



Summer 2004

# Keeping In Touch

## News For Family Caregivers

by Lynn Cibuzar, LSW, DARTS Service Coordinator

### Preventing Falls

#### Senior Health Fair and Screening Event

Monday,  
September 27th  
12:30-4:30 pm

The Minnesota  
Valley YMCA  
13850 Portland  
Avenue South  
Burnsville



At this senior fair, you'll learn all the facts about falls from health care professionals and they'll help you prevent falls by knowing the risk factors and developing an action plan.

Vision, hearing, and balance screenings will be available, as well as exercise program demonstrations and an opportunity to review your medications with a pharmacist.

#### Facts on Falls

- Thirty percent (30%) of people over the age of 65 will fall each year. That number increases to fifty percent for people over the age of 85!
- Minnesota seniors have a higher incidence of falling than any other state.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations among older people.
- Ninety percent (90%) of hip fractures treated annually in the U.S. occur as a result of a fall.

### Learn to Let Go!

Darlene has a difficult caregiving life. She's often disappointed that her two brothers don't help their mother as much as she would like. She tries to come to terms with the fact that her mother has never been happy since she moved to the assisted-living facility. She hears complaints from her spouse who, at times, tires of Darlene venting about her mother. Sometimes Darlene wants to get into her car and drive away.

For many caregivers, these experiences are all too familiar. One strategy to staying strong and balanced in the long journey of caregiving is to "let go." This involves staying lovingly connected, but less consumed by the difficulties. Where do you begin? What follows are some great insights for letting go that I've had around for many years.

- ◆ to "let go" doesn't mean to stop caring; it means I can't do it all for someone else
- ◆ to "let go" is not to cut myself off; it's realizing I can't control another
- ◆ to "let go" is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences
- ◆ to "let go" is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome isn't in my hands
- ◆ to "let go" is not to try to change or blame another; it's to make the most of myself
- ◆ to "let go" is not to fix, but to be supportive
- ◆ to "let go" is not to judge, but to allow another to be their true self
- ◆ to "let go" is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their destinies
- ◆ to "let go" is not to be protective; it's to permit another to face reality
- ◆ to "let go" is not to deny, but to accept

*(continued on back)*

*(continued from front)*

- ◆ to “let go” is not to nag, scold, or argue, but rather to search out my own shortcomings and correct them
- ◆ to “let go” is not to adjust everything to my desires, but to take each day as it comes, and cherish myself in it
- ◆ to “let go” is not to criticize and regulate anyone; it’s to try to become what I dream I can be
- ◆ to “let go” is not to regret the past, but to grow and live for the future
- ◆ to “let go” is to fear less and love more

*may we help you?*

### Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

The Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) program provides telephone equipment to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or speech impaired or who have a physical disability and need adaptive equipment to use the phone. The equipment is loaned out long-term at no cost. Available equipment includes TTYs, Captel phones, VCO phones, light-flashing ring signalers, amplified telephones, loud ringers, hands-free speaker phones, and more.

#### To qualify you must:

- Live in Minnesota
- Have a hearing loss or speech or physical disability that limits your use of a standard telephone
- Have a telephone in your home or have applied for telephone service
- Have a family income at or below these guidelines:  
 Single person – annual gross income below \$37,770  
 Couple – annual gross income below \$49,392

For more information, please call 800-657-3663 or (TTY)800-657-3513 or visit

[www.ted.program@state.mn.us](http://www.ted.program@state.mn.us)



### Fear Invades Memory Loss

Fear is the most pervasive feeling in people with dementia. If we understand this, we understand more of their behavior. In the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease, people are quite aware that something is wrong. Because they may not exactly know what’s wrong, they are often frightened of “losing their minds.” That fear is quite rational. The manifestation of that fear may be paranoia, and in its mild form, we are all guilty of it. When we misplace our keys, we don’t want to attribute it to our own inattentiveness, so we may yell, “Who took my keys?” When a person with dementia loses something, that feeling of not wanting to be at fault is intensified.

As dementia progresses, memory loss is more profound. Then fear arises because everything seems unfamiliar. Think of being in a foreign land where we don’t speak the language, don’t know the customs, and don’t know what is expected of us – we fear making a mistake. That means we are unsure of the steps we take literally and figuratively. You’ll often find this applies to people with dementia too.

Feeling safe is a powerful need. The best care of people with dementia happens when those who love them know how to help them always feel safe.

*Feeling safe is a powerful need.*