PCA
PHILADELPHIA CORPORATION FOR AGING™

update

FALL 2015

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A letter from PCA President and CEO Holly Lange

President Lyndon B. Johnson declared "War on Poverty" 51 years ago, in his 1964 State of the Union speech. Among the programs that resulted were Medicare and Medicaid; a permanent food stamps program; and expansion of Social Security. Thanks in large part to these initiatives, since 1966, the poverty level among older adults nationwide has dropped from 28.5% to 9.5%. But in Philadelphia, poverty is still pervasive. Among those age 60-plus, 18% have incomes below the federal poverty level. That is twice the poverty rate for seniors nationwide, which is 9.5%.

This issue of UPDATE shares some of the ways Philadelphia Corporation for Aging utilizes its resources to help older Philadelphians meet some of their most basic needs.

• Congregate meals – nutritious lunches served five days a week at senior centers throughout the city – were among the first services PCA provided, starting in 1974. Today, in combination with home-delivered meals, PCA provides close to 1.4 million meals annually to Philadelphia seniors.

• Our Housing Department, created in 1980, was one of the first in the nation at an Area Agency on Aging. A staggering 70% of Philadelphians age 60 and older own their homes. Unfortunately, in many cases, they are hard put to maintain, repair and heat those homes. PCA's Housing Department provides services to help make seniors' homes safe, secure and accessible. At the same time, the PCA Helpline provides information about resources available to help with home heating and utilities.

These efforts are ongoing; but at times, urgent needs arise. The Emergency Fund for Older Philadelphians was created in 1981 to help senior citizens in crisis, who have exhausted all other resources. With winter approaching, we will be raising funds to see us through the heating season, which is the time of greatest need for the thousands of older Philadelphians who are struggling to make ends meet.

Holly Lange

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Donor spotlight: Debra Speyer

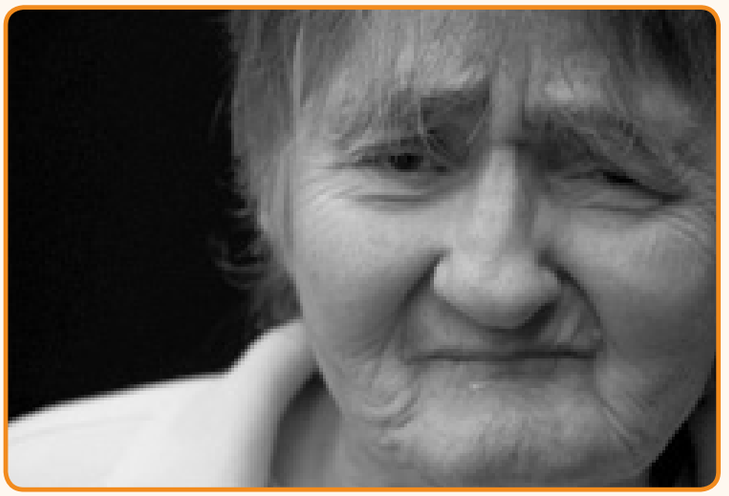
Attorney Debra Speyer's ties to PCA go back a long way. "I learned about the agency when I opened my law practice in 1990," says Speyer. "Clients who were seniors would rave about PCA and tell me that it was the one place they could turn to for help to live their lives independently." Speyer's firm is dedicated to elder law, life planning, estate planning and elder fraud. She has found PCA to be "a wonderful client resource for information on senior housing, senior centers, helping transition people back to the community from nursing homes and more," she says. She has also seen firsthand how often seniors can be targeted for financial exploitation and is well acquainted with PCA's Older Adult Protective Services as a key resource for preventing and addressing all forms of elder abuse.

Speyer has been a committed donor to PCA over the years. The agency's Philadelphia Fund for Seniors and Emergency Fund for Older Philadelphians inspire her, she says. "PCA's mission is to give seniors, who would not otherwise be able to afford it, the extra help needed to allow them to live out their lives in their community – if they are able to do so. It's the central source seniors can turn to for answers and help for many issues of aging. I often deal with social workers and staff at PCA on behalf of my clients. They are some of the most dedicated people I have ever met in helping seniors achieve their goal of aging in place.

"Many people think that PCA is entirely funded by Pennsylvania Lottery money, but that is not true," Speyer says. "The agency needs the financial assistance of the community to continue to fulfill its mission. I think PCA is one of the best places to invest your donor dollars."

Outside of her professional life and related activities, Speyer cultivates another special interest. "When not lawyering, I am on my farm in Maryland raising pasture-raised and grass-fed Highland and Belted Galloway heritage cattle, as well as Dorper and Katahdin sheep," she says. "It's one of the only farms in Maryland running on solar energy. I am part of Animal Welfare Approved, which certifies family-owned farms that utilize high standards of farming practices."

Emergency Fund campaign underway



PCA will launch its annual campaign to help seniors in need keep warm this winter. PCA's Emergency Fund for Older Philadelphians serves as a last resort for low-income seniors in crisis and helps pay for basic needs, like heat, shelter, food and medicine. Each year, the majority of assistance goes to pay for heat. The annual campaign helps to replenish fund resources at the time of greatest demand.

Of the nearly 291,000 Philadelphians age 60-plus, 18% live below the federal poverty level, according to Holly Lange, PCA president and CEO. Many struggle to afford the basics – heat, shelter, food and medicine. "Helping seniors afford heat this winter is fundamental to PCA's mission to help older Philadelphians enjoy optimum health and quality of life," she says. "The Emergency Fund helps provide a safety net for hundreds of the city's most vulnerable elders."

Last winter, the fund provided $144,440 in heat assistance to 755 senior households, according to PCA Helpline Director Chris Gallagher, who administers disbursements from the fund. Eligible seniors received 100 gallons of oil or up to $100 for a heating bill, with payments made directly to the vendor.

Altogether, the fund distributed $215,788 last year to assist 1,768 households, he says. Of that total, 67% was for fuel (including oil); 19% for general needs, such as medicine, medical supplies, rent/mortgage assistance and clothing; and 14% provided food assistance.

The fund serves individuals age 60 and older whose household income is at or below 175% of the poverty level and who have exhausted all other alternatives for help with critical needs. Applicants for assistance must be referred by a recognized social service agency or a member of the clergy. More than 100 organizations can make referrals, including senior centers, assisted living facilities and senior housing sites, legal services and advocacy organizations, city agencies, energy assistance programs, hospitals, and home health care agencies.

Founded in 1981, the Emergency Fund is supported by donations from individuals, corporations and foundations. The fund is guided by a coalition of 24 community-based agencies serving senior citizens. PCA administers the fund, ensuring that money raised directly benefits low-income older Philadelphians.

Darlene Nicks, center counselor at West Philadelphia Senior Community Center, says it is essential for her to be able to make referrals for fund assistance. "A number of our seniors are not able to meet monthly expenses, especially during the winter season," she says. "About 60% of the referrals I make each year go for heat."

Since its founding, the fund has provided nearly $3 million in assistance to more than 24,500 senior households, according to Lange.

To donate, go to www.pcaCares.org/emergencyfund or call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040. Donations can also be mailed to PCA, 642 North Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19130. For information on corporate and foundation giving opportunities, call Joan Zaremba PCA director of marketing and development, at 215-765-9000, ext. 5051 or e-mail jzaremba@pcaphl.org.

Holly Lange is new president of P4A

PCA President and CEO Holly Lange has been elected president of the Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging (P4A). Founded in 1977, the organization represents the interests of the Commonwealth's 52 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). It acts as an advocate for both the AAAs and those they serve, providing information and educational resources and supporting development of quality standards and procedures. P4A serves as a voice for AAAs with the state legislature, testifying on matters of concern, developing policy statements, and providing updates on legislative developments.

Richard Browdie receives PCA's M. Powell Lawton Quality of Life Award

Professionals in aging, health care, counseling, legal and financial services, along with students in aging-related fields, gathered for the 2015 Regional Conference on Aging held at PCA October 19 through 21. Presented by local and national experts, sessions this year focused on such topics as behavioral health and aging; caregiving; diversity; elder financial abuse; ethical issues; health and wellness; long-term care; and public policy and entitlements. The conference was sponsored by Always Best Care Senior Services, Health Partners Plans and Mom's Meals.

During a special reception and ceremony held during the conference, PCA presented the M. Powell Lawton Quality of Life Award to Richard Browdie, president/CEO of the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging and a nationally recognized leader in the aging field. Prior to the award event on October 19, Browdie addressed a conference session on "The Future of Aging Services."

The Lawton Award honors an individual who is nationally recognized for professional accomplishments in his or her field; demonstrates commitment to improving the quality of life for others; and who has exemplified an active, engaged lifestyle. It was named in honor of M. Powell Lawton, Ph.D., a behavioral psychologist and international authority on aging who guided and influenced national public policy to enhance the quality of life for the elderly. This is the 14th Lawton Award presented by PCA since 2001.

"Rich Browdie exemplifies the principles of the Lawton Award," says PCA President and CEO Holly Lange. "He has been an outstanding advocate on behalf of vulnerable elders, a transformative leader of aging organizations and on the cutting edge in advancing aging policies and practices."

For more than 40 years, Browdie has held leadership positions in organizations dedicated to maintaining and improving the health and well-being of older adults. Currently as President/CEO of the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging in Cleveland, Ohio, he leads an organization dedicated both to helping older adults live independently in the community and pursuing innovation in aging practice and policy.

Browdie served as Pennsylvania's secretary of aging from 1995 to 2002, where he was responsible for the administration of a statewide system of 52 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). His duties included overseeing a budget of more than $800 million. He also served as PCA's deputy director from 1980 to 1987.

As executive director of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging from 1993 to 1995, he developed policy and had oversight responsibility for the national organization representing 670 AAAs and Indian Tribal organizations.

From 1998 to 2000, Browdie served as president of the American Society on Aging. He is immediate past-chairman of the Board of the National Council on Aging, chairman of the editorial board for the American Society on Aging's "Generations" publication, and a member of the board of directors of the International Association of Homes and Services for the Aging. In 2014, he was appointed to the American Bar Association's Commission on Law and Aging.

n4a meets in Philly

PCA played a leading role when 1,000 professionals gathered in Philadelphia for the 2015 National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) Annual Conference and Trade Show from July 11 to 15. PCA President and CEO Holly Lange chaired the host committee for the conference, which focused on the theme "Answers in Aging."

"We were very pleased that Philadelphia was chosen as the site for this, the 40th annual conference of n4a," Lange says. "It gave PCA and our partners in the aging network an opportunity to shine, and to share some of the innovative programs we've developed."

Offerings included mobile workshops which enabled participants to observe some model PCA programs. Sites visited included On Lok House in Chinatown, a PCA-supported satellite senior center; PCA's state-of-the-art Meal Distribution Center, which annually delivers 850,000 meals to homebound seniors; and Philadelphia Senior Center (PSC) on the Avenue of the Arts. The program at PSC focused on PCA's annual citywide "Celebrate Arts and Aging" festivities.

PCA also sponsored an "Innovations in Aging" booth at the Trade Show highlighting the Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program (SHARP); its successful Community Care Transitions program; community collaborations with diverse ethnic and religious groups; programs expanding seniors' access to technology; and the new Aging and Disability Resource Center, the PA Link.

In addition, PCA staff members were featured speakers for sessions on topics including elder financial abuse, community care transitions, communications strategies, nutrition, information and referral, and age-friendly communities.

Pictured above: PCA President and CEO Holly Lange stands with Philadelphia Mummers Jeff MacTough (left) and Robert Holz as "The Senior Strut: A Health Event in the Park" gets underway.

The Senior Strut: A Health Event in the Park

Following a musical send-off by a Mummer's string band, 600 seniors attended the event, which included a one-mile loop down scenic Boathouse Row, Kelly Drive. Participants returned to Lloyd Hall for a health and information fair with free health screenings fitness and entertainment activities. "The Senior Strut: A Health Event in the Park," presented by the Fairmount Park Conservancy, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, took place October 9. It featured special appearances by Mike Quick, former Eagles wide receiver and Eagles radio sports analyst, and DJ Patty Pat. Participants received free t-shirts and a healthy snack. Major sponsors this year included Always Best Care Senior Services and Health Partners Plans. Additional sponsors included Addus HealthCare; Bath Fitter; BAYADA Home Health Care; Cigna HealthSpring; Gateway Health; Independence Blue Cross Liberty Resources; My Independence at Home; One Care Inc.; Penn Medicine; the Pennsylvania Lottery; Rite Aid Pharmacy and SarahCare.

Fall Clergy & Seniors Day focuses on housing issues

PCA's Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition presented its annual Fall Clergy & Seniors Day on October 8 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Philadelphia West. The theme was "Empowering Faith Communities with Knowledge about Senior Housing Options." The conference drew more than 200 attendees. Sponsors included Always Best Care Senior Services, Gateway Health, Health Partners Plans and the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing LIFE program.

Helping seniors buy fresh fruits and vegetables

PCA distributed Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program produce vouchers this summer as part of an annual program to encourage seniors to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables. More than 36,000 low-income Philadelphia seniors received $20 worth of vouchers to purchase fresh Pennsylvania-grown produce sold at certified Farmers' Markets in Philadelphia.

Information and Referral Council learns of resources

PCA's Community Relations Department hosted a meeting of the Information and Referral (I and R) Council on September 10. The council, coordinated by the department, meets three times a year to serve as an information sharing and networking forum for aging system staff and providers. Speakers for the event included Harry Barnum, deaf outreach & advocacy coordinator at Liberty Resources; Brandon McGinley, project coordinator at Benefits Data Trust; and Chris Gallagher, director of the PCA Helpline. The meeting was sponsored by A Place Like Home II, Always Best Care Senior Services, Health Partners Plans and the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing LIFE Program.

GenPhilly helps seniors with pets

One-third of Philadelphia seniors – more than 95,000 households – have a pet in their homes. Young professionals committed to promoting an age-friendly Philadelphia gathered for GenPhilly's 5th annual Pet-tastic Happy Hour and Charity Drive on August 6. Many brought donations of pet food, pet toys or pet accessories. The donations benefitted older adults and their pets served by PAWS's Seniors for Seniors Program.

Cambodian elders attend health and information fair

Older Cambodian Philadelphians enjoyed a free health and information fair on September 19 at Preah Buddha Rangsey Temple in South Philadelphia. The event was presented by PCA and the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia. The fair was sponsored by Health Partners Plans and Always Best Care Senior Services.

PCA meal programs are a lifeline for thousands

According to the 2014/2015 Public Health Management Corporation's Household Health Survey, there are nearly 291,000 people age 60-plus in the city. Among them:

•103,418 live alone
•46,827 are unable to shop by themselves
•24,060 cannot or need help preparing a meal
•31,935 report skipping a meal because of lack of money
•29,505 have used a meal program; an additional 18,115 need a meal program

Many Philadelphia seniors live on fixed incomes and struggle to pay for food, especially in the face of rising costs. Food expenses can be especially challenging for those who have dietary restrictions due to health conditions. For seniors with limited mobility who lack adequate support, cooking and shopping for groceries can be difficult or impossible.

PCA's home-delivered meals and congregate meal programs are a lifeline for thousands of Philadelphia's elderly.

Home-delivered meals
Every weekday, PCA's meal-delivery trucks make their rounds, serving nearly 4,000 older adults in all. Most participants receive seven meals each week. Those who are too frail to heat up a frozen meal themselves receive daily deliveries of a hot meal during the week, and sandwich packs for the weekend. All meals consist of an entrée with accompaniments, such as bread, milk or dessert. Last year, approximately 850,000 meals were delivered to homebound seniors.

Meals are packed and readied for delivery at PCA's centralized, state-of-the-art Meal Distribution Center (MDC) in North Philadelphia. The MDC purchases meals from qualified vendors chosen through a competitive bid process. It offers both non-kosher and kosher meals. All meals are limited in carbohydrates, high fat foods and salt, so they are compatible with most diabetic, cardiac and modified sodium diets, according to Sue Gibson, R.D., PCA's nutrition manager. Each meal meets one-third of minimum daily nutritional requirements for older adults.

All meal recipients receive emergency packs early in the winter in case the MDC is unable to get to them as scheduled. When blizzards are forecast, they receive additional emergency food packs that meet nutritional requirements, need little preparation and which can be stored without refrigeration for up to a year.

Consumers appreciate the meals and the regular contact the deliveries provide. "The meal drivers are persistent. If I don't answer the door, they call to say they are outside and to make sure I'm okay," says Marcia Dixon.

If anything seems amiss about a senior's situation, the meal delivery drivers report back to MDC office staff. The office staff conveys the information to the appropriate service coordinator at PCA for follow-up.

Meals are provided at no cost to eligible older adults through funding from the Older Americans Act, and the PA lottery channeled through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. Participants are asked to provide a donation for the meals if they are able to do so.

Eligibility
Individuals must be age 60 or older; live alone or with unreliable support; have no informal resources (family, friends or neighbors) capable of preparing meals; be unable to access community resources to meet nutritional needs; have impairments that impede their ability to prepare meals; and/or lack financial resources to meet their nutrition needs.

Participants are assessed for eligibility through PCA's Long Term Care Access Department or In-Home Support Program for older adults who are temporarily homebound. Once assessed and found eligible, participants can receive meal deliveries as soon as the order is placed, even the same day.

Congregate meals
Older adults who are more mobile can take advantage of nutritious meals, served Monday through Friday, at 31 PCA-supported senior community centers and satellite sites throughout Philadelphia. Last year, nearly 500,000 congregate meals were served to participants at these sites. "You can enjoy a healthy lunch, at no cost, in a friendly setting," says Gibson.

Senior centers and satellite sites offer a hot luncheon and on some days, an alternate cold luncheon. Meals are carefully planned to provide one-third of the required daily allowances for older adults that include protein, calories, fiber, Vitamins A and C, and calcium. They follow dietary guidelines for Americans that include limiting high fat content, excess salt and calories. These meals are also diabetic-friendly, with a limited amount of carbohydrates.

Manya Perel, 91, says she began coming to KleinLife: Northeast Philadelphia after her husband passed away. Meals, with their nutrition and sociability, are part of the attraction for her, along with the center's educational and recreational activities. "We have hot meals; we're sitting at the table and it's wonderful for me to have a hot meal, because I don't feel like cooking now. I don't have the strength," she says.

For more information about PCA's home-delivered meals or senior center and satellite site congregate meals, go to www.pcaCares.org or call 215-765-9040 (215-765-9041 TDD).

Focus on housing

Among the 2,000 phone calls received by PCA's Helpline each week, the most frequent request is for information about homes and housing. "Based on the calls we receive, home repairs and affordable, accessible housing are among the greatest needs faced by Philadelphia's senior citizens," says PCA Helpline Director Chris Gallagher.

Philadelphia is a city of older homeowners and older homes; approximately 203,000 of the city's senior citizens own their homes. More than thirty-seven percent of them report that they have trouble affording maintenance and repairs, including heating systems, plumbing and roof repairs. This is not surprising, considering that approximately 46% of all Philadelphia seniors have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line.

At the same time, seniors who want to move to more affordable and appropriate, subsidized rental housing, face long waiting lists. The availability of housing for low- and moderate-income seniors that offers support services of any kind is also extremely limited, according to Ellena Jonas, director of PCA's Housing Department.

PCA tackles the city's housing problems in both systemic and concrete ways. Through advocacy, information-sharing and training, staff seeks to address the problems and to develop ways to increase resources and optimize current programs and funding. On a practical level, the agency's Housing Department arranges for, or performs, a range of home repairs and modifications.

Information and training

PCA maintains an extensive database of housing resources on its website, www.pcaCares.org. Included is information on affordable, subsidized and public housing; mortgages and foreclosures; resources for home heating fuel; and real estate tax and rent rebates. Seniors, or anyone working with them, can search for information by keyword or in "Search for services," where resources are searchable by general category or specific topic. The site offers a print-friendly option for both lists and individual listings.

PCA also organizes training seminars on housing issues which explore the range of housing problems frequently encountered by older tenants and homeowners. Legal issues, financial assistance and resources for home repair are among the topics addressed at these seminars that are held throughout the year. Participants learn about resources and techniques that can greatly increase their ability to resolve common problems.

Repairs and modifications

Through PCA's Housing Department, a variety of home repairs and modifications are available to help make older Philadelphians' homes safer, more secure and more accessible. Some of these jobs are done for people who receive long-term care services through PCA and some other community agencies. The type of repairs to be done is determined by a thorough assessment, and includes small jobs, such as installation of grab bars, and larger projects, such as installation of a first-floor half-bath, stair glide or exterior lift.

Minor repairs and modifications are also provided to older Philadelphians who are not long-term care consumers, through the Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program (SHARP). Depending on financial eligibility, SHARP services may be offered at no charge, or on a cost-sharing sliding scale, depending on income.

SHARP provides up to $2,400 worth of minor repairs and adaptations which can include:

- Repair or installation of exterior doors and hand railings
- Installation of dead bolt locks on exterior doors
- Installation of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms
- Repair or replacement of wooden basement steps and railings
- Repair of leaky faucets and toilets; installations of grab bars, tub benches and hand-held showers
- Installation of shut-off valves
- Replacement of doorbell systems and/or installation of intercom systems
- Replacement of electrical switches, receptacles and fixtures

Some of these jobs are done by outside contractors; others are completed by Housing Department staff. To apply for SHARP services, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040 or 215-765-9041 (TDD).

Agencies interested in contracting with PCA's Housing Department, or becoming a contractor, may call 215-765-9000, ext. 5217.

PCA update FALL 2015 ISSUE

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Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), a private, nonprofit Area Agency on Aging, was established in 1973 to coordinate social services for Philadelphians who are older or who have disabilities and to assist them in achieving optimum levels of health, independence, and productivity.

One of the region's largest nonprofit organizations, PCA is funded in part by the federal Older Americans Act and the Pennsylvania Lottery, channeled through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, and by Medical Assistance, channeled through the Pensylvania Department of Human Services.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2015

Thursday, November 5
1 to 4 p.m.
Winter Resources Training
Training for professionals and volunteers serving seniors on programs to help low-income seniors cope with the challenges of the winter season. Information about fuel, weatherization, home repairs, utility company programs, food resources and tax payer relief. To register, call 215-765 9000, ext. 4470.

Thursday, November 5
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Our Assumptions about Older People
Training for professionals focusing on personal and societal concepts of older people. For information, www.pcaCares.org; call 215-765-9000, ext. 5065; or e-mail tshea@pcaphl.org.

Saturday, November 14
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Latino Seniors Conference
Free conference for Latino seniors with information in Spanish about healthy eating and exercise, preventing scams and elder abuse, and community resources. Continental breakfast and lunch included. Registration is required by Nov. 6 at 215-282-6582.

Thursday, November 19
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Tools for the Trade: Nuts & Bolts for Growing Senior Center Participation
Training for senior center professionals, volunteers and lay leadership focusing on strategies to enhance senior centers. For information, www.pcaCares.org; call 215-765-9000, ext. 5065; or e-mail tshea@pcaphl.org.

DECEMBER 2015

Wednesday, December 2
10 a.m. to noon
Triple Advisory Committee Meeting: Asian, Interfaith and Latino
Topic: "Involving Isolated Seniors in Senior Centers"
To register: call 215-765 9000, ext. 4470.

JANUARY 2016

Tuesday, January 19
Noon to 2:30 p.m.
Information & Referral Council Meeting
To register, call 215-765 9000, ext. 4470.
Events held at PCA, 642 North Broad St., unless otherwise specified.

Cover Photo: Cecelia Grose, PCA Meal Distribution Center meal packer, prepares food for a recipient. (photo by Evangelina Iavarone)