

Caregiver Quarterly

A publication of Caregiver Services,
a program of the Area 1 Agency on Aging.

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Caregiver Services

maintains a registry, matching trained and pre-screened caregivers with potential employers, including In-Home Supportive Services clients. Information and support are available for family and professional caregivers.



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Caregivers, You Do More Than Just a Job!

By Anthony Antoville, Caregiver Services Manager

The reasons for becoming a caregiver can be personal and numerous. Perhaps you find yourself well suited to help people who are in need of assistance and companionship or you have always enjoyed your grandparents' company. Maybe you are planning a career in the health professions, and as a caregiver you can earn experience as well as tuition. Whatever brings you to this line of work, it is important to remember that caregiving begins and ends with service. This service is not just simply serving someone a meal or making a bed, but being there to help meet the physical requirements and realize the emotional needs of your clients.

By approaching this job in a genuine and caring way, you will feel satisfied at the end of each day rather than just on the day when you receive a paycheck. Since caregiving is often harder work than the pay earned, it is important to find satisfaction in your caring acts and service done well. For being a caregiver is a labor of love and nothing less. Only if you can freely give of yourself in your daily work, will you find yourself completely rewarded. Otherwise, the hard work you will be required to do and the

sometimes difficult situations you will be called to attend to will only leave you feeling empty and lacking purpose.

As a caregiver, you have the opportunity to meet a variety of people. In your work you are given a glimpse into some of the private and sensitive aspects of people's lives and relationships. You also have the chance to affect people for the better at a time when many of these people would otherwise find themselves alone. These responsibilities are just some of the quiet and hidden duties of the caregiver and should never be regarded lightly or without respect. Hopefully, you will find this career to be fulfilling. As you provide this priceless role within our community, when so many of our seniors and citizens with disabilities are in need of assistance; never forget that your gifts of compassion mean all the more with a smile, a gentle word and tenderness.

We at Caregiver Services, and all of us at the Area 1 Agency on Aging, thank you for the care you give to the people you serve. Have a Happy Holiday Season!

**Mark Your Calendar Now:
Next Caregiver Training Begins ... See page 3**

Help With 2006 Heating Costs

Making it through winter with increased energy prices can be quite a struggle. There are some programs for low-income consumers that may help and are definitely worth checking out.

H.E.A.P., the federal Home Energy Assistance Program available through Redwood Community Action Agency, offers a once-a-year rebate toward gas and electricity, propane or wood. Eligibility and the amount of assistance are based on household income, family size and other particulars. Persons age 60 and above who are homebound or wheelchair bound may call (707) 444-3831, ext. 202, from January 1st through March 31st to be on the Senior List. Persons under 60 should call (707) 444-3834 Mondays beginning at 9 a.m. for the 2006 program.

R.E.A.C.H., Relief for Energy Assistance through Community Help, is a Salvation Army program that provides once-a-year financial assistance to people who have no other way to pay their energy bill. The intent of REACH is to assist low-income customers, particularly the elderly, disabled, sick, working poor and the unemployed, who experience severe hardships and are unable to pay for their energy needs. Call (707) 442-6475 for information about applying after December 31st.

Online, check the Utility Reform Network's website at www.turn.org/STATEassist.shtml for detailed information on these and other energy assistance programs available to low-income consumers.

A Merry Caregiver Celebration

November was National Family Caregivers Month. Locally, the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Advisory Board, the IHSS Public Authority, and the Area 1 Agency on Aging presented the 2nd annual Caregivers' Celebration and Resource Fair at the Adorni Center in Eureka. Caregivers and their guests visited various service providers' tables filled with program and service information, and enjoyed a buffet spread prepared by St. Vincent De Paul. See picture on page 4.

On display was the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors' Proclamation recognizing the importance and benefit of in-home caregivers. Door prizes included a lovely handmade quilt donated by Humboldt Domestic Violence Services, an emergency disaster preparedness kit contributed by the American Red Cross, and various gift certificates to local businesses that were provided by the IHSS Advisory Board.

Relief for Caregivers

By Laura Patterson

We all need some "relief" once in a while, especially as we approach the holidays and cold/flu season. Have you, as a caregiver, ever needed to take time off for a doctor's appointment, illness, jury duty or family emergency? If so, you understand the importance of having someone who may be able to help care for your client(s) when you cannot.

If you have already listed with the Caregiver Services registry, we offer the Relief Caregiver List to help you find someone to cover when you have to be away. This is a list of caregivers on our registry, like yourself, who have said that they can be called. If they have free time, they will consider working a shift or two for you.

When you interviewed to list with the registry, we asked if you were willing to be on this list. If you agreed, your name and phone number may be sent to another registry caregiver who calls us needing temporary relief. The list is created by region – for example, if the client is in Fortuna, we will send names of caregivers that live in the greater Fortuna area (Fortuna, Ferndale, Rio Dell).

If your name is on the relief list, other caregivers may call you to see if you might cover a shift. If the job is private pay, you can work out the details of payment with the caregiver who calls you. If, however, the client gets In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), you will need to complete a hiring packet for that client as soon as possible so that you can be paid for your work. If you have IHSS questions, call (707) 476-2100.

If you are unsure if we are sending your name out or want to get your name on the relief list, call us at (707) 443-4363.

It is important that we as caregivers look out for each other and that we have back-up if a situation arises where we cannot go to work. Thanks to all of you who are willing to help out others in our community to provide the highest level of care for all clients this season.

Laura Patterson is a Resource Specialist for Caregiver Services.

A January Caregiver Training

Caregiver Services staff never give up trying to increase the number of trained, pre-screened caregivers available on the registry. Trainings are scheduled all year throughout Humboldt County.

In 2005, classes were held in Eureka, Willow Creek, Orleans, Trinidad and Fortuna. Each time a training ends, more graduate caregivers call the office to sign on to the registry. Gradually the registry grows and lists of available caregivers grow as well.

The next training starts in January. Space is always limited, and pre-registration is required. If you or anyone you know might be interested in enrolling in this course, please call Laura Patterson at 443-4363 (toll free: 877-977-1604) for more information. Help us make the registry grow!

Family Caregivers Online

www.link2care.net offers information and support for family caregivers in California. The resources on this free site are designed for those providing care for someone who is living with a disease-related dementia.

This website provides current caregiver-related news, an online discussion group and an Ask the Expert site where medical, legal and caregiver experts respond to questions.

Link2Care is a secure, password-protected site available to caregivers who are registered with a California Caregiver Resource Center. In Humboldt, that would be the Redwood Caregiver Resource Center in Eureka. You need not receive services from RCRC in order to register for the Link2Care site membership. Call (800) 834-1636.

Caregiver Quarterly is published every three months by Caregiver Services, a program of the Area 1 Agency on Aging. We welcome your comments. Please send letters and change of address notices to *Caregiver Services*, Area 1 Agency on Aging, 3300 Glenwood Street, Eureka CA 95501. You can also e-mail us at: caregiver@a1aa.org

Medicare Drug Plans: I have Medi-Cal and Medicare. What do I need to do?

By Anne Antoville

No Share of Cost Medi-Cal:

If you have Medicare and you have Medi-Cal with no share of cost, or you have met your share of cost since July 2005, you will automatically be enrolled in a Medicare Drug Plan. You will receive a new drug card that can be used at the pharmacy. You will have to pay co-pays of \$1 for a 30-day supply of a generic drug or \$3 for a 30-day supply of a brand name drug.

You will no longer use your Medi-Cal card at the pharmacy after January 1, 2005, but your other Medi-Cal coverage will not be affected by Medicare drug plans.

You should have received a yellow notice in the mail letting you know which drug plan you have been automatically enrolled in. You can call the drug plan or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to make sure that the plan covers your drugs and that you can use the plan at your pharmacy.

If you have Medi-Cal with no share of cost, you can change drug plans once per month.

Share of Cost Medi-Cal:

If you have Medi-Cal with a share of cost and your income and assets are equal or less than:

- ◆ Single Income \$14,355/Year and Assets \$10,000
- ◆ Married Income \$19,245/Year and Assets \$20,000

you can get most of the costs covered for Medicare Drug Plans. Call Social Security to enroll for the Extra Help at 1-800-772-1213. ("Extra Help" is also called *low income subsidy*.)

You must still enroll in a Medicare drug plan to get a Medicare drug plan even if you are already enrolled for the Extra Help. There are 10 Medicare drug plans available in Humboldt County that work with the Extra Help. For more information on the drug plans, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

For those who require in-person assistance regarding Medicare drug plans, call HICAP at 1-800-434-0222. There may be a wait to get an appointment.

*Anne Antoville is HICAP Manager
for Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.*



Were You There?

Good times were had by all who came to the **Caregivers' Celebration and Resource Fair** at the Adorni Center in Eureka on November 3rd. Despite rainy and windy conditions outside, more than 250 caregivers and their guests arrived to enjoy the party.

Calendar of Coming Events

In-Home Care Provider Training: The next training begins in January. Call Laura at (707) 443-4363 (toll free: 1-877-977-1604) for specific dates and times.

Medicare Town Hall with guest Assemblywoman Patty Berg, Tuesday, December 6th, 1:30 p.m. at Humboldt Senior Resource Center dining room, 1910 California Street, Eureka. Presentation by Anne Antoville, HICAP Manager, on Medicare Drug Plans. No registration is required.

"Those Holiday Blues" Independent Living Skills Workshop, Wednesday, December 21st, 1:30 p.m. at Tri-County Independent Living, Inc., 955 Myrtle Avenue, Eureka. Call (707) 445-8404.

The Caregiver Services offices will be closed for the holidays on Friday, December 23rd; Monday and Tuesday, December 26th and 27th; Friday, December 30th; and Monday, January 2nd.