



The Senior Advocate

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Winter 2012

Winter is Here! Tips for Staying Safe, Warm & Busy

Weatherization Assistance

PTRC's Weatherization Assistance Program helps low-income elderly or disabled residents in Forsyth County save energy and reduce their utility bills by improving energy efficiency. Assistance is available for most types of housing including apartments & mobile homes. You do not have to own your home to be eligible. For more information call (336) 608-3578.



Heating Cost Assistance

Low-income residents 60+ or disabled may be eligible for help with their winter heating bills through LIEAP, a program administered by the Salvation Army. Funds are limited and applications will be accepted until the funds are depleted. For more information call 722-3208.

As a full time caregiver, the colder months present you with a big problem. Isolation! With the cold, bad weather, and shorter days, it is easy to let one day run into the next without noticing you haven't had contact with another human being other than the person you are caring for in weeks. This is the time to make a special effort to carve time out for you. Make sure to take advantage of any respite available to you, even if you have to hire a paid caregiver once a week, and get out with other people. This area is rich with opportunities in the winter to take classes, volunteer, or just socialize. Try signing up for a yoga class; yoga helps with stress, high blood pressure, arthritis, and other chronic problems. Not a yoga person? Find a book club, a knitting class, or anything that is not too time consuming or stressful but beneficial for you to get your mind off your caregiving duties and out with people who will give you a smile, tell a joke, or just help you get rid of those winter blues! Check out the opportunities on page 3.

Individuals with disabilities may want to take extra care during the cold weather season. Some disabling conditions may limit sensory abilities and the ability to maintain body heat, so be particularly vigilant about staying warm when you are out in low temperatures. More winter tips for people with disabilities are on page 2.

Is It a Cold or the Flu?

As winter approaches, more and more people start to feel like they're coming down with "something." How do you know if you have the flu or the common cold? Both have similar symptoms, so it can be hard to tell the difference. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold. Symptoms such as fever, body aches, tiredness, and cough are more common and intense with the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose.

Seek medical attention immediately if you experience any of the following: difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, purple/blue discoloration of the lips, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, seizures, flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

Remember, the best protection against the flu is the flu vaccine!

Winter Safety on the Roads

Adults 65 and older are involved in more car accidents per mile driven than those in nearly all other age groups. Because winter driving can be more hazardous you should:

Have your car 'winterized' before the bad weather hits. This means having the antifreeze, tires, and windshield wipers checked and changed if necessary.

Take a cell phone with you when driving in bad weather. Always let someone know where you're going and when you expect to arrive, so they can call for help if you're late.

Do not drive on icy roads, overpasses, or bridges if possible; look for another route.

Stock your car with basic emergency supplies, such as:

- * a first aid kit
- * blankets
- * extra warm clothes
- * booster cables
- * a flashlight
- * a shovel
- * a windshield scraper
- * a container of water & canned or dried foods and can opener
- * rock salt, a bag of sand or cat litter (to pour on ice or snow in case your wheels get stuck)



Winter Safety Tips for Persons with Disabilities

- When you go out it's a good idea to carry a cell phone.
- If you travel in a wheelchair, wrap a small blanket around your legs, tucking it underneath yourself or around your sides. Use table salt or clay cat litter to clear ramps – rock salt can poison working assistance animals and also may be slippery. Shake debris and ice off chairs before placing them in your vehicle. Wipe down any metal surfaces (wheelchair tire rims, walkers, etc.) as soon as possible after returning home. This will prevent rusting.
- Freezing rain will stick to surfaces such as canes, walkers, forearm cuffs and wheelchairs. Use gripper driving gloves to keep your hands warm and to prevent slipping.
- If you use a working assistance dog, remember that dogs also can suffer from hypothermia and frostbite. Get a dog coat to place under the harness. Have a blanket in your vehicle for the dog. Also plan for your pet or service animal's needs in case of emergency (food, shelter, etc).
- If you receive home-based care (e.g., homecare attendant, home health aide, visiting nurse service), include caregivers in developing your plan and familiarize yourself with your homecare agency's emergency plan.
- If you rely on home-delivered meals, always stock nonperishable food at home in case meal deliveries are suspended during an emergency.
- Have a plan with your doctor that addresses emergency prescription refills, if possible.
- If you receive dialysis or other medical treatments, find out your provider's emergency plan, including where your back-up site is located.
- If you rely on medical equipment that requires electric power, contact your medical supply company for information regarding a back-up power source such as a battery. If you use a portable generator for emergency power, follow the manufacturer's directions for safe operation. Ask your utility company if the medical equipment qualifies you to be listed as a life-sustaining equipment customer.
- If you rely on oxygen, talk to your vendor about emergency replacements.

Senior Program News from Winston-Salem Recreation & Parks

This fall the city's parks and recreation programming for seniors got a boost when Jessica Garrett joined the staff. Here are a few of the new offerings:

- **Golden Readers Book Club**, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 2 pm at Miller Park Recreation Center, 400 Leisure Lane. If you enjoy reading and discussing what you read, this is for you.
- **Brain Games**, Mondays at 2 pm at Rupert Bell Recreation Center, 1501 Mt. Zion Place. Fun games that will expand your mind and improve your memory such as Scrabble, cards & charades.
- **Pensters Writing Club**, 1st Thursday at 10 am at Old Town Recreation Center, 4550 Shattalon Dr. The group will write, share and encourage each other through editing and constructive critiques.

The list of activities available for seniors through the department is over 8 pages long! If you would like to learn more or find out if your favorite activity is offered, call Jessica at 727-2321

Senior Games Events

Piedmont Plus Senior Games (PPSG) is for adults age 55+. It's not only athletic events, but also includes SilverArts; an opportunity for seniors to showcase their creative talents. PPSG is a year round program, with the competitive events occurring in the spring. Below are some upcoming PPSG events:

- **Senior Games Kick-Off**, Friday, January 25th, 10 am-noon, Hanes Hosiery Recreation Center, 501 Reynolds Blvd.
- **Race Walking Clinic** Monthly beginning January 2nd, 10 am, Hanes Hosiery
- **Doubles Bowling Tournament**, February 6th, Creekside Lanes
- **Singles Bowling Tournament**, March 6th, Northside Lanes

There are also weekly activities such as corn hole and table tennis. To learn more about the games, call Jessica at 727-2321. Winter is also a good time to work on items for the SilverArts competition...perfect your performance in dance, music, comedy or drama, write, create through drawing, paint or crafts. To learn more about SilverArts, contact Elaine Williams 659-4315



Planning to Travel?

ACCESS-NC---A Vacation and Travel Guide for People with Disabilities is a publication from the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. This guidebook contains a wealth of information designed to help enhance your travel experience in North Carolina. You can request a printed copy by contacting the local Vocational Rehabilitation office at 784-2700 or the state administrative office at 800-689-9090. You can also access it online at:

<http://www.ncdhrs.gov/dvrs/pdf/ACCESS-NC.pdf>

Senior Power Think Tank

A subcommittee of:

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**Working Together to
Make Forsyth County
Senior Friendly**



Thoughts From The New Older Guy

—Phil Poore

MY WISH LIST

1. **I wish** I were younger

No, wait...I don't want to be younger. As an older guy (with limited grey hair) I get respect from MANY others (even other older(ers)).

2. **I wish** I had more money.

No, wait...I have more than I need because God supplies it (Phil 4:19)

3. **I wish** my health was better.

No, wait...I have seen so many happy people that have health situations they have learned to accept and remain happy.

4. **I wish** my family would visit me more

No, wait...my real family visits me often. Who is my family? Those that love and care about me.

5. **I wish** the world was a better and safer place

No, wait...we live in the greatest country in the world. I need to remember that we are in a country **under God**.

MY REAL WISH IS that more seniors would become part of our THINK TANK and join us in assisting other seniors, just by knowing needs and suggestion ways to help.

What's on YOUR wish list?

Not All Gifts Come in Pretty Packages

You may not see the following items on your loved ones holiday wish list:

-Health Care Power of Attorney

-Living Will

Yet, those two documents would be a tremendous gift for your friends and family! They are often referred to as Advanced Directives and are usually the final portions of your Advanced Care Planning. You may be asking, "What is advanced care planning?" In a nutshell, advanced care planning means thinking ahead about the care you would like to receive at the end of life, especially if you were unable to make decisions for yourself. Then, directing people you know and trust to help you carry out those wishes. That's it.

Beginning your advanced care planning is as simple as setting up an appointment. A trained facilitator will guide you through the process, making you aware of your choices, and helping you appoint someone to carry out your health care wishes if you cannot.

Too often, people have not taken the time to document their wishes. That's when loved ones become overwhelmed, divided, torn, and uncomfortable regarding your care. However, if a healthcare agent has been appointed to advocate for the patient, many questions are answered and healthcare decisions are more likely to be in harmony with the patient's wishes. Giving your loved ones that peace of mind is a wonderful gift. Contact the Community Partnership – a program of Hospice & Palliative Care-Center – to attend a clinic or schedule a free consultation. Call 768-6157 ext. 1622.