

**E**lder Services dedicates this edition of *Elder Forum* to all the individuals, businesses, volunteers and staff who tirelessly strive to provide older adults, those with disabilities, families and caregivers with the best possible choices in elder care.

We continue to be amazed and appreciate the generosity, thoughtfulness and creativity of all of our donors. Your support over the last 35 years, directly and indirectly, has touched thousands of lives.

In this issue, we highlighted a few of the small kindnesses that made an immeasurable difference for so many. Collectively, we continue to make a positive impact on the quality of life an older adult, living in the Merrimack Valley, experiences every day. Thank you for all your efforts.

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### *Community Greenhouse Project, Lowell*



**G**ardens in full bloom at three housing sites in Lowell are providing interest and conversation for residents who staked their own plots and then selected their own crops. Residents at Bishop Markum have enjoyed watching the garden grow and look forward to working and weeding it each day.

### *2009 Golf Tournament nets over \$29,000*



*Change and Challenge* is what this year's annual golf tournament offered - a new location and quite a challenging course. Despite the rain, on June 19th we hosted our golf tournament at Meadow Creek Golf Course, Dracut. The winning team, pictured, was the Kissel Family - Michael, Mark, Dorothy and Vincent. This was Mark's second team win and he also took the prize for the longest drive. Proceeds will benefit the Elder Care Fund.

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Julie Spencer, Housing Coordinator at Elder Services collaborated with Deborah Harding, Operations Manager at Community Gardens Greenhouse at the National Historical Park of Lowell. With grant funding, they secured seeds, compost and a Rototiller to get this community garden project underway. Big red tomatoes, climbing beans and other plants are in full bloom.

Carl Green, Garden Manager and Hugh Finnerty (in wheelchair) check on tomato plants daily. Kirman Tsiourvrakos, a Greek elder, who loves to plant tomatoes every year was so happy to have his own garden plot for the first time.

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## To The Reader

This is a benchmark year for Elder Services. We are celebrating our 35th anniversary. Since 1974 our Board, Advisory Council and Staff have remained passionate about our mission to provide advice, service and choices that encourage independence at home.

We are proud to have served as a resource to the thousands of elders, families, caregivers and professionals looking for the best possible choices in elder care. I am in awe of the caring and kindness reflected in our work. Every day we touch the lives of elders and family members not just with services, but with human compassion.

A few of our crucial programs depend on the generosity of our donors. These privately funded efforts provide basic necessities that go beyond what public dollars support, but mean the most to an elder in need. Over the last 10 years, we have been honored and very grateful to have received more than \$800,000 from individuals and businesses - some who have shown their support for many years and new friends we have just met.

Last spring we unexpectedly, received a bequest of over \$181,000 from a mother and daughter. After much thought and consideration; our Board's intention is to establish an endowment. We believe this decision shows vision and foresight in establishing a source of revenue for the future. It initiates a message about who we are as an organization and emphasizes the importance of addressing quality of life issues for elders and those with disabilities. Our newly established *Generation to Generation Society Endowment* fund speaks to this vision.

It is because of everyone's collective generosity of spirit, support, kind words of encouragement, advice and hard work that Elder Services achieved 35 years of success. Thank you.



Rosanne DiStefano  
Executive Director

## Planned Giving

### Leave Your Lasting Legacy in Your Will

Requests are an easy way to leave a gift in your Will to Elder Services without reducing any cash or asset you may need or are currently using.

Your Will is a written, legal document distributing your possessions as you intend after you pass. Most wills are prepared by a lawyer with fees ranging from \$150 for a simple will and upwards into the thousands for more complex documents.

Within the will is a listing of all your major assets like your home and other real estate; bank accounts and/or stocks; possibly business holdings, car or jewelry and other assets. Your will defines how you want to have these assets distributed; who receives them; what specific part, percentage or remainder is dispersed to each beneficiary; when this is done and how this is done.

Again this can be simply arranged through a legal resource.

Statistics indicate that 7 out of 10 individuals die without a will leaving the courts to decide how to distribute one's possessions. Procrastination and "I am not going to die yet", are the major reasons why wills are not made.

Take control of your life now. Make sure your will is in good order. Let family and trusted professionals know your intentions. Avoid the courts deciding how to disperse your personal belongings.

If you can, please remember Elder Services in your will when you are thinking about how you want to leave your legacy.



Top ~ Lorraine Christedes, Advisory Council, Board Member Joan Bedford joined Maryellen Osgood, North Andover and Nancy Gump, Andover and invited guests at Elder Services first *Because of You* Donor Reception, Enterprise Bank, Andover in May.

  
Rosanne DiStefano  
Executive Director

"We reach backward to our parents and forward to our children to a future we will never see, but about which we need to care." Carl Jung

# *Exciting* Resources

## *Consumer Resource Directory*



The 2009 Green Book edition is published. Rosanne DiStefano, executive director, Elder Services with John Sarro, executive director, Pentucket Medical Associates are happy with the new edition of this resource guide for programs and services that helps older adults, those with disabilities, families, caregivers and professionals with options for elder care. This collaborative effort also included the Northeast Independent Living Program.

## *New Resource Room*



The Mary Petronio Resource Room - (l-r) Sisters, Grace Lagana and Angela Sakakeemy were excited to unveil the plaque dedicated to their mother, Mary Petronio, at Elder Services new Resource Room. Mary was a long-time staff member who worked in the Age Info Dept. helping elders, families, caregivers and staff who were looking for information on elder care.

## *Neighborhood Pharmacy*

Greater Lawrence Family Health Center's neighborhood pharmacy serves many older adults who may not have transportation to get their prescriptions filled or, in some instances, may not have insurance or the financial resources for their medications.



(l-r) Ready to serve - Greater Lawrence Family Health Center's Director of Pharmacy, Diane Gatchell, RPh, with Emily Lopez, and Claudia Rodriquez, Pharmacy Techs.

## *Lots of DOUGH!*

Members of the Community Outreach Team led by Ann Pratt at Wyeth Biopharma, Andover hosted a bake sale for employees and in the process raised over \$700 for Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley. Elder Services Volunteer Team participated in the Community Outreach Team's Open House last fall and was later designated as a charity of choice by team members who organized the fund raiser.



(l-r) Rosanne DiStefano, Executive Director, and from Wyeth's Community Outreach Team - Ann Pratt, Jamie Perkins, Denise Trottier and Tami Sanders.



*The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra."*

*Jimmy Johnson, football coach*

**S**ometimes the ordinary, everyday things can go un-noticed. However, some of those simple acts of kindness - the ones that keep us connected and touch the lives of many become the extraordinary difference we make in the life of our clients. And in the spirit of celebrating 35 years of service, here are a few *extra* acts of kindness performed by our staff:

*sending a sympathy card sent to an elder's family with a poker chip from Foxwoods inside because that was the elder's favorite place*

*taking an extra trip to the grocery store to pick up ice cream for an elder on a very hot day*

*going to the housing library to get books for a home-bound elder who loves to read*

*fixing a DVD player so the elder could watch a special slide show of her family*

*advocating for a spouse of an elder to be placed in the same nursing home so they could be together*

*sharing tomatoes and tomato plants with a gardener and Spinner's tickets with a baseball fan*

*helped put a band together in a building where several clients played different instruments*

*called a client on Thanksgiving day to make sure that she had food for the holiday*

*doing an intake at 6 pm on Thanksgiving Eve to help accommodate the elder's family*

*escorted two elders and helped them carry their belongings out for a day at the beach*



Mary Ann Egan and Blanca share a laugh together.

**B**lanca lives in elder housing and spends many hours alone. Her case manager requested a companion to meet with her to help increase her socialization.

Mary Ann Egan, a substitute teacher who lives in Chelmsford is a volunteer companion and a perfect match for Blanca, a client nicknamed the "feisty one!" When Mary Ann received this referral and was told the client may be a little feisty, her response was "great, I love the feisty ones".

That match, made in March of 2008 continues to grow. They have a wonderful friendship. This may sound surprising, but according to Blanca - "It's fascinating because Mary Ann only speaks English and I speak Spanish. We've had interesting conversations about President Obama, art and travel. And, though our languages are different, we manage to understand each other quite well."

The companion program at Elder Services brings together volunteers and elders across the Merrimack Valley. Many requests are made for *Friends-in-Deed* whose 'deeds' may include food shopping, companionship, errands and an occasional ride to a medical appointment.

The benefits received by this elder are invaluable. "It is very difficult to find someone like MaryAnn! She takes very good care of me when we travel in the community. She treats me like her grandmother!"

Recent studies have proven that volunteering holds great health benefits for those who do volunteer. MaryAnn says "Knowing I'm helping someone and making a difference is great and just knowing Blanca look forward to my visits makes me feel like *I am making a difference!*"

## Age Information Center

One Call. Many Choices.  
800-892-0890 ~ 978-683-7747  
FAX 978-687-1067 ~ TTY 800-924-4222  
www.esmv.org ~ e-mail: info@esmv.org

### Elder Services can serve TTY users



Our Age Info Center has a TTY telephone communication device to meet the needs of our hearing impaired clients. To reach the Age Info TTY, call 800-924-4222 to be connected to the direct TTY line.

### National Diabetes Education Program

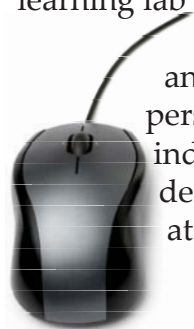
Over 35 million seniors, age 65 years or older and on Medicare have undiagnosed diabetes or pre-diabetes. Medicare covers *free* screenings for diabetes and pre-diabetes for at-risk seniors. Initial data from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services suggest these benefits are under-utilized.

Get your *free* info on living with diabetes, tips for prevention or delaying type two diabetes and how to help loved ones manage the disease.

Call the National Diabetes Education Program at 1-888-693-6337.



**L.A.C.E.** ~ *Learning About Computers Everyday* is the new name of the computer learning center for older adults at Elder Services. It was formerly known as *SeniorNet*. This new computer learning lab has openings in the fall schedule offering classes at affordable prices and small class ratios (6-1) providing personal attention that may cater to an individual learning style. For more details or to register, call Tony Marino at 800-892-0890, ext. 1516.



## Event and Activities

**Elder Network Meetings** ~ 11:30 am. Open to all. Call or e-mail jhrenko @ esmv.org to be placed on the mailing list. Monthly notices are e-mailed with topic and meeting location.

	Oct-09	Nov-09
Gr. Haverhill/Newburyport	7	no meeting
Gr. Lawrence	14	no meeting
Gr. Lowell	21	4th & 18th

**Elder Brown Bag Program** - Pick up dates are on Tuesdays. For more details on the food program or to volunteer, call Janice Boyd at 978-946-1321.

**Family Fun Fest - A Community Block Party** - October 4th

from 11 am - 2 pm at Elder Services. Join us as we celebrate 35 years of service to elders, families and caregivers. See the brochure for all the fun details!

**Family Fun Fest!**



**A Matter of Balance** - Fall prevention workshop to help reduce the fear of falling. Ashland Farms, North Andover, October 1, 2009, 3-5pm. For more details, call Susan Poludniak at 978-946-1355.

**My Life, My Health** - A six week workshop for people with chronic health problems and those who care for others with chronic problems. A new session begins Tuesday, October 20, 1-3:30 pm at Merrivista in Haverhill. Call Susan Poludniak at 978-946-1355 for details or to register.

**Elder Services Annual Meeting**, November 20, from 11 am - 2 pm, Wyndham, Andover. Our keynote speaker is Pamela Schmidt, professor of psychology and human services at Bunker Hill Community College, Boston ~ **Creativity and Resilience Among Older Adults: A Look at the Extraordinary**. Ms Schmidt is an artist and therapist, specializing in gerontology. She developed the first corporate sponsored inter-generational arts center in the United States and produced an age integrated arts curriculum for elders and young children for the Stride Right Foundation in Cambridge, MA.



*I make a difference ~ I drive people happy! Terry Day, Volunteer Driver*



Elder Services is looking for individuals or families who would like to volunteer to help older adults. Take a quick peek to your right and possibly consider one of the opportunities listed. Perhaps you, a friend or your family has an interest in volunteering. If so, call Eileen Giordano at 978-946-1463.

## Volunteer Opportunities

- Brown Bag Food Program
- Drivers
- Friends In Deed
- Health Care Counselors
- Medical Advocates
- Money Managers
- Nursing Home Ombudsmen
- Special Events & Activities

## Going Green!

**Elder Forum** - Elder Services is exploring ways we can join the effort to go GREEN! One way, to help reduce our mailing, printing and paper costs, associated with getting our newsletter to you, is to go paperless. If you prefer e-mail send your current e-address to Alison Graziano at [agraziano@esmv.org](mailto:agraziano@esmv.org). We are also in the process of launching a new website and you may soon view Elder Forum at [www.esmv.org](http://www.esmv.org).



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