

FAMILY CAREGIVERS NEWSLETTER



Celebrating Older Americans Month Administration for Community Living (ACL)

May is Older Americans Month, and this year's theme is "Safe Today. Healthy Tomorrow." With this theme, we recognize older adults for their contributions and sacrifices by helping them stay safe and active as they age. The theme focuses on injury prevention and safety to encourage older adults to protect themselves and remain active and independent for as long as possible.

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries among adults 65 and older. Annually, older adult falls are responsible for more than 21,700 deaths, 2.4 million emergency department visits, and more than \$30 billion in direct medical costs. This is an increasingly important public health issue as the rates for both fall deaths and emergency visits for falls are rising.

Below is a list of key risk factors and what can be done about them.

- **Fallen in the past year.** Older adults who have fallen once are more likely to fall again. Community programs such as Stepping On can empower older adults to assess their risks and to take appropriate actions. For more information about programs and resources to help reduce your risk of falling, visit: www.lacrossestopfalls.org or contact the La Crosse County Aging Unit at 608-785-9710.
- **Lack of exercise.** Lack of exercise can lead to weak legs and this increases the chances of falling. Exercise programs such as Tai Chi can increase strength and improve balance, making falls much less likely. Other programs found in the community including YMCA Active Older Adults, Strong Seniors and others such as yoga, water aerobics, and dancing can be promoted to increase physical activity among older adults.
- **Combination of medications.** Some medicines—or combinations of medicines—can have side effects such as dizziness or drowsiness. This can make falling more likely. Having a doctor or pharmacist review all medications can help reduce the chance of risky side effects and drug interactions.
- **Poor vision.** Poor vision can make it harder to get around safely. Older adults should have their eyes checked every year and wear glasses or contact lenses with the right prescription strength to ensure they are seeing clearly.
- **Hazards at home.** About half of all falls happen at home. A home safety check can help identify potential fall hazards that need to be removed or changed, such as tripping hazards, clutter, and poor lighting. Adding grab bars in the bathroom is important at any age to reduce tub and toilet falls.

CAREGIVER RESOURCES & SUPPORT

Gundersen Health System 4th Annual Parkinson's Symposium

Saturday, May 17, 2014

11:45am to 3:45pm

Lunda Center—Western Technical College

If you or a loved one is living with Parkinson's disease (PD), plan to attend this Parkinson's Symposium presented by the Gundersen Health System Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center. Spend the afternoon talking with others who are walking in your shoes, get tips for daily living and hear advice from Gundersen health care providers who are experienced in treating Parkinson's disease.

Please register by Friday, May 2, 2014.

For more information, contact Janet Potts at 608-775-2220 or visit the web site at: www.gundersenhealth.org

North American Squirrel Association — NASA



The NASA was formed in 2003 as a non-profit organization that grew out of a desire to provide the physically challenged and elderly members of our community with outdoor opportunities. Using donated funds and merchandise, NASA has been able to provide a host of opportunities, **free of charge**.

Activities include: fishing, hunting deer, hunting waterfowl, biking, skiing, and golfing. A big part of our program is the NASA "Buddy" system. This system pairs an able-bodied sportsperson with a sportsperson-in-need for a specific sporting opportunity, and also helps NASA locate private lands and ponds for use on disabled hunting and fishing events.

For more information about NASA, visit their web site at: www.nasasquirrel.org or call 1-608-234-5988 or email: nasasquirrel@yahoo.com

Vital Aging Conference

Celebrate the Wisdom of Aging!

Thursday, June 12, 2014

9AM—3PM at the Cartwright Center, UW—La Crosse

Join us at 8am for "Get Moving: Senior Circuit" exercise session

Cost is \$25 (includes lunch & refreshments)

To register, call 608-785-6502 or online at www.uwlax.edu/conted/vitalaging

SAVE THE DATE!

CAREGIVER RESOURCES & SUPPORT

Couleecap

Couleecap is happy to announce that they have funding to help pay for accessibility home repairs and installations for people living in owner-occupied homes in Vernon, Monroe, La Crosse and Crawford counties.

Couleecap can pay for accessibility repairs/installations including:

- Grab bars
- Ramps
- Handicapped accessible bathtubs, sinks and toilets
- Widening of doorways
- And many other home rehabilitation projects

Up to \$5,000 available in the form of a forgivable loan. Must be income eligible and live in an owner-occupied home requiring repairs.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Berger, Property & Housing Assistant, at: 608-632-6512 or by email: sara.berger@couleecap.org

Coulee Region RSVP ~ Telephone Reassurance Program

The RSVP Telephone Reassurance Program is for adults with disabilities or those who live alone. It provides a safety check and serves as a catalyst for homebound citizens to socialize daily. RSVP Telephone Reassurance volunteers provide support to participants, their family, and their friends, knowing that someone will be contacting them daily. There is **no cost** to participate in the program.

For more information, call Coulee Region RSVP at 608-785-0500

Carrier Alert

If living alone worries you, Carrier Alert can offer you the comfort of knowing that someone who visits your home regularly will call for help if you need it. This **free** service has been developed especially for older adults and people with disabilities—those who may have difficulty reaching vital services in the case of an accident or sudden illness.

If you are registered with Carrier Alert, your letter carrier will provide a special service for you. A decal will be placed on the inside of your mailbox. If your carrier notices an accumulation of mail or any signs that might suggest you're in distress, it will be reported to Great Rivers 2-1-1, who will immediately try to contact you by phone. If you cannot be reached, they will call the individuals you list as emergency contacts. If these people cannot be reached, the police will be notified and asked to check on your health and well-being.

For more information or to register for Carrier Alert, please call Great Rivers 2-1-1 by dialing 2-1-1 or (800)-362-8255



La Crosse County Aging Unit

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La Crosse, WI 54601-3200
608.785.9710
www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/aging/

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The **La Crosse County Aging Unit** provides information and services that promote independence, and support the dignity of Seniors by allowing choices for living in and giving to their community.

Programs & Services include:

- Home-delivered Meals
- Meal Sites
- Elder Benefit Specialist
- Transportation
- Caregiver Coach Program
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Gifted Hands
- Senior Farmers' Market
- Nutritional Supplements
- Wellness & Prevention

CAREGIVER COACH PROGRAM

Who Is A Family Caregiver? Husbands, wives, partners, sons, daughters, nieces, nephews, friends, and neighbors – also known as “family caregivers” – are typically the most important source of support to older people and adults with chronic or disabling health conditions.

You Don't Have To Do It Alone! The Caregiver Coach will meet with the caregiver to listen and help identify what resources and support is needed. Together, they will create a plan designed to relieve stress by connecting the caregiver to the appropriate support and services.

The Caregiver Coach encourages the caregiver to discover a solution on their own, and offers a consistent, on-going relationship to help implement new skills, changes and goals over time.

This program is **FREE** to family caregivers and/or care-receivers, age 60+, residing in La Crosse County.

For more information, contact **Amy Brezinka at (608)-785-3460**

THE LUNCH BUNCH ~ MEMORY CAFÉ



The Lunch Bunch ~ Memory Café is a place to meet with other caregivers and their loved one in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Once a month the café offers a chance for everyone to step out of their daily roles and share a positive experience in a supportive environment. It's a place to listen, share and learn from other caregivers who may be on a very similar journey.

Location, Date & Time: The Lunch Bunch ~ Memory Café meets at the Black River Beach Neighborhood Center in North La Crosse on the last Tuesday of each month from 11:30am–1pm. Lunch is available at a suggested donation of \$4 per person and an RSVP is encouraged.

Education, Music & Art: Each month a different local service provider will be invited to briefly share information about their services. They will also be available to answer questions and visit with family caregivers during the café. Occasionally, art or special music may be featured at the café.

If you would like more information, or to be added to The Lunch Bunch Memory Café mailing list, please contact **Amy Brezinka at 608.785.3460** or abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org