



Keeping In Touch

Spring 2002

News For Family Caregivers

by Lynn Cibuzar, DARTS Service Coordinator

From the Caregiver Library

Did you ever notice how slippery a person's skin is when wet and soapy? This can make helping someone bathe or shower difficult! There are many tips for providing physical care, and we have several *Home Care Companion* videos that can help:

- Vol. 1 How to care for someone on bed rest
- Vol. 2 How to care for someone who uses a wheelchair
- Vol. 3 Creating healthy home care conditions – infection control

Caregiver Education, Vol. 1 – How to communicate effectively with someone who has hearing loss

These and many more books and videotapes are available for loan by calling Alicia at 651-234-2245. We can mail them to you at no cost.

Celebrate National Volunteer Week April 21-27, 2002 Volunteers Matter!

“Everybody can be great because anybody can serve...You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Way We Were

Think of a time in your life when you knew things were never going to be the same again. Perhaps it was when you drove a car by yourself for the first time. Or when you took your first baby home from the hospital. Or when your father had a disabling stroke and you knew he would now need your help.

These kinds of life changes are the result of many things – some chosen and planned, like having a child; some not chosen and sudden, like a health problem or a disability. They have some common elements though: What we called “normal” is no longer normal. We may not know the extent to which our life has changed, but it is permanent.

When illness strikes, many of us pretend life hasn't changed and we ignore how illness can put our families off balance. The basic rhythm and flow of our days are changed. When we finally see that we can't go back to life before the illness, we may feel pain and sadness because we must let go of “the way we were.”

Then the time comes to enter into the new reality and figure out how to not only survive, but perhaps thrive in a new life that includes caregiving and illness. We struggle with knowing who our new self will be. *We know life has changed, but what role do I play now and how do I play it? Do I have the strength and capacity to do it? How do I make sense of this? What do I want my life to be like?* These questions are asked by the ill person as well as the caregiver.

As we begin to focus on the future, we may be fearful and lonely until we come to our “new normal.” Our new self can grow, learn, and succeed and become a stronger person – sometimes because of the role of caregiving. The experience we would have liked to avoid becomes an opportunity to grow because we have faced adversity and suffering. It is possible to survive and be transformed into a new self – one with “caregiver” as a proud title.

I like this quote and read it often when I am struggling with change.

Faith

When we walk to the edge of all the light we have and take the step into the darkness of the unknown, we must believe that one of two things will happen:
there will be something solid for us to stand on
or we will be taught to fly.

Patrick Overton

may we help you?

Aquatic Therapy in Apple Valley

It may be too early in the year to think about swimming in our beautiful Minnesota lakes, but the aquatic therapy pool at the Apple Valley Health Care Center is always a warm 92°F. The warm water with its buoyancy helps people with various physical conditions and disabilities do exercises and improve their physical and emotional well-being.

Aquatic therapy can help those who have arthritis, chronic pain, fibromyalgia, neck and back pain, joint replacement, neurological conditions, and more. Some benefits are increased circulation, decreased swelling and pain, increased relaxation, and better balance, mobility, strength, flexibility, and coordination. This pool is open to the public on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for two sessions: 2:30 PM to 3:15 PM and 3:15 PM to 4 PM. The fee is \$4.00 per session. For reservations or more info, call the pool reservation line at 952-953-7552. Leave a message and staff will return your call. The Apple Valley Health Care Center is located at 14650 Garrett Ave.

for your information

Caregiver Education Programs

DARTS
1645 Marthaler Lane, West St. Paul

Advice on Eldercare Legal and Financial Issues

(Presented by Stuart Schmitz, Elder Law Attorney)
Wednesday, June 5, 2002 • 7:00 – 9:00 PM, \$10 donation

Understanding Memory Loss – presented by Karna Levy, DARTS Licensed Social Worker. Learn about coping with the symptoms of dementia, communicating with someone experiencing memory loss, and finding services to help.

Wednesday, June 12, 2002 • 7:00 – 9:00 PM, \$10 donation

Caregiving as a Family: All for One and One for All – presented by Lynn Cibuzar, DARTS Licensed Social Worker. Bring your family along to hear ideas on how families can work together to manage caregiving challenges and share the rewards.

Wednesday, June 19, 2002 • 7:00 – 9:00 PM, \$10 donation

Dealing with Depression – presented by Diane Hanlon, Mental Health Therapist. Learn some specifics about how depression affects older people and how you can help yourself or others.

Monday, May 6, 2002 • 7:00 – 8:30 PM
Shepherd of the Valley Church
12650 Johnny Cake Ridge Road, Apple Valley

On-line Resource: Twin Cities Caregiver Events

Eldercare Partners, a collaboration of six nonprofit organizations (including DARTS), has on-line information about caregiver education, training, and support events across the Twin Cities metropolitan area. All DARTS-sponsored caregiver programs in Dakota County will be listed, but this resource will also help you find sessions in other counties that may be of interest. To see this information, simply go to www.eldercarepartners.org and click on the link to caregiver events from the homepage. If you don't have access to the Internet, call Colleen at DARTS, 651-455-1560, and she can help you find events of interest.

Tired of Housecleaning Chores?

Wouldn't we all like some relief from the mundane household chores we have to do? Who can do these chores? DARTS! We provide caring, responsible homemakers to help with household needs, such as vacuuming, laundry, light meal preparation, and grocery shopping/errands.

DARTS homemakers enjoy working with seniors and are carefully trained and screened. A homemaking service appointment can be as little as 1 hour, with additional service in 15-minute increments. The service is flexible and provided on an affordable, sliding-scale fee basis.

For more information, call
651-455-1560.

If you do not want to receive this newsletter, call DARTS at 651-455-1560 and ask to have your name removed from the Keeping In Touch mailing list.