



MONMOUTH COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING

Senior NewsLines

Jointly funded by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the New Jersey Division of Aging and Community Services, Department of Health & Senior Services

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Older Americans Month

Project Lifesaver Program for Children with Autism Unveiled

The Monmouth County Sheriff's Office, Office on Aging and Department of Human Services unveiled a pilot program, Project Lifesaver for children with autism spectrum disorders on April 24, 2007 at the Monmouth County Library. The Project Lifesaver program is being expanded to include up to 25 children with autism who are prone to elopement. Project Lifesaver has been available for seniors with memory disorders since 2003. "Protection of our children, especially those with special needs is a priority," said Sheriff Joseph W. Oxley. "This collaboration of the Sheriff's Office with the Monmouth County Office on Aging and the Department of Human Services to expand our Project Lifesaver program to children with autism proves that planning and partnerships produce positive results."

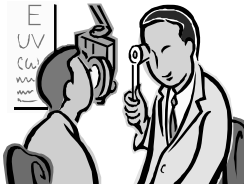
The program uses bracelets that emit radio signals to locate individuals. Each bracelet has a separate radio frequency allowing sheriff's officers to zero in on a person wearing the bracelet. "The average time nationwide for locating individuals on the project lifesaver program is thirty minutes or less," said Sheriff Oxley. "To date our officers rescued five people in Monmouth County. One in less than ten minutes."

Autism is a nationwide problem with New Jersey having the highest rate ever documented in the United States. The neurological disorder can cause children to wander away from home. The partnership between the Sheriff's Office, Office on Aging and the Department of Human Services will help bring autistic children whom have wandered back safely to their loved ones. "By applying the technology and qualification procedures developed from our senior citizen Project Lifesaver partnership over the past four years, we are able to expand our collaborative efforts to include autistic children," said John A. Wanat, Executive Director, Office on Aging.

The project is funded by a 30,000 dollar grant from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Jersey Central Power and Light Company and New Jersey Natural Gas Company.

For further information, contact Barbara Rutan at (732) 431-7450.

Partially funded under Title III, Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended through a grant by the State of New Jersey Division of Aging and Community Services, Department of Health & Senior Services.



Eye Care and the Elderly Patient

Recent Advances in Macular Degeneration Offer Opportunity to Preserve Vision Benjamin D. Spirn, MD

Eye Care and the Elderly Patient

Changes can occur in the eye as a result of aging that can profoundly impact our health, happiness, and ability to function independently. Several eye conditions become increasingly common as we age. One of the most notable of these is Age-Related Macular Degeneration, commonly referred to simply as macular degeneration. In the United States, macular degeneration is the number one cause of severe vision loss and legal blindness in adults over 60. As Americans are living longer, doctors are beginning to see a large increase in the number of patients with age-related diseases like macular degeneration. It is the challenger of both doctors and aging patients alike to identify those people who are at a high risk of vision loss. Recent research and new medical therapy have resulted in dramatic clinical breakthroughs which have been shown to slow the progression of vision loss in some individuals and in others even resulted in recovery of vision. With proper screening and early treatment it may be possible to prevent some vision loss essential to continue reading, driving, cooking, watching television, and other daily activities.

What is Macular Degeneration?

Macular degeneration is a disease which affects the macula, the portion of the retina (tissue in the back of the eye) which is responsible for the majority of our central vision. There are two forms of macular degeneration, wet and dry. Dry macular degeneration is the more common form, affecting approximately 90% of those with the disease. Disease progression is typically slow, over several years. Many patients may be unaware of this condition until they are informed by their eye doctor. Wet macular degeneration, on the other hand, typically results in a more rapid loss of vision. Vision loss is usually the result of bleeding or scarring into the back of the eye. Patients typically notice a distortion and/or loss of central vision. Recent studies suggest that prompt evaluation and treatment for wet macular degeneration can result in better visual outcomes.

How is Macular Degeneration Treated?

There have been several advancements in the treatment of macular degeneration in the last several years. The goal for most patients with dry macular degeneration is to prevent further progression of this condition. This is accomplished by monitoring vision at home and routine eye evaluations with an ophthalmologist or retina specialist. In addition, many patients are now recommended to take vitamin supplements specifically formulated for patients with macular degeneration. Prior to starting any vitamin therapy, it is important to speak with your doctor as some of these vitamins may have side effects or interact with your current medications. Additionally, there have been several new treatments which are now used for the treatment of patients with wet macular degeneration. These include injections of Lucentis, Macugen, and off-label use of Avastin. Studies have shown these medications to be very effective at slowing the progression of this potentially devastating disease. Many of these therapies require monthly treatment by a retinal specialist until stabilization of the disease is achieved. These treatments are now able to help many people who previously had few options and frequently went blind. The ability to restore vision and prevent blindness has been dramatically improved with these recent advancements.

In a society where patients are living longer and healthier lives, it is important to understand and treat the conditions which are more prevalent with age, such as macular degeneration. If untreated, it may progress to the point that daily activities, such as reading and driving are impaired. Regular examinations by an ophthalmologist or retina specialist and early treatment when indicated can help to maintain a good level of vision and active enjoyable lifestyle.

The Benefits of Joining a Senior Center

Did you know that there are 15,000 senior centers across the country, serving close to 10 million older adults each year?

That's more senior centers than there are Starbucks in this country!

Senior centers are designated as community focal points through the Older Americans Act.

The National Institute of Senior Centers defines a senior center as a Place where “older adults come together for services and activities that Reflect their experience and skills, respond to their diverse needs and interests, enhance their dignity, support their independence, and encourage their involvement in and with the center and the community.”

Not only do senior centers offer helpful resources to older adults, they serve the entire community with information on aging, support for family caregivers, and developments of innovative approaches to addressing aging issues.

Senior centers offer a multitude of programs and services to improve the Quality of life of people from the baby boomer generation to centenarians. “Typical programs”, says Carol Zur, Director of Senior Services, Howell Township Senior Citizens Center, “include free health screenings and exercise classes such as aerobics, t'ai chi, yoga, swimming, line dancing, and arthritis management.” Opportunities to learn about all sorts of senior related health, legal, medical insurance, and prescription medication issues are offered.

While senior centers typically provide nutrition, recreation, social and educational services, and comprehensive information and referrals, many centers are adding new programs such as fitness activities and internet training to meet the needs and interests of the new generation of seniors.

Socialization is key to preventing feelings of isolation and to providing recreational, physical, and mental stimulation, as well as emotional support. Carol Zur says “many centers offer a daily congregate and homebound meal program, parties, intergenerational activities, and all sorts of volunteer and community service opportunities.”

Common Services Offered at Many Senior Centers

Health and wellness programs

Arts and humanities

Intergenerational programs

Employment assistance

Community action opportunities

Social networking opportunities

Transportation services

Volunteer opportunities

Educational opportunities

Information and referral

Financial assistance

Meal and nutrition programs

Leisure travel

Source: www.ncoa.org

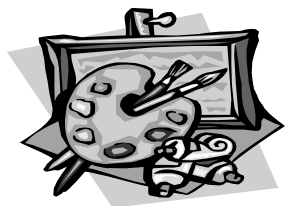
Monmouth County Senior Centers

*Asbury Park Senior Center
Bayshore Senior Day Center
Eatontown Community Center
Freehold Township Senior Center*

*Highlands Community Center
Howell Senior Center
Keyport Senior Center
Long Branch Senior Center
Marlboro Community Center*

*Manalapan Senior Center
Middletown Senior Center
Neptune Township Senior
Red Bank Senior Center*

2007 Senior Citizen Art Contest and Exhibition



The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disability and Veterans' Interment Affairs are again sponsoring the Senior Citizen Art Contest and Exhibition. The 2007 Monmouth County Art Contest and Exhibition will be held at the Monmouth County Central Library, 125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, New Jersey. The art show viewing will run from Thursday, July 5, through Tuesday, July 31, 2007. The judging of the artwork will be Thursday, June 28, 2007.

Anyone interested in entering the Art Contest and Exhibition must be a resident of Monmouth County and be age 60 or over. There will be two artist classifications: professional and non-professional. The categories that will be judged by each artist classification are: acrylic, craft (original, one-of-a-kind creations only), digital imagery, drawing (pencil, pen, ink, graphite), mixed media, oil, pastel, photography, print, sculpture, and watercolor. Entries winning first place will automatically advance to the State competition.

Anyone interested in entering Monmouth County's 2007 Senior Citizen Art Contest and Exhibition should **contact Joni Baron at the Office on Aging at 732-683-8919** with your name, telephone number, and address. Ms. Baron will send you a packet that will include an application, rules and regulations, directions to the library, and important dates. The completed application is to be returned to Joni Baron no later than Thursday, June 21, 2007.

This is an exciting event which provides all artists an opportunity to display their artistic talent. So please join us in making this the best year ever!

*SCAN Learning Center
Comes to Applewood Estates
in Western Monmouth!*

Applewood Estates in Freehold is now a Satellite Campus of the SCAN Learning Center.

*Please join us for a RECEPTION TEA
Friday, May 18th at 2:00pm*



Light Refreshments
APPLEWOOD ESTATES
*One Applewood Drive
Freehold, NJ*

Join the celebration! Learn more about SCAN & register for a class

Monmouth County Office on Aging
P.O. Box 1255
21 Main and Court Center
Freehold, NJ 07728

