



# Senior Companion News

The Senior Companion Program is a sponsored ministry of the Racine Dominican Sisters.

Phone: 262-639-4100 Ext. 1299 – e-mail [scp@racinedominicans.org](mailto:scp@racinedominicans.org)

MARCH 2008

## From the Director's Desk

After such a bitter cold and snowy winter, it's a pleasure to be able to look forward to spring and all that it brings to mind. But first, I want to thank everyone for their generosity to our program during this past holiday season. Donations were exceptional, and many elderly benefited from the gift certificates for groceries and other items which were contributed and then distributed by the SCP. In spite of the cold, our benefactors and volunteers continue to provide many warm moments for those we serve. Wishing you a blessed Easter and a beautiful spring!

*Gloria Brown*

## Tax-Aide Services

For many, spring means preparing an income tax form. The IRS and AARP are providing assistance to low and moderate income taxpayers (60 & over) in filing personal income taxes. Trained volunteers will be available February 5 through April 10 at several locations in Racine and Burlington, including the Volunteer Center at 6216 Washington Ave. Suite G. For appointments or more information call RSVP at 886-9612. Seniors should bring the following to their appointment: 1) current year's tax forms and preparation booklet; 2) a copy of their 2006 income tax return and supporting documentation; 3) W-2 and W-2p forms from each employer; 4) unemployment compensation statements; 5) SSA-1099 form if Social Security benefits were received; 6) all 1099 forms; 7) all forms indicating federal income tax paid; 8) all receipts or cancelled checks if itemizing deductions; 9) Social

Security numbers for all dependents; 10) for Wisconsin Homestead filing, bring 2007 real estate bill or Certificate of Rent Form signed by landlord. The maximum income for Homestead filing is \$24,500. For more information you can call Cynthia Koepke at 262-639-3505.

## Calendar of Events

### March

11 – 8:00 – 9 am Elderly Services Network Meeting  
Topic: Simplifying Transitions for the Elderly,  
1717 Taylor Ave

20 – SCP Education Program 9:30-10:30 am:  
Reverse Mortgages, Siena Center

23- *Happy Easter*

24 - Visions of the Future: UW Parkside Guest  
Lecture Series on Aging, 3 pm

### April

8 – Elderly Services Network Meeting 8 am, 1717  
Taylor Avenue. Check local papers for topic.

11 – Changing Seasons: A free workshop for the  
challenging times of our lives; St. Paul the  
Apostle Church; 5:30 – 9 pm

17 – SCP Education Program; 9:30-10:30 am,  
Siena Center. Topic: Elderly Benefit Specialist  
Elise Bechly will discuss how she can be of help.

27 – Senior Companion Program Volunteer  
Dinner, 12 noon. Celebrating 30 years of service

### May

13 – Elderly Services Network Meeting 8 A.M, 1717  
Taylor Avenue. Check local paper for topic.

15 – SCP Education Program 9:30-10:30 AM,  
Siena Center. Victor Erato: "Helping Adult  
Children & Aging Parents Talk about Sensitive  
Topics

## PROGRAM UPDATE

The following statistics are for the year ending December 31, 2007. Thank you to everyone who made these numbers possible. Number of Volunteers: 86(16 Sisters, 68 Lay People, 2 Clergy); Number of Visitees: Monthly average 156; Volunteer Hours: 3233; Visits: 2339; Phone Calls: 1328; Cards & Letters: 737; New Visitees: 35; Deceased Visitees: 20; In-home Assessments: 74; Outreach/Advocacy: 76.



### The Gift of Life

The cold weather has taken its toll on the region's blood supply and the Blood Center is in urgent need of donors.

If you can donate blood, please call the Blood Center today at 884-8504 and make an appointment. The Blood Center is located at 1120 Sunnyslope Drive in Racine.

### IMPORTANT: How to Get Your Rebate

Anyone wishing to receive their "Economic Stimulus Act of 2008" rebate from the government this year will be required to file an income tax return for 2007 even if they have not done so in the past.

### DONATIONS 11/16/07 - 2/15/08

Memorials and gifts are always welcome and vital to the continuation of the Senior Companion Program. We wish to thank the following for their gifts: Leo Beyer, Lincoln Lutheran Leadership Team, Home Instead, St. Rita's Parish, Mary Marciniak, Arthur and Marilyn Skantz, Mr. & Mrs. Ray Rheume, Joanne Beyer, Mr. & Mrs. John Albert, Jr.; Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Crawford, The Belle City Red Hatters (Friends of Seniors), Tony Clementi, Cesy Eifler, Nancee Getman, Helen DeGroot, Colleen Hershberger, Ervin Kovara, Eleanor Brooks, Kira & Timothy LaFond, Ellie, Jim and Pete Reynolds, Rhyllis & Richard Reisenauer, Margaret Johnson, Mary Trivison Stein, Gloria & Bernie Brown, Marilyn Pelky; Paul, Anne, PJ & Ellie Stedman (Bradson Technology), The Vallone Family; Donna & Lawrence Pias, Dick & Laverne Poplawski, Ruth King, Janet Bauman, Catholic Woman's Club of Racine, Sister Brenda

Walsh & Catherine Davitt, and Susan Boyer Woodsome. Bless you!



### Getting help with utility bills

WE Energies assistance program is accepting applications from those people who are anticipating trouble paying their utility (gas and electric) bills. For more information, contact the Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency at 637-8377 and ask to speak to Joy McClellan. Last year she helped many Senior Companion Program participants receive several hundred dollars in energy assistance payments. This year the SCP will also have some funds available for this purpose, but you must apply for help through Joy first.



### Visions of the Future

UW-Parkside Guest Lecture Series on Aging is sponsoring author Dr. Harry Moody, Director of Academic Affairs for AARP and former Chairman of the Board of Elderhostel, at 3 p.m. on Monday, March 24 in the Communication Arts Theater. "The 122 Year-Old Man" is the topic of Dr. Moody's lecture which is free and open to the public. Parking is also free in any of the UWP Lots.

### 30 Years and Counting

This year the Senior Companion Program will celebrate 30 years of service to the community. If you would like to schedule a presentation for your group, please call Gloria Brown at 639-4100 ex. 1299.

### Working to Stop Elder Abuse

Elder abuse has several forms. It can be physical, sexual, financial exploitation, neglect by a caregiver or self-neglect. If you suspect that an older adult has experienced or is at risk of experiencing

abuse, please report it. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911. If you think an investigation is called for, call the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) 638-6800. You will be asked to give your name and address (but you do not have to give this information). You will also be asked some information about the adult at risk and the incident(s) but you aren't required to know this. After you contact your county elder adult-at-risk agency a caseworker will respond to the report and determine what response is necessary. Self neglect is probably the most common form of abuse, but someone cannot be forced to leave their living arrangement unless they are declared legally incompetent. By making a referral, the family and individual will be offered a variety of services which could help to improve the situation.



### Phone for Help

The mission of the Racine County Aging & Disability Resource Center is to support seniors, adults with disabilities and their families and caregivers by offering easy access to services and by fostering a caring community that values lifelong contributions, maximum independence and individual dignity. Located at 1717 Taylor Avenue, staff members are well-trained and experienced in identifying programs and services which help meet the needs of the client. The ADRC office on Taylor Avenue is open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. Phone them at 262-638-6800. The toll free number is 1-866-219-1043. The Western Racine County Service Center at 209 N. Main Street in Burlington can be contacted at 262-638-6800 Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. Walk-ins are welcome during posted

times. Tuesday from 8 to 5 is by appointment only.



### Depression in Older Adults

The long, cold winter months can take their toll on anyone's spirits, but often it takes more than a few days of sunshine to overcome feelings of depression. Depression is a medical condition that affects 19 million Americans each year. Professionals estimate that 15 out of every 100 adults will experience an episode of depression at some point during their elderly years. Depression is a real and serious medical illness often caused by an imbalance of chemicals in the brain. It interferes with one's ability to function like they normally do. The good thing is that it can be treated with proper medical attention. Depression is NOT a normal part of aging for anyone. Some common symptoms of depression in an older adult are: Persistent sadness (all day, every day) lasting 2 weeks or more; feelings of worthlessness or helplessness; feeling slowed down; excessive worries about health and financial problems; frequent tearfulness; changes in weight; pacing and fidgeting; difficulty sleeping; difficulty concentrating; physical problems (for example, pain or gastrointestinal problems); recurring thoughts of suicide or death. Some illnesses can also trigger depression in older adults. With proper treatment, more than 80% of people can improve. Treatment may consist of counseling (psychotherapy) and/or medication. The important thing is to recognize the signs and discuss the situation with your health care provider. There is nothing to be ashamed of and so much to gain by seeking help. (Information provided by Forest Laboratories, Inc.)

### WEBSITES OF INTEREST



[www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/LTCare](http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/LTCare) for information on issues affecting older people and their families in Wisconsin

[www.adrc.racinecounty.com](http://www.adrc.racinecounty.com) Aging & Disability Resource Center web site