

# AASCC's Monthly News and Notes



## Independence

*September 2014 Issue*



## Annual Meeting 2014

AASCC is pleased to announce that Joseph Lugo, Center for Disability and Aging Policy, US Administration on Community Living, will be the keynote speaker at its annual meeting to be held on October 22nd. [Visit our website](#) for more information.

## Volunteer Spotlight

### RSVP Launches New Initiative to Serve Veterans in the Community

Hundreds of veterans under the care of the VA in south central Connecticut are living in the community...some in apartments, some with families and some in congregate housing. Many of them receive services through the

## In the Community

*AASCC provides grants to community organizations through Federal Older Americans Act funding to provide services for individuals 60 years of age or older.*

VA's Outpatient and Telehealth Program and, regardless of the quality care provided, many are lonely.

The mission of the RSVP's Veteran Initiative is to provide community based veterans with a trained volunteer who will spend time with them and/or provide a veteran's caregiver with respite relief for a few hours or short-term breaks. Some of the services RSVP volunteers will provide include visiting companionship support, money management assistance and respite relief. Everyone, including VA outpatient staff and VA Veterans Affairs staff, are excited about this endeavor.

They are particularly delighted about a side benefit provided by the Orange Afghans Ladies, as they prefer to be called. The group of about 13, under the leadership of Claire Westerink, has offered to make afghans for the patients at the VA hospital in West Haven. Each afghan provided to a veteran will have a special "USA HERO" stitched on it.

RSVP is blessed with several knitting groups throughout the greater New Haven area. All of which continue to meet and produce afghans, lap blankets, hats, mittens and scarves for a variety of agencies serving children and displaced families.



RSVP is actively recruiting volunteers 55 and over to give of their time to veterans by providing companionship, respite relief and/or money management support. Contact [Cherie Strucaly](#) if you would like to volunteer or help.

## The Consultations Center

Since 1995, The Consultation Center has been providing grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren with a range of support, education and respite services.

According to an article published by AARP, grandparents raising grandchildren are often "isolated (and) they lack information about the range of support services, resources, programs, benefits, laws and policies available to help them successfully fulfill their caregiving role."

This is where The Consultation Center's program makes a difference, providing respite services for older adults who provide full time parenting for relative children under age 18. Respite "breaks" for the caregivers can occur in a variety of ways from individual/family respite, to small groups of families gathering with children of similar ages, to large group respite for the entire membership. One example of a large group respite event is the annual graduation celebration (see a recent article in the [New Haven Independent](#)).

Respite can help caregivers continue in their often stressful role by encouraging socialization, and providing a support

## Focusing on Excellence

### Assessing Satisfaction with Homecare Services

Connecticut Homecare Program (CHC) clients are eligible to receive a wide variety of services as prescribed under their care plan which is created following an assessment with a AASCC Care Manager. The Care Manager works with the client and their supporters to devise a plan of services which can include nursing, home health aide, personal care assistant, homemaker, companion, chore, home delivered meals, attendance at an adult day center and placement of an emergency response system. These direct-care services are provided by over 120 agencies serving the south central region.

There are several ways that we assess the clients' satisfaction with these services. One venue for determining satisfaction is a client survey. All clients newly enrolled in CHC receive a satisfaction survey 3 months after initiating services. Any negative comments by the client are followed up by phone. We just tabulated our results for the last two quarters and found the following:

Service	Number of Clients	% rating Good to Excellent
Skilled Nursing	92	96%
Home Health Aide	105	92%
Homemaker	106	90%
Companion	67	90%
Chore	48	85%
Home Delivered Meals	34	95%
Adult Day Center	17	88%
Emergency Response Unit	86	93%

In reviewing the above results, it appears the majority of clients are satisfied with their services, thanks to the hard work of those employees providing care management services to the CHC Clients.

system with others who are on a similar journey. Another benefit is the tangible cost of meals, enrichment programs, and cultural activities, which are often out of reach for relative caregivers struggling with the high cost of raising children at a time when many are on fixed incomes.

In addition to respite, The Consultation Center's Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program offers a monthly support group where relative caregivers can vent and share strategies. The support group occasionally features educational speakers, including topics such as how to prevent bullying, getting your grandchildren to college, end of life discussions and decisions, and medication management.

When grandparents and other relatives agree to raise another generation of children, it's typically a long-term commitment. Members appreciate the program, "*We are grateful for the chance to be with others who understand us and help us.*"

For more information, contact The Consultation Center at (203) 789-7645 or email Donna Fedus at [donna.fedus@yale.edu](mailto:donna.fedus@yale.edu).

## CHOICES Corner

The "flu" is miserably uncomfortable for everyone who gets it, but for older adults and people with some disabilities it is more than uncomfortable, it's fatal. Chronic conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), commonly affect older adults. People with these conditions are more likely to develop complications from the flu that can result in hospitalization and even death. The weakened immune system of older adults and people with certain disabilities makes it harder to fight the "flu" and in their weakened state they succumb. This is why Medicare provides coverage for "flu" shots. Flu vaccination is a Medicare Part B benefit, with no co-pay for people who are Medicare beneficiaries. Talk to your health care provider today about the dangers of the flu, the benefits of annual vaccination to help protect against the flu, and flu vaccine options to meet your needs.

Don't wait for flu season to start to get an annual flu shot. An annual flu vaccine is an important part of taking care of your health, so get vaccinated as soon as possible once the vaccine is available. Talk to your health care provider about flu vaccine options. People 65 years of age and older have flu vaccine options, including the traditional standard-dose flu vaccine and a higher-dose flu vaccine that was made specifically to address the age-related decline of the immune system.

### Upcoming Events [View Our Full Calendar](#)

[Aging and Disability Etiquette 101](#)

September 18

[Multidisciplinary Team \(M-Team\) Meeting](#)

September 18

[H.O.P.E. presentation: Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage](#)

September 25

## Caregiver Corner

Are you taking care of someone who has difficulty communicating with you? Perhaps it's due to dementia, or hearing loss? Maybe they're in the late stages of a critical illness and speaking is too much effort for them. It is extremely frustrating for the caregiver to try and understand what the person they're caring for wants and needs when they don't have feedback to inform them. As caregivers, we want to solve problems, help the person we're caring for to be as comfortable as possible, but it's so difficult to do when they have trouble communicating.

It might surprise you to learn that sometimes the best thing you can do is to stop trying to communicate, trying to help, trying to solve problems. Sometimes the best thing we can do is just sit and listen to each other breathe. It is comforting to people to know they're not alone. Someone who cares for them is with them in their weakest moments, just breathing together. As you sit with someone in these quiet moments, you'll be surprised at the thoughts that cross your mind, the memories that pop into your consciousness. Some of them will be happy, some melancholy, some sad or even angry. The content doesn't matter because the impact will be the same. The memories will bring you closer to the other person. Quietly, allowing the memories to enter your mind, will afford the opportunity for the memory to be examined in the perspective of the present moment. Is this the final thought you want to hold on to? Can you

[Diabetes Self-Management Workshop begins](#)

September 25

[Ambassador Meeting](#)

September 30

[Guilford Community Program](#)

September 30

[Elder Abuse Workshop](#)

October 15

Registration for the Interagency Council on Aging of South Central Connecticut is open for the 2014-2015 year. [Find out more.](#)

let the memory go and forgive the hard feelings, let go of the sadness, enjoy the happy memories? This silent communication can be a gift to you. Spend time with the person you care for unwrapping the gift.

## Did You Know

- 4.9 million children (7 percent) under age 18 live in grandparent-headed households. That's up from 4.5 million living in grandparent-headed households in 2000. (US Census 2010)
- A total of 5.8 million children live in homes where a grandparent is the householder (owns or rents the home).
- In Connecticut, 19,153 grandparents are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them. Of these:
  - 50% of the grandparents are White and not Hispanic, 26% are Black/African American, 3% are Asian, and 21% are Hispanic/Latino, and may be of any race.
  - 36% have no parents of the children present in the home.
  - 35% are over age 60.
  - 6% live in poverty.

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