



Keeping In Touch

Spring 2004

News For Family Caregivers

by Lynn Cibuzar, LSW, DARTS Service Coordinator

Save the date:

On Wednesday, May 12, at 10:30 am, DARTS' caregivers can see *"Tuesdays with Morrie"* at the Great American History Theater in St. Paul. The theater is giving DARTS 20 tickets. Look for more information in your mailbox this month or call Alicia for more details, 651-234-2245.

Online Caregiver Resources Available 24 hours a day



www.CaregiverMN.org

Check out the Calendar of Twin City caregiver events



www.Eldercarepartners.org

You can balance your life...you can meet daily challenges...you can thrive

Some interesting research on caregiver stress flies in the face of what many of us might expect. The level of stress caregivers feel does not correspond with the length of time spent as a caregiver nor with the memory decline in the person receiving care. What's more, a caregiver's stress level doesn't increase based solely on how much help their care receiver needs.



Most of us know that caregiving can be filled with joys and sorrows – and DARTS wants to help you experience more joys! Through our work with Eldercare Partners, you can take advantage of two free services. **One helps train you to better care for your loved one's physical needs, and the other provides a coach to help you manage your caregiving challenges and meet your personal goals.**

The physical care training is done by an occupational therapist or nurse from Wilder Foundation's Home Health Care agency who provides one-to-one, individualized caregiver training in your home. Training related to your care receiver's needs can include:

- ▶ Personal care needs, such as bathing, skin care, dressing, and grooming techniques
- ▶ Medication administration, including setting up, ordering, monitoring, and tips on administering to resistant people
- ▶ Bowel/bladder and incontinence training; for instance, use of products and managing a bowel program
- ▶ Ambulation/mobility training, such as using walkers and transfer belts and safely making transfers
- ▶ Assistance with daily living tasks; for example, using adaptive equipment for dressing and eating
- ▶ Behavior training, such as tips on managing dementia-related behavior
- ▶ Exercise training

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In most cases, the training is accomplished in one or two visits.

The second service uses a family consultant/coach from DARTS who is an expert on aging issues. This coach:

- ▶ Helps you identify caregiving issues
- ▶ Assists in managing your caregiving challenges
- ▶ Offers education and training opportunities
- ▶ Understands the dynamic nature of relationships
- ▶ Works within your schedule – face-to-face, by telephone, or with email
- ▶ Assists you with your personal goals

To get more information on either of these free services, call **651-234-2262**.

may we help you?

Connecting People with the Prescription Drugs They Need

The Minnesota Board on Aging believes that all consumers should have access to affordable prescription drugs to ensure their quality of life. The new **RxConnect** program provides the information and assistance needed to make informed decisions about affordable prescription drugs.

A toll-free call to the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433 will get you connected to the help you need. Staff will discuss all pharmaceutical options with you. They will even help you complete paperwork and prepare information for mailing. Help is available on a one-to-one basis, over the phone or in person.

RxConnect assists people, regardless of age or income, in accessing the best options for affordable medications, including discount cards and patient assistance programs offered by pharmaceutical manufacturers.

For online help, go to <http://www.minnesotarxconnect.com/>. Here Minnesotans can find out whether their prescription medicine is available at a lower cost from a Canadian pharmacy and get information on ordering medicine from the Canadian pharmacies listed on the website.

*Remember where you have been and know where
you are going. Life is not a race, but a journey*

to be savored each step of the way.

– Nikita Koloff

give me a break

Can I leave my care receiver alone?

Just like a parent who is trying to determine whether their son or daughter is ready to be home alone, caregivers have to decide whether they can leave their family member home alone. These questions can help you decide:

- Can your loved one call 911 or someone in an emergency?
- Can they identify what is an emergency?
- Would they allow strangers into the home?
- Would they know how to find the way home if they left the house?
- If they were hungry, could they get something to eat safely without assistance?
- Can they use the bathroom without your help?
- In an emergency, are they capable of leaving the house and seeking safety outside?
- Are they aware of smoke alarms and unusual noises, or would they tend to ignore such sounds?

If you **didn't** answer yes to all the questions, seek some assistance so you can still take a break and get away. Give DARTS a call at **651-455-1560** for help and support. We have respite volunteers who may be able to sit with your loved one while you're away.

If you **did** answer yes to all questions, your loved one may still need to be with someone when you leave. Call DARTS, **651-455-1560**, to help you assess the situation.