




Aging Issues

Southwestern CT
Agency on Aging
 & Independent Living

The ABC's of ADRCs

In the alphabet soup of acronyms for social service projects, ADRC means, "Aging and Disability Resource Center." The ADRC is part of a nationwide effort to develop a single point of entry for older adults, persons with disabilities, family members and care providers to provide seamless access to services and supports. ADRCs are designed to help navigate a complex web of community-based, health and long term care supports.

SWCAA's staff, Board and Advisory Council have embarked on our regional ADRC initiative by meeting with the Mayors and First Selectman in each of our 14 Cities and towns. Discussions included the ever-shrinking resources in the community and how we can enhance the service capacity through integrated training for human service staff, cross referrals from SWCAA to municipalities and vice versa, and engaging the Disability Resource Center – Fairfield County to promote access to disability supports. Each community was asked to identify the "Community Focal Point (CFP)." The CFP will be the local point of contact for residents in need of information, referrals or support. If the CFP has questions or needs additional resources, they will call SWCAA at 1-800-994-9422 where a knowledgeable Information Specialist will assist them. Future trainings will offer brainstorming opportunities to break through barriers to service and improve transitions through various care settings. Thanks to funds made available by the Board of Directors Community Investment Fund, each community will receive a small grant to further their work with older adults. The Disability Resource Center is the recipient of funds to hire a dedicated ADRC staff person. There is great promise in our ADRC partnership as evidenced by the interest and commitment from each municipality, the State Unit on Aging and the Disability Resource Center.

Please join us at SWCAA's Annual Meeting on October 20th at Bridgeport's Holiday Inn to celebrate the ADRC partnerships between Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County, SWCAA and aging network professionals from all 14 southwestern towns. Comments and technical assistance from the State Unit on Aging and the Lewin Group will connect the ADRC to federal and state initiatives. 

Core Functions of ADRCs

- Information, Referral and Awareness
- Options Counseling, Support of Your Decisions
- Streamlined Eligibility Determination for Public Programs
 - Person-Centered Transition Support
 - Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

UPCOMING EVENTS

6th Annual C4A Conference:

Taking Control of Life's Transitions

Wed., Oct. 12, 2011 • 8:00a.m.–3:00p.m.

Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT

CEU's will be offered. For more information call

Maureen McIntyre at 860-624-6443.

SWCAA's 2011 Annual Meeting &

Southwestern CT's ADRC Grand Opening

Thur., Oct. 20, 2011 • 8:00–10:00a.m.

Holiday Inn, Main St., Bridgeport, CT

For more information call Gretchen James at

203-814-3620 or email gjames@swcaa.org

ADRCs Connect the Dots...

On Wednesday, Stratford Senior Services receives a call from Mrs. Jones who is totally overwhelmed by caregiver responsibilities for her 68 year old husband stricken with Alzheimer's.

Stratford Senior Services (SW regional ADRC partner) makes a referral to SWCAA.

The Respite Care Manager makes a referral to the CT Home Care Program. Now Mr. Jones attends Grasmere five days per week.

SWCAA enrolls Mr. Jones in the CT Statewide Alzheimer's Respite Program and sends him to Grasmere Adult Day Center twice a week.

Stratford's Baldwin Center introduces Mrs. Jones to caregiver support group. Mr. Jones needs a bath chair. The Disability Resource Center describes his options and introduces the family to the New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Center.

Homemaker and companion services are added to Mr. Jones' plan of care. Mrs. Jones continues working and is now able to cope with the challenges of caregiving while keeping her husband at home.



SWCAA's Live Well Program Helps Older Adults To Manage Their Chronic Health Conditions...



Dorothy Seawright

Dorothy Seawright is thankful that she attended a Live Well workshop at Ella Jackson Senior Center in Bridgeport and enjoyed the support she gained from others who also suffer with chronic conditions. Dorothy learned a great deal from the workshop and most importantly reports feeling better about herself and now has a different outlook on life.

Before taking part in Live Well Dorothy explains how she would put important tasks aside and reason that she would do "it" tomorrow. When tomorrow would come, Dorothy found herself putting "it" off again. Through Live Well, Dorothy learned how to make an action plan and specifically how to set achievable goals with confidence. Each week Dorothy attended the workshop, she and her peers each made an action plan and shared it with the group. The following week Dorothy reported the results of her action plan to the group and was pleased with her weekly achievements. Attending the workshop helped motivate Dorothy to do just what she wanted. Today, Dorothy reports that she no longer puts important tasks aside.

Practicing meditation was one of Dorothy's favorite workshop activities. Through the "Time for Healing" CD Dorothy learned how to quiet her mind and not let anything upset her. Dorothy

claims life is so complicated and by learning this technique she now feels altogether different.

Finally, Dorothy learned the benefits of positive thinking, healthy eating and exercise, and has improved her communication skills with her family. Dorothy credits the Live Well program for helping her to practice healthy habits.

Live Well is a nationwide evidence based health promotion program known as a Chronic Disease Self Management Program (CDSMP). The CDSMP was researched and developed by Stanford University and helps older adults who suffer with chronic conditions through a series of six weekly workshops which are facilitated by trained lay leaders. Workshops cover topics such as dealing with frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation. Exercise, nutrition, relaxation, proper use of medications, and communicating with family, friends and health professionals are also discussed.

The CT Department of Social Services, Aging Services Division in partnership with the CT Department of Public Health, Southwestern CT Agency on Aging, and United Way of Coastal Fairfield County is currently part of this exciting grant funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging. For more information on the Live Well program, leaders training and workshop offerings, please visit www.swcaa.org (under Benefits and Services) or contact Gretchen James at 203-814-3620 or gjames@swcaa.org.

CHOICES Corner

As we say goodbye to another beautiful summer in Connecticut, CHOICES is gearing up for what promises to be a very busy fall with the Annual Enrollment Period moving up a month this year. The new Annual Enrollment Period for Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage plans begins on **October 15th and runs through December 7th, 2011**. Medicare beneficiaries will no longer have until December 31st to evaluate the plans and make a change for 2012. The new dates give beneficiaries an extra week to evaluate their coverage and make any changes they wish to make. However, we need your help in getting the word out to Medicare beneficiaries of the new enrollment dates. CHOICES staff will be hosting numerous educational presentations across Southwestern CT during the fall to talk about the changes ahead in Medicare for 2012. Please visit our website at www.swcaa.org and click on "**Upcoming Events**" for a list of where we'll be.

As a result of new legislation passed in April, The ConnPACE program was eliminated on July 1st for anyone who was on Medicare. Although 25,000 Medicare beneficiaries lost their ConnPACE coverage, thankfully, it did not have significant effects on the majority of these individuals. This was due to the fact that

many of these individuals were already enrolled in the Low Income subsidy also known as "extra help" through the federal Medicare program. Anyone receiving "extra help" through Medicare will pay no more than \$6.30 for each of their formulary medications. This is a significant savings from the ConnPACE co-pay of \$16.25. However, about 5,500 individuals who had not yet applied for a Medicare Savings Program (MSP) and therefore were not receiving the federal low income subsidy would see a huge increase in their drug costs come July 1st. ConnPACE did a great job notifying those individuals and sending them an application to apply for MSP and subsequently be enrolled in the Federal Low Income Subsidy. Thanks to our CHOICES staff and community counselors who did a great job

assisting many of these individuals fill out their MSP application. As a result of their efforts, these individuals had little or no additional out of pocket costs for their drugs. However, a few hundred Medicare beneficiaries have been very adversely affected by the elimination of their ConnPACE benefits. Individuals taking barbiturates or benzodiazepines were getting those medications covered through ConnPACE because those two classes of drugs



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Senior Neighborhood Support

Quiet ripples through the room as Reverend Fred Ogletree steps up to the microphone to make the day's announcements. "The City is opening a farm stand at an alternative location, it should make it easier for you all to get your fruits and vegetables. Ethel, thank you for the food pantry information and for keeping the group informed. You all know that we are running low on transportation tickets. City leaders are working hard to release more tickets, it will happen, just keep the faith. Most important, keep our friends in your prayers, especially those suffering in the hospital and rehab. There is not a moment in the day that wouldn't benefit from a little prayer!"



Reverend Ogletree is joined by good friends Ethel Williams and Bob Gould after morning announcements.


Another day for seniors at Stamford's Quintard Manor, the long standing Center funded since 1977 by SWCAA and Older Americans Act funds. Reverend Ogletree has been the program's fearless leader for 18 years. The members call him an angel as they recall stories of how the Reverend helped them through the most challenging times of their lives. "He was there when my husband was sick" said Hattie Ginyard. Every Thursday Reverend

makes the rounds to the local hospital and rehab facilities to encourage patients to regain their health and return to the Center. Reverend Ogletree has little to say about his own good work. Instead he recounts how the members of his Center add purpose and love to his life. He ends his announcements by thanking the group for the ice cream treats and the welcoming cheers he received upon returning from vacation.

You can feel the warmth and happiness when you walk in Quintard's door. Stamford resident, Sylvia Simmons, said she spent a lot of time alone before she learned about the Senior Neighborhood Support Program. She joined initially to volunteer and help give back to the community. "Each day, I walk in and give every member a hug. I do this because you never know who might need a hug today." Sylvia recounted a time when she was ill and could not attend the Center. "I thought I was going to lose my mind!" Many of the members agree that loneliness and isolation can be more devastating than disease. I asked Sylvia how Senior Neighborhood has been able to bring together such a diverse group of people where other agencies have difficulty serving multi-ethnic or multi-lingual people. Sylvia's response, "We are all God's children. Our attitude comes from our leader. Reverend Ogletree welcomes and accepts everyone and so do we!"




Member Sylvia Simmons is quick with a smile and a hug.

Senior Neighborhood Services Support Program encourages its members to use their special gift or talent to help others. It is this renewed sense of purpose that affects all members. Each member is motivated by the opportunity to set the lunch table, read a poem, arrange the music for the exercise class or do some stand-up comedy. Senior Neighborhood Support Program proves that nothing is more powerful than having a reason to live and a reason to give! 

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have been excluded from Part D coverage. The closing of ConnPACE for these individuals means that they now have to pay for those medications 100% out of pocket. The Affordable Care Act has changed the law and starting in January 2013, benzodiazepines and barbiturates will be covered under Part D. However, in the meantime individuals are struggling to pay for those needed medications out of pocket. CHOICES can assist these individuals with doing plan screenings and looking for generic equivalents that will lower their out of pocket costs. In addition, some pharmaceutical companies offer certain medications for free to low-income individuals who don't have prescription coverage for those medications and cannot afford to pay for them. CHOICES can help research those possible options for individuals who are struggling to pay for these excluded prescription drugs.

Please keep in mind that ConnPACE is still available for individuals who are NOT Medicare eligible and is a great option for disabled individuals who have to wait the two years before becoming eligible for Medicare. Those individuals can apply for ConnPACE within 31 days from when they are deemed disabled by Social Security or during ConnPACE's Annual Enrollment Period which runs from November 15th to December 31st.

If you know someone who has lost their ConnPACE coverage and is NOT yet on a Medicare Savings Program, or for a ConnPACE application, you can download them on our website at www.swcaa.org under Benefits and Services or call us at 800-994-9422. Remember, anyone who needs help evaluating their current Medicare coverage and/or reviewing their options for 2012 can call CHOICES for a free and objective screening. 



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Tai Chi for Strength and Balance

If you're looking for a way to reduce stress, consider Tai Chi. Tai Chi is sometimes described as "meditation in motion" because it promotes serenity through gentle movements. Originally developed in ancient China for self-defense, Tai Chi evolved into a graceful form of exercise that's now used for stress reduction, to promote balance and to help with a variety of other health conditions.



Members of Stratford's Baldwin Center practicing QiGong.

Thanks to the United Way of Coastal Fairfield County (UWCFC) and the Southwestern CT Agency on Aging, seniors attending targeted centers will have access to Tai Chi instruction twice per week. Eligible participants can register for free Tai Chi classes offered

at Norwalk's Senior Center South, Bridgeport's Eisenhower Senior Center and Stratford's Baldwin Center. Access to health is a critical aspect of the UWCFC mission. By partnering with the Southwestern CT Agency on Aging, the United Way was able to broaden the impact of this regional, evidence-based initiative to improve the health of many seniors.

Why Tai Chi? Senior Centers have long recognized the importance of exercise classes designed to enhance lower extremity strength and improve postural stability. Tai Chi has been clinically proven to reduce the risk for falls and the fear of falling. Research presented by the CT Collaboration for Fall Prevention indicate that among adults 70 years and older, sixteen percent of Emergency Room visits and seven percent of all hospitalizations are the result of a fall. Decreasing falls improves health outcomes for older adults.

Darryl Manning and Maryann Charmoz, Tai Chi instructors and co-founders of The Flowing Motion, will offer expert instruction in the Norwalk and Bridgeport locations, and Mathew Mele is the instructor at the Baldwin Center. For more information or for a class schedule please contact Gretchen James, Project Manager, at 203-814-3620 or gjames@swcaa.org.

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