



Civic Engagement: Staying Involved in Your Community

active aging



Being active and involved as we age is of great benefit to us personally as well as to our communities. And in response to Ohio's increasing older population, Governor Strickland signed

an Executive Order in 2008 creating the Senior Civic Engagement Council. The council was charged with developing policies and recommendations to increase opportunities and participation levels of seniors in the areas of employment, volunteerism, and lifelong learning.

Employment: Many seniors retire only to discover that they miss being in the workplace and want to return to work. Other seniors, due to recent economic difficulties, have seen their retirement portfolios shrink and may need to return to work or stay on the job longer in order to afford even their basic expenses. Between 2005 and 2015, 100% of the growth in the state's labor force will be those age 55 and over. The focus in this area is to provide employers with the information and tools needed to recruit and retain the older worker as well as to help older workers develop the skills they need to stay in or return to the workplace.

Volunteering: While many are staying in or returning to the workforce, others are enjoying or are ready for a fulfilling retirement. Ohio seniors currently provide hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours each year in their communities throughout

the state. Many retired and near-retired seniors are looking to use their skills, knowledge, and interests to somehow be of benefit through meaningful volunteer opportunities. The focus in this area is to identify new opportunities that harness the skills and energy of a new generation of volunteers.

Lifelong Learning: Ohio's colleges offer a wide range of personal enrichment classes that allow seniors the opportunity to pursue an area of interest purely for the pleasure of learning. Yet other older adults seek more substantial credit-bearing coursework to either complement their previous education or to shift into a completely new arena. For some, education provides the vehicle to move into a new career or volunteer position. The focus in this area is to create new opportunities to reach out to older adults and encourage participation in the many learning activities through Ohio's higher education system.

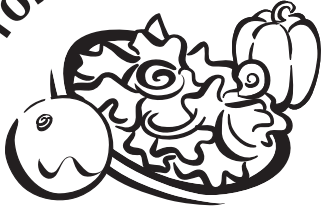
Whether engaged in employment, volunteering, and/or learning, the benefits of remaining active are many. One study showed that physically active seniors reduce their healthcare costs by an average of \$2,000.00 per year. But equally as important is the benefit to our neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities. Think about the ways you can stay engaged in your community—it may improve your health and your community!

By Scott Layson, Ohio Department of Aging

Source: Health Partners Research Associates, 2008.

Enjoy a Crunchy Carrot

food for thought



MyPyramid recommends eating at least 2½ cups of vegetables each day. During the summer months, it is easy to go to the garden or your local farmer's market and pick some freshly grown produce. During the winter and spring months, this is more of a challenge.

Foods like carrots and broccoli are available year-round and have a good flavor throughout the year. This root vegetable is low in calories, and high in fiber and beta-carotene. Carrots are also low in sodium and a good source of Vitamins A and C. They are also low in calories (before you add any toppings like butter or honey).

Did you know that carrots can also be purple, white, red, or yellow, as well as the common orange variety? They were the first vegetables canned commercially and are also available in the frozen food section of the grocery store. Carrots have one of the highest sugar contents of all vegetables; only beets are higher in natural sugar.

Carrots are crisp and tasty when served raw or cooked. When choosing fresh carrots in bunches, look for smooth, firm, crisp carrots that are well-shaped with fresh, green tops. If you buy the baby carrots in the bag, be sure to check the expiration date on the package. Keep baby carrots dry when storing to prevent spoilage. Compare prices for the large and baby carrots. When baby carrots are on sale, their price may be comparable, and are time and energy savers.

Enjoy carrots raw as a snack with some salad dressing or dip or add to a lettuce salad. For a change of pace, mix shredded carrots with raisins, diced apples, and some low-fat yogurt.

Cook them in a stir-fry with other vegetables, steam them with herbs such as dill, or use sliced carrots in soups or stews.

Try adding carrots to your grocery cart and menus for a crunchy change of pace.

Submitted by Cindy Oliveri, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Specialist

References:

Food for Thought—Carrots, 2008 Fruit and Vegetable Fact Sheet Series, Ohio State University Extension.

<http://www.mypyramid.gov>



My Stroke of Insight

by Jill Bolte Taylor

On the morning of December 10, 1996, Jill Bolte Taylor, a thirty-seven-year-old Harvard trained brain scientist, experienced a massive stroke when a blood vessel exploded in the left side of her brain. A neuroanatomist by profession, she observed her own mind completely deteriorate to the point that she could not walk, talk, read, write, or recall any of her life, all within four brief hours. Taylor describes alternating between opposite realities—euphoric nirvana of the intuitive right brain in which she felt a sense of complete well-being and peace; and the logical, sequential left brain, which recognized she was having a stroke, and enabled her to quickly seek help. She shares her unique perspective on the brain and its capacity for recovery. This is a powerful story of her journey and life-altering lessons. It is a valuable recovery guide for anyone touched by brain injury, and is an emotionally stirring testimony that deep internal peace truly is accessible to anyone, at any time.

Submitted by Lynn Dobb, Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging

Johnny's Chairs for Charity



Instead of sitting in a rocking chair, my dad, Johnny Borowski, at age 90 "rocks"

his world by making unique child-size Adirondack chairs. These specialty chairs are exact scale models of the popular Adirondack chairs you might see on porches and decks. When I was a little girl, we always had one of these special chairs, and as we've had our own children, they each have received one of Dad's chairs, too.

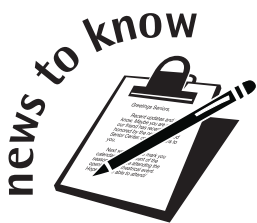
After retiring from two jobs, Dad really expanded this hobby. He calls his woodworking "monkeying around," and you'll often see him out in his workshop cutting some of the 25 pieces that go into each chair. By carefully laying out his patterns, Dad can get many pieces from lumber that would be scrap to a builder. Many of the area lumber yards now donate scrap wood to him to aid in his charitable endeavors.

In summertime, it's not uncommon to see him surrounded by dozens of little chairs in bright, cheerful colors so appeal-

ing to young children. He works at his craft for a while and then takes a break to either help with the local community service organizations or his church. Many of his chairs have been donated to churches and charities where they are raffled, sold, or auctioned off to raise money. Dad says that he's slowing down as he gets older, but I see a man that I can only hope to keep up with when I am 90!

Submitted by Nancy Recker

The Digital TV Transition



Television will soon undergo the largest change since the introduction of color. As of February 17th, all full-power broadcast stations will only broadcast in digital. And yes, this includes local channels

you rely on for news and weather. Digital broadcasting promises a clearer picture and more programming options, but may create a challenge for some.

For those televisions receiving a signal through cable or satellite TV service, your service provider ensures you will continue to receive your TV signal after the transition. This transition impacts people receiving their television signal via a roof antenna or "rabbit ears" on top of the set. If you receive your TV signal via antenna and you've purchased a new television in the last couple of years, chances are your TV is ready for the transition and you won't experience a change in your reception. Read your TV owner's manual to determine if it has a digital tuner

built in. However, if your television is more than a couple of years old and you receive your TV signal via antenna or rabbit ears, you **may** need a digital TV converter box to continue receiving your TV signal after February 17.

Certified converter boxes are available for sale from many common retailers in your community. To help pay the cost of purchasing a converter box, the government has been offering a \$40 coupon. However, as of January 2009, the program has run out of money and cannot fill new requests for coupons until funds are freed up by expiring, unused coupons. If you would like to be placed on a waiting list for a converter box coupon, call toll-free 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009) or visit www.dtv2009.gov. Those on the waiting list will receive coupons on a first-come, first-served basis as funds become available. You can learn more about the digital TV transition at www.dtv2009.gov.

Submitted By Deanna Clifford, Ohio Department of Aging

Compassionate Allowances Announced by the Social Security Administration



Do you or someone you know need disability income assistance, quickly?

On October 27, 2008, the Social Security Administration made a groundbreaking, yet very quiet announcement that introduced the national rollout and implementation of the "Compassionate

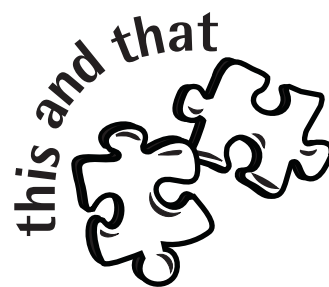
Allowances" initiative. This initiative will allow all Social Security Administration offices to expedite disability claims for applicants whose medical conditions are so severe or serious that they obviously meet disability standards.

Compassionate allowances are a way of quickly identifying diseases and other medical conditions that will invariably qualify under a newly created list of impairments. This initiative will allow Social Security to act quickly, in a matter of days rather than months or years, to more quickly target the most obviously disabled individuals based on medical information that can be usually and routinely obtained at the time someone needs to apply for disability income assistance.

Social Security is currently launching this expedited decision process with a modest list of 50 medical conditions. Over time, more diseases and conditions will be added to expand the list. The list of these 50 initial conditions and more information can be found at: www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances/.

This initial list of conditions was developed as a result of information received at public outreach hearings, public comments submitted via the Web, comments received from the disability determination communities, as well as the expert counsel of both medical and scientific experts. To date, three such public hearings have been held to help identify conditions, such as rare diseases and cancers. With more hearings scheduled, it will most likely expand to include brain injuries and strokes. A summary regarding the most recent public hearing focused on the topic of brain injuries and strokes can also be reviewed at the above listed web address.

*Submitted by Jennifer Justi, Training Manager,
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"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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