

AASCC's Monthly News and Notes



Independence

June 2014 Issue

Grant Funding Available

AASCC announces the availability of funding for mini grants. AASCC will begin funding new projects with small grant funding beginning October 1, 2014. For more information about eligibility and grant submission details, join us on August 5, or August 6 at the AASCC offices. Please contact Sue Hamilton at 203 785 8533 to register.

Our Story

Margaret* is 74 years old, enjoys television, cooking, doing cross word and puzzles. She also loves baseball and had attended a few baseball games in the past; her favorite baseball team is the New York Yankees. However, as she got older, she spent more and more time in her home alone. Then she met *Bea**, who is an outgoing and social person.

Bea is a volunteer with AASCC's Senior Companion Program (SCP). Margaret began receiving services from SCP five years ago, and five days a week, for six hours each day Bea is there for Margaret. She picks up Margaret's medication and groceries. She takes Margaret to church and social outings. Margaret tells us, "I have an opportunity to go out and I have a person I can relate to and talk with. She's really been a blessing to me."

Bea says that "Margaret is a nice person and we always got along really well". They both like sports and both attend the same church, which is where they met. They agree that that religion is a way of life, talking about church and reading the bible together. Margaret enjoys her time with Bea whether they stay in the house laughing and talking or going out shopping.

Margaret adds that whenever Bea calls, she feels "uplifted", and continues by saying "I know I have a friend and someone who cares about me. She's a good person and I do not want to lose her. I don't know what I would do without a companion."

**names have been changed for privacy*

Volunteer Spotlight

Audrey Harrell is the busiest person we know! Audrey has a long history of volunteering for causes that are important to her: Girl Scouts, Veterans, literacy, AARP, arts and faith. Audrey views volunteerism as the best way to make a difference in her community and to reach those in need.

For the past 4 years, we have been honored to have Audrey serve as a volunteer literacy tutor with AARP Experience Corps at Wintergreen Magnet School in Hamden. Working with students in Kindergarten through grade 4, Audrey helps her students improve their reading and writing skills – as well as their confidence and self-esteem. Along with other AARP Experience Corps volunteers, Audrey also participates in community events to promote literacy by helping children pick out books to take home. Last summer, Audrey helped at Hamden's Night Out event as she had for the previous 2 summers. She staffed the teen book area. It can be a challenge to encourage the love of reading in teens, but by using persistence and humor Audrey helped reluctant teens pick out just the right books that brought smiles to their faces. At the AARP Experience Corps luncheon on June 10, Audrey received the 6th annual Lester Sarkady Award for her dedication to Experience Corps and her students, her zest for life, and love of children and learning.

Audrey is also a committed volunteer for Zion Baptist Church in Waterbury, chairing their scholarship committee, serving on their usher board, and helping organize their Women's Day project and their Vacation Bible School. She volunteers at the Mattatuck Museum, too, helping with special projects. In addition, Audrey speaks to schools and community groups about veterans' issues for the Waterbury Veterans' Memorial Committee, serves as an usher and greeter for the Waterbury Palace Theatre, volunteers for AARP Connecticut and coordinates the "Sister to Sister" book club at her local library.

To find out more about tutoring children in the New Haven and Hamden schools, contact [Sheila Greenstein](#).

Focusing in Excellence

Quality in Perspective

AASCC is entrusted to manage many programs funded by the State and the Federal Governments, the largest of which is the Connecticut Homecare Program (CHCP).

When we think about quality in CHCP we consider many viewpoints:

- * The perspective of the clients who receive both care management services and the direct-care services provided by the over 100 homecare agencies through their contracts with the State Department of Social Services;
- * The perspective of our oversight and regulatory agency, the Department of Social Services and, ultimately,
- * The perspective of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Our Initiatives

Our Quality Assurance Program, as in many agencies, is multi-faceted. One of our many initiatives is the Quality Initiative Committee. In June the AASCC Board of Directors established a Quality Initiative Committee comprised of three Members of the Board, the AASCC Director of Quality Initiatives, the Care Management Quality Improvement/Training Manager, the Assistant Director of Care Management and the Staff Development Coordinator. The purpose of this Committee is:

- to establish a more formal means of fostering communication related to quality initiatives;
- to provide Board support and expertise to our existing quality program;
- and to establish an entity that can help us objectively evaluate strengths and weaknesses of our program and, as appropriate, allocate resources needed to meet identified goals.

This committee has already proved to be invaluable, helping to further develop our "road map" for the coming months. CHCP serves approximately 2,900 adults, assisting them in remaining in their homes, independently, to the greatest extent possible.

Caregiver Corner

Caregiver Home Safety

Caring for another person may require you to assess their safety at home and take steps to keep them safe. There are a number of publications and websites with useful information about home safety, but not too many include information about safety outside the house. Below are some tips from the Alzheimer Association designed to keep people safe outside the house.

- Keep steps sturdy and textured to prevent falls in wet or icy weather.
- Mark the edges of steps with bright or reflective tape.
- Consider installing a ramp with handrails as an alternative to steps.
- Eliminate uneven surfaces or walkways, hoses, and other objects that may cause a person to trip.
- Restrict access to a swimming pool by fencing it with a locked gate, covering it, and closely supervising it when in use.
- In the patio area, remove the fuel source and fire starters from any grills when not in use, and supervise use when the person with Alzheimer's is present.
- Place a small bench or table by the entry door to hold parcels while unlocking the door.

CHOICES Corner

Have you or a family member misplaced your Medicare card? The Medicare card is a red, white and blue card with your, or your spouse's Social Security number on it. You receive the card when you become eligible for Medicare and it serves as your proof that you are entitled to Medicare benefits. It is an important document and should be kept in a safe place. Sometimes we forget where that safe place is and we need a replacement card. If you need a replacement card, you can contact Social Security to obtain one. It will take thirty days to receive a new card. If you need proof of your Medicare eligibility before that time you can request a letter from Social Security which will serve as a temporary document. This will take ten days to arrive. However, if you need immediate proof of eligibility you can access proof by using the Social Security website.

Go on-line to www.socialsecurity.gov and set up your Social Security account. Using the account you can request a replacement card and also printout a statement that verifies your eligibility for Medicare. Establishing an account with Social Security is a good idea, even if you don't need a replacement card. Through your account you can change your address, check your benefits, verify your eligibility status or change your direct deposit information.

- Make sure outside lighting is adequate. Light sensors that turn on lights automatically as you approach the house may be useful. They also may be used in other parts of the home.
 - Prune bushes and foliage well away from walkways and doorways.
 - Consider a NO SOLICITING sign for the front gate or door.
 - Lock access to all garages, sheds, and basements if possible.
 - Inside a garage or shed, keep all potentially dangerous items, such as tools, tackle, machines, and sporting equipment, either locked away in cabinets or in appropriate boxes or cases.
 - Secure and lock all motor vehicles and keep them out of sight if possible. Consider covering vehicles, including bicycles, that are not frequently used.
 - Keep all toxic materials, such as paint, fertilizers, gasoline, or cleaning supplies, out of view. Either put them in a high, dry place, or lock them in a cabinet.
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Upcoming Events
[View Our Full Calendar](#)

Caregiver Workshop

Guest Speaker: Maria Tomasetti, South Central Regional Director of Alzheimer's Association

July 9, 6 p.m.

Welcome **to** **Medicare**
July 16

C4A *Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging*

9th Annual C4A Conference

entitled

“Creating Livable Communities for All”

Wednesday, October 29, 2014

Did You Know

Congress passed the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1965 in response to concern by policymakers about a lack of community social services for older persons. Today the OAA is considered to be the major vehicle for the organization and delivery of social and nutrition services to this group and their caregivers.

Home and Community-Based Supportive Services provides grants to States and Territories using a formula based primarily on their share of the national population aged 60 and over. The grants fund a broad array of services, without which many older adults would be unable to continue to live safely at home.

Services provided by the HCBS program in FY 2012 include:

- Transportation Services—provided nearly **25 million rides** to doctor's offices, grocery stores, pharmacies, senior centers, meal sites, and other critical daily activities.
- Personal Care, Homemaker, and Chore Services—provided over **27 million hours** of assistance to seniors unable to perform daily activities (such as eating, dressing or bathing) or instrumental activities of daily living (such as shopping or light housework)
- Adult Day Care/Day Health Services—provided over **8 million hours** of care for dependent adults in a supervised, protective group setting during some portion of a twenty-four hour day.
- Case Management Services—provided over **3.6 million hours** of assistance in assessing needs, developing care plans, and arranging services for older persons or their caregivers.

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