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They had me walking on my feet and walking right away. —Darlene DeNike

Volunteer Opportunities for Older Adults



By Deb Smith

Deciding when to retire involves a number of decisions, which may be based on such things as financial stability, health and your chosen career. Those same factors may also influence how you will spend your newly acquired free time, whether it will be traveling, educational pursuits or tending to family obligations. Seniors may choose to remain active in pursuing part-time career interests, while others move away from the paid work force to volunteer opportunities.

Of the 45 million Americans who actively volunteer, 15 million are seniors 65 years and older. Seniors, especially those who are retired, make excellent volunteers. Not only do they

have the time to become involved in community activities, they possess valuable expertise and the experience to make meaningful contributions in a variety of areas.

The Senior Corps is a federally supported program, operating throughout the United States that places older adults in volunteer assignments in their communities. Three nationally recognized programs that exist under the Service Corps are the Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

Whether you are a grandparent or not, seniors who serve as Foster Grandparents have the opportunity to serve as

role models for children in need. Due to the fact that many children today are separated from their grandparents by distance or death, the program works to fill a void and ultimately benefits both parties.

The Foster Grandparent program offers seniors 60 years and older the opportunity to serve their community by offering emotional support, mentoring, tutoring and caring for children and youth with special needs. Over 28,000 Foster Grandparents serve over 230,000 young people annually, throughout the United States, in organizations such as schools, hospitals, Head Start programs and youth centers.

Examples of their activities include;

*Assisting in

schools with children who have difficulties with speech or hearing, developmental or learning disabilities.

*Caring for pre-mature infants in hospitals and offering support to teenage mothers.

*Mentoring troubled teens, by offering them stability and forming relationships built on trust and mutual respect.

These opportunities allow older adults the chance to impact, shape and change the lives of children, by giving them the time and attention they need. Foster Grandparents meet eligibility requirements, serve 20 hours per week and receive small stipends for their services.

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Are you ready for a positive change?™

If you are interested in becoming a service provider we would like to hear from you too.

Free workshop available to caregivers!

By Eileen Godek

Volunteer Coordinator, Otsego County Commission on Aging

When Elizabeth Rosenthal was first diagnosed with dementia, she was one of millions of people living with the disease. Before she passed away in 2009, her daughter, Robin Petruska, was primarily responsible for her care. With Petruska living in Gaylord and Rosenthal living down state, this was an especially challenging and difficult time for Petruska, often filled with much frustration.

Luckily for Petruska, during the time she was caregiver for her mother, the Otsego County Commission on Aging (OCCOA), was sponsoring a workshop targeted toward people who were caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. "I took the workshop twice," Petruska shares. "I took it the first time because I wanted

more information to help me with my mother's care." She adds, "I took it the second time, because I was interested in becoming a trainer."

Her interest in becoming a trainer increased after her mom passed away. She explains, "My mother did a lot of volunteer work with older adults. Sharing what I learned in the workshop by becoming a trainer was a way for me to honor my mother and her work. I learned so much from her disease and wanted to help others facing similar challenges."

Petruska is now a certified master trainer for the Creating Confident Caregivers workshop, sponsored by OCCOA, which is paid for, in part, by grants from the U.S. Administration on Aging, the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, and the Region 9 Area Agency on Aging. To receive her certification, Petruska was required to com-



Robin Petruska, master trainer (far right) works with a Creating Confident Caregivers class.

plete ten hours of training.

Petruska notes, "The workshop consists of six classes, that run once a week for six weeks, and is targeted toward non-professional caregivers caring for loved ones in a home setting."

During the workshop, caregivers learn how to reduce stress in their lives, improve their self-confidence, create a positive caregiving environment, and plan daily activities for the one for whom they are caring.

Speaking from her own experiences as a student in the workshop, Petruska recalls, "It helped me to relate better to my mom and to deal with the issues that come from caring

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Transit manager resigns

Charlevoix County Transit manager, Ray Leach, is resigning his post to return to Escanaba, after three years in Charlevoix county.

"The job has been great," Leach said. But he has family issues to take care of in Escanaba, where he lived prior to Charlevoix county. "It's a great crew, and I've been impressed with everyone I've met here."

Leach will stay on the job for another couple of months to give the county time to find a replacement.

Craft & Flea Market

at Northland Sportsmen's Club
Saturday, March 26
9 am to 4 pm

Admission is \$1 person or \$5 family. Lunch available.

Antiques, Crafts, garage sales items, Sporting Goods and a whole lot more!

Inside... Johnny's Country Oven

The newly opened Johnny's Country Oven in Petoskey specializes in traditional American favorites, such as tender rib eye and t-bone steaks, and tempting Greek and Italian dishes, including spinach pie, grape leaves and lamb shanks.

Mathis Passes the Torch

Longtime E-Free Church Pastor, Jim Mathis reflects back, and looks ahead



This Sunday, March 26th marks the occasion of the segue from Pastor Mathis serving as Senior Pastor at E-Free Church to the onset of the journey of newly appointed Senior Pastor, Scott Distler.

Crawford County Michigan Works! Holds Job Fair & Expo on Tuesday, March 29th

Next Tuesday, job seekers will have a terrific opportunity to meet scores of employers looking for personnel to fill a wide variety of job openings. Its the Michigan Works! 2011 Crawford County Job Fair & Expo, and the event will be held at the Days Inn, located at 2550 E-75 Business Loop in Grayling, from 3 to 6 pm.

"Purple Day" raises awareness about epilepsy

Supporting Epilepsy Around The World! Purple Day - March 26

Some 1,200 Sundays ago (allowing for a few weekends off), Jim Mathis and his wife, Joan, and their two children arrived in Gaylord, Michigan, when Jim had accepted the call to become Pastor of what was then the 50-year-old Gaylord Evangelical Free (E-Free) Church. The year was 1967, and it was an exciting time for the Mathis family.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY ON THURSDAY

County News

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Assistance at the push of a button with the Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)

By Jim Akans

The comfort and familiarity of living independently at home is becoming the lifestyle preference for a growing number of seniors. It is also a much less expensive alternative to other nursing home care options, though the lack of round the clock staff monitoring in a private home is a primary concern for both seniors and their caregivers.

The Personal Emergency Response System (PERS), offered by the Heritage Alert Group in Gaylord, has been designed and created to provide peace of mind for those seniors living independently at home in the event of a medical or other emergency concern.

“The unit is available to

wear as a pendant or wrist-style ‘help’ button,” notes Ron Skoglund, owner of Telephone Support Systems, who developed the PERS system in conjunction with Jim Driver (Premier Marketing) and Bruce Fasel (Northern Management Services). “That means the unit is with the person if they need to access it. The simply push a button to activate it and can then talk to the attendant, who receives a unique code identifying the sender, using the speaker-phone mounted in the unit. If the user is unable to communicate after the button is pushed, our attendant sends an EMS unit to the address immediately.”

Those professionals at the Call Center who monitor the PERS system around the

clock, 365 days a year, are based right here in northern Lower Michigan. That is another unique component of the PERS service; these are local technicians responding to the needs of area individuals.

“That locally-based support is a comforting part of PERS,” Bruce Fasel notes. “This system is yet another means for allowing people to remain in their homes and still have access to help should they need it with the simple push of a button.”

When signing up for the PERS service, which is offered at a very reasonable monthly rate, the user, family and/or caregiver can designate their preferred hierarchy of people to be contacted should the emergency alert button be activated.

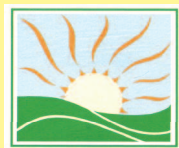
That may include other family members, professional caregivers such as Northern Management Services, as well as their medical providers and emergency professionals.

Heritage Alert Group’s mission is to “provide peace of mind to individuals wanting to maintain their independence.” The Personal Emergency Response Unit is the group’s first product offering, and through its unique blend of convenient access, local support, and customized response options, it is on-target in offering enhanced peace of mind for independent seniors living at home and their families.



PHOTO BY JIM AKANS

Available as either a pendant or wrist-style unit, the Personal Emergency Response System (PERS), offered by the Heritage Alert Group in Gaylord, has been designed and created to provide peace of mind for those seniors living independently at home in the event of a medical or other emergency concern.



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Evaluating Assisted Living and Retirement Communities

By Amanda Knoles

Most people would prefer to remain self-sufficient and live in their own home throughout their senior years, but sometimes health problems or disabilities make that impossible. Today a wide variety of retirement communities and assisted living centers help to meet the needs of residents 55 and over.

Senior apartment complexes are much like any other apartment complex except that monthly rates are often lower thanks to federal and state funding. Usually there are more amenities in place to help those who may be physically impaired. (For example there are frequently more elevators than stairs, and door entrances may be wider to accommodate wheel-

chairs.) Many senior apartment residences offer residents private apartments with the option of having one or three meals with other residents in a community dining hall. (Residents pay extra for meals). Senior complexes often have a community recreation center or lounge where residents may socialize and participate in activities such as cards, crafts, viewing movies, etc.

Assisted living centers offer more privacy and are less institutional looking than a traditional nursing home, but there are nurses and caregivers in attendance to help administer medications or help with bathing and therapy if needed. They are more expensive than other senior residences since they must retain additional medical personnel and specially trained employees to help with a variety of other needs residents may have.

Before you make a commitment to any retirement community or assisted living complex, it's best to check it out in person. Glossy brochures may present a rosy picture, but it's best to visit a facility more than once at different times of day to form an impression. Keep your eyes and ears open, talk to residents, and if possible, stay for lunch or dinner. Trust your instincts to get a feeling if the place is homey and inviting or sterile and too institutional. Many people believe that moving to a retirement residence means a loss of freedom and privacy, but for others it can provide the opportunity to live independently without the burdens of home ownership and maintenance or the worries of living alone. Other advantages include companionship, regular meals, social and recreational activities plus safety and security.

These are some of the questions you should ask when visiting a retirement community. If possible take another family member with you to help judge whether it's a suitable place for you or another family member to live.

1. Is it a rental residence or life care residence? Life care residences may require a large entrance fee in addition to monthly rental fees. That fee may include a range of services or very little.

2. Who is the owner and how long has the residence been in business? Has the residence been licensed or accredited? Has it received any awards?

3. If the community offers rentals are they on a lease or month-to-month basis? Is cleaning and maintenance included in the rent? What about laundry facilities?

4. What services are parts of the monthly fees? Which services, if any, are optional, such as three meals a day? Some residences may offer two meals or none depending how self-sufficient you wish to be.

5. How are emergency health situations handled? What security and safety measures are in place? Is there parking for your own car or is transportation provided to nearby shopping and entertainment?

6. Don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions. You want to be cautious and make an informed choice. Ask for a written description of rates and a breakdown on how costs might increase, as well as charges for additional services.

7. How are complaints handled if a resident has a problem? Ask what the procedure would be if the facility were to close. Are there provisions for giving notice, moving residents to another facility, and what type of refunds would residents receive for security and cleaning deposits?

8. How much freedom do residents have to redecorate the interior of their residence, if any?

9. Check with your state's long-term care ombudsman for information on the facility. Other government agencies in your area may also have information that can help you determine if a facility is rated highly or has logged up a number of complaints.

10. Before you sign a contract, read all of the fine print and make sure you understand all of the policies and rates. Consider having an attorney review the contract if you find it confusing.



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Spending Time With Your Grandchildren

By Christy Potter

Your grandchildren are coming for a visit! You're looking forward (?) to seeing them. Their sweet, eager little faces; the excited way they greet you; their wonderful energy. And then you realize they're going to want to DO something. Now there's a fly in the ointment.

Not to worry. There are many things you can do with your grandchildren that will entertain them, stimulate their minds and not leave you exhausted by the time they leave. The most important part of spending time with your grandchildren is just that: spending time with them.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, spending time with your grandchildren shows them that they are important to you. They'll feel that they matter. If you usually



see all of your grandchildren together, make time to do something with them one at a time. Use your special time together to talk with them and, more importantly, to really listen to them. Let your

grandchildren know they have your undivided attention and that you value what they have to say.

It's important for children to have caring adults who are interested in their lives and to

whom they're close.

Grandparents have a unique opportunity to play that role for their grandchildren.

Grandparents see this role as an opportunity to pass on family history, provide for, and

be there for their grandchildren.

To make the most of your grandchildren's visits plan ahead. Talk to the parents; find out their routines - bedtime, what they eat for breakfast - to help make them comfortable. Also, think about what kids like to do, what they will think is fun.

One thing grandparents should not feel they have to do is go out and buy lots of toys. There are other ways of having fun with your grandchildren. Ways that are fun for everyone.

Scrap booking has become increasingly popular among grandparents and their grandchildren. Take lots of photos and make scrapbooks together. This can even keep going after the visit is over. You can take color copies of pictures and send them back and forth.

CONTINUED ON PG. 19

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Boomers! Do you know?

by **Dona J. Wishart**
Executive Director, Otsego County
Commission on Aging

A challenge looms.

Boomers, do you know there are a lot of us? Okay, no joke! There were 77 million of us born between 1946 and 1964. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, and noted in a special report entitled 65+ in the United States: 2005, the first U.S. Baby Boomers turned 65 this year, inaugurating a rapid forecasted increase in the older population during the 2010 to 2030 period. The older population in 2030 is projected to be double that of 2000, growing from 35 million to 72 million! So what? Who cares?

Well, let me tell you! Pick up any newspaper, listen to any news cast, or Google “Baby

Boomers” and you will find the “so” in “so what?” It is about SO much information! The Google search on Baby Boomers I just conducted showed 11,900,000 results in just .07 seconds!

In these results, and just generally speaking, Baby Boomers are analyzed, berated, celebrated, dubbed, labeled, and numbered. We are credited with many things and blamed for even more, portrayed as trend-setters, evaluated, poked at with humor, and prodded toward action.

The big question is, “What will the world be like with all these Boomers reaching ‘old age?’”

You might respond, “Old age? Are you kidding? Who’s old?” But wait; let’s avoid the old age topic just for a moment.

Instead, let’s look back in time. In say, the 1950s. Did you even know you were a Baby Boomer? Did you know, at that time, that our sheer numbers were causing

such alarm and challenge? Did you even know, then, why there were so many of us? LOL!

No, we were at that time, in large measure, oblivious to the idea that we were causing challenges for our communities. Think of this, before we even knew it, we were a force to be reckoned with! We just didn’t know it!

This realization makes me think of another generation - that of my parents. This was the generation that experienced the Great Depression as children. When my mom was still able to reminisce about her childhood and carry on a conversation (before the effects of Parkinson’s disease), and when my special friends in the OCCOA Reminiscence program reminisce, their stories reflect that as children in the Great Depression era, they were mostly oblivious to the challenges their parents and communities were facing. They did not know they were poor. As

my mom would add, “We were all poor.” Then mom and this group of friends would go on to tell of wonderful childhood memories. Ah, the simple fun found in being children!

Now join me as we fast forward in time to our childhood as Boomers. Did we not have it good? New schools were built because there were so many of us! New television programs were launched to entertain us, because there were so many of us. Remember the Lone Ranger? Howdy Dowdy? Captain Kangaroo, and Tom Terrific? What simple fun these TV shows were for so many of us - and with very little violence!

And let’s consider the cars we rode in as children. Remember the station wagon and all the fun that could be had by children in the back of that vehicle? For girls, perhaps it was a stagg area for playing with dolls. For boys, perhaps it was a battlefield for those little plastic

army men or a work area for Lincoln Logs...all of this in a time before seat belts. Okay, no joke, it wasn’t safe. We didn’t know!

What the Greatest Generation and the Boomers didn’t know as children now becomes part of the story as we arrive at the next adventure - “aging.” There’s that word again! Maybe we don’t know how to get old or even believe we will!

What we do know, or perhaps are beginning to realize, is that our generation does, indeed, pose a challenge to our communities, including the services systems in our communities. Why? Again, because there are so many of us! Some 77 million, remember? And let us also remember that the older population in 2030 is projected to be double that of 2000, growing from 35 million to 72 million.

The U.S. Census report also

CONTINUED ON PG. 18

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Adjusting to the Retirement Lifestyle

By Christy Potter

Retirement. The very word conjures up images of fishing beside a lazy pond, sipping lemonade in a lawn chair, or tooling about the country in an RV. But is that the reality?

Many people face retirement with some trepidation. They're used to getting up with the alarm clock, putting in their hours, and taking home a regular paycheck. The prospect of anything different can be unsettling.

Dr. R. Turner Goins, Associate Director for Research at the West Virginia University Center on Aging, said that many people who have worked for 30 or more years with a company are tending not to retire in the traditional sense but rather going from full-time to a part-time consulting position for their company. "They're called

bridge jobs," Goins said. "They ease the transition between full-time work and retirement. And companies find these sorts of people very attractive because of their experience and their expertise. A lot of people are choosing this route."

When a person does retire completely, Goins said, it just takes a little imagination to find ways to stay busy. "It's a capitalistic myth that just because you're not working anymore means you're useless," Goins said. "It isn't true. There are plenty of things to do."

She suggested contacting your religious community, where there are always activities in which you can participate. Many communities have Elderhostels, who plan trips and outings geared toward older adults, and SCORE, an organization in which retired



executives can offer their expertise to others as a consultant. "I see a lot of older men who may have retired but they continue to do handyman type of work," Goins said. "They'll work with their son-in-law, for example, on fixing the car. They'll help an elderly, frail neighbor by fixing their

plumbing or their front steps. That kind of work is really rewarding."

Goins said research has shown that older women generally maintain a stronger social support network than men. "If their husbands die, they are not as devastated and socially isolated," she said.

"Men's social support networks tend to be just their spouse, and if their wife dies, they don't have a lot of resources to stay engaged." That need not be the case, Goins said. There are plenty of

CONTINUED ON NEXT PG.

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ways retired people can stay active and vibrant.

Dvora Waysman agrees. The Jerusalem resident is living proof that even after you retire, you don't have to stop working.

"I did retire from a job when I was 64," Waysman said. "I had been the press officer for a large Jerusalem hospital, writing their press releases, medical stories and acting as a liaison between the hospital and the media."

Now she is a freelance writer. She is syndicated in overseas newspapers, has had nine books published and is working on her tenth, and in her "spare time" teaches creative writing. She also has 17 grandchildren.

However, Waysman said, if she had retired in the conventional sense, she would think it vital to develop new interests, so that you have a reason to get out of bed every day. Don't stagnate, she said, mentally or physically. (She speed walks every day from 6 a.m. until 7 a.m. before she begins her day's work.)

"Hobbies are important; maintaining contact with friends and perhaps looking up old friends from the past now that more time is available," she said. "The most important thing would be to keep learning ... maybe taking part-time courses in subjects

that interest you, attending concerts, joining a library."

According to IntelliHealth, an online health information company, research has shown that people who stay busy after retirement, with hobbies, active lives, or even part-time work, live longer and feel a lot better than those who camp out on the sofa.

Retirement is a time when some honest self-examination is essential. Think about the things that made you happiest before you retired. Now, look for ways to incorporate those into your new life. IntelliHealth offers the following tips:

Keep working. A lot of people don't really retire at 65. Rather, they retire from a 40-hour work week to a shorter schedule. If you enjoy your job, why not keep doing it? Retired bankers and accountants, for example, find themselves in huge demand. They probably wouldn't dream of going back to the daily grind, but they keep using their skills - as long as they can do it on their terms.

Let your hobbies blossom. One of the best aspects of retirement is finally having time to do all those things you always dreamed of doing, like reading more, starting a coin collection or raising exotic orchids. Didn't have hobbies before? Retirement is the per-

fect opportunity to find some.

Stay physically active. Studies have shown that people who keep their bodies active after retirement by gardening, playing golf or going to the gym live longer and have fewer health problems than those who opt for more sedentary lifestyles.

According to the AARP, successful retirement requires both a chosen lifestyle and the financial means to maintain it. Such goals and their fulfillment do not result from a one-time discussion or decision. Rather, they evolved from an ongoing process of planning, acting on those plans, and continually reviewing and revising them as needed. This process is the essence of retirement planning.

The financial concerns in retirement are directly related to the lifestyle that people plan to have in retirement. Issues such as employment, housing, health, and use of time have a direct impact upon financial planning for retirement, just as they do in pre-retirement years, the AARP says.

The AARP offers seven important issues that you should consider in your retirement:

* **Attitude and Role Adjustment.** Dealing with the changing roles that may occur within the family and

other psychological and identity adjustments in retirement life.

* **Meaningful Use of Time.** Taking charge of your time; how to prioritize your work and other activities.

* **Employment Planning.** Reviewing your job search, work life plans and exploring creative working options.

* **Housing and Lifestyle.** Deciding whether to relocate and things to consider if you must relocate; how to achieve your objectives including relocation and financial information.

* **Dynamic Fitness.** Ways to manage and retain your health; how to avoid and manage stress; health disability insurance needs.

* **Financial Security.** Sources of income (e.g. retirement pay, investments, earnings); the importance of budgeting; projecting financial needs and cutting current costs; and investment strategies.

* **Legal and Estate Planning.** The importance of a will and other estate planning instruments; how to select a lawyer and other professional advisers; what questions to ask as you plan.

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Gaylord Memory Walk, Swim, Skate for Alzheimer's scheduled for November 12th!

By Eileen Godek

Volunteer Coordinator, Otsego County Commission on Aging

According to 2011 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, a report published on the Alzheimer's Association website, www.alz.org, 5.4 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. The report estimates that someone develops the illness every 69 seconds and that one in eight people aged 65 or older have been diagnosed with it! In the United States, Alzheimer's disease is now the sixth-leading cause of death and the fifth-leading cause for people aged 65 and older. Women, because they have a higher average life

expectancy than men, are more likely to have Alzheimer's.

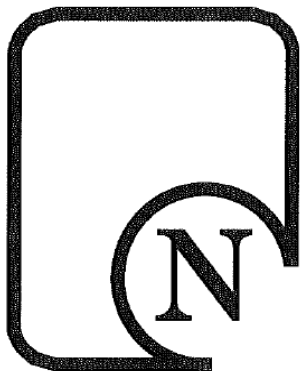
The Alzheimer's Association estimates that the illness is currently costing Americans \$183 billion a year. Not included in this total is the 17 billion hours of unpaid care provided by 14.9 million family members and friends, valued at \$202.6 billion. These numbers will surely grow as more Americans enter their retirement years.

Although there are several types of dementia, Alzheimer's disease is the most prevalent, accounting for 60 to 80 percent of the diagnosed cases. Anyone

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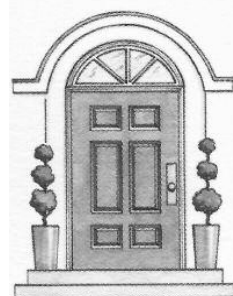
Makenzie Miller signs in to swim at Last year's Walk as Grandpa Bill Miller and Volunteer Elaine Crawford look on



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who has ever known or cared for a friend or family member living with Alzheimer's knows that it is a brain disease that progresses in stages, initially sneaking up on those it afflicts by robbing them of short term memory. Over time, it causes severe memory loss, incontinence, and the inability to walk, sit or stand without assistance. In the end stage, swallowing, speaking, and smiling are usually severely impaired. There is currently no cure for Alzheimer's disease.

Caring for a loved one living with Alzheimer's can be a very stressful long-term journey. Even if you are not caring for anyone with Alzheimer's, chances are good that you know someone who is. Should this disease touch your life, how prepared will you be? Will better treatments be available? Will you, as a patient or caregiver, have the physical, emotional, and financial support you need?

The Alzheimer's Association is a voluntary health organization that has been working hard since 1982 to eliminate the disease. Their single largest fundraiser has been through community-sponsored Memory Walks. This fall, thousands of people across the nation will, once again, "Walk to end Alzheimer's" by supporting Memory Walks in their communities. You can be one of them by participating in the 14th annual Memory Walk, Swim, Skate for Alzheimer's at the Otsego County Sportsplex on Saturday, November 12, 2011, from 8:30 a.m. to Noon. The Gaylord Walk is the only one in Michigan that bears the distinction of offering participants the opportunity to also skate and/or swim. All funds raised on behalf of the Memory Walk, Swim, Skate for Alzheimer's will help with research and provide supportive services in Northern Michigan, includ-

ing benefiting caregivers who attend the monthly Caregiver Support Group sponsored by the Otsego County Commission on Aging (OCCOA).

Those who wish to participate in the event can register beforehand by going to the www.alz.org website. Then, just click on the Walk tab at the top of the website and then select the state of Michigan from the map. This will take you to a listing of the 22 walks scheduled throughout the state. Under the Gaylord listing, click on register. This will take you to the Gaylord registration page. Simply follow the directions listed there. You can elect to start a team, join an existing team, walk individually, or simply donate to a team participant. You can also lend your support by volunteering or attending the Walk on November 12h.

In addition to the Walk, Swim, Skate event, there some other ways you can help. A Rizzo Spahetti

Benefit Dinner is planned for October 29th, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at the St. Mary Parish Hall. All proceeds raised will go to the Gaylord Memory Walk, Swim, Skate for Alzheimer's.

The walk will feature a licensed raffle, headed up by planning committee member Bill Wishart. Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased from Bill or any of the planning committee members beforehand or on the day of the event. The grand prize is \$1,000. The first runner-up prize is \$300 and the second runner-up prize is \$100. Seven \$50 prizes will also be awarded. The prizes will be raffled off during the closing ceremony on the day of the walk. All funds raised on behalf of the Gaylord Memory Walk, Swim, Skate for Alzheimer's will help with research and provide supportive services in Northern Michigan.

For those who would like to honor a loved one lost to Alzheimer's or lift up those

who are currently caring for someone living with Alzheimer's, the planning committee will be hosting its 6th annual Candlelight Vigil on Friday, November 11th. The vigil is being planned by committee member Social Services Director Ellie Panci of Tendercare Gaylord and will take place at 6 p.m. in the dining room of the Alten Zimmer, located at 120 Grandview Blvd. in Gaylord.

Whichever way you choose to participate, you will be making a difference in the lives of those who are living with Alzheimer's disease, as well as those who care for them.

To learn more about the Rizzo Spahetti Benefit Dinner, the Candlelight Vigil, or the 2011 Gaylord Memory Walk, Swim, Skate for Alzheimer's, please call the OCCOA at (989) 732-1122 or visit the agency's website at www.OtsegoCountyCOA.org.



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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

(CONTINUED FROM PG. 4)

SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

Many seniors choose to volunteer their time by assisting other seniors in need. These activities may include transporting frail elderly to health care services, or shopping errands, assisting at group meal sites or delivering meals to homebound elderly. Often, seniors who are otherwise healthy are subject to isolation and loneliness. The senior companion pro-

gram serves them by providing daily telephone reassurance calls and regular visits to help ensure their well being through social contact. Through these social contacts, many long lasting friendships are formed. Senior companions receive reimbursement for transportation and meals while on duty.

RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP)

RSVP works with seniors 55 and older by matching their interests and skill levels to address the needs of communities throughout the nation. RSVP volunteers work from as few to as many hours as they choose, in organizations ranging from public to

non-profit.

Opportunities include working with children through tutoring, assisting in classrooms, and mentoring youth. Volunteers work as hospital aides, provide in-home respite care to the elderly and their families and assist in specialized community functions and activities. RSVP volunteers serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for mileage expenses.

In addition to these federal programs, many communities have volunteer centers, which offer information on the types of opportunities that exist on a local or regional level. Check your yellow pages or local paper for more information.

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CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PG. 5)

for someone living with dementia. It also helped me to better understand the disease, and this helped me to be more patient and understanding of what she was going through."

She adds, "The workshop helped me to become a better caregiver and to achieve a better quality of life for myself." She explains, "As anyone caring for someone living with dementia knows, it can be very frustrating and stressful. It's important to take care of yourself so you don't suffer caregiver burnout." Petruska emphasizes, "This workshop will help you to be a good caregiver and survive everything that's going on."

Workshops are scheduled on Tuesday between October 11th and November 15th, in both Gaylord and Grayling. There is no charge for the workshops and free respite care is available during the classes. Further details are available by calling the OCCOA at (989) 732-1122, or by visiting the agency's website at www.OtsegoCountyCOA.org.

BOOMERS: DO YOU KNOW?

(CONTINUED FROM PG. 12)

states, "The historical trend of the older population is growing at a faster pace than the total population, and will continue well into the 21st century." The report adds, "Projections indicate an 18 percent increase of the total population

between 2010 and 2030, but a 78 percent increase of the older population. This differential growth will result in nearly 1 in 5 Americans being aged 65 and older in 2030, compared with about 1 in 8 in 2010." Wow!

Upon reflecting on U.S. Census information, conducting a Google search on Baby Boomers and considering our life experiences, it is clear to see that our sheer numbers, along with who we are portrayed to be and who we perceive ourselves to be, will create new challenges for us and our communities as we

experience the aging process.

In closing, I can't help but wonder how we Boomers will meet the new challenges. Do we know that new systems and services will need to be in place to serve so many of us? Are we ready to ask, "How can we help?"

Postscript: The OCCOA Reminiscence Program takes place on the second and fourth Friday of every month, honoring the research of Dr. Robert Butler (1927-2010), and under the leadership of Dona Wishart. For more information call 732-1122.



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Spending Time with your grandchildren

(CONTINUED FROM PG. 5)

Experts at AARP also suggested grandparents plan outings during the visit. “Young children love kid-oriented pizza restaurant, but that can be difficult for older people. But if that is the thing they really love, then maybe that can be the one special outing during their visit.”

Amusement parks and regular parks are popular with kids of all ages. A trip to the library is fun, and if your grandchild is staying with you for a while, use your library card and let them check out books to read during their stay. For younger kids, the library may offer a story time. Older children might enjoy a play, a concert, or a museum. Plan your outings based on what is in your area. Think about their age,

capabilities, attention span. If it's been awhile since you've been around young kids, it is easy to forget what it's like. It is important to know what the limitations and safety issues are.

It's also good to know how much down time the children need. If they get worn out and cranky, it's no fun for anyone. Again, talk to the parents and learn beforehand about naps or rest time.

It is perfectly fine for grandparents to have rules in their home that the grandchildren are expected to follow, while still being sensitive to the rules the parents may have. Talk to the parents and find compromises. For example, parents may have a set rule about the amount of time the children are allowed to watch TV. But at

grandma and grandpa's maybe it can be a little longer? That's part of what makes it special.

Spending time with your grandchildren can benefit them in many ways, but there's an added bonus: it can be good for you, too. Grandparents have told us that spending time with their grandchildren affects their behavior. They literally say it makes them better people. They're more active, they exercise, and they do things they never would have done otherwise. The grandchildren learn about smoking in school, talk to their grandparents about it, and the grandparents quit smoking. Grandchildren teach their grandparents how to use a computer. There's a lifelong growing and learning process that's mutually beneficial.

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