bacteria called dental plaque builds up on your teeth. The bacteria in plaque produce acids that can begin to harm enamel. Over time, the acids can cause a hole in the enamel. This hole is called a cavity. Brushing and flossing your teeth can protect you from decay, but once a cavity happens, a dentist has to fix it.

You can protect your teeth from decay by using fluoride toothpaste. If you are at a higher risk for tooth decay (for example, if you have a dry mouth because of medicines you take), you might need more fluoride. Your dentist or dental hygienist may give you a fluoride treatment during an office visit. Or, the dentist may tell you to use a fluoride gel or mouth rinse at home.

GUM DISEASES

Gum disease begins when plaque builds up along and under the gum line. This plaque causes infections that hurt the gum and bone that hold teeth in place. Sometimes gum disease makes your gums tender and more likely to bleed. This problem, called gingivitis, can often be fixed by daily brushing and flossing.

A more severe form of gum disease, called periodontitis, needs to be treated by a dentist. If not treated, this infection can ruin the bones, gums, and other tissues that support your teeth. Over time, your teeth may have to be removed.

To prevent gum disease:

- Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss once a day.



- Visit your dentist regularly for a checkup and cleaning.
- Eat a well-balanced diet.
- Quit smoking. Smoking increases your risk for gum disease.

CLEANING YOUR TEETH AND GUMS

There is a right way to brush and floss your teeth. Every day:

- Gently brush your teeth on all sides with a soft-bristle brush and fluoride toothpaste.
- Use small circular motions and short back-and-forth strokes.
- Take the time to brush carefully and gently along the gum line.
- Lightly brush your tongue to help keep your mouth clean.

People with arthritis or other conditions that limit hand motion may find it hard to hold and use a toothbrush. Some helpful ideas are:

- Use an electric or battery-operated toothbrush.
- Slide a bicycle grip or foam tube over the handle of the toothbrush.
- Buy a toothbrush with a larger handle.
- Attach the toothbrush handle to your hand with a wide elastic band.

You also need to clean around your teeth with dental floss every day. Careful flossing will take off plaque and leftover food that a toothbrush can't reach. Be sure to rinse after you floss.

See your dentist if brushing or flossing causes your gums to bleed or hurts your mouth. If you have trouble flossing, a floss holder may help. Ask your dentist to show you the right way to floss.

DENTURES

Sometimes, false teeth (dentures) are needed to replace badly damaged teeth. Partial dentures may be used to fill in one or more missing teeth. Dentures may feel strange at first. In the beginning, your dentist may want to see you often to make sure the dentures fit. Over time, your gums will change shape and your dentures may need to be adjusted or replaced. Be sure to let your dentist handle these adjustments.

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Taking Care of Your Teeth and Mouth

Continued from Page 17

When you are learning to eat with dentures, it may be easier if you:

- Start with soft, non-sticky food.
- Cut your food into small pieces.
- Chew slowly using both sides of your mouth.

Be careful when wearing dentures because it may be harder for you to feel hot foods and drinks or notice bones in your mouth from your food.

Keep your dentures clean and free from food that can cause stains, bad breath, or swollen gums. Brush them every day with a denture care product. Take your dentures out of your mouth at night, and put them in water or a denture-cleansing liquid.

DRY MOUTH

Dry mouth happens when you don't have enough saliva, or spit, to keep your mouth wet. Many common medicines can cause dry mouth. That can make it hard to eat, swallow, taste, and even speak. Dry mouth can cause tooth decay and other infections of the mouth.

There are some things you can try that may help

with dry mouth. Try sipping water or sugarless drinks. Don't smoke and avoid alcohol and caffeine. Sugarless hard candy or sugarless gum may help. Your dentist or doctor might suggest that you use artificial saliva to keep your mouth wet. Or they may have other ideas on how to cope with dry mouth.

ORAL CANCER

Cancer of the mouth can grow in any part of the mouth or throat. It is more likely to happen in people over age 40. A dental checkup is a good time for your dentist to look for signs of oral cancer. Pain is not usually an early symptom of the disease. Treatment works best before the disease spreads. Even if you have lost all your natural teeth, you should still see your dentist for regular oral cancer exams.

You can lower your risk of getting oral cancer in a few ways:

- Do not use tobacco products—cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, pipes, or cigars.
- If you drink alcohol, do so only in moderation.
- Use lip balm with sunscreen.

For more information about health and aging, visit www.nia.nih.org

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Skin Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

PROVIDED BY
THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancer types. More than 3.5 million skin cancers are diagnosed each year in the United States. That's more than all other cancers combined. The number of skin cancer cases has been going up over the past few decades.

You don't need any x-rays or blood tests to find skin cancer early, – just your eyes and a mirror. If you have skin cancer, finding it early is the best way to make sure it can be treated effectively.

CHECK YOUR OWN SKIN

It's important to check your own skin, preferably once a month. A skin self-exam is best done in a well-lit room in front of a full-length mirror. You can use a hand-held mirror to look at areas that are hard to see. A spouse or close friend or family member may be able to help you with these exams, especially for



those hard-to-see areas like your back or scalp.

The first time you examine your skin, spend time carefully going over the entire surface. Learn the pattern of moles, blemishes, freckles, and other marks on your skin so that you'll notice any changes next time. Be sure to show your doctor any areas that concern you.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR?

Skin cancers can show up in a variety of shapes and sizes. Be sure to show your doctor any abnormal areas that concern you, especially if they have just appeared or have changed recently.

Basal and squamous cell cancers

Basal cell cancers and squamous cell cancers are most often found in areas that get exposed to a lot of sun, such as the head, neck, and arms, but they can occur elsewhere. Look for new growths, spots, bumps, patches, or sores that don't heal after several weeks.

Continued on Page 22

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HYPERTHERMIA: TOO HOT FOR YOUR HEALTH

NIH provides heat-related illness advice for older people

PROVIDED BY NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH

Hot summer weather can pose special health risks to older adults. The National Institute on Aging (NIA), part of the National Institutes of Health, has some advice for helping older people avoid heat-related illnesses, known as hyperthermia.

Hyperthermia is an abnormally high body temperature caused by a failure of the heat-regulating mechanisms of the body to deal with the heat coming from the environment. Heat fatigue, heat syncope (sudden dizziness after prolonged exposure to the heat), heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke are commonly known forms of hyperthermia. Risk for these conditions can increase with the combination of outside temperature, general health and individual lifestyle.

Lifestyle factors can include not drinking enough fluids, living in housing without air conditioning, lack of mobility and access to transportation, overdressing, visiting overcrowded places and not understanding how to respond to hot weather conditions

Older people, particularly those with chronic medical conditions, should stay indoors on hot and humid days, especially when an air pollution alert is in effect.

People without air conditioners should go to places that do have air conditioning, such as senior centers, shopping malls, movie theaters and libraries. Cooling centers, which may be set up by local public health agencies, religious groups and social service organizations in many communities, are another option.

Health-related factors, some especially common among older people, that may increase risk of hyperthermia include:

- Being dehydrated.

- Age-related changes to the skin such as impaired blood circulation and inefficient sweat glands.
- Heart, lung and kidney diseases, as well as any illness that causes general weakness or fever.
- High blood pressure or other conditions that require changes in diet. For example, people on salt-restricted diets may be at increased risk. However, salt pills should not be used without first consulting a doctor.
- Reduced sweating, caused by medications such as diuretics, sedatives, tranquilizers and certain heart and blood pressure drugs.
- Taking several drugs for various conditions. It is important, however, to continue to take prescribed medication and discuss possible problems with a physician.
- Being substantially overweight or underweight.
- Drinking alcoholic beverages.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening form of hyperthermia. It occurs when the body is overwhelmed by heat and unable to control its temperature. Heat stroke occurs when someone's body temperature increases significantly (generally above 104 degrees Fahrenheit) and has symptoms such as mental status changes (like confusion or combativeness), strong rapid pulse, lack of sweating, dry flushed skin, faintness, staggering, or coma. Seek immediate emergency medical attention for a person with any of these symptoms, especially an older adult.

If you suspect that someone is suffering from a heat-related illness:

- Get the person out of the heat and into a shady, air-conditioned or other cool place. Urge them to lie down.
- If you suspect heat stroke, call 911.
- Encourage the individual to shower, bathe or sponge off with cool water.
- Apply a cold, wet cloth to the wrists, neck, armpits, and/or groin. These are places where blood passes close to the surface of the skin, and the cold cloths can help cool the blood.
- If the person can swallow safely, offer fluids such as water, fruit and vegetable juices, but avoid alcohol and caffeine.

For a free copy of the NIA's AgePage on hyperthermia in English or in Spanish, contact the NIA Information Center at 1-800-222-2225.



GentleCare's Lucky G

Continued from Page 13

“He has his own routine and he knows when it’s time to get in his cage,” Terry added. “He uses that time to recharge his battery.”

Lucky G has proven to be very trainable and has a whole repertoire of tricks. So far he has learned to shake, roll over and jump through two hula hoops at once. The staff is working on teaching him how to sneeze and pray on command.

According to Terry, several residents who never used to leave their rooms now come up front just to watch Lucky G do his tricks. The dog has also helped a few stroke patients with their speech therapy.

Even though he is still a puppy, Jerry said he seems to have an



Lucky G cuddles up to Norma Cogswell to watch some afternoon TV in the comfort of her recliner.

innate ability to recognize how fragile some of the residents are and how important it is to be careful around them. He also seems to

sense if someone is having a bad day and will spend more time with that individual.

“He’s definitely been a morale booster for the residents and staff,” Terry said. He also is a big hit with visitors. Often one of the first things family and friends ask when they come in the front door now is “How is Lucky?”

Jerry has no regrets about their decision to rescue the puppy and give him a forever home.

“There’s some extra work involved in having a therapy dog, but it’s very well worth it,” he said.

“I would have done this 15 years ago if I’d known the effect it would have on the residents and staff. It’s amazing how much he cheers people up.”

Letter

Continued from Page 2

to fund services for a new client when a current client no longer needs them. This is a time when we need to be expanding as the demand for our services increases due to the growing numbers of older adults.

This automatic and thoughtless hit to critical programs is going to cause real pain to seniors and families across the country and that means right here in our hometown. As we work through these funding cuts we are just beginning to gauge the total impact this will have on our services. Drafting a contingency plan has been complicated by the delay in implementing the cuts and uncertainty over the size of the final allocations. Unfortunately speculation leads me to believe that some of our programs will have to be eliminated.

I am reaching out to you for help. Ask your senators or representatives to reach a budget agreement that protects older adults, individuals with disabilities and the people who care for them. And as always, Generations relies heavily on the generous support of our donors and volunteers. Consider making a donation or volunteering your time.

Please consider a memorial or tribute donation to Generations as a way to honor a friend or loved one.

With your support, we can continue to provide older adults in our area with the options they need to live and age successfully.

*Donations may be sent to:
Generations, P.O. Box 314,
Vincennes, IN 47591*

Skin Cancer

Continued from Page 19

Basal cell carcinomas often look like flat, firm, pale areas or small, raised, pink or red, translucent, shiny, pearly areas that may bleed after a minor injury. They may have one or more abnormal blood vessels, a lower area in their center, and blue, brown, or black areas. Large basal cell carcinomas may have oozing or crusted areas.

Squamous cell carcinomas may look like growing lumps, often with a rough, scaly, or crusted surface. They may also look like flat reddish patches in the skin that grow slowly. Both of these types of skin cancer may develop as a flat area showing only slight changes from normal skin.

Actinic keratosis, also known as solar keratosis, is a skin condition that is sometimes precancerous and is caused by too much sun exposure. Actinic keratoses are usually small (less than 1/4 inch across), rough spots that may be pink-red or flesh-colored. Usually they develop on the face, ears, backs of the hands, and arms of middle-aged or older people with fair skin, but they can occur in younger people or on other sun-exposed areas of the skin. People with one actinic keratosis usually develop many more. Some can grow into squamous cell cancers, but others may stay the same or even go away on their own. These areas should be looked at by a doctor, who can help determine if they should be treated.

NORMAL MOLES

A normal mole is usually an evenly colored brown, tan, or black spot on the skin. It can be either

flat or raised. It can be round or oval. Moles are generally less than 6 millimeters (about 1/4 inch) across (about the width of a pencil eraser). A mole can be present at birth, or it can appear during childhood or young adulthood. New moles that appear later in life should be checked by a doctor.

Once a mole has developed, it will usually stay the same size, shape, and color for many years. Some moles may eventually fade away.

Most people have moles, and almost all moles are harmless. But it is important to recognize changes in a mole – such as in its size, shape, or color – that can suggest a melanoma may be developing.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF MELANOMA

The most important warning sign for melanoma is a new spot on the skin or a spot that is changing in size, shape, or color. Another important sign is a spot that

Protect yourself from UV rays

You don't have to avoid sunlight completely, and it would be unwise to reduce your level of activity by avoiding the outdoors, because physical activity is important for good health. But too much sunlight can be harmful. There are some steps you can take to limit your exposure to UV rays.

Some people think about sun protection only when they spend a day at the lake, beach, or pool. But sun exposure adds up day after day, and it happens every time you are in the sun. Simply staying in the shade is one of the best ways to limit your UV exposure. If you are going to be in the sun, "Slip! Slop! Slap! and Wrap" is a catch phrase that can help you remember some of the key steps you can take to protect yourself from UV rays:

- Slip on a shirt.
- Slop on sunscreen.
- Slap on a hat.
- Wrap on sunglasses to protect the eyes and sensitive skin around them.

looks different from all of the other spots on your skin (known as the ugly duckling sign). If you have any of these warning signs, have your skin checked by a doctor.

The ABCDE rule is another guide to the usual signs of melanoma. Be on the lookout and tell your doctor about spots that have any of the following features:

- A is for Asymmetry: One half of a mole or birthmark does not match the other.
- B is for Border: The edges are irregular, ragged, notched, or blurred.
- C is for Color: The color is not the same all over and may include shades of brown or black, or sometimes with patches of pink, red, white, or blue.
- D is for Diameter: The spot is larger than 6 millimeters across (about 1/4 inch – the size of a pencil eraser), although melanomas can sometimes be smaller than this.
- E is for Evolving: The mole is changing in size, shape, or color.

Some melanomas do not fit the rules described above, so it is important to tell your doctor about any changes or new spots on the skin, or growths that look different from the rest of your moles.

View from Over the Hill

Red Skelton wasn't slowed by age

(Editor's Note: Duane Chattin, Director of Public Information for Vincennes University, deserves the credit for bringing this column to our attention. It was originally published by Mesquite Local News in Mesquite, Nevada, in May and the newspaper graciously gave us permission to reprint it. According to Editor Kent Harper, Debbie Beatty is 76 years old and enjoys writing because it keeps her mind active.)



**DEBBIE
BEATTY**

BY DEBBIE BEATTY

I may be over the hill, but I am a member of the New Old Age group.

As Michael Pritchard said, "You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing."

Comedian Red Skelton helped keep us all young. He is known for his work in radio, films, television and casinos. His famous portrayal of Freddie the Freeloader, Clem Kadiddlehopper and the Mean Widdle Kid is vivid in our minds. January 14, 1969, Red Skelton introduced a new character, "The Little Old Man." The character gave an unforgettable presentation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The readers can listen to this at www.redskelton.com/PLEDGE.htm.

The hours of pleasure he gave to the American people and people around the world is remarkable.

There is another side to Red Skelton that looms larger than life. He was an avid artist, a prolific writer, a composer and gardener. He made a point of writing one short story a week. He painted clowns that brought world-wide acclaim. Before his death in 1997, his paintings sold for as much as \$80,000 and today much more. They are found in fine art collections around the world.



RED SKELTON is pictured above during one of his trips back to his hometown of Vincennes. It was the summer of 1980 and he made an appearance at the old Lincoln High School during the summer session and autographed "I Went to School with Red Skelton Club" certificates for the students. The little girl at the counter is Brenda (Richardville) DeLisle standing between her father, Vincennes Fire Chief Jack Richardville, and mother Bernadine.

Red Skelton composed 8,000 songs and 64 symphonies. His music has been performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Van Clyburn and Arthur Fiedler. One of his best known compositions is the "Red's White and Blue March."

Red Skelton also was a gardener. His daily schedule at his Palm Springs, Calif., home was working in the Japanese garden on one side of his house and the Italian garden on the other side.

Red Skelton's most productive years were after he retired from the entertainment industry, when he became a senior citizen. He did not stop contributing because of retirement and/or age. We all have natural talents that we can contribute or enjoy if we but just develop them.

VU's Community Series brings impressive line-up to Skelton Center

Vincennes University is working to preserve and honor the memory and legacy of Red Skelton. This summer the university will open the Red Skelton Museum of American Comedy adjoining the Red Skelton Performing Arts Center.

Built in 2006, the Performing Arts Center includes an 850-seat theater. An impressive line-up of talent will be performing at the theater again this year as part of the Vincennes University Alumni Community Series.



Performances include:

- ★Melissa Manchester on September 20
- ★Let's Hang On/Frankie Vallie Tribute on October 11
- ★Ain't Misbehavin' on November 22
- ★American Big Band "Home for the Holidays" on December 15

★The Four Freshmen on March 28, 2014

★Texas Tenors on April 25, 2014

Season tickets are on sale now at the VU Alumni Office located at Third Street and College Avenue, Vincennes.

Tickets prices are: adults \$155, seniors (60+) \$140 and students \$95. If available, single tickets will go on sale September 3rd.

Call 812-888-4354 for tickets or information.

WHO WE ARE

Generations is your Area Agency on Aging connecting individuals and caregivers to community resources and options for long-term care and in-home services. We offer people choices as they age to live a better life with independence and dignity.

WHAT WE OFFER

Generations works with community partners and contracted providers to offer services to our clients in Daviess, Dubois, Greene, Knox, Martin & Pike Counties. We offer:

- Aging and Disability Resource Center
- Meals on Wheels
- Case Management
- Caregiver Services
- Ombudsman Services
- Care Transitions

- AngelWorx volunteer program
- Knox County RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program)
- Pre-Admission Screening for nursing home placement
- Health & Wellness Programs
- *Generations* Magazine
- In addition, contracted providers allow us to offer transportation, adult day services and legal assistance.

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