Life Hacks to Keep Your Loved One Active

by Kathy Bullis

While every minute of the caregivers day may be cram-packed, this is not necessarily so for the elder receiving care. Isolation and lack of stimulation can increase depression and mental decline.

Oh GREAT! One more thing for a caregiver to worry about! There are many ways to add a little spice to your loved ones life without adding stress to yours. In fact, people who are kept active are less disoriented, less likely to become depressed and may suffer fewer sleep disturbances.

It’s ok to try new things, but in general, familiar routines and activities are more successful. It’s a good time to look back and reminisce to find out what they used to like. Often past favorite activities can be adapted to meet current abilities.

Don’t assume your loved one can’t do things without trying them, within reason of course. I don’t think I would take someone with osteoporosis bungee jumping, but the seniors I worked with in nursing facilities never ceased to amaze me. I have met people who couldn’t remember their own names, but could play a piano beautifully or couldn’t speak, but could sing. Once I was standing in a small group of ladies reminiscing and demonstrating tatting, a 97 year old lady who had very poor vision and hands gnarled with arthritis asked if she could see the tatting shuttle. I handed it to her and to my amazement, she began to work the fine thread expertly and quickly into little bits of tatted lace. I never would have guessed she could do that. So try things even if you think they might not be able to do them, again, within reason and keeping necessary adap-
A Senior Moment

April 2019

Mrs. L, who is 72 years old and her daughter, came to Aging Matters on the recommendation of her pharmacist. When her appointment was made, she stated that she had been given an expensive heart medication that she could not afford. Her Medicare Part D did not cover this particular medication on its formulary, my first thought was, “we can contact the Part D company and ask them for an exception to have the medicine covered until October when we can make sure she gets into a plan that does cover that medicine.” I asked her to bring all of her cards (Medicare, Part D, Supplement, Medicaid (if she has that) proof of income from Social Security or any other income source and her medication list) with her to the appointment.

Mrs. L had worked all her life and retired about 5 years ago. In early March, she was taken to the Emergency Room at a local hospital with chest pain. Upon release from the hospital, her doctor prescribed a very expensive blood thinner for a heart condition that they found. The office provided her with a small supply of samples, and when she checked with her local pharmacy, she could not believe the price, $479.80 per month. There was no way Mrs. L could afford that expense into her already stretched monthly budget.

Her monthly income from Social Security is $1,387.00. One hundred thirty-five dollars and fifty cents ($135.50) is the cost of the Medicare Part B premium, it is automatically withheld from her Social Security check. Her monthly supplement plan G cost $178 per month, and her Part D (drug plan) is $29.20 for a total of $342.70 in Medicare costs per month. Her basic monthly bills; rent, utilities, car insurance, etc. are well over $400 monthly, there is no way to fit $470.89 for the additional medication and still pay for food, gas and toiletries. She knew she could not afford the medication but she did not know what to do.

Mrs. L was overwhelmed with relief when she was able to apply for a couple programs that are available to her. Extra Help from Social Security reduces the Medicare Part D expenses, and the Medicare Savings Program through Mo-HealthNet covers the $135.50 Medicare Part B premium. She was awarded “Full-Extra Help” effective April 1, 2019. This means that her Medicare Part D premium will now be $0 with $0 deductible and no coverage gap, and a deep reduction in her co-pays on medicine. Her medication co-pays will now be about $12 per month total including her blood thinner. This will save her $647.59 per month. This was a life changing Senior Moment for Mrs. L and she left Aging Matters knowing she could afford her living expenses, medicines and still have a little left.

A Senior Moment is a new feature that shines a light on what we at Aging Matters do and how we change the lives of our seniors.

Time Critical Diagnosis System

by Christina Degenhardt
Cape County Private Ambulance Service

In 2013, Missouri took a step forward in the attempt to treat trauma, stroke, and STEMI, a type of heart attack, in a faster more efficient manner. Missouri pushed forward legislation under the title of Time Critical Diagnosis System in attempt to improve survival and outcome of three major threats to health in the state. This system allows hospitals to be categorized by their ability to diagnose, begin treatment, and if necessary transfer to a more appropriate hospital for those patients suffering trauma, stroke, or STEMI. The legislation also mandates ground and air ambulance services to bypass one hospital in favor of a more appropriate hospital that can properly treat one of these time critical illnesses. In each of these medical emergencies time is critical and by designating hospitals in this way Emergency Medical Services can give patients the best chance of survival and outcome.

Trauma centers are categorized I through III. Stroke and STEMI centers are categorized I through IV. Level I centers generally function as a resource in the area and have specialized resources for the most complex patients. Level II centers provide definitive care to high numbers of patients within the area. Level III centers provide access into the system and provide care, but generally refer to a higher level of care. Level IV centers are key entry points into the system in rural areas. They are instrumental in beginning care, stabilizing, and preparing patients for rapid transfer to higher levels of care.

So what does that mean for hospitals in our area? St Francis Medical Center is a Level III trauma center. Southeast Health and St Francis Medical Center are both Level I STEMI centers and Level II Stroke centers. Perry County Memorial Hospital is a Level IV STEMI center and a Level III Stroke center. All of these facilities have committed time and resources to participate in the state wide time critical diagnosis system for the benefit of their communities. For more information visit https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/chronic/tcldiagsystem/.
Hidden Gems

by Jackie Dover

Clients often say they wish they had learned about Aging Matters earlier so we could have helped them with previous issues. Aging Matters is like a hidden gem, a valuable service that not enough people know about. With that in mind, I realized there are many programs and services that could be a benefit if more people knew about them.

The first hidden gem is Wolfner Library. Wolfner Library is a free library service for qualifying Missourians who are unable to use standard print reading materials due to a physical or visual disability. Wolfner Library offers a wide variety of services including:

• Braille
• Large print
• Fiction and non-fiction audio books for all ages
• Over 70 magazine subscriptions
• Loanable machines for those renting audio books

Materials are mailed to and from library patrons free; that is right there is no cost for these services. As an avid reader, I think this is one of the most amazing services available. If you would like more information, you can visit the Wolfner Library website: www.sos.mo.gov/wolfner or follow them on Facebook: facebook.com/wolfnerlibrary or call 800-392-2614.

Another little gem that has benefitted many seniors is the South Central Pension Rights Project. Pension counseling projects assist anyone with a pension question or problem, regardless of age, income, or value of the claim. This is a free service. If you have ever tried to find a pension from a company that changed names or ownership, you know how valuable this help is.

Pension counselors assist:
• Answering questions about complicated pension laws and how they affect retirement
• Obtaining and explaining hard to find retirement publications, forms and other documentation
• Correcting pension miscalculations
• Claiming retirement benefits that have been denied
• Tracking down benefits from past employers

South Central Pension Rights Project is the pension-counseling project serving Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. If you have questions, you can contact them at www.southcentralpension.org or 800-443-2528.

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Other little gems from Aging Matters are our Medicare Bootcamps. At a Bootcamp, we cover all the parts of Medicare including when, where, and how to enroll. We also discuss the cost, penalties, and coverage. It is everything you wanted to know about Medicare, but were afraid to ask.

We also have regional Scamborees. These events go into detail on how to protect yourself from scams and fraud, and what to do if you are a victim. These programs are held throughout the year in the Aging Matters service area. Our toll free number is 800-392-8771; you can check our web page http://www.agingmatters2u.com or our Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/Aging-Matters.
Grand Opening

by Barbara Hahs

Missouri National Veterans Memorial Scheduled for May 18 & 19

With the completion of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Perryville, Missouri, a promise made by army veteran Jim Eddleman, is a promise kept. While serving in Vietnam back in 1968, Eddleman made a promise that if he made it back out of Vietnam, he would do something to show his respect in honor of his comrades. That promise became a reality in 2018 when an exact black granite replica of the Vietnam Memorial at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. was completed on 45 acres donated by Eddleman.

On May 18 & 19, 2019 there will be an official grand opening celebration dedicated to honor all of American soldiers and their families. You will find visiting the Memorial in Perryville to be more affordable than making a trip to Washington D.C. The campus is easy to navigate, wheelchair friendly, and has plenty of parking. Also known as America’s Wall, viewing is available 24/7. The Welcome Center is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For holiday and weekend hours call 573-547-2035.

Located approximately 3 miles off of Interstate 55, take exit 129 for Perryville; travel north on Highway 51/S. Perryville Boulevard for about 3.5 miles. Turn left at the Main Street intersection for one-plus miles. The Missouri National Veterans Memorial will be on your right. For your GPS, input the address: 1172 Veterans Memorial Pkwy, Perryville, MO 63775.

Records at www.archives.gov shows the total number of casualties at 58,220. Of this total, 46,850 casualties occurred during a five-year span of 1966 through 1970. The number of names on the wall is different than the official number of U.S. Vietnam War deaths, which is 58,220 as of May 2018. It was during this time span, that I (in my early teens then) remember the news reporters would announce the number of deaths each day. It was hard to imagine and extremely sad.
The following are a few ideas:

• Find chores for them to do. Everyone needs to be needed. Caregivers sometimes do too much for their loved ones and take over tasks that they could do for themselves. For instance, personal or household jobs such as folding clothes, and some aspects of food preparation could still be performed by many care receivers with some assistance or guidance. Look for things they can do that have real value.

• Another way to help your loved one maintain a purposeful life may be for them to volunteer. Over the years, I had nursing care residents who read stories, played Santa, and hosted parties for preschoolers. Libraries and schools often welcome volunteers who can read to children and perform other necessary tasks. The 4H clubs have a program called “spin” classes. Spin classes are 6 sections during which a senior adult can teach the club members a skill such as knitting, wood working, cooking, or any topic a person might be knowledgeable on.

• For those with memory impairment, try making memory boxes. These are containers with several items in them that are safe to be handled and usually all pertain to a particular subject. For instance, you might place an old road map, sun glasses, vacation pictures and souvenirs in one container, in another, a collection of kitchen gadgets, or for men, tools could be kept. It’s nice to make up several memory boxes so that they can be pulled out on a moment’s notice when your loved one is sitting idly by. Memory boxes encourage conversation and reminiscing.

• Social interaction is important for all of us. Schedule outings to favorite spots. If necessary use the wheelchair adapted van available through most public transportation services. Restaurants and stores are handicap accessible many have handicap accessible restrooms, you may also find accessible walking trails and fishing spots. It is a good idea to be familiar with your destination. If you haven’t been there before, call and ask about accessibility or stop in for a quick look around before you visit. I have seen remarkable transformation on outings. I’ll always remember a lady I took to a Cardinal baseball game. She had been lethargic and not eating. I was surprised when she showed interest in the trip. We gladly put her on the roster to attend. While making the long trip from Arcadia Valley to St. Louis, I noticed how she became more animated and excited as we got closer to the stadium. She began calling off the street names as we passed them and gave everyone a rundown as to what businesses and neighborhoods lie along our path. She lived in the area as a young woman and the trips to the ball park had been a summer ritual for her and her sister. But the biggest surprise came when she demanded a beer and nachos at the stadium. I consulted the accompanying nurse who said “let her have them”. We both watched in amazement as she downed the beer and nachos, jalapenos and all. That outing and the ones that followed had a noticeably positive effect on her attitude and health.

• Adapt an old hobby. For instance needle work can become difficult as eye sight fails and perhaps arthritis develops. However a stand magnifier can be used, light colored materials and directional lighting are helpful and larger needles and yarn or thread may be used. A combination of these tips might make needlework possible again. Purchase jigsaw puzzles with larger and fewer pieces also in lighter shades to make them more manageable. Men who no longer have the ability to use power tools, can still be involved in wood working by purchasing projects pre-assembled, or assembling them yourself and allowing them to do the finish sanding and painting.

There are all sorts of braces and clamps made to assist stroke victims in their daily activities. These can be used to hold craft projects and make them manageable for those who have the use of one hand.

• Use “video respite” to entertain people with dementia. I was skeptical at first, but was impressed after viewing some of the programs. They have different topics such as holidays, children, pets, automobiles, etc…. the videos have been created in an entertaining and respectful manner. There are also services such as Memory – Lane TV which provides a tailor made video reminisce program for your loved one.

These are just a few ideas to help keep your loved one active. If you are too overloaded, or don’t see anything here that would interest you, please contact me, Kathy Bullis at Aging Matters 573-335-3331 ext. 121 or 1-800-392-8771. I would be happy to help you find activity ideas for your specific situation.
Healthy Eating during Summer Travel
by Tracey Tripp

As the weather gets warmer and the days get longer, many of us begin to make summer travel plans. Maybe you’ll travel to see family; maybe to attend a special event like a graduation or wedding; maybe you’ll head out for a relaxing trip to the beach; maybe you’ll fly to an exotic location for adventure and sightseeing! Whatever your destination and however you get there, here are some tips for planning ahead and making smart choices to help you avoid some of the common pitfalls while traveling, so you arrive at your destination feeling energized and ready to enjoy yourself.

The key to making smart choices is planning ahead. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) says “research has shown that your ability to successfully engage in healthy behaviors may decline more than you think once you're away from your daily routine.” They suggest thinking through your typical daily routine as well as any challenges you may face and plan how to manage them on your trip.

While there’s no shame in indulging when you’re on vacation, it helps to strike a balance between nutritious meals and snacks and occasional splurges. Whether you’re flying or taking a road trip, packing some nutritious snacks will help prevent hunger and will help to lessen some of the stress of travel.

Suggestions for healthy, tasty snacks to bring include:
• Homemade trail mix with whole-grain cereals, nuts and a bit of dried fruit
• Fresh, whole fruit – think apples and bananas
• Whole-grain snack bars
• Unsalted nuts
• Dried fruit or Freeze-dried vegetables
• Cherry tomatoes
• Fruit and nut bars
• Whole-grain crackers or whole-grain pretzels
• Plain popcorn
• Peanut or other nut butters

If you’re able to take a cooler you have even more options. Sliced fruits and veggies, hummus, guacamole, low-fat cheese sticks, and yogurt are some great options. You could even make some sandwiches or a salad for the road. You could choose fresh, healthy ingredients and save some money, too. Make sure these items are thoroughly chilled or frozen before adding to the cooler. Use ice or ice packs to ensure the temperature stays under 40°F.

Staying well hydrated helps to fight tiredness and gives your immune system a boost. Avoid sugary beverages and those with a lot of caffeine. Choose water or other low calorie beverages. Try some fizzy water or pack a thermos of iced tea with mint, or slices of lemon or cucumber for a refreshing lift.

Trying new restaurants and new foods is often part of the fun of travel. Keep some of these tips in mind when enjoying a meal on vacation:
• Sandwiches – choose whole-grain bread, add extra vegetables, avoid oil or mayo
• Buffets – Walk around the buffet and decide which foods you’ll choose before grabbing a plate; aim to make half your plate fruits and vegetables, one quarter of your plate should be lean protein and the final quarter should be whole grains.
• Sit down restaurants – choose items that are grilled, steamed, broiled or baked rather than fried or sautéed, and watch your portions
• Strike a balance – If you have a big dinner planned, try eating lighter during the day. Balance nutritious meals and snacks with your splurges and desserts.

As always, always clean your hands before eating. Washing with warm running water and soap for 30 seconds is always best, but hand sanitizers will do in a pinch. Remember the 2 hour rule – cold or hot food must be eaten within 2 hours of purchasing to be safe. It’s all about balance. Just be mindful and plan ahead so you have fun, set limits and stay healthy and safe.

Easy Homemade Granola
(House of Nash Eats)

Big, crunchy clusters of lightly sweetened oats and almonds and a touch of cinnamon, brown sugar, vanilla, and honey flavor this the best, easy homemade granola recipe.

Ingredients
• 4 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
• 1 1/2 cups sliced almonds (or other nuts of your choice)
• 1/2 cup light brown sugar
• 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
• 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
• 1/4 cup canola oil
• 1/3 cup honey
• 2 teaspoons vanilla
• 1 egg white

Instructions
1. Heat oven to 300 degrees. Prepare a baking sheet by lining with parchment paper. Move the center rack up a level so it’s on the second level from the top.
2. Mix the oats, almonds, brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt together in a large mixing bowl until combined. In a small, separate bowl, stir the canola oil, honey, vanilla and egg white together, then drizzle over the oat mixture, stirring together until well combined. Stir in 1/2 to 3/4 cup dried fruit of your choice.
3. Transfer the granola mixture to the prepared baking sheet and spread it out in an even layer. If you want large chunks of granola, flatten into an even layer with a spatula, adding pressure so the granola is nice and compact. Bake for 30-35 minutes, rotating the pan once halfway through for even toasting, until golden and crispy and the almonds look lightly toasted.
4. Remove from oven and let the granola cool completely before transferring to an airtight container. Keeps for 2 weeks at room temperature.
OLDER AMERICANS MONTH 2019: CONNECT, CREATE, CONTRIBUTE

Each year, more and more older adults are making a positive impact in and around their community. As volunteers, employees, employers, educators, mentors, advocates, and more, they offer insight and experience that benefit the entire community. That's why Older Americans Month (OAM) has been recognizing the contributions of this growing population for 56 years.

Led by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) each May, OAM provides resources to help older Americans stay healthy and independent, and resources to help communities support and celebrate their diversity.

This year’s OAM theme, Connect, Create, Contribute, encourages older adults and their communities to:

• Connect with friends, family, and services that support participation. Arrange a meal to celebrate Older Americans Month and consider recognizing community members for their accomplishments. Plan a game night or crafting activity to bring people together in the name of fun. Encourage older adults and other storytellers to share their experiences, perhaps around a certain theme.
• Create by engaging in activities that promote learning, health, and personal enrichment. Offer a class on computers and social media to help people become comfortable online. Plan a resource fair or set up a kiosk at community events to inform older adults about information and services available to them. Host a workshop for seniors on key issues like starting a new career, personal finance, nutrition, or health and safety.
• Contribute time, talent, and life experience to benefit others. Coordinate one or a series of community betterment activities (e.g., cleanups, gardening, donation drives). Host a fundraising event, like a community walk or bake off, to benefit local programs or community centers that serve older adults. Promote the work of volunteers and organizations (e.g., meal programs/delivery) that support older adults. Recognize their contributions at a public event or in the media. Use social media to connect older adults with resources and each other. Consider hosting a photo, caption, or story contest to encourage interaction.

Communities that encourage the contributions of older adults are stronger! By engaging and supporting all community members, we recognize that older adults play a key role in the vitality of our neighborhoods, networks, and lives.

Everyone benefits when everyone can participate. We encourage you to connect, create, and contribute for stronger and more diverse communities this May, and throughout the year.

Source: Administration for Community Living

Get your golf clubs ready for the RSVP/VIC

21st Annual Golf Tournament
Friday, July 19, 2019
Cape Jaycees Municipal Golf Course
$75 per person ($300 per team)
Includes: Green fees & cart rental, lunch, beer & other beverages
All proceeds benefit the Retired Senior Volunteer Program & the Volunteer Intergeneration Center
Contact: 573-335-7555 | 573-887-3664
Email: rsvpvic@sbcglobal.net

Word Search

B C K G N I N E K A W A A E D
E I E N N B R E E E Z Y U M A G
N T R I J I E M T D O I P L N
J E U D B W T A H P T W A U R
O G T D S J K A U G Y G Q F E
Y R A E V C F E N T R Z A T V
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B Z M S C H E E R F U L G G P
N X S B N K L Y M P N N T G S
C L E A N I N G S R E W O L F

Theme: Spring Time

ALIVE
GREEN GRASS
SPRING FEVER
THUNDERSTORMS
AWAKENING
BLOOMING
CLEANING
ENJOYABLE
MOTHER NATURE
SPRING TIME
BEAUTIFUL
BIRDS CHIRPING
BREEZY
CHEERFUL
DELIGHTFUL
REJUVENATING
SPRING WEDDING
ENERGETIC
FLOWERS
Advocacy Day held in Jefferson City

by Emily Smith

On March 12, 2019 Jan McFerron, Regional Ombudsman Coordinator, and Emily Smith, Assistant Regional Ombudsman Coordinator traveled to Jefferson City, MO for Advocacy Day. Advocacy Day is a day for programs such as the Ombudsman Program to inform and educate our State Legislators on what it is they do and how their program helps Missourians.

Jan and Emily handed out information to Capital visitors and spoke with them about the importance of the Ombudsman Program in their community. They also met with each Legislator or their representative on the importance of the Ombudsman Program and which bills the program supports.

While in Jefferson City, Jan and Emily also attended Level I & II Volunteer Trainings for the Ombudsman Program. The Level I & II Trainings are now being presented to volunteers all over the state over the course of three days. Locations for the trainings include: Cape Girardeau, Dexter and Farmington. The new trainings serve as a refresher for seasoned volunteers and provide new education to volunteers who have just joined the program.

If you are interested in making a difference in the lives of Long Term Care Resident’s please call Jan McFerron or Emily Smith at 573-335-3331 for more information on how you can become an Ombudsman Volunteer.

April 2019 Fraud Prevention Fact

This month’s Fraud Fact from the Missouri SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) focuses on providers offering DNA or genetic testing to older adults and telling them that the service is free to Medicare beneficiaries.

Out-of-the-blue genetic or DNA testing is NOT free and is not routinely covered for all Medicare patients. If an individual offers you or someone you know such services, DO NOT go along with it.

Here is how the scheme works:
A provider offers an educational session to a group of seniors at a church, senior housing complex or senior center. The provider takes the participants’ Medicare numbers and does DNA swabs. The provider then bills Medicare for the services, which have not been deemed medically necessary and do not have a referral from a primary doctor. Providing contact information or anything else during an education session is OPTIONAL, and sign-up sheets should clearly state this.

In another scenario, the provider phones seniors and offers free DNA tests to be sent by mail. The older adults are instructed to swab their cheeks at home and return the kits. The caller gets the seniors’ Medicare numbers and emphasizes there will be NO charge to the beneficiaries.

DO NOT give out your Medicare number over the phone, in the mail or in a group setting in exchange for a promised free service.

DNA testing IS legitimately used by doctors at times to help determine how effective some medications might be in treating some patients. However, you should ask your primary care doctor or your specialist, who is familiar with your medical history, about such tests. As always, report suspected Medicare fraud to the Missouri SMP at 1-888-515-6565.

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