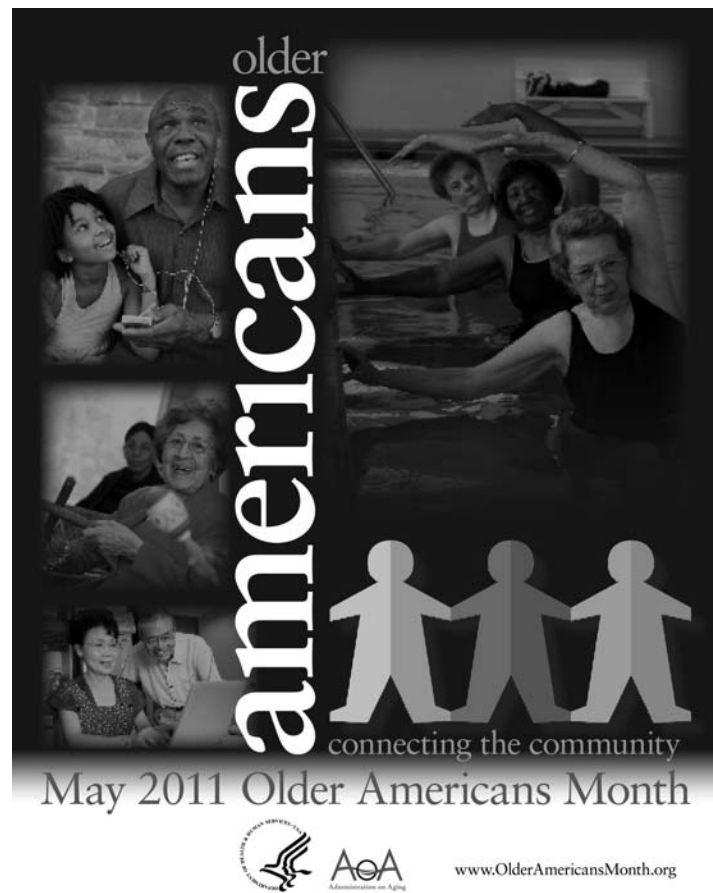


## May is Older Americans Month



Each year the Administration on Aging (AoA) issues a theme for Older Americans Month to assist the National Aging Services Network of state, tribal, area agencies on aging, and community services providers plan for activities that take place in May and throughout the year. The theme of this year's celebration – Older Americans: Connecting the Community – pays homage to the many ways in which older adults bring inspiration and continuity to the fabric of our communities. It also highlights the many ways technology is helping older Americans live longer, healthier and more engaged lives. Celebrate Older Americans month this year by becoming engaged in your community! To learn about volunteer opportunities in your community, call the I&A specialists at 732-431-7450.

### Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services

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Freehold, New Jersey 07728

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# NEWSLINES

THE DIVISION ON AGING, DISABILITIES AND VETERANS SERVICES  
SPRING EDITION, 2011



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732.431.7450

www.visitmonmouth.com/aging

## Information and Assistance – I&A



The Information & Assistance Specialists: Seated left to right, Joan Vawter, Robin Robinson Standing, Sandra Wiater

By Tom Pivinski

If you're an older person or are caring for an older person, there are many services in Monmouth County to help you. However, finding the right resource to meet your needs can be frustrating and complicated if you don't know who to call. If you need help understanding the maze of services, contact the Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services and speak with our Information and Assistance (I&A) personnel. The three most helpful voices you will hear belong to Robin Robinson, Joan Vawter, and Sandra Wiater.

From 8:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, these trained, professional women will direct you to an appropriate agency or contact the agency on your behalf; arrange home visits if you have intensive needs; follow up to make sure that you have received the help you need.

They provide Information and Assistance for Monmouth County Senior services including: Housing, Transportation, Home Care, Chore services, Counseling, Employment, Health care, Home repairs, Legal services, Nutrition programs, Caregiver Issues, Social Security Issues, Long Term Care Facilities, Utility Assistance, Medicare Issues, Assisted and Supportive Living Facilities.

In preparation for this article I asked each of the I&A workers to tell me about their experiences in this important position, and I thought I would give you a bird's eye view of just who these dedicated people are and what they do.

Robin Robinson noted that I&A "Enables seniors to have a voice and to have someone who listens to them." Sandra Wiater agreed and said that "Being able to point seniors in the right direction is very satisfying. Many times they have already bounced around from

agency to agency and by the time they reach us, they are frustrated and sometimes angry. Helping them focus on their immediate needs and finding out what programs they are eligible for is what we in I&A do best."

Joan Vawter, who is married to a "wonderful man who cooks, and has been blessed with an amazing daughter" noted that, "We (I&A) are the starting point for folks trying to find help. So often we hear that we are the first people they have spoken to who have really helped them."

Working in I&A also has its humorous and tender moments. One senior called around Thanksgiving time asking for instructions on how to baste a *continued on page 2*

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**Caregiver Tip: Communicating with Those with Dementia**

Caring for someone with dementia can be fraught with difficulties. As their cognitive ability changes, we need to adapt the way we communicate and interact with them. Patience and understanding are key. Try to be a good listener and understand what is being said. Look them in the eye. If they are having trouble communicating, reassure them that it is okay and give them time to explain what it is they are

trying to say. Avoid correcting them if they say something that is wrong; it usually only makes matters worse. If they have difficulty finding the correct word, try guessing the right one. Sometimes the emotions expressed are more important than the words. Listen for the feelings behind the words. If they sound anxious or frightened and are looking for their mother, perhaps what they really need is to be reassured that they

are safe and secure – qualities associated with their mother.

Communicating with your loved one is important and nourishing to them even if they lose the ability to respond. Remember that the **Alzheimer's Association** is a valuable resource available to you and offers support groups as well as education and referrals. Their toll free number is 1-800-883-1180.

**Greeting Cards from The White House**

If a senior citizen is 80 years of age or older, or has been married for more than 50 years, The White House can send a greeting card to the person. The request has to be in writing one month in advance of the occasion.

When sending the request please include:

- Date of Birth of the person to be honored, or Number of years married
- Name/names of who the persons are

- Address of the individual to whom the card is to be sent
- Telephone number of the person who is requesting the card

The request should be sent to:

The White House Executive Office  
Greetings Office  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500



**Information and Assistance – I&A** *continued from page 1*

turkey. Another wondered if someone could come over and paint chairs or change a light bulb. A retired gentleman called to say thank you to an I&A worker for all the information that had been sent to him and wondered if they could go out on a date. Recently, a walk-in client who was being cared for by Robin asked to see me and proceeded to regale me with wonderful examples of how Robin had helped her in professional and practical ways. She even suggested I give Robin a raise!

Joan summed up what it is like to be

an I&A worker. “Something I enjoy a lot is helping seniors who are not aware of their eligibility for services. One area especially is with their outrageous heating bills because millions of dollars have been set aside thru the LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance) program to help them.

“Although there is NOT always a solution to every problem, trying to find answers to questions people ask us and doing research on possible solutions to problems is rewarding,” says Sandra. “It’s almost like being a “reference librarian” (which I wanted

to be) and sometimes being a detective, nurse and social worker all rolled into one. Being a good listener is a requirement for a good I&A worker, being patient and kind, and knowing what resources are available.”

All three of our I&A workers are dedicated to helping people; they bring their unique personalities to their work and treat all callers with respect by offering understanding and providing insights that make a huge difference in their lives. If you are in need of assistance, call **732-431-7450** and experience their care first hand.



**Rough Up Your Diet** *From an article printed by the National Institutes of Health*



Everyone knows that fiber is good for you. But if you are like many Americans, you don't get enough. In fact, most of us get less than half the recommended amount of fiber each day.

Fiber can relieve constipation and normalize your bowel movements, and some studies have found that high-fiber diets might also help with weight loss and reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease. “There is evidence that high dietary fiber consumption lowers ‘bad’ cholesterol concentrations in the blood and reduces the risk for developing coronary artery disease, stroke and high blood pressure,” says Dr. Somdat Mahabir, a nutrition and disease expert with NIH's National Cancer Institute. Fiber may also lessen the risk for type 2 diabetes, the most common form of diabetes. Fiber in the intestines can slow the absorption of sugar, which helps

prevent blood sugar from spiking.

Different types of fiber might affect your health in different ways. Soluble fiber may help to lower blood sugar and cholesterol. It's found in oat bran, beans, peas and most fruits. Insoluble fiber is often used to treat or prevent constipation and diverticular disease, which affects the large intestine, or colon. Insoluble fiber is found in wheat bran and some vegetables. Tips to get more fiber in your diet include:

- Bulk up your breakfast. Choose a high-fiber cereal (5 or more grams per serving) or make a bowl of oatmeal and top it with nuts and fruit.
- Switch to whole grains. Look for bread that lists whole-grain flour as the first ingredient. Experiment with barley, wild or brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat pasta and bulgur.
- Add a vegetable. Keep a bag of frozen

mixed vegetables, spinach or broccoli florets for a quick addition to any pasta sauce or rice dish. Start dinner with a tossed salad.

- Don't forget legumes. Try peas, different kinds of beans (pinto, kidney, lima, navy and garbanzo) and lentils.
- Snack on fruit, nuts and seeds. Grab a piece of fruit such as an apple, pear or banana. Keep some almonds, sunflower seeds and pistachios handy.
- Low-fat popcorn or sliced vegetables and hummus also make a great snack.

Increase your fiber intake gradually, so your body can get used to it. Adding fiber slowly helps you avoid gas, bloating and cramps. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables whole grains and nuts to add a mix of different fibers and a wide range of nutrients to your diet. A fiber-rich diet can help your health in many ways.



**Alerts and Happenings!**

**Be Ready!**

Summer is approaching and with it comes the hurricane season. New Jersey's Special Needs Registry for Disasters is the program that will help those who may have difficulty during an evacuation because of physical or other limitations, or lack of transportation. People with special needs are strongly encouraged to register electronically by accessing the website [www.registerready.nj.gov](http://www.registerready.nj.gov).

Other means of registering are by calling New Jersey's toll-free 2-1-1 telephone service. This service will register people, offer free translation, and provide TTY services for the hearing-impaired. Paper registration forms are available from the county Office of Emergency Management, 300 Halls Mills Road, Freehold, NJ 07728. Information entered into REGISTER READY is strictly confidential and is not available to the public.

**Office on Aging Public Hearing**

The Monmouth County Office on Aging and its Advisory Council will hold a public hearing for the purposes of affording consumers the opportunity to obtain information and to comment on the services provided to senior citizens under the Monmouth County Area Plan Contract with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

The hearing will be held on Wednesday, June 15, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. at the county Agricultural Building, 4000 Kozloski Road, Freehold, NJ 07728. Information gathered during the public hearing will provide data and insight to the Office on Aging on those issues most in need of advocacy and funding. Persons requesting additional information should contact the Monmouth County Office on Aging at **732-431-7450 or 1-877-222-3737**.