



Newsletter

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Clifton/Fairfax Station—Transition in Place Services (CFS-TIPS) – An Update

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

P. 1 CFS-TIPS Update

P. 2 Someone to Watch over Them

PP. 3-4 Aging in Place Is Becoming More Popular

P. 5 The Virginia Senior Alert Plan

P. 6 File of Life (Emergency Data) Form

CFS-TIPS Officers and Contact Information

Pp. 6- 7 TIPS new website

P. 8 Indication of Interest Form

By David Smith

Clifton/Fairfax Station—Transition in Place Services announced its program initiation at a social gathering at the Clifton Town Hall on January 25. Approximately 55 interested persons attended. So far, CFS-TIPS has 40 members and some 41 persons have indicated they wish to volunteer to help our senior neighbors remain in their homes longer.

There exists a lot of enthusiasm and recognized need for a program to help seniors stay in their homes. Considering the current economic concerns, with Governments at all levels cutting back on out-reach services, the need for CFS-TIPS is even more evident.

All members of CFS-TIPS have access to our contractor, Senior Checked, which maintains a large number of “vetted” contractors, vendors, and service providers available to help with a large variety of personal needs. “Vetted” means that all providers have had background and criminal checks to make sure they are trustworthy and safe. Senior Checked goes to great lengths to verify the backgrounds of their providers to be sure an elderly home owner will not be taken advantage of. The cost for membership for Phase I, is \$50 for a single member or \$100 for two or more persons in the same household.

CFS-TIPS is now in the process of developing Phase II services, which will provide volunteer neighbors to transport members to activities of need and to provide other volunteer services that may be needed. The following types of transportation services will be provided: grocery trips, doctor appointments, trips to the airport, to visit friends, to attend cultural events, to attend club meetings, and TIPS sponsored cultural and educational events.

(Continued on Page 6)

Someone to Watch Over Them: Looking Out for Our Parents

by David Zoll

As the caregiver of an 82 year old parent, I'm heartened that there are people hard at work at the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Statistics (with the catchy url of <http://www.agingstats.gov>). Heartened because a recent update to their "2008 Older Americans: Key Indicators of Well-Being" sounded a warning bell loud enough for people on the Hill to hear. The Forum tells us our aging society is facing health illiteracy, a dangerous problem that has been flying under the radar. We have elders whose limited comprehension of the state of their health puts them at a great disadvantage. They don't understand their medical conditions, and that disconnect means they might not be getting the care they need and are entitled to. The report calculates that 39% of people 75 and over have below basic health literacy -- they can circle the date of a medical appointment, and not much else. The next tranche, 31%, has only basic HL, the ability to understand a one-pager on a health condition.

That tells me, and anyone who's listening, that beyond helping pay for our aging parents' health care if they can't fill the donut hold on their own, we as caregivers may have to provide them with health instruction at a most fundamental level. This makes our predicament even harder because we are not always there on the ground with them to do it. Our mobile society means many of the country's elders are far from family members during the years they need them the most. The result -- long-distance caregiving -- is the pickle on the plate of the sandwich generation.

Until those health illiteracy numbers improve, we have aging Americans who are becoming isolated in their own homes and who don't understand how to take care of themselves. And this is on top of a government system that created a drug plan so complicated seniors need help deciphering it. Health and Human Services needs to take a step back and ask: Who is going to protect our parents?

I got lucky during my own mother's illness and recovery, and discovered exactly who that person is: the care manager, a health care expert who can actually be our eyes and ears for our parents, available not just when a crisis occurs, but beforehand to communicate between doctors, coordinate care and possibly prevent the crisis. It's ironic that in a time of unprecedented job loss, here's an emerging field that will need to expand for our 36 million over-65ers and we, as a nation, aren't doing enough to grow it. Right now, a care manager is an out-of-pocket luxury rarely covered by even long-term care policies, but needs to be if our elders are to gain access to the health innovations that are being discovered to keep them alive longer. Not a case worker assigned to a claim, but a care worker assisting a person, this new breed of health care professional needs to be part of the national dialogue on elder issues.

Aging in Place Is Becoming More Popular

By TED RUHIG

The current recession is having a severe impact on the goals of many seniors. In particular, the goal of retiring to a “retirement village” is being sorely tested as seniors are hit especially hard by rising prices and the stock market plunge. Many, who had planned their move to an assisted living or other retirement community, find that their plans must be put on hold.

Last year, about 1.1 million households could be found in active adult settings for seniors. While this was down from the 1.8 million living in senior living communities more than five years ago, it was never-the-less a healthy number of resident seniors. Now, under the pressure of the recession, the number of seniors living in such communities is predicted to shrink considerably more. Many employers are cutting back or even eliminating the retirement bonus that many pre-retirement seniors had planned on to help them make an investment in a senior community. Home equity is often a senior’s largest asset, and the one they usually tap to pay the entrance fees, down payments or monthly service charges when they settle into retirement communities.

The downturn in the housing market makes that equity much less valuable. The Dallas Morning News reports that senior-housing experts don’t have hard numbers on the retirees stuck in their homes because of the depressed market, but retirement community executives agree that it’s becoming a regular predicament.

From Florida to Arizona, condos are sitting idle as potential buyers find themselves stuck, unable to sell their houses and relocate. The article points out that continuing-care retirement communities may be especially susceptible to the housing slump and financial crisis because they often require new residents to make refundable entrance deposits of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The need for dollars is also putting pressure on active adult communities to scrub age restrictions for potential community residents, which, in some cases, have been in place for decades. Increasing numbers of properties in so-called age-restricted developments are lying empty as the recession continues to bite the housing market and baby-boomers defer retirement.

Proponents of “age desegregation,” as it’s known in the industry, say opening the doors to people younger than 55 is the only way their once-idyllic enclaves can weather a worsening economic climate.

Some seniors are opposed to breaking the age barrier for residents. They fear that younger neighbors will bring with them increased crime and nuisance as well as an

increase in taxes to support the schools for kids living in these communities. In addition, having these young families around is hard on some seniors, who had hoped that by moving to a senior community, they were leaving the competitive world of the young behind.

Others welcome the breaking of the age barrier. They see it as a way of stalling the aging process. They want their communities to be perceived as active ones, attractive to 55 to 60-year-olds. Families in their communities will help to enhance that active image. No one predicts age-restricted living will disappear. But the financial downturn could force some places to reinvent themselves.

An additional challenge faced by age-restricted communities is reflected by a gradual change in the way Americans view retirement communities. A recent survey by AARP, reported in the Wall Street Journal, found that almost nine in 10 respondents said they did not want to move when they retired, instead opting to age in place.

This confirmed an earlier AARP survey taken in 2007, which showed that 82 percent of people over age 65 wished to stay in their own homes - even if they needed help in caring for themselves.

And that statistic is born out by yet another figure: 60 percent of all home remodels involve some kind of age-related modification. Aging-in-place renovation work is expected to provide one of the few bright spots for residential construction as the recession-battered industry eventually begins gaining ground in 2009.

Remaining in one's home might even help put the brakes on aging. The Los Angeles Times reports that older people note that they have a better quality of life, more control, more independence and feel less stigmatized when they live on their own - less old, in other words.

Aging in place may very well be the chosen way in the future. Published at:
<http://www.metnews.com/articles/2009/inmyopinion010909.htm>

Information About AARP Legal Services Network.

(Editor's Note: One of our CFS-TIPs members recently received information about AARP's Legal Services Network. In an effort to provide relevant information to our readers, we have provided some basic contact and explanatory information about this AARP program. However, provision of this information does not constitute either CFS-TIPS' approval or endorsement of this AARP program.)

"The AARP LegalServices Network is a lawyer directory, not a lawyer referral service or prepaid legal plan. It is an advertisement and all content regarding listed attorneys is provided by the listed attorneys. The AARP Legal Services Network is operated by Signature Agency, Inc., 200 N. Martingale Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173.

As an AARP member, you and your spouse/partner have free access to the AARP Legal Services Network from GE. By entering your Name, Member ID and Zip Code, our online directory lists all of the attorneys in your area that participate in the Legal Services Network."

The Virginia Senior Alert Plan

The Virginia Senior Alert Plan created by legislation in the 2007 General Assembly provides a valuable tool for Virginia law enforcement agencies to help locate missing senior adults.

The Senior Alert operates just like an Amber Alert or Silver Alert, as it is called in other states. The family of a missing senior (if he/she meets criteria) can work with local law enforcement who then would contact the Virginia State Police to issue the Alert. The family does have to have a recent photo and know other data on the senior who went missing in order for the alert to be activated.

Updated alerts on seniors may be viewed at <http://www.vasenioralert.com/>

Excerpted from www.vasenioralert.com and www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/newsletter/fai/november2008.pdf.

File of Life (Emergency Data) Form

Should you be involved in an emergency situation and the Fairfax Fire and Rescue Department are called to your home, do you have readily available a "File of Life" form? This form, which is easy to complete, should be readily available, as it can provide the emergency responders with potentially life-saving information.

In order to obtain a blank form, click on and follow the straight forward completion instructions:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/educate/fileoflife.pdf>

Clifton/Fairfax Station—Transition in Place Services (CFS-TIPS) (Continued from Page 1)

With good luck, we hope to activate Phase II later this spring. The cost for Phase II services will be higher than Phase I, and will be announced soon.

Sometime after the successful operation of Phase II, CFS-TIPS will further expand its services to a full range of concierge services identified as needed by our senior neighbors. More information on the Phase III program will be provided as it is developed.

In the coming months, CFS-TIPS will be surveying our neighbors to determine the full extent of their needs, enrolling new members, recruiting more volunteers, making activation plans for Phase II, doing fund raising to support more services, and looking for those neighbors who have limited funds and who are the most in need of help to stay in their homes.

For further information about Clifton/Fairfax Station—Transition in Place Services (CFS-TIPS), select one of the points of contact below.

TIPS Officers and Contact Information

Officers:

President	Fran McWhorter	Tel: 703-266-2767	E-mail: fran-val@cox.net
Vice President	David A. Smith	Tel: 703-830-3418	E-mail: dasmith1@cox.net
Secretary/Treasurer	William W. Cole	Tel: 703-764-1300	E-mail: wwcole@cox.net

Contact Information:

Mailing Address: CFS-TIPS, PO Box 311, Clifton, VA 20124

CFS-TIPS e-mail Address: cfstips@cox.net

TIPS Website: www.cfs-tips.org:

The CFS-TIPS Website has a new green look and a revised format. Please visit it again soon and check it out. Click on: www.cfs-tips.org to view it. The website now incorporates our TIPS Logo and the content has been updated to reflect our three phased approach of continued and increasing services for our TIPS Members. Our website was originally designed by Sue Niebling, who volunteered to assist us almost two years ago. We gave Sue little more than a blank page and she developed it into a grand assortment of TIPS facts, information and related 'Aging in Place' news releases. Sue has done a commendable job creating, organizing and maintaining the website. Her volunteer efforts were greatly appreciated, especially so when we learned she had begun working full time again. Soon after learning this, we met Nathan Baker, a website developer, who moved to the Burke area with his family in November 2008. Nathan offered his services and suggested he start with the existing website to see what he might be able to develop.

The website as you see it today includes most of the facts and content of our initial website, but in a new and somewhat different format. The Board of Directors sincerely appreciate and thank Sue Niebling for her outstanding volunteer efforts in getting TIPS up and running with its first website. The Board also welcomes Nathan Baker as its new Webmaster and is appreciative of his creative web design talents.

Let Us Hear From You - Our ability to provide the services we propose is totally dependent upon hearing from you. We need to know who you are, the kind of services that interest you, whether you are willing to help the TIPS organization as a Volunteer helping your neighbors in the Clifton and Fairfax Station areas. Please print out this page, complete it, and mail it to us. **We Need Your Input. Thank you!**

TIPS Indication of Interest Form

Membership:

I want to become a Member of CFS-TIPS and start receiving Phase I senior services in 2009. My check for \$100 for couples, \$50 for singles for a year's membership is attached. Yes _____

I want to become a Charter Member of CFS-TIPS by and start receiving Phase I senior services in 2009. My check for \$200 for couples, \$100 for singles, for two year's membership is attached. *This will help provide the working capital to launch the program and services.* Yes _____

I want to become a member of CFS-TIPS at a later date and desire to keep in touch with CFS-TIPS activities and growth. Yes _____

If you know others who might be interested in the TIPS program, please make copies of this page and share them with your friends or neighbors. If you prefer we contact them, please add their names, addresses and phone numbers of the back of this form.

Supporting CFS-TIPS:

Are you interested in joining the Board of Directors and assisting CFS-TIPS? Yes _____

Are you interested in volunteering to help seniors receive services through CFS-TIPS? Yes _____

Contributions:

Will you be willing to make a tax-deductible donation to CFS-TIPS to help in further developing the senior services?

- Founding Donors: for donations of \$1,500 and more,
- Golden Circle: for donations of \$1,000 and more,
- Patron: for donations of \$500 and more,
- Sponsor: for donations of \$250 and more,
- Friends of TIPS: for donations of less than \$250.

Type and Specific Services you feel are needed most?

Use the back of this form for additional services and/or comments.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ E-mail address: _____

Please return this form to CFS-TIPS at PO Box 311, Clifton, VA 20124