Promoting senior- and disability-friendly efforts

Chestnut Hill Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church (8700 Germantown Ave.), led by Pastor Lance Moncrief, provides sign language interpretation during worship services and offers wheelchair accessibility and a stairlift for individuals who need this assistance. The Rev. Angela Lundy helps to lead the church’s many efforts on behalf of seniors and individuals with disabilities. As a member of PCAs Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition, she also helps to ensure that PCAs aging resource information is available to congregants. Previously, the church hosted a special Sabbath worship service focusing on seniors and people with disabilities that featured its new Senior/Disability Angelic Choirale, Rev. Lawrence W. Lucas, a health and wellness ministry director, helped to organize the event.

Connect with us

PCAs Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition seeks to develop connections with more houses of worship and clergy from the Philadelphia area. Get connected! Call Sandy Lawrence, PCA interfaith outreach coordinator, at 215-765-9900, ext. 5342, or email her at salawrence@pcaphl.org.

Wayland Memorial Church opens resource center

Wayland Memorial Baptist Church (52nd St. and Baltimore Ave.) held a grand opening for its new Rev. Mary L.B. Franks Resource Center on January 21. The center provides services such as referrals for food and employment assistance, educational opportunities, computer access, clothing and furniture, free notary services, and information on aging resources and benefits. The Rev. Charles Caione serves as interim pastor. Dr. Minnie Moore-Johnson is the church’s program coordinator. For more information about the center, call the church at 215-774-3765.

Elder Catherine Swift honored

Elder Catherine Swift, founder of the senior ministry at her house of worship, New Vision United Methodist Church (3259 N. Broad St.), was recently recognized by the church for her dedicated service. Elder Swift shows her love to God by helping others. In her work with the church’s senior ministry, she is dedicated to helping older adults age with dignity, independence and optimum health. She connects seniors with aging resources, schedules guest speakers for talks at the church on health and other relevant topics, listens to seniors’ concerns, and advocates on behalf of individuals and families who need help. As a member of Philadelphia Corporation for Aging’s PCAs Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition, she helps approve PCA of senior issues and keeps church seniors updated on aging information and services. Elder Swift is also active in promoting cultural sensitivity at the church by expanding the diversity of its women’s ministry. (Article by Dior Fields, intern in PCA’s Community Relations Dept.)

Greater Enon Missionary Baptist Church presents senior citizen award

Greater Enon Missionary Baptist Church (1856 N. 22nd St.), recently honored Dottie B. Finckney with its fourth annual Senior Citizen of the Year Community Service Award. The award ceremony took place at the honoree’s house of worship, New Thankful Baptist Church (1608 W. Allegheny Ave.), during New Thanksgiving’s annual Family and Friends Day. Greater Enon Senior Pastor the Rev. Michael Robinson made the presentation, recognizing Finckney’s administrative leadership role at her church, frequent visits to elderly hospital patients and strong support of citywide ministries.
PCA’s Domiciliary Care program seeks providers, consumers

PCA’s Domiciliary Care (DomCare) program, marks 40 years of service to consumers this year. Through the program, PCA matches adults, who are elderly and/or may have physical or mental disabilities, with providers who are willing to share their home and provide meals, housekeeping and laundry assistance, arrange transportation to medical appointments, and administer medications and assist with personal hygiene as needed. “Most of all, they provide attention and support to consumers who otherwise would be living in a personal care home or other institutional setting,” according to Jean Janik, PCA director of community living options. “We continue to seek more Dom Care providers and consumers.” Janik says.

Consumers

To be eligible for Dom Care, adults age 18-plus must have some type of physical disability or mental health diagnosis that impedes them from living alone. An assessment helps determine if the program can support the individual’s needs and discusses their preferences for a home or area of the city. For some, an environment with children or pets may be desirable. The individual is given a choice of homes, and there is a trial visit. The consumer pays the provider a monthly fee, usually through Social Security.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or a retirement account, for room, board and services.

Providers

Provider applicants go through a certification process that includes an assessment to determine the type of care the provider is able and willing to provide. Providers must give references, pass a background check, participate in initial and continued training, and undergo a home study. All provider homes are certified and monitored annually to meet state fire and safety regulations, and also for basic cleanliness and security. The home must have a private room for each participant, who should also have access to bathroom, kitchen and laundry facilities as well as dining and living space. A limit of two participants may live in each provider home.

Dom Care staff maintains contacts and checks in regularly with providers and participants throughout the entire placement.

For information about becoming a Dom Care provider, call 215-765-9000, ext. 5365. For consumer inquiries, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

Ralston Center launches community food project

The Ralston Center’s Age-Friendly West Philadelphia Initiative has introduced a new intergenerational community project, “Food & Company.” The project improves older West Philadelphians’ access to fresh food, nutritional resources and opportunities for social connection. Through regular communal cooking programs at community locations, participants learn how to farm fresh, healthy ingredients into delicious soups and stews. Senior volunteers can take soup home for themselves or share it with friends and neighbors; the rest is donated to local seniors in need through community partner organizations. The center is always looking for new community partners, volunteer cooks (all skill levels) and partner organizations in need of food donations. For information, call 215-386-2984 or email jruessl@ralstoncenter.org.

Ministry offers ‘baskets of love’

Helping Hands Ministry Inc., 5926 Webster St., offers a variety of free services to Philadelphia’s elderly and individuals under 60 who have dementia or other serious health conditions. Services include information and referral, help with home care and daily activities, pastoral care, coat giveaways, holiday gifts and a caregivers’ luncheon. The ministry’s “baskets of love” outreach project provides baskets of personal care and other nonperishable items to individuals in need. The basket delivers provide social contact, and basket items help seniors save on expenses that otherwise can drain their limited monthly income,” says Elder Marietta Melton, founder of the ministry’s Philadelphia area chapter. Helping Hands has built relationships with various houses of worship in Philadelphia and surrounding counties to identify seniors in need of help and people who want to volunteer. A core group of volunteers assists with purchasing, packing and delivering the baskets to frail seniors. For more information or to volunteer, call 267-395-9000 weekdays, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. or email hmbygb@gmail.com.

Hotline to healthy food

The Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger offers a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Hotline — 215-430-9536 — to help callers apply for SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps). Eligible household can apply for SNAP over the phone without going to a county assistance office. Callers can also get information about food pantries, soup kitchens and other food assistance resources in their neighborhood by calling the hotline or visiting PhillyFoodFinder.org, a website created by Hack4Impact in partnership with the coalition and the Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council.

Refrigerator swap program

PECO residential electric customers who own a refrigerator that is at least 10 years old, 15 to 21 cubic feet, and in working condition may be eligible to trade their old refrigerators for a new Energy Star-rated top-freezer model of the same size. Both tenants and homeowners are eligible for the swap through Pennsylvania’s ACT 129 Low-Income Energy Efficiency and Conservation Program if they meet income eligibility requirements: $17,305 for one-person or $23,595 for two people. There is a limit of one refrigerator per property. For information, call 800-492-4062 (weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

Holiday outreach addressed senior loneliness in West Philly

Several members from the 59th Street Baptist Church Outreach Ministry (315 S. 59th St.) showcased the spirit of the holiday season in December by sharing their time and gifts with seniors during a visit to the nearby Older Adult Sunshine Center (137 S. 58th St.). During their visit, ministry volunteers and center members discussed holiday experiences and what the holidays meant to them. For more information about the church, including its outreach programs, call 215-474-8750. Managed by PCA, Older Adult Sunshine Center is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information about the center, call 215-472-4188 or go to the PCA website, www.pacacares.org, and click on “Services for Seniors.”

PCAs Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program (SHARP) helps to improve the safety, security and energy efficiency of seniors’ homes. Through this, and other programs, PCA arranges for repairs and modifications to the homes of more than 1,000 low-income elderly Philadelphia home-owners each year. There is now a reduced waiting list for the program, so referrals/applications are encouraged.

Modifications are made following consultation with an occupational therapist. They can include installation of grab bars; provision of durable medical equipment, such as tub chairs and toilet safety frames; and installation and repair of railings, both interior and exterior.

Minor home repairs done through SHARP include replacement or repair of exterior and interior doors; plumbing fixtures, such as faucets, toilets and drains; electrical parts, such as light fixtures, outlets or switches; sink bases; and even basement steps.

To qualify for SHARP the senior must be a Philadelphia homeowner 60 or older whose home is structurally sound and has all utilities, including the central heating system, functioning. SHARP services are free to those with a household income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level $2,010 per month or $24,120 a year for one person, $2,701 per month or $32,480 a year for a two-person household. Those whose household income is above this range may be eligible to have repairs and modifications made on a cost-sharing basis.

For information or to apply for services provided by the Housing Department, seniors may call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

Milestones newspaper

Milestones newspaper, published by PCA, has a readership of nearly 170,000 older Philadelphians each month. This free newspaper is aimed at reaching senior citizens with news, features, and information on activities and opportunities for involvement. Copies are distributed at more than 900 locations throughout Philadelphia, including senior community centers, senior living facilities, libraries, doctors’ offices, pharmacies, houses of worship and conventionally located honor boxes. Milestones is available for free delivery to faith institutions that order 50 or more copies. Contact PCA at 215-765-9000, ext. 3560.