

SeniorHOTLINE

Volume 14, Issue 2

Senior Series

A partnership between
Ohio State University Extension and
Ohio Aging Network professionals



A New Direction for Healthy Aging

active aging



The aging network across Ohio funds a variety of programs that encourage older adults to improve their health. Programs offered include health fairs, blood pressure screenings, exercise programs at senior and community centers, and others. Under a new initiative from the U.S. Administration on Aging, health promotion and disease prevention programs for older adults and people with disabilities are heading in a new direction – towards “evidence based” programs. For someone who enrolls in such a program, it means that if they follow the program as prescribed, we know they’ll get a specific set of results.

In Ohio, evidence based disease prevention and health promotion programs currently follow a couple of models.

The **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program** (the Ohio program is called Healthy U) helps individuals with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, asthma, emphysema, heart conditions, high blood pressure, as well as others, learn how to manage those diseases. Participants meet two hours per week for six weeks to learn how to deal with symptoms and frustration and how to design a self-management program that works for them. *How do we know it works?* Participants regularly report using fewer healthcare services, greater energy levels, reduced fatigue, better psychological well-being, enhanced relationships with their physician, but most importantly – they feel better!

Reports show that up to half of older adults in the community experience a fear of falling and restrict their activities because of that fear. A **Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls** emphasizes practical strategies to reduce the risk of falling and to increase activity levels. As part of the class, seniors learn to change their environment and to exercise so that they increase strength and balance and reduce their risk of falls. *How do we know it works?* 97 percent of participants feel comfortable increasing activity, 99 percent plan to continue exercising, and 98 percent would recommend the program to someone else.

To help those who are at risk of developing serious health problems because of sedentary lifestyles, the **Active for Life** program helps develop the motivation and skills needed to become more physically active. Active for Life is a twenty-week course that helps sedentary people learn ways of incorporating physical activity into their everyday lives, achieving the health benefits of activity. *How do we know it works?* Follow-up studies show that participants in the program increased moderate and vigorous intensity activity by an average of 2.12 hours per week and increased total activity by 3.84 hours per week.

Evidence based disease prevention programs are gradually making their way to Ohio. To learn more about healthy aging programs near you, contact your Area Agency on Aging at 1-866-243-5678.

*Submitted by Deanna Clifford
Program Administrator
Ohio Department of Aging*

Strawberry Season!



A fresh strawberry – just the thought of it makes your mouth water. The aroma and taste of strawberries is hard to beat! Strawberries are at their peak from late May through June, but can be found almost year-round at the grocery store.

Did you know that strawberries are grown in all 50 states, with California growing about 80 percent of all strawberries in the United States? The strawberry is the only fruit with seeds on the outside, and the average strawberry has over 200 tiny seeds.

Strawberries aren't only delicious – they are nutritious. They are an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of potassium and fiber. They are low in calories and fat, and are cholesterol free. All in all, they make a great snack.

Shopping for strawberries: Choose berries that are firm, bright red in color, and have green caps that are fully attached. Strawberries will not ripen once they are picked. Avoid berries with large uncolored or seedy areas. For best quality, use strawberries as soon as possible after purchase or store in the refrigerator until serving.

Serving suggestions: Just before serving, wash strawberries in cold water in a colander. Drain and remove caps with a sharp knife. Eat whole as a snack or add to salads, yogurt, smoothies, and cereal. Serve sliced with ice cream, pancakes, waffles, or French toast. Strawberry pie and strawberry shortcakes are also popular ways to serve strawberries, but have more calories than the other choices.

If you have a strawberry grower in your county, take a field trip to a "pick your own farm." This is a great activity to share with grandchildren.

Enjoy some delicious Ohio strawberries while they are at their peak this year.

Resource: "Food for Thought – Strawberries," Fruit and Vegetable Fact Sheet, Kathy Jelley, Brown County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Educator, Ohio State University Extension, 2008.



For One More Day

By Mitch Albom

This is the story of Charley, a child of divorce who is always forced to choose between his mother and his father. He grows into a man and starts a family of his own. But one fateful weekend, he leaves his mother to secretly be with his father – and she dies while he is gone. This haunts him for many years and unravels his own young family. Charley's guilt leads him to depression and drunkenness and one night he decides to take his life. But somewhere between this world and the next, he encounters his mother. They are in their hometown and he gets to spend one last day with her – the day he missed and always wished he had. He asks questions many of us yearn to ask, the questions we never ask while our parents and other loved ones are alive. By the end of this magical day, Charley discovers how little he really knew about his mother, the secret of how her love saved their family, and how deeply he wants the second chance to save his own.

*Contributed by Lynn Dobb
Education and Training Manager
Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging*

Meet Marlene and Ray



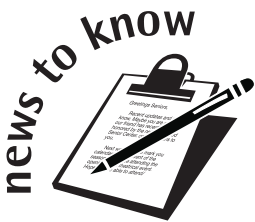
Yes Marlene and Ray are "seniors," according to birth records – but to me they are just special friends. I have known them for several years and feel such a warm and loving connection whenever I am with them or when one or the other comes to mind. I think of them fondly for so many reasons,

with the top being the mutual respect and love they share for one another and the devotion and commitment they have for their family and community. They have been married for more than fifty years and their relationship is inspiring. Not only do they enjoy spending time together, with their three children and their many grandchildren, and with their friends – they also enjoy and give each other much space to do their own thing and

explore their individual interests. They are proud of what the other does and given the amount of community volunteering they both do – they have much to be proud of! And while they are there to offer a suggestion and constructive criticism when needed, they are more often there to share a sincere smile and wonderful words of encouragement.

*Contributed by Karen Puterbaugh
Greene County Council on Aging*

The Newest Assisted Living Opportunity



Good news for Medicaid-eligible Ohioans – your choice in the Long Term Care Spectrum has been expanded. The Federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services has approved amendments to the Ohio Department of Aging's Assisted Living Medicaid Waiver Program. Current assisted living facility residents who are Medicaid eligible now have more choice.

In July 2006 The Assisted Living Waiver Program was open to people living in a nursing facility or enrolled in a home and community-based program such as PASSPORT, Choices, or Home Care. If you have been a current resident of Ohio assisted living facilities for at least six months, you are eligible.

Guidelines state that interested participants must be 21 years of age or older, need hands-on

assistance with certain tasks such as dressing, bathing, grooming, toileting, eating, or mobility; meet the financial criteria for Medicaid eligibility (as determined by the Department of Jobs and Family Services); and be able to pay room and board costs established by the state and reside in a residential care facility licensed by the Department of Aging.

In order for facilities to accept waiver participants, they must be licensed as residential care facilities by the Ohio Department of Health and certified by the Ohio Department of Aging as an Assisted Living Provider. To find participating facilities, visit the Long-term Care Consumer Guide web site www.ltcoho.org and use the keyword: "waiver."

For information call toll free: 1-866-243-5678 for the Area Agency on Aging serving your area.

*Contributed by Linda Vogel
Quality Improvement Specialist
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Siblings as Caregivers



Siblings – our relationships are unique and priceless. We grow up together and if we are lucky, we even like each other. In fact, the sibling relationship is the longest relationship we have – longer than that of child with parent, parent with child, and husband with wife! We share many things

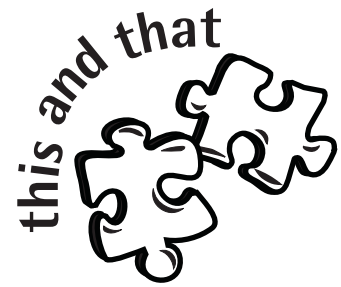
during our lives, and for most of us we will one day share caregiving responsibilities for our parent(s).

Caregiving roles and responsibilities can strengthen, challenge, and even change the relationships we have with our brothers and sisters. In most families, one member is designated as the primary caregiver and decision maker. And even when the primary caregiver is a spouse, there also tends to be one adult child we look to first. In *The Eldercare Handbook: Difficult Choices, Compassionate Solutions*, author Stella Mora Henry dedicated a chapter to "parent-child role transfer" and still another to "redefining sibling roles." Ms. Henry shares that as our parent(s) need us as caregivers, the family unit changes and with change can come challenges.

What we need to do, and sooner than later, is start a family dialogue. Sit down and talk about how you should and would handle various caregiving situations. You and your siblings should be in the discussion, as should your parent(s). We all have gifts and tasks we are more comfortable with, so maybe there are some natural caregiving "assignments" each sibling can take on. There is always a chance that the assignments handed out won't be necessary, but isn't it better to have plan and not need it, than need a plan and not have one? We all want what is best for our parent(s), but we may not all agree on what that should be.

An issue paper published by the AARP Public Policy Institute (PPI) in 2005 explored informal, or non-paid caregiving at length, pulling data from the 1999 National Long-Term Care Survey of Medicare beneficiaries. The research on "who caregivers are" confirms what we already know – adult children make up the largest part of the caregiver pool. So it only makes sense to find a balance between being the best caregiver we can while maintaining a positive relationship with our siblings!

*Contributed by Karen Puterbaugh
Greene County Council on Aging*



"One can never pay in gratitude; one can only pay 'in kind' somewhere else in life."

– Anne Morrow Lindbergh

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