

1941 SOUTH 42ND STREET
SUITE 502
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68105

STAFF

Sue FredricksExecutive Director
Nicole Meyer.....Program Coordinator
Rachel SchlesselmanClient Resource
Coordinator
Deb Storvedt.....Administrative
Assistant
Linda HoughtalingReceptionist

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HOURS

MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:30-4:30

OUR MISSION

TO SIMPLIFY THE LIVES OF
SENIORS BY ENABLING THEM TO
MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS
REGARDING THEIR BENEFITS



— VOLUNTEERS —
ASSISTING SENIORS

VOLUME 1

JULY 2009

Medicare News by Sue Fredricks

Some of you may have already heard that the nation's top drug manufacturers have agreed to at least a 50 percent discount for most Medicare beneficiaries for brand-name medicines purchased in the "doughnut hole". "Under the proposed plan, pharmaceutical companies will provide a 50 percent discount to most beneficiaries on brand-name medicines covered by a patient's Part D plan when purchased in the coverage gap," states PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America)

President and CEO Billy Tauzin. "In addition, the entire negotiated price of the Part D covered medicine purchased in the coverage would count toward the beneficiary's out-of-pocket costs, thus



lowering their total out-of-pocket spending."

In a statement issued by Joe Baker, president of the Medicare Rights Center (MRC), "A discount of at least 50 percent in the coverage gap will mean that

more older adults and people with disabilities will be able to continue taking their medicine as prescribed by their doctor instead of choosing which drug they can 'afford' to take, a choice that can endanger the lives of people with diabetes and heart ailments, and other chronic conditions." Many of you can relate to Baker's statement, as you have counseled individuals who are faced with these choices. If this plan reaches fruition, it will be a great help to the beneficiaries we see here at VAS.

Homestead Exemption by Nicole Meyer

A big thank you to all of this year's Homestead Exemption volunteers! VAS provided nearly forty volunteers to assist in the twenty events across Omaha and Elkhorn. Your hard work has not gone

unnoticed!

The Douglas County Assessor's Office would like to personally thank all those who participated at the 2009 events. On August 13, the Assessor's office will be hosting an

appreciation luncheon at Old Country Buffett on 75th and Dodge at 2:00 p.m.

This year we were able to assist over 2400 individuals in filing for their exemption.

Volunteer Corner by Alice Pauley



When I joined VAS (then VIE), I had not planned to be a conservator. Sandy said they needed conservators so I said O.K. My first appointment was August 2001.

I was so lucky to get this client because she was so sweet. She was handicapped and her only relative was a sister in Arizona. In a short time I became her friend as well as conservator, but being a friend to your client is not

always positive or desirable.

Over the years I have had five clients all with very different personalities and problems. In one case, a nursing home held over \$1000 of my client's funds and I had to be very firm and persistent with them to get them to turn over their funds to me.

Another client had an abandoned bank account and I had to deal with the state to

recover the funds.

My clients have not been time consuming. I spend from one to three hours a month on cases depending on whether there is a court date or I have to buy some clothes.

You cannot be a friend to all of them but I never avoid a closer relationship if that person has a need or desire for a kind, caring friend.

"Sure I'm for helping the elderly. I'm going to be old myself someday. "

-Lillian Carter, Jimmy Carter's mother at age 85

Office Notes by Deb Stortvedt

You may have noticed a new face at the front desk. Gladys, one of our newest volunteers, comes to us from the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, where she performed billing tasks. She will be answering phones and hounding volunteers to sign in before their shifts! Welcome, Gladys! Gladys will be taking

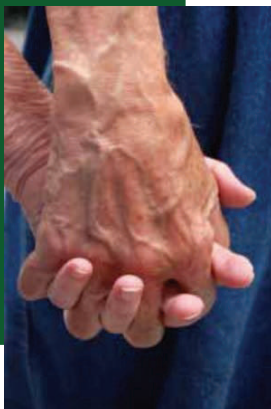
over Lorraine's shift of Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. I will now be in the office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and Linda will be here all day on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

We are saddened to report that Lorraine will be taking a leave of absence from VAS.

Lorraine has been with VAS since 2007 and she will be missed. We wish Lorraine luck in her future endeavors.

Just a reminder, please remember to turn in your volunteer activity reports by the first Monday of the month. This can emailed to volunteer@vie.omhcoxml.com or mailed to the office.

Ask a SHIP Expert by Rachel Schlesselman



Q: Does Medicare cover cataract surgery?

A: While Medicare does not generally cover eye care, it will cover cataract surgery when medically necessary.

Additionally, Medicare will cover one pair of prescription eye glasses following the cataract surgery.

Q: Does Medicare cover a second opinion for recommended surgeries?

A: Yes, because your doctor recommended surgery, or any major procedure, Medicare will cover a second opinion. If the second opinion differs from the first, Medicare will even cover a third opinion.

From the Director's Desk by Sue Fredricks

June proved to be a busy month. VAS helped counsel a group of retirees who had lost their employer retiree health coverage and had only 63 days to find a supplement, a drug plan or an Advantage plan



before they lost their guarantee issue rights. I want to thank all of the volunteers that have spent extra time in the office to counsel these retirees and help them understand the options available to them.

We are ready to launch our new Volunteer Court Auditor program. VAS volunteers will be reviewing the annual accounting forms submitted to the court by conservators. We

have six volunteers trained to date and the first team of VAS Volunteer Auditors started on June 30th. We will be scheduling another 2-hour training session at the office in late July, if you are interested in volunteering for this program, please call the office for more information on the program.

I hope to see all of you at the Annual Dinner on July 29 at Spaghetti Works in Ralston!

Annual Volunteer Dinner by Nicole Meyer

Each year VAS chooses to recognize our volunteers with a special dinner and awards ceremony to honor their hard work and commitment to the VAS mission.

This year's dinner will be on Wednesday, July 29 from 6-8pm at the Spaghetti Works in Ralston.

Awards will be given to recognize volunteers who have gone above and beyond in their areas of specialty. Areas include: Outstanding Medicare/SHIP Counselor, Conservator, Homestead Volunteer, Legal Volunteer, and New Volunteer.

The Antonson Award, VAS's

most prestigious award, will be chosen by VAS staff. The award was named after Lo'Raine Antonson, a dedicated VAS volunteer who died in June 2005. Previous Antonson award recipients were Joyce Mack, Bill Hamilton, and Marian Freberg.

***“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”
-Margaret Mead***

Volunteer Opportunities

We are looking to expand our conservator program and are in need of organized individuals interested in becoming a court-appointed volunteer.

A conservator interviews referred clients and determines if client are eligible to receive services,

prepares and files with the court a complete inventory of the person's property, keeps an accurate record of the administration of the property, accounts to the court for the administration of the property when required to do so, and are

prepared to submit any and all property to a physical inspection at any time.




Please contact Nicole at **Conservators manage the finances of others seniors.** if you are interested in becoming a conservator.

Volunteers Assisting Seniors

The Center Mall
 1941 South 42nd Street
 Suite 502
 Omaha, NE 68105
 Phone: 402-444-6617
 Fax: 402-546-0886
 E-mail: nmeyer@vie.omhcoxmail.com

Retirees Sharing the Experiences of a Lifetime

JULY 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 6-8:30pm Guard/Conserv Class	2	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4  Happy 4th!
6 10-12 Charlie	7 9-12 Dave C.	8 12-4 Gerry F. 1-4 Harvey 12-4 Marian	9 9-3 Jim B. 9-12 Rick S. 11-4 Gladys	10 10-3 Charlie	11
13 10-2 Charlie	14 11-4 Gladys	15 12-4 Marian F. 12-4 Gerry F. 1-4 Harvey	16 9-3 Jim B. 9-12 Rick S. 11-4 Gladys	17 11:30-2:30 Ask An Attorney	18
20	21 11-4 Gladys	22 12-4 Marian F. 12-4 Gerry F. 1-4 Harvey	23 9-3 Jim B. 11-4 Gladys	24 10-2 Charlie	25
27	28 11-4 Gladys	29 12-4 Marian F. 12-4 Gerry F. 1-4 Harvey 6-8 Volunteer Dinner	30 9-3 Jim B. 9-12 Rick S. 11-4 Gladys	31	