



# Senior Companion Program News

Winter 2011

## Our Vision

To serve the elderly with presence, compassion and advocacy.

## Our Mission

With respect and recognition of the dignity and value of each human being, the Senior Companion Program enhances quality of life for older adults through friendship, socialization and advocacy.

## Senior Companion Program

Sponsored Ministry  
of the Racine Dominicans



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## It Is Never Too Late

It is never too late. Christmas will be celebrated within the month. New Year's Day follows and then, in February, Valentines are sent and received. It is never too late to spend time with someone and share each other's stories.

It is never too late. Every day offers the opportunity to unfold the mystery of another person. Perhaps the people who are closest to us and have always been with or around us have heard our stories.

It is never too late. Everyday conversations offer the opportunity to discover the priceless gift we have in a friend, spouse, adult child, caregiver or companion.

It is never too late. Indeed, it is never too late to say hello, how are you, thank you, or I'm sorry, please forgive me. It is never too late to listen to the voice of a wise woman who said: "One of the most valuable things we can do to heal one another is listen to each other's stories."

This listening is one of the Senior Companion volunteers' and visitees' greatest gifts they offer to each other. Each listens to the other person's stories regularly. It is never too late to listen, to share, to heal.

Without social interaction, we humans will soon show signs of emotional, psychological and mental decline. So let us take every opportunity during these winter months to share some of our stories and invite others to share their stories. As we listen we will gain insight, wisdom and healing.

It is never too late.

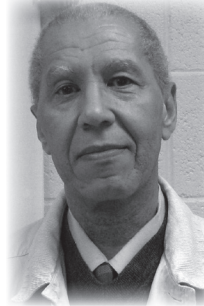
*Sister Joyce Ballweg  
SCP Administrator*



## Giving Thanks: A Two-way Street

Carl Hubbard

The 2011 holiday season is fast approaching – a time of celebration and reflection as well as a time for giving thanks and gifts. As one who volunteers for the Senior Companion Program, I'm thankful for this chance to speak with you through our SCP newsletter.



Why is the Senior Companion Program important to me? My involvement with the SCP began when my mother started to receive visits from a program volunteer. I quickly realized how much my parent looked forward to these visits, and how much her visitor, a wonderfully caring and compassionate sister, was able to lift her spirits.

Sometime later, I began working with the program as a visitor and serving on committees. I know the support that SCP provides is appreciated. Visitees and their families often express their thanks directly or with cards, letters or donations.

This is my opportunity to let our senior visitees know how thankful we are for all they give back to us. Our SCP staff and volunteers really do have lots to be grateful for; after all, we benefit all year long from the very special and unique gifts we receive from our Senior Companion visitees.

These are gifts of heart, mind and memory. When a visitee shares a favorite story about a special day or event in their life, both the storyteller and the listener are enriched by that communication. Whether speaking of the deep faith that helped them through a difficult time in life, or describing the joy of first cradling a grandchild in their arms, or remembering that first encounter with the love of their life, perhaps reliving their wedding day, or simply recalling how life and times were different in decades past – these conversations are gifts our visitees choose for us from the treasure trove of their own memories.

Our visitees give us, the volunteers, a view of the world from a different perspective and another place in time. Best of all, these gifts of personal wisdom and fond recollection cannot be lost, stolen or broken – they truly are the gifts that keep on giving.

## Donations Received

August 15 to November 15, 2011

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Jerry Rademacher          | Grace Christian             |
| Mark Giese                | Joanne Beyer                |
| Fr. Joseph C. Cox         | Eleanor Brooks              |
| John Deardorf             | Theresa Ruediger            |
| Tillie Sullivan           | Phillip R. Grana            |
| Kristi L. Kurklis-Ohnstad | Catherine & Doug Gundlach   |
| Donna & Lawrence Pias     | Sacred Heart Mission Circle |

## SCP Stats

Our volunteers have made many contacts and spent many hours volunteering in the Senior Companion Program from January to October 2011. The visits, phone calls and letter/card writing are all valuable contacts. We have a total of 2,748 contacts and 2,582 volunteer hours so far this year.

### Number of Contacts:

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Visits        | 1287 |
| Phone Calls   | 936  |
| Letters/Cards | 525  |

### Number of Volunteer Hours:

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Visiting/Calling/Writing | 2048 hours |
| Office Work              | 256 hours  |
| Committee Meetings       | 133 hours  |
| Driving                  | 256 hours  |

## Energy Assistance

Applications for Energy Assistance are presently being accepted. Please contact the Community Action Agency by calling 262-633-6000. Leave your name, phone number, and tell them the best time they can call you back. The SCP will also have some funds available for this purpose, but you first must apply for help and have the letter of response from the Community Action Agency.

## October Food Drive

The proceeds from the *Stomp Out Senior Hunger Food Drive* sponsored by Comfort Keepers this past October gifted us with over 100 pounds of food. Forty-seven letters were sent to our seniors explaining the food drive with a suggested food item list. The 20 seniors who responded were greeted by SCP's Catherine Gundlach with a grocery bag of their requested items. Another donation of food is in the workings. Thank you, Comfort Keepers! You can learn about Comfort Keepers at [www.comfortkeepers.com/racine-wi](http://www.comfortkeepers.com/racine-wi).

## Six Tips to Prevent Falls

Falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults. Follow these six simple fall-prevention strategies.

### 1. Doctor Visit

Certain kinds of sedatives or antidepressant prescriptions or over-the-counter medications can increase your risk of falling. Have your doctor review your medications for side effects. Keep track of each fall including when, where and how you fell. This can help your doctor identify specific fall-prevention strategies. Certain eye and ear disorders may increase your risk of falling. Other health conditions such as dizziness, joint pain, numbness or shortness of breath can weaken your strength and balance in walking.

### 2. Keep Moving

Physical activities such as walking, water workouts, yoga and dancing, can all help reduce the risk of falling. If you avoid physical activity because of health risks, ask your doctor for a custom exercise program to fit your lifestyle.

### 3. Footwear

Wearing appropriate fitted shoes so you do not slip, stumble or fall can decrease the chance of falling. Buy properly fitting, sturdy shoes that are laced or Velcro closure with nonskid soles.

### 4. Home Hazards

Look around your home and remove floor clutter in high-traffic walkways. Use slip-resistant floor rugs, nonskid floor wax, and non-slip mats in the bathtub and shower.

### 5. Lights

Keep your home well lit in all areas of walking to avoid tripping on objects that are hard to see. Nightlights are helpful in the night and store flashlights easily accessible for power outages. Have installed glow-in-the-dark or illuminated switches.

### 6. Assistive Devices

Other in home installations of hand rails, nonslip treads for bare-wood steps, raised toilet seat, grab bars in the bathtub or shower are extra preventatives to keep you steady on your feet.

*Sister Joyce Ballweg  
&  
Catherine Gundlach  
wish you a  
blessed Advent,  
a wonderful Christmas season  
and a  
happy, healthy, holy New Year!*





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to all who contribute  
in any way  
and share in the  
program's ministry.**

