



Caring for the Whole Person

The Aging and Spiritual Well-being Program

As a part of our ongoing efforts to enhance the health and overall well-being of older adults in our community, Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES) is launching the **Aging and Spiritual Well-being Program**.

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Somerville Cambridge

Elder Services

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Options Counseling

In the last issue of **The Advocate**, we introduced Options Counseling (OC), why it is important, and who can benefit from the services provided by Options Counselors. Now we would like to give you an update on how OC works, and what it means to some of our clients.

The purpose of OC is to make sure that people can make choices about their care. Often, individuals are sent directly to rehabilitation or a nursing home after hospitalization, without realizing that their needs may have been met at home with the help of community resources. Options Counselors help people to determine the best setting for their needs.

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services

(SCES) is part of the Greater Boston Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC). The ADRC is a network of agencies serving the needs of older adults and people living with disabilities that provide seamless access to information and resources for both older adults and younger people with disabilities.

The OC counselor can see the client in the hospital and follow them through their rehabilitation, and with a background and history of that client's care, can inform them on their options after rehab. OC is

consumer-directed, meaning that the client directs how they want to receive their care and other assistance.

Options Counselors help people to determine the best setting for their needs.

To make sure that we are reaching everyone who might need counseling, twice a week an OC goes to an interdisciplinary meeting at Cambridge Hospital and the team reviews every admitted patient, so we can identify patients who may benefit from OC. We're benefitting both the patient and the

hospital in providing oversight and support for the patient. In addition, OCs check-in with the nurse case managers at Spaulding Cambridge (formerly Youville), and we will be working with Somerville Primary Care at Somerville Hospital.

Over the past few months we've had many clients who have benefited from OC. Consider for example our client in Cambridge, Mary, a widow in her 80s, who lives in a private home. She is more than a case study; she is a member of our community who deserves to receive the information necessary for her to make informed decisions about her health and welfare.

Struggling with some cognitive and mobility issues, a heart condition, and low vision, she called SCES





because she wanted to live in her home, but her son who lives out of state wanted her to move into assisted living facility or a nursing home. She was thinking that her son might be right, but in the conversation with our intake person, we found that she was looking for a nursing home

because she didn't know what else was available.

The OC discussed her lifestyle, exploring areas where she was having difficulty, but also recognizing areas of functioning and strength. During our OC's visit with her, she said that she

wanted to stay at home. This changed the focus of the counselor to determining what her needs were in order to stay at home. In addition to the OC, she got a money manager, a social worker (Geriatric Services, Cambridge Health Alliance) and therapy in her home for cognitive issues, a referral for homecare, assistance for laundry, homemaking and food shopping. The SCES Options Counselor gave her information on congregate meal sites and transportation available to take her there to socialize.

Mary is just one example of how OC is helping individuals determine for themselves where and how they want to receive care.

By offering information about all available programs and services (not just ones offered by SCES), Options Counseling empowers individuals to make informed choices that enhance their independence and quality of life.

A Historic Gift to Your Older Neighbors

The cities of Cambridge and Somerville are thriving communities founded on the ideals of diversity, education, and civic pride. None of these ideals would have been realized without the generosity of forward-thinking women and men who, over the course of more than three centuries, have built our neighborhoods into the free and compassionate places which we call home. Through the continued vision of the people and institutions of our area, we are able to provide modest but vital services for our older adults and younger people living with disabilities. Our mission is to ensure that these neighbors are able to live

with dignity and in the setting of their choice. We ask you to share that historic vision and give a gift to local frail seniors and people living with disabilities by including a bequest to Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services in your will, or by making a charitable grant to one of our many programs.

Make your bequest by giving the following language to your attorney: "To Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services, 61 Medford St., Somerville (County of Middlesex), Massachusetts, I give ___% of my residuary estate." You can also name a fixed dollar amount.

For More Information

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Caring for the Whole Person



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While SCES has other volunteer programs that seek to address the needs of isolated elders, they were not designed to deal with those who are struggling with depression, loss, or grief. In addition, traditional volunteers may not feel comfortable talking about spiritual or religious themes.

we are reaching out to ethnic and minority communities and non-Christian faith communities for other members.

To meet this unmet need, SCES is launching a new program to specifically address the spiritual needs of our clients.

The program will take referrals for elders in need from SCES case managers, social workers and nurses, and through our Aging Information and Elder Care Advisors referral system.

An **Aging and Spiritual Well-being Advisory Council** has been established.

This group serves as a resource to connect the program to the community, to congregations, faith communities and religious institutions and to other spiritual and mental health resources that might be needed. We have recruited five people so far and we are reaching out to ethnic and minority communities and non-Christian faith communities for other members.

Currently, we are seeking volunteer Spiritual Caregivers who will be trained to deal with people who are struggling with depression or loss and grief in their lives. The program is inter-faith and non-denominational.

Spiritual Caregivers:

- Are spiritually mature in their own faith tradition
- Will receive fifty-hours of training, over four months, to help people struggling with depression, loss, grief, illness, or spiritual concerns of normal aging
- Visit their client once per week for about an hour
- Meet for peer mentoring and continuing education twice per month
- Able to provide references, and a criminal background check.

Successful candidates are asked to make a two-year commitment and will be trained starting at the end of August 2011. Volunteers who apply by August 15, 2011 will complete training to be matched with a care receiver by the end of 2011. The following training cycle will start in January 2012

Lending a Helping Hand to an Older Neighbor

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services is currently in need of the following volunteers:

Brown Bag

The Brown Bag Program is sponsored by the Greater Boston Food Bank, Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES), and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Each registered participant receives a brown bag consisting of 10-15 pounds of nutritious groceries once per month. The items represent a balance and variety of foods from the USDA Food Guide.

SCES is currently looking for able-bodied volunteers to assist our staff in the distribution of these groceries every third Wednesday of the month between 8:45 am & 12:30 pm at Cross Street Senior Center, 165 Broadway, Somerville

If you can help by volunteering in this program, please contact Marie Mazzeo at 617-628-2601 x3051 or email mmazzeo@eldercare.org.

New Friends

We have an Arabic speaking client who is lonely and would enjoy some companionship. If you or someone you know speaks Arabic

and would enjoy visiting a lonely client, please contact Marie Mazzeo at 617-628-2601 x3051 or email mmazzeo@eldercare.org.

Medical Escorts

Our Medical Escort Program is in need of volunteers to accompany clients to and from medical appointments. Volunteers without a car, as well as with a car, are eligible to volunteer in this program. SCES provides the transportation means for our clients. Individuals with a vehicle are able to assist those individuals contacting SCES for transportation to a medical appointment. It is a very flexible program which can work

for many schedules. A volunteer needs to be available during working hours as most appointments run on workday schedules. If you can help by volunteering in this program, please contact Marie Mazzeo at 617-628-2601 x3051 or email mmazzeo@eldercare.org.

Successful candidates will be trained and matched with a client by the end of 2011. To volunteer or for more information, please contact Nancy Willbanks at 617-628-2601, ext. 3160 or nancyw@eldercare.org.

Volunteer to Help Someone in Need

Health & Wellness Programs



SCES offers a range of health and wellness programs that enhance the quality of life of older people and younger people living with disabilities.

- **A Matter of Balance Program**
- **Healthy Eating for Successful Living in Older Adults Program**
- **Simple Cooking for Your Health Program**
- **Stanford Chronic Disease Self-management**
- **Stanford Chronic Disease Self-management for Diabetes**

These programs are available to senior residents of Somerville and Cambridge. There is no course fee for the Matter of Balance Program. All the other programs have a \$10 course fee (which can be waived for hardship) due at registration. Transportation is available. To register or for more information, contact: Eliza Wiesner, Wellness Coordinator at 617-628-2601, ext. 3108 or ewiesner@eldercare.org.

Combating Heat-Related Illness

The Risk of Heat-Related Problems Increases with Age

As we age, our ability to adequately respond to summer heat can become a serious problem. The National Institute on Aging (NIA), part of the National Institutes of Health, has some advice for helping older people avoid heat-related illnesses, known collectively as hyperthermia, during the summer months.

Hyperthermia can include heat stroke, heat fatigue, heat syncope (sudden dizziness after exercising in the heat), heat cramps and heat exhaustion. The risk for hyperthermia is a combination of the outside temperature along with the general health and lifestyle of the individual. Health-related factors that may increase risk include:

- Age-related changes to the skin such as poor blood circulation and inefficient sweat glands
- Heart, lung and kidney diseases, as well as any illness that causes general weakness or fever
- High blood pressure or other conditions that require changes in diet. For example, people on salt-restricted



diets may increase their risk. However, salt pills should not be used without first consulting a doctor.

- The inability to perspire, caused by medications such as diuretics, sedatives, tranquilizers and certain heart and blood pressure drugs
- Taking several drugs for various conditions. It is important, however, to continue to take prescribed medication and discuss possible problems with a physician.
- Being substantially overweight or underweight
- Drinking alcoholic beverages
- Being dehydrated

Lifestyle factors can also increase risk, including extremely hot living

quarters, lack of transportation, overdressing, visiting overcrowded places and not understanding how to respond to weather conditions. Older people, particularly those at special risk, should stay indoors on particularly hot and humid days, especially when there is an air pollution alert in effect. People without fans or air conditioners should go to places such as shopping malls, movie theaters, libraries or cooling centers which are often provided by government agencies, religious groups, and social service organizations in many communities.

Heat stroke is an advanced form of hyperthermia that occurs when the body is overwhelmed by heat and unable to control its temperature. Someone with a body temperature above 104 degrees is likely suffering from heat stroke and may have symptoms of confusion, combativeness,

strong rapid pulse, lack of sweating, dry flushed skin, faintness, staggering, possible delirium or coma. Seek immediate medical attention for a person with any of these symptoms, especially an older adult.

If you suspect that someone is suffering from a heat-related illness:

- Get the person out of the sun and into an air-conditioned or other cool place.
- Offer fluids such as water, fruit and vegetable juices, but avoid alcohol and caffeine.
- Encourage the individual to shower, bathe or sponge off with cool water.
- Apply a cold, wet cloth to the wrists, neck, armpits, and/or groin, places where blood passes close to the surface and the cold cloths can help cool the blood.
- Urge the person to lie down and rest, preferably in a cool place.

For a free copy of the NIA's Age Page on hyperthermia in English or in Spanish, contact the NIA Information Center at 1-800-222-2225. The NIA leads the federal effort supporting and conducting research on aging and the medical, social and behavioral issues of older people. For more information on research and the aging, go to www.nia.nih.gov.

The NIH—the nation's medical research agency—includes 27 institutes and centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

Special Thanks

Porter Square Shaw's Supports SCES



Asst. Store Director Jim Frasier (left) awarding Shaw's donation to SCES Public Relations & Development Manager Donald Donato (center) and Office Manager Betty Mitchell (right).

On Thursday, June 23, 2011, Assistant Store Director Jim Frasier and Personnel Coordinator Deb DeCicco presented Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services with a donation from the monthly community giving program at Shaw's Supermarket in Porter Square, Cambridge.

The \$750 raised in June 2011 will fund 75 Medical Escort visits for local seniors from Cambridge and Somerville. During his meeting with SCES Public Relations & Development Manager Donald Donato, and Office Manager Betty Mitchell, Mr. Frasier also shared the good news that Shaw's has featured SCES as part of this promotion in July as well. The program is sponsored by purchasing special Frito-Lay, Pepsi and Aquafina product packages at the Porter Square location only.

Computer Help for Seniors

Are you looking for an opportunity to have one-on-one help to brush up your computer skills? Cambridge Community Television welcomes local seniors to use their computer lab to do just that! Seniors go to the computer lab for help with: Computer tutoring, online searches, photo scanning, creating a blog, using Facebook, emails and more. CCTV's friendly staff is waiting to assist you with your basic computer needs. Their lab is equipped with the latest technology so that you can have the ultimate learning experience.

The lab is open to local seniors on Mondays between 9 am and noon at CCTV's main office in the heart of Central Square, just 100 yards from the Red Line. 676 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge. For more information, call (617) 661-6900

Please check if you would like to:

- Have the Advocate mailed directly to your house
- Make a donation to
Somerville Cambridge Elder Services

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip code _____

To mail a donation:

- A check is enclosed made payable to
Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services.

This gift is in honor of in memory of
Name: _____

Please mail to:

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services

61 Medford Street
Somerville, MA 02143-3429

For on-line donations:

Please visit:

www.eldercare.org

SCES on the World Wide Web

SCES's web site continues to be a resource for older people, caregivers, and professionals. Located at www.eldercare.org, the site contains information about SCES programs and services, as well as a variety of links to other web sites featuring resources for elders and caregivers. Visitors can access the latest advocacy bulletins highlighting legislation and budget issues impacting elders. They can also browse a directory of health fact sheets.

Free Elder Care Advice Consultation

Struggling with issues related to aging or caregiving? SCES offers a free consultation with an Elder Care Advisor who can provide information, advice and education to older people, their partners, families, and caregivers. Elder Care Advisors offer in-home, in-office or phone consultations to residents of Cambridge and Somerville or to individuals caring for an older person who lives in either of the two communities. Services include: information about community resources; advice about care options; assistance with planning for care; education about issues of aging and connections to a wide range of community services including those services offered by Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services.

**For more information, call The Aging Information Center
at 617-628-2601, ext. 3151**

Questions, Comments, or Suggestions

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ADVOCATE

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