

THE HELPING HAND

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W.D. Goodwill Initiatives on Aging Staff Heads to Southern Utah to Help Older Adults with Medicare Rx Applications

by Nathan Judd

The Internet-based application is very tedious and has given rise to a great need for some sort of program to help older adults gain access to the prescription drug benefits for which they are eligible. There have been very few and usually ineffective efforts made by the government to address this problem. That is why W.D. Goodwill Initiatives on Aging decided to round up a crew to see if they could make a tiny dent in the nation-wide problem. With the help of a grant which they received from the Department of Human Services' Department of Aging and Adult Services, Dr. O. William Farley, director, along with 2 staff members and 6 student volunteers, took the road in January and went to St. George, Hurricane, Kanab, and Enterprise to help older adults in these rural areas to apply for the Medicare-Approved Prescription Drug Discount Card and the \$600 credit.

The government offers both the Medicare-Approved Prescription Drug Discount Card and a \$600 credit to help older adults with rising costs of prescription drugs. The \$600 credit is for seniors that have lower incomes and have an even harder time paying for the medications that, a lot of times, keep them alive. Nation-wide, only 12% of eligible Medicare beneficiaries have signed up

for the card. The problem is that even though older adults can greatly benefit, and sometimes can't afford their prescription drugs without the help of government programs like this, the application process is difficult and can only be done on the Internet.

For younger generations, the Internet is incredibly useful and a commonly used tool for a wide variety of activities but for older adults it might as well be the monster that used to come out of the closet after their parents tucked them in as children. Seniors have always done business in person or by mail.



Many are uncomfortable with the thought of putting their private and important information on the Internet and most of our older population is completely illiterate when it comes to computers.

We set up 2 days at the St. George Senior Citizen Center, as well as a day at each of the other senior centers, for older adults to come and meet with the University of Utah College of Social Work students trained

to walk them through the entire application process. All of the Goodwill Initiatives on Aging representatives that participated with the trip attended three comprehensive training sessions prior to leaving for St. George. 500 flyers were distributed throughout the different areas which were posted at various locations including all area pharmacies. Additionally, local newspapers and radio stations also carried articles and advertisements announcing this event.

After all of the preparations, our crew was a little nervous but optimistic about the success of the project. Dr. Farley, who said that if we helped even one older adult in need the trip would be a success in his mind, was pleasantly surprised with the actual turnout. All of

us were very happy as we arrived at the St. George Senior Center the first morning to find ten people waiting. Both days went well, and we had many successful opportunities to help. In all, we were able to assist 42 older adults with the application process and consulted with another 80 seniors.

One woman's prescription drug costs averaged nearly \$200 dollars per month and her only income was about \$600 a month from social security. She had been trying unsuccessfully for months to apply for the services. She qualified to have all of her prescription drugs paid for by the government. She was one of the many that we were able to help by breaking down the Internet barrier.

Many of the people we helped just couldn't understand why the government would make the Internet the

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**CALENDAR OF
EVENTS**

April
27th– Trip to Hill Air Force Base Museum & Lunch; 8:30a-2:45p; \$13–lunch included; Friendly Neighborhood Senior Center (1992 S. 200 E.– 468-2781).
29th– Free Pancake Breakfast at Columbus Senior Center (2531 S. 400 E. - 412-3295)
30th– LifeCare’s Spring Spruce Up Day; 978-2452.

May
“National Older Adult Month”
5th– “Caesar & Cleopatra” at the City Library Auditorium; 4-6p Screening; 7-9p Lecture Series.
5th– Cinco de Mayo Celebration & Entertainment at 11a at Friendly Neighborhood Senior Center.
7th– “National Join Hands Day” volunteer fair at South Towne Mall from 11a-4p.
18th– Free legal consultation at 1p at Friendly Neighborhood Senior Center.
19th– “Powerful Tools for Caregivers;” 3-5p every Thursday for 6 weeks; 468-3480.
23rd– Neighbors Helping Neighbors 5th Annual Volunteer Recognition and Student Appreciation Awards Dinner; 6-8p at the University of Utah College of Social Work.
26th– FREE Project C.A.R.E. Resource Fair at Liberty Senior Center (251 E. 700 S.– 532-5079); 8:30a-12:00p with lunch following.
31st– Memorial Day

Message from the Director



Dr. Nancy Kelley-Gillespie,
Program Director

Hello and Happy Spring! This is a very busy time of year for a lot of folks—taxes, spring cleaning, end of school year, etc. It’s very busy for NHN too! It’s exciting to us to see our students blossom into true professionals and prepare to move on and use the skills they’ve learned while completing their service learning and internship requirements with NHN. Our organization offers an incredibly rich experience for college and high school students to learn about issues that older adults sometimes face and how to address

these issues and meet the diverse needs of this population. It is an opportunity of a lifetime and one that we hope sticks with them throughout their professional careers. This year, we have had the pleasure to work with the following social work practicum students from both the University of Utah

and Brigham Young University: Marianne Christensen, Jamie Navarretti, Jenny Allen, Melanie Lawrence, Mendy Magistro, Kim Olsen, and Wendy Ray-Stats. These students will bid farewell to NHN at the end of this month and we will be thanking them for their contributions at our annual recognition dinner in May. Service learning students are also welcomed at NHN—these are students who choose to help out with NHN as part of a requirement for a class they are taking. We have students (too many to name here) complete service learning projects through the University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College,

Westminster College, and Weber State University. These service-learning students come from a variety of majors or disciplines, such as, nursing, sociology, social work, gerontology, engineering, medicine, writing and communications, psychology, and family and consumer studies. Service learning assignments have included such projects as completing oral histories, volunteering one-on-one with an older adult, completing a community service project, developing a training manual for our volunteers, developing invitations and programs, etc. The opportunities are endless! This is a wonderful chance to promote civic engagement and instill in future generations the value of community service and volunteerism— activities that are essential to making a difference in our communities and with the older adults within them. So, by working with students and older adults, we all win and NHN is proud to be a part of this exchange!

Nancy Kelley-Gillespie

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only way to apply for the card or financial assistance when the majority of older adults can’t even use computers. A few of the people with whom we met told us that making older adults apply online was the government’s way of not having to help them at all. While we hope that isn’t the case, there are still millions of older adults eligible for these benefits that simply can’t apply.

It is just one problem that older adults face that is in dire need of a solution. In the meantime, we can all lend a hand to help. If you have a relative that may be eligible, or know a senior that you may be able to help with the 30-45 minute Internet application, a little bit of your time might go a long way. There are several options to assist with this process. For more information contact: Salt Lake County Aging Services @ 468-2416.

“COMMUNITY AND INTERNET RESOURCES”

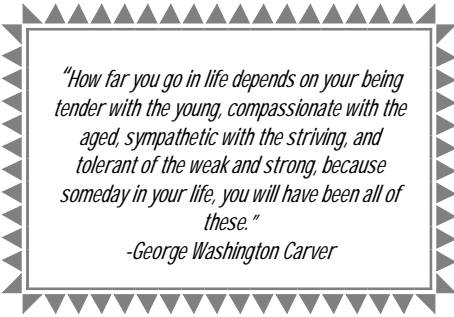
- **New Diabetes Support Group.** Offered every Tuesday at 10a at the Liberty Senior Center (251 E. 700 S. - 532-5079).
- **Grief Support Group.** Offered every Wednesday at 12:30p at Heritage Senior Center (140 E. Center St.-Clearfield; 773-7065).
- **Substance Abuse Treatment for Older Adults.** New services being provided at Valley Mental Health Master’s Program (4460 S. Highland Dr., Ste. 100 - 273-1085).
- **Free credit report.** Under the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, you’re entitled to one free report per year. Make sure no costly strings are attached. Go to www.annualcreditreport.com or 877-322-8228.
- **New Hospital Compare website.** Compare hospitals in your area at <http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov/>. Also, compare nursing homes and home health agencies at <http://www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/> and <http://www.medicare.gov/HHCompare/Home.asp>, respectively.

Service-Learning: The Pathway to Community Involvement

By Kim Olsen

Service-learning is a distinctive philosophy, way of teaching, and community development strategy that requires a community of support. It refers to curriculum-based community service done through the schools that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities. Service-learning in relation to intergenerational projects that match youth and older adults in a mutually beneficial relationship is one way to attempt to bridge the gaps between generations. It is an opportunity to combine the tenderness of youth with the compassion of the aged -- one having journeyed through life, the other just embarking. High school volunteering recently reached the highest levels in the past 50 years with almost half of high school aged youth volunteering at least one hour per week. Approximately 69% of K-12 public schools engage in community service or volunteer activities. According to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, through service-learning, students acquire skills and enhance existing abilities by actively participating in organized service. Elementary and secondary schools as well as institutions of higher education play a key role in facilitating and partnering with community organizations to provide an enriching experience for those involved. Service-learning enhances the academic curriculum of the students and provides structured time for students and participants to learn from

one another. Service to others and to one's community is the glue that holds the community together. At the core of this perspective is the conviction that young people need a variety of adults to help them understand their place in the community. The challenge is to create the opportunities for youth and elders to come together in meaningful ways. Service-learning helps to improve academic performance, values, self-efficacy, leadership and interpersonal skills, choice of a service career, and continued plans to participate in service/volunteering. Studies have shown that 44% of adults volunteer and 2/3 of these volunteers began volunteering their time when they were young. Adults who began volunteering as youth are twice as likely to volunteer as those who did not volunteer when they were younger. Utah is ranked 1st in the nation for rates of volunteerism. The vision of volunteering is becoming a greater part of who we are. Many young people are driven to explore issues of social justice. Consequently, in many organizations, the young people become the keepers of the vision. They are the ones who focus on the mission; they bring a fresh perspective. It is through service learning that we can maintain the vision of volunteering and continue to bridge existing gaps between generations.



VOLUNTEER CORNER

- | <u>On-Going Activities</u> | <u>As-Needed Activities</u> | <u>Administrative Activities</u> |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Befriend participants; provide home visits and companionship Telephone reassurance Accompany participants on walks Run errands/shopping Care for pets Light housekeeping Provide transportation Conduct recreation and leisure activities Assist with writing/organizing family genealogies, letters, or cards Keep up to date with current events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring cleaning Seasonal yard work Home repairs, maintenance, and safety modifications Interior/exterior painting Provide holiday/birthday visits Make special purchases/donations Provide special entertainment Put up and take down seasonal decorations Coordinate special outings/activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain newspaper ads, volunteer websites, church bulletin inserts, and other PR efforts Distribute flyers, brochures, and other program materials throughout the program's catchment area Maintain a community resource file/loan library Filing and data entry Organize and maintain picture files and scrapbook Mass mailings Follow-up with internet resources and information Create flyers and cards on computer |

WAYS YOU CAN LEND A HELPING HAND

Below is a list of specific participant and program needs that you can fulfill.

- Things to do:**
- Sand/varnish a front & back door
 - Do light housekeeping (e.g., vacuuming, dusting)
 - Yard work (e.g., raking, weeding, mowing, planting, trimming, edging)
 - Mow lawns/shovel snow
- Needed Items:**
- 2 wedge cushions
 - Shovels, rakes, edger, hedge cutter, leaf blower
 - Holiday decorations
 - Extension ladder
 - Van
 - Microwave and toaster
 - Lift chair
 - Birthday gifts
 - Special events tickets
 - Yarn
 - Paint and paint supplies





SRI:W.D.Goodwill Initiatives on Aging
College of Social Work
 THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

NONPROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 PERMIT NUMBER 1529
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Neighbors Helping Neighbors
 395 S. 1500 East, Suite 207
 Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0260

Phone: 801-581-5162
 Fax: 801-585-6865
 Email: nancy.kelley@socwk.utah.edu
 Website: <http://www.socwk.utah.edu/neighbors/index.asp>

ABOUT NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

NHN strives to enable older adults to reside in the community for as long as possible. The *mission* of NHN is to improve the health, safety, and quality of life of community-residing older adults through the promotion and maintenance of independent living. NHN uses a community building approach to mobilize various entities within the community to participate in meeting the needs of neighboring older adults. Recognizing that formal aging service systems are often overwhelmed by the demand for services and lack of sufficient resources, NHN attempts to bridge this gap by accessing resources from the informal support network (e.g., neighbors, local businesses, social groups, religious and civic organizations).

“Never doubt that a group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

-Margaret Mead

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

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AGENCY PARTNERS

- AARP
- Columbus Senior Center
- Friendly Neighborhood Senior Center
- Hilda B. Jones Center
- Jewish Family Services
- Journey at Willow Creek
- Liberty Senior Center
- LifeCare
- Lowell Bennion Community Services Center
- Neighborhood House Adult Day Care Center
- Salt Lake County Aging Services
- Salt Lake Valley Health Department
- Sunday Anderson Westside Senior Center
- Utah Division of Aging and Adult Services
- University/Neighborhood Partners
- Valley Mental Health Services
- Youth Care

**Please visit our website for a complete list of agency and community partners.*

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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- Project C.A.R.E.
- Salt Lake City Fire Department
- Salt Lake Community College
- Shaw Contract Flooring
- Salt Lake City Mayor’s Office
- S.O.S. (Seasons of Service)
- Wasatch Advisors
- SIFC-U
- Zions Bank
- Zurcher’s Party Store