

The Serenity Connection

Caring for Your Loved Ones in Greater Victoria

CAREGIVER PROFILE



Our caregivers are totally committed, highly qualified and carefully selected individuals who are personally and thoroughly screened, bonded and insured.

Most importantly our caregivers are dependable and extraordinarily caring of others. In addition to their previous experience, our caregivers receive continuous training that includes a specialized curriculum exclusive to Serenity Home Care that results in them becoming Certified Companion Aides™. These highly qualified and trained caregivers are ready to help you and your loved ones with a variety of daily activities such as:

- Caring companionship
- Meal planning and preparation
- Incidental transportation
- Running errands
- Light housekeeping
- Medication reminders
- Assistance with bathing and grooming
- Assistance with bill paying
- Information and referral services

Our personalized and affordable services are available 7 days a week and can range from a few hours a day to 24 hour and live in care.



Welcome to the Summer 2012 Serenity Connection

Congratulations to “Caregiver of the Season”, Sue Gooding!

Sue gushes fondness for her “beautiful, amazing, golden ladies”—the three clients she works with regularly—98-year-old Ruth, 94-year-old Alva, and the youngster of the trio, 85-year-old Claire. While Sue provides understanding, companionship and support to meet the unique needs of each client, they provide stories, experience and gratitude that enrich her life in the same profound way.

Sue spends about 4 or 5 hours a day, 6 days a week with Alva—helping her out of bed, helping her bathe, cooking her meals, exercising. Currently, they walk up and down the hallway. Sue explains, “We’re in training.” The goal is a trip to Beacon Hill Park to visit the familiar places Alva used to go regularly before medical set backs left her lying in bed for months. With the help of Sue, and other healthcare professionals, Alva’s come a long way from giving up on life.

They also listen to books on CD—the Narnia Chronicles, Lord of the Rings—share stories, keep company, all the while building a relationship of deep respect and appreciation. With gratitude Alva tells Sue “When I hear your voice in the morning, it’s a day worth living.”

Ruth is fiercely independent. It’s taken time to build trust. Trust that Sue’s not trying to take her independence away, but rather support her in keeping it.

Now, Ruth looks forward to the Wednesday outings they plan: a drive to the hotel where Ruth worked as a housekeeper for 30 years; a trip to Thrifty Foods; afternoon tea; help writing a letter to a friend (a friendship that spans over ninety years!).

Claire, a green thumb who loves her garden, still lives in the same house she’s lived for over forty years. Unfortunately, Claire’s body doesn’t let her garden in the same way she used to, but with Sue’s help she can.

Whether Sue’s helping her “beautiful, amazing, golden ladies” shop, cook, bathe, garden, or whatever other goals they have, she treasures their time together and the friendships they build. Thanks for the caring work you do, Sue!

Serenity Home Care
www.serenityhomecare.ca



**Murray Tough
Kathy Tough**

Owners,
Serenity Home Care

IN THIS ISSUE:

CAREGIVER OF THE SEASON	1
CAREGIVER PROFILE	1
FINANCE/CONSUMER: Your Grown Children and Estate Plans	2
ROTATING TOPIC: Ten Free Activities For Seniors	2-3
HEALTH & LIFESTYLES: Hospitalizing A Loved One With Dementia	3
SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS: A Caregiver Bill Of Rights	4



FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES

Talk to Your Grown Children About Estate Plans

What type of financial legacy would you like to leave to your adult children? Whatever you have in mind, share it with them. Make sure they understand your estate plan so you can avoid potential confusion, hard feelings and family squabbles when it's time to settle your affairs.

Of course, it may not be easy to discuss estate planning with your children. Even though they're adults, they may feel uncomfortable discussing topics dealing with your death. In fact, surveys have shown that fewer than one in three families have had meaningful conversations about estate planning.

Once you've decided to bring up estate planning with your children, how should you go about it? Consider easing into the subject by talking about matters that may not be so emotionally charged. For example, discuss your grandchildren's post-secondary education and how you'd like to help pay for it. Or talk about a charity you support, and mention that you're planning to remember it in the future.

Once you've broken the ice, it will be easier to move into the finer details of your estate plan. Tell your children what's in your will, who the executor is, who helped prepare it and where a copy can be found. Better still, give them a copy.

You may even want to discuss these matters with your children before you draw up or amend your will, to make it easier to meet their wishes and expectations. For example, find out which of your children might be interested in the family home or cottage, or who has a special attachment to certain family heirlooms, before you decide how to distribute property. This will help ensure even and fair distribution of your assets.

If you intend to use a trust or other vehicle to transfer assets, explain the advantages with the help of your financial advisor. For example, your intention might be to better manage taxation of your estate, provide longer-lasting benefits to your heirs or manage potential legal complications.

It's also important to discuss how your affairs should be managed if you become incapacitated. You should prepare powers of attorney for financial matters and personal care. That means deciding who will act on your behalf if you can't make financial or medical decisions. If you pick one of your children as your representative, explain the choice to your other children.

And always make sure your will and other elements of your estate plan are up to date. Your will should take into account new family births, marriages, divorces, remarriages and deaths. Review your will at least once a year to make sure it reflects your wishes and any developments that might call for changes in beneficiaries or terms. And don't forget to review the beneficiaries named in insurance policies and financial accounts.

When all of these elements are in place, everybody benefits. Plus, you'll avoid the estate planning problems that the unexpected can bring. Your financial advisor can help arrange professional legal and tax assistance to help develop and execute your plan.

*Submitted by Barbara Armstrong,
Financial Advisor with Edward Jones in
Victoria BC*



ROTATING TOPIC

Ten Great Free Activities For Seniors

Who doesn't like free activities? Whether you're saving for retirement, living on a fixed income, or just looking for new ways to be smart about how you spend your money, consider the following 10 ways that you can trim your entertainment budget and actually increase your fun.

Gallery openings and art walks

Attend art gallery openings, free activities which often include wine, hors d'oeuvres,

and a chance to meet the artists and gallery owners. Many communities also host monthly "art walks," which allow you to join other art lovers to tour a number of local galleries on the same evening.

Open mic nights

Check out local coffee houses and pubs that regularly provide an open microphone and performance venue to amateur and aspiring musicians. At these free activities you can support local artists and hear some of the freshest sounds around—or maybe even sign up and share your own musical, comedy, or poetry talents.

Free activities at museums

Many museums offer free admission at least one day or night each week. Same art, same exhibits, but no admission fees.

Volunteer to usher

By volunteering to pass out programs and helping the paying customers find their seats, you will receive free admission to the performance.

Literary readings

When authors go on tour to promote their books, they may be heading to a bookstore near you. Check your local newspaper, public library, and bookstores for free activities like readings, where you'll have a chance to meet the authors and sample their new work.

Free lectures and community events

Colleges and universities, especially those that receive public funding, are great community resources for free activities, or events and services at little or no cost. Community and nonprofit organizations also host many free activities. Check libraries, newspaper listings, and neighborhood bulletin boards for schedules.

Free lunchtime concerts

During nice weather, many communities offer free lunchtime concerts in pleasant locations where there is a high concentration of office workers and a lot of pedestrian traffic. For these free activities,

Continued on page 3 ►



SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

Hospitalizing a Loved One with Dementia: “First Steps” — #1 in Dementia Series

Whether it's for a planned procedure or a medical crisis, hospitalization can be chaotic and confusing for both family caregivers and a patient with dementia.

Hospital admission is the process of getting the patient set up for a room and bed, and clinically with the right medical orders and care plan. The admissions desk takes care of the first part: paperwork regarding insurance, contact information, and internal hospital planning.

The clinical admission is then done by the hospital doctors. This includes taking the patient's history and conducting a physical exam. Next, orders for monitoring and treatment are written based on the patient's needs. If your loved one begins in the emergency room, these evaluations will first be done there. But if an overnight admission to the hospital is necessary, the steps will be repeated, because the hospital itself has a different structure and staff, as well as a longer-term treatment vision than the emergency room. Although this process can seem confusing and redundant, think of it as dealing with two separate entities.

To help get your loved one's hospital stay off to the best start, take these steps during the admissions process:

1. Explain the person's dementia status

Make sure it's clearly marked in your loved one's patient chart that he or she has dementia as well as the stage of dementia. It can also be helpful to explain what your loved one can usually do and not do for himself or herself.

2. Bring a summary of ongoing medical conditions

Be sure to make an up-to-date list of all of your loved one's conditions, which you can give to medical personnel. Hospital doctors need to understand which other conditions and treatments might affect care.

3. Bring all medications the person has been taking

An up-to-date list (including the drug's name, purpose, dosage, and timing of

doses) is important, but much better is to bring the actual containers with the medications. Don't forget any regularly used over-the-counter meds, herbals, or supplements.

4. Stay available to give needed info

Especially throughout the admission process, but also afterwards, it's best for a patient with dementia to have a caregiver (or other person familiar with his or her case) around at all times to provide an accurate history and to answer hospital staff questions.

5. Make clear who the medical decision makers are, and specify a point of contact for the hospital

Be sure to let staff know which family member has been helping to make medical decisions. If your loved one has paperwork related to a durable power of attorney for healthcare, an advance directive, or a living will, bring copies to the hospital staff.

If your loved one has never filled out paperwork designating a durable power of attorney for health care, in British Columbia the default surrogate decision-maker is the legal spouse. If there's no spouse, it's the next of kin, usually adult children or siblings. Especially when there's no paperwork on hand, specifying which family member has been taking on the medical-decision support role is helpful. Streamline the process—and avoid dangerous crossed wires or missed information—by identifying one spokesperson.

6. Let hospital staff know what should be done in the event of a life-threatening medical emergency

Most hospital doctors will check at admission to see if a person prefers to be “DNR,” or “do-not-resuscitate.” This means that if the heart stops, the person does not want to have CPR. (The alternative is usually to be “Full Code,” which means that CPR, defibrillation, and breathing machines can be used if needed to revive a person.) If you have any other paperwork providing guidance about medical care, such as an advance directive, living will, or POLST form, be sure to give a copy to hospital staff.

First of an 8-part series by Leslie Kernisan, M.D. and Paula Spencer Scott, Caring.com.

www.senioritylifecare.com/caring-checklist/

Free Activities, continued from page 2

pack a picnic or a brown bag lunch, grab a friend, and tap your feet to some good music while you enjoy the sunshine.

Join a book club or discussion group

Whether you organize your own with a small group of friends, discover an established group through your local library or bookstore, or plug into a national movement like the Socrates cafés, book clubs and discussion groups are free activities that offer a great way to exchange ideas and gain new insights.

Be a tourist at home

We all establish routines and patterns, get into ruts, and eventually see only a narrow slice of our own community. Make a conscious effort to step off your usual path, and take a day to explore a neighborhood or nearby attraction that you have never visited or haven't seen lately. You may find a wealth of free activities, close to home.

Go to the library

Still the single greatest resource in almost any community, the public library offers a rich collection of books and magazines, research and reference materials, and free Internet access. Whether you just drop in to check out a book you can read on the bus, attend a public meeting about a critical local issue, or spend a rainy afternoon surfing the Web, your local library is a great place to find free activities.

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<http://seniorliving.about.com/od/entertainmentrecreation/a/free-activities-for-older-adults.htm>



SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

A Caregiver Bill of Rights...

- To take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my loved one.
- To seek help from others even though my loved ones may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- To maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can for this person, and I have the right to do some things just for myself.
- To get angry, be depressed, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.
- To reject any attempts by my loved one (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt, and/or depression.
- To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance for what I do, from my loved ones, for as long as I offer these qualities in return
- To take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my loved one.
- To protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my loved one no longer need my full-time help.
- To expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, similar strides will be made towards aiding and supporting caregivers.

Jo Horn
www.caregiver.com

www.caregiver.com/articles/caregiver/caregiver_bill_of_rights.htm

When to Ask for Help

Serenity Home Care presents a free seminar for caregivers and for people who are concerned that someone they love may need care. Topics include:

- Top 10 indicators that someone needs help.
- Signs of caregiver burnout
- Tips for being a caregiver

August 21, 10:00 a.m. James Bay United Church, 511 Michigan St. September 25, Call for time and location.