



February 2006

Keeping In Touch

News For Family Caregivers

by Lynn Cibuzar, LSW, DARTS Service Coordinator

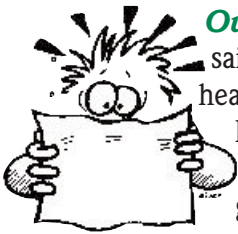
APHASIA CONVERSATION GROUP



The Minnesota Stroke Association offers an aphasia

conversation group in Burnsville at the Arbors Ridges on the Ebenezer-Fairview Ridges campus, 13810 Community Drive. The group leader is Maureen Boyle, a speech language pathologist. For more information, visit www.strokemn.org or contact the association at 763-553-0088 or mnstroke@covad.net.

May We Help You?



Ouch! A word many of us said when opening our heating bills this past month.

For some, it means spending a bit less at the grocery store or postponing a purchase. But for others, it can be more serious. The Energy Assistance Program is available for those who need help paying residential heating bills. The program also has funds available for energy crisis situations and energy-related repairs. Energy conservation information is also offered.

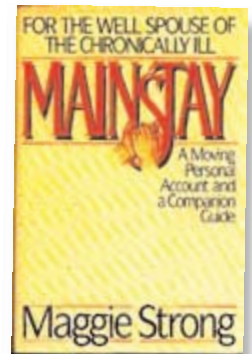
Energy Assistance Program Income Eligibility Guidelines for 2006

Maximum gross income for 3 months
1 person \$4,987
2 people \$6,522

The CAP Agency for Dakota County is the provider of the energy program. Contact them at 651-322-3500 for an application or for help in completing one. Visit them online at www.capagency.org.

A CHECKLIST FOR THE CAREGIVER AND THE CARE RECEIVER

A classic book in our caregiver library is Mainstay – For the Well Spouse of the Chronically Ill, by Maggie Strong. She has a checklist for the “well spouse,” which I have adapted for all caregivers, and she has a checklist for the care receiver, which follows. I know for many of you, your care receivers may not comprehend well enough to answer the questions. But the information is still valuable.



FOR THE CAREGIVER

- **HAVE YOU TRULY** mourned the old relationship and made up your mind about the viability of the new? What's in it for you? Have you made as much of a life for yourself as you want? If you haven't, how much can you fairly blame on the illness?
- **HOW'S YOUR EMPATHY?** Do you really know your care receiver's physical limitations? Which of them bothered him or her most today? Do you really know the level of your care receiver's sense of guilt? Fear? Dependence? Have you tried to find out (books, doctor, support groups) the emotions that the disease brings out?
- **WHAT ARE THE** things you hate about your care receiver? Which of them are due to the illness? Which are not?
- **DID YOU FIND** time recently to really connect with him or her? Pressures aside, anger aside, did you manage to drop all that and connect for just a few seconds, in a laugh, for instance?
- **ARE YOU DOING** more than you really have to?
- **IN WHAT WAYS** do you still feel like a spouse, son, daughter, etc.?
- **DO YOU SPEAK** clearly? Or do you expect your care receiver to read your mind? Are you afraid to say what you mean? How could you change?

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- **WHERE HAVE YOU** polarized? Do you, for instance, overstate the negative and your care receiver the positive? Maybe he or she denies or ignores reality, but try for balance in your own statements and see what happens.
- **HAVE YOU ASKED** your care receiver for help recently?
- **DO YOU BELIEVE** your care receiver could get well if he or she changed attitudes or diet? Is your belief realistic?
- **ARE YOU MORE** fused as caregiver/care receiver than you would like? What have you done for fun by yourself this week?
- **DO YOU RESPECT** your care receiver? If not, how could you get your respect back?
- **REMEMBER THREE** happy moments you've had together.

FOR THE CARE RECEIVER

- **DO YOU FEEL** guilty? Inadequate? Deprived? Scared? Angry? When was the last time you spoke about these feelings to your caregiver? If you keep stoically quiet, your caregiver may feel that he or she can't have bad feelings about it either.
- **DO YOU RELY** on your caregiver to be your only friend? When was the last time you called a friend or your own?
- **DO YOU ASK** your caregiver for help without noticing what he or she is already doing? Is your caregiver on the way to that very task? In the middle of another? True, you feel frustrated, but imagine what it's like to be somebody else's arms and legs.
- **DO YOU TAKE** your caregiver for granted?
- **HAVE YOU URGED** your caregiver to do some of the things you can no longer do together, such as going to the movies, skiing, swimming?
- **DO YOU TRUST** your caregiver to act with your best interests at heart? And in doing so, to sometimes choose his or her needs over yours?
- **DO YOU EVER** leave the nasty little things, such as calling the insurance company, to your caregiver on the grounds that you're sick?
- **WHEN WAS THE** last time you planned something fun for the two of you to do together?
- **WHEN WAS THE** last time your caregiver told you his or her real fears?
- **THINK OF THREE** wonderful moments in your life together.

DARTS ▶

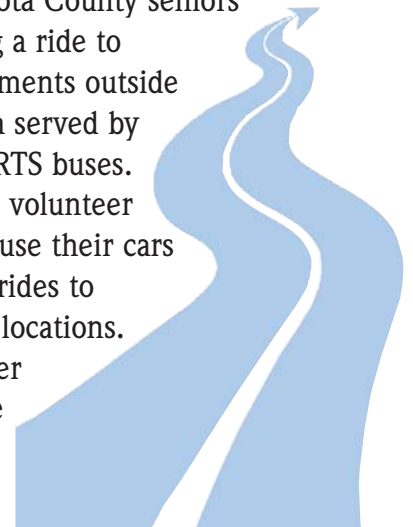
Personal Ride Service

ANOTHER RIDE OPTION FROM DARTS

DARTS has a new transportation option for Dakota County seniors needing a ride to appointments outside the area served by the DARTS buses. DARTS' volunteer drivers use their cars to give rides to various locations.

The rider must be able to walk and get

into and out of a car with just a little assistance. The driver escorts the rider to the final destination and, in some cases, may be able to stay with the rider.



The standard cost depends on where

the rider goes – the longer the ride, the higher the cost. A one-way trip ranges from \$11.00 to \$17.50. If a rider meets certain income guidelines and the ride is for a life-essential need, the ride cost may be reduced.

For more information or to schedule a ride, call 651-455-1339.