

# outside in

## BRINGING THE OUTSIDE WORLD IN FOR SENIORS IN OUR COMMUNITY

**OUR MISSION:** "Using primarily volunteers, PeopleCare will assist and support the homebound elderly by providing socialization, emotional support and access to service providers where no one is denied services."

### In This Issue

Automobile Safety and the Aging Driver	<b>1</b>
Live a Longer / Healthier Life	<b>2</b>
Commodity Supplemental Food Program	<b>3</b>
PeopleCare Funding Drive	<b>4</b>
Technology and Senior Independence	<b>5</b>
Pros & Cons of Reverse Mortgages	<b>6</b>
Mind Body Medicine	<b>6</b>
Brain and Body Health	<b>7</b>
Food Freshness- Understanding Food Expiration Dates	<b>8</b>

"BECOME THE  
CHANGE YOU  
WANT TO SEE"

- OPRAH WINFREY

## Automobile Safety and the Aging Driver

Aging is inevitable - it happens to everybody. But growing older does not have to mean giving up an active life. While aging does impose physical limitations, many people achieved their greatest success when they were over 60.

Traffic safety is vital for drivers of all ages, but older drivers experience physical changes that can affect driving ability - changes in vision, reaction time, and flexibility. Yet while older drivers as a group do have more crashes than people in their 40's, their individual safety records differ as much as those of any other group. Here are some considerations about how to become an older and wiser driver.

### Vision:

As everyone over 40 knows, eyes change with age, and not

usually for the better. Physically, the eye's lens loses the ability to change focus quickly, peripheral vision narrows, and the retina

becomes less sensitive to light. A driver aged 60 needs three times as much light to see as a teenager, and will take more than twice as long to adjust to a change from light to darkness. Simply put, vision is crucial to safe driving.

- Get regular eye exams. See a doctor at least every two years and more often if your eyes are changing rapidly.
- If you have trouble with night vision or glare, limit driving to daytime hours.
- Turn your head frequently to compensate

for diminished peripheral vision.

- Keep lights, mirrors and windshields clean.
- Add a large rearview mirror to increase the range of visibility.



- Keep your eyes up – look at the road ahead to see trouble before you reach it.

### Cognition:

While older minds are just as sharp as younger ones, and even keener in some ways, they react more slowly. Age lengthens the time it takes the brain to process information and also makes it harder to ignore distractions. Here are some suggestions:

- Leave more room between your vehicle and the car ahead of you, so you'll have plenty of time to stop.

## Safety and the Aging Driver *cont.*

- Avoid left turns if you are uncomfortable making them. You can sometimes make three right turns to avoid having to make a left.
- Eliminate distractions, such as the radio or cell phone.
- Plan and go over your route ahead of time, so you won't reach an intersection and have to make a last-minute decision about which way to turn.
- If freeways are confusing or feel too fast-moving, use side roads. Also, if rush hour is stressful, limit your driving to slower times of the day.

### Fitness:

- Driving is a physical activity, and a driver who gets no physical exercise may not have the strength, flexibility and coordination to operate a vehicle safely. Taking a brisk walk every day can help make you a safer driver.
- Stay physically fit. Walk for at least 20 minutes five times a week, or the equivalent. Gardening, golf, tennis and other sports can help keep you in good shape.
  - Stay mentally active. Using your problem-solving skills in non-driving ways can help mental flexibility.

### Medication:

Medications can interfere with driving by making the driver drowsy or distracted. This includes many over-the-counter medications, such as decongestants or cold remedies. Some of the worst offenders include tranquilizers, pain pills, sleep medicines, antidepressants, cough medicines, antihistamines, and decongestants.

- Read the fine print. If a medication you're taking is labeled "Do not use

while operating heavy machinery," let someone else drive.

- Inform your doctor about what nonprescription medication you are taking which can interact with other prescription drugs you are taking.
- Discuss the side effects of medications you are taking with your pharmacist and check with your doctor before



stopping any medication.

- Avoid driving when first starting a new medication and if it makes you feel sleepy or disoriented, don't drive.

### When to Stop:

A driver's chronological age is not a good predictor of driving ability. What counts on the road is performance. Here are signs of diminished capacity for driving safely:

- Having a series of minor accidents or near misses, or inability to read road signs.
- Having wandering thoughts or being unable to concentrate.
- Having other drivers honk at you frequently or being spoken to about your driving by police, family, and friends.

Being a safe driver means more than avoiding crashes. It means paying attention to road conditions and being aware of your own changing abilities. Just a few simple adjustments, such as limiting your driving to certain times or adding an extra-wide mirror, can help protect you and those around you from deadly crashes.

**And remember – ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEATBELT!!**

*- from AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety / The Older and Wiser Driver*

## HOW TO LIVE A LONGER AND HEALTHIER LIFE

With advances in medicine, healthier eating habits and less smoking, people have a greater possibility of living to 100 than at any time in recorded history. Here are some great ways to increase your chances.

### Eat a Heart-Healthy Diet

A Mediterranean diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables, olive oil, fish and whole grains with few processed, packaged or refined foods, reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease more effectively than other diets.

### Read the Newspaper

Staying connected and current keeps your brain working and increases your sense of purpose.

### Drink Up

Drinking certain beverages, especially green, black or oolong tea have lower rates of death due to cardiovascular disease.

### Go Forth and Multiply

Having kids can help you live longer.

### Get Married

Studies show that divorced or separated people were 27% more likely to die earlier than married people.

### Watch Your Waist

Keeping a trim waistline is a requirement to a long and healthy life.

### Have Faith

Most centenarians reported having some kind of regular religious practice or belief.

### Buy the Farm

Studies show that living out in the country extends life compared with city dwelling.



## Commodity Supplemental Food Program — Services for the Elderly

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is a USDA food and nutrition program. This program is administered by the Illinois Department of Human Services and services are provided locally by Catholic Charities.

### Who Is Eligible For This Program?

Elderly people who meet the following requirements are eligible:

- Age 60 or older and Reside in Cook County
- Annual gross income at or below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.

### How Does One Participate?

The supplemental foods are provided at no cost to participants at all twelve local centers. Participants can receive food every month. Special efforts are made to serve elderly persons who are home bound and unable to obtain foods. In these situations, arrangements can be made for a proxy to pick up food and deliver to the elderly.

### What is the Supplemental food?

- |                                      |                              |                        |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Juice                              | • Evaporated Milk            | • Vegetables & Fruit   |
| • Instant Dry Milk                   | • Meat                       | • Egg Mix              |
| • Rice, Macaroni or Instant Potatoes | • Peanut Butter or Dry Beans | • Dry Cereal or Farina |

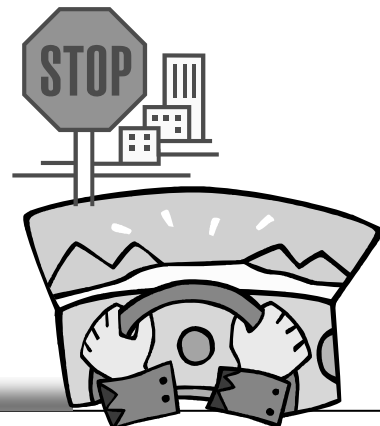
For more information on the program and distribution sites, please call (773) 378-3127.



### FREE OLDER DRIVER WELLNESS RESOURCES

- Information about older driver health and wellness.
- Prepared scripts for presentations to community groups, older adults & caregivers
- Ready-to-use Powerpoint presentations
- And more...

For more information and to download these free resources visit: [www.asaging.org/drivewell](http://www.asaging.org/drivewell)



“I WAS LOOKING IN THE MIRROR THE OTHER DAY AND I REALIZED I HAVEN’T CHANGED MUCH SINCE I WAS IN MY TWENTIES. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS, I LOOK A WHOLE LOT OLDER NOW!”

- George Carlin

EACH SMALL TASK OF EVERYDAY LIFE IS PART OF THE TOTAL HARMONY OF THE UNIVERSE

- ST. THERESA OF LISIEUX

# Thank You

## FOR YOUR DONATIONS & FOR SUPPORTING OUR FUNDING DRIVE

*Thank you to all the donors that have contributed to PeopleCare's mission!  
We couldn't do it without you! Your thoughtful contributions will continue to support our  
vision that older adults in the last third of life would never feel abandoned but should  
be able to live their life in the most productive way possible.*

*(The following are names of donors for 2008 up to the time of printing.  
We regret if any names were inadvertently omitted due to printing deadlines.)*

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Riverside Township  
Lions Club  
Sam's Club  
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YMCA Men's Club

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## Free Income Tax Preparation Service for Seniors

The First National Bank of Brookfield,  
9136 Washington Avenue Brookfield, IL 60513, is offering

***FREE income tax preparation services for senior citizens.***

For more information, please contact

**Deborah E. Sitter or Beverly Keehn at 708-485-2770.**

## High Tech Homes Give Seniors Independence

Imagine an 85-year-old widow who lives alone. She can't get around too well, stairs are a problem, and she sometimes forgets to take her medication. She no longer drives, making her increasingly isolated.

Her daughter, who lives in another city, knows her mom isn't managing as well as she should be. The daughter wants her mom in an assisted-living building, but her mom doesn't want to go. What to do?

Technology may be an answer. Sensors placed strategically around the home can monitor whether a senior takes her medication or gets out of bed in the morning. A home health monitor can chart blood pressure and other vital signs.

The information can be sent via computer to a family member or a physician. Other new systems can help those with memory loss cook or remind them

of the last time they spoke to a grandchild.

"These technologies might keep people from having to move to a nursing home or assisted-living facility" said Rich Schutt, chief executive at Rest Haven Christian Services, a senior housing and home care provider in Tinley Park. "People will be able to stay independent longer."

Schutt is one of the founders of the Center for Aging Services Technologies, which encourages the development of devices related to safety, health and social interaction to help seniors stay independent.

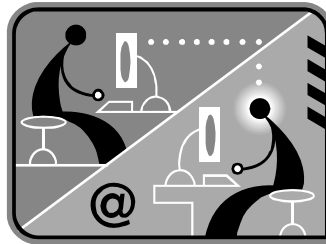
The devices can be customized for the senior. Take medication reminders. One senior might prefer to have a device in the bathroom mirror to show

whether medication has been taken that day. Another might want to get a phone call.

A screen can be installed in the senior's home with a direct connection to a caregiver. Even two-way communication is on the way that will be more like a video conference call.

Rest Haven is testing products at its retirement building and also in people's homes. However, some experts say it could be years before the technologies are refined and offered at a price many people can afford. But Schutt says seniors appreciate the help as long as it's unobtrusive. "It gives people a sense of security," he said.

- Jane Adler,  
Chicago Tribune



"YOUTH IS  
HAPPY BECAUSE  
IT HAS THE  
ABILITY TO  
SEE BEAUTY.  
ANYONE WHO  
KEEPS THE  
ABILITY TO SEE  
BEAUTY NEVER  
GROWS OLD."

- Franz Kafka



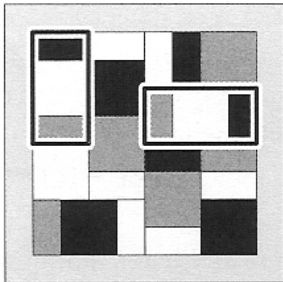
"I WAS BORN IN  
1962. AND THE  
ROOM NEXT TO  
MINE WAS 1963!"

- Joan Rivers



PAGE 5

*Hugs...*  
*Are non-fattening,*  
*Non-polluting,*  
*Non-taxable,*  
*Constantly renewable,*  
*Happily contagious and*  
*do not require batteries*  
*or special assembly.*



(from pg. 7)

**Quilt Quest Answer**

(from pg. 7)

**World's Easiest Quiz**

1. 16 years
2. Ecuador
3. Sheep and horses
4. November
5. Squirrel fur
6. Dogs
7. Albert
8. Crimson
9. New Zealand
10. Orange

## The Pros and Cons of Reverse Mortgages

“I DON’T THINK I’LL  
EVER LIVE TO BE A  
HUNDRED. I’VE BEEN  
FIFTY FOR TWENTY  
YEARS NOW!”

- Helen Ksyпка

“I BELIEVE  
EVERY WOMAN,  
ESPECIALLY  
THOSE OVER  
FORTY,  
NEEDS THE  
REJUVENATION  
THAT A FEW  
MOMENTS  
ALONE CAN  
PROVIDE.”

- Sophia Loren

Over the last few years, reverse mortgages have been growing in popularity. They can be an excellent tool allowing seniors to stay in their homes. They are, however, complex financial transactions which should not be entered lightly.

### What is a reverse mortgage?

A reverse mortgage is a loan which you are taking out against the equity in your home. With a reverse mortgage, the bank makes payments to you each month, and the amount of your loan increases each month. The payments are calculated to continue for a number of years until you have reached a maximum loan amount (60-80% of your home’s value). At that point, you would not receive any further payments, however you are also not required to pay back the loan. The loan is due only when you move out of the house. When the house is sold, any equity remaining in the house after repaying the loan is yours to keep.

### What are the advantages of a reverse mortgage?

A reverse mortgage can allow you to stay in your house by removing your monthly mortgage payment and instead giving you a monthly income. That in-

come can be used to maintain the house, pay for in home care, property taxes or other purposes. This can allow seniors to live a long healthy life in their own home.

### What are the disadvantages of a reverse mortgage?

In a reverse mortgage, you are borrowing against the value of your home. As a result, when you do sell your home, you will receive less equity or your heirs will inherit less money. Second, there are some fees at the outset of the loan which are comparable to the fees associated with purchasing a home (about 5% of your home’s value). It may not make sense to obtain a reverse mortgage if you are only planning to stay in the house for a couple of years. Third, it may not be the right thing if you are ready to move into assisted living or a nursing home, in which case you would be better to sell the house and make the move.

If considering a reverse mortgage, make sure to check with independent sources and not just the lenders themselves. For more information, visit [www.aarp.org/reversemortgage](http://www.aarp.org/reversemortgage).

- by Eric Parker

## The Mind Can Heal or Cripple the Body

Writer Anne Harrington believes that diseases have histories and that people have changed the way they *think* about certain diseases, and changed the way they *feel* when they have them.

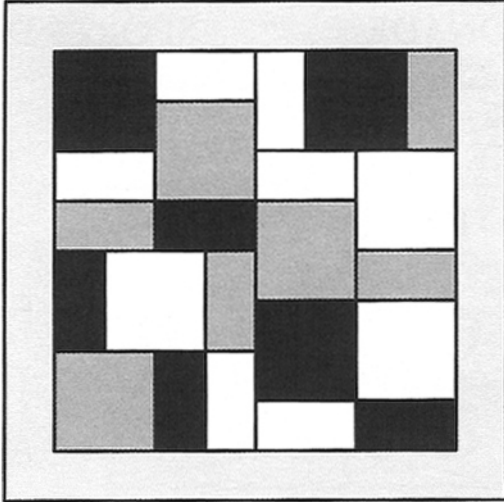
It’s one of the arguments Harrington, a professor of Harvard, makes

in her new book “**The Cure Within**,” a history of mind-body medicine in the Western world. She traces the ways in which certain ideas have emerged again and again: That illness is the body’s way of working through psychological trauma, that positive thinking can

cure us, that the pace and atomization of modern life make us sick. In her book, she avoids taking sides on what works and what does not, but the history she traces shows evidence of the belief that the mind can cripple *and heal* the body.

- Drake Bennett, *The Boston Globe*

## BRAIN EXERCISES - KEEP YOUR BRAIN AND BODY HEALTHY



### Quilt Quest

In the quilt to the left, find a small three-colored rectangular pattern that repeats exactly twice. Its diagram is shown next to the quilt.

Note that these patterns can be rotated but not overlapped.

*(answers on page 5)*



### Mind Stretchers Thoughts to Enlighten Your Imagination

- ◆ If you could be present for a famous event in history, which one would it be?
- ◆ If you could write a book, what would the subject be?
- ◆ If you were writing to a pen pal, how would you describe yourself?
- ◆ If you were to take a sentimental journey, where would you go?
- ◆ If you could have any job in the world, what would you like to do?
- ◆ Name 5 items that you would bury in a time capsule to be opened in 100 years.
- ◆ If you could live one day of your life over again, which would it be?
- ◆ If you were introduced to Eleanor Roosevelt, what would you say?

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### World's Easiest Quiz

*(Passing required 4 correct answers)*

1. How long did the Hundred Year War last?
2. Which country makes Panama hats?
3. From which animal do we get cat gut?
4. In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
5. What is a camel's hair brush made of?
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What color is a purple finch?
9. Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
10. What is the color of the black box in a commercial airplane?

*(answers on page 5)*



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## Food Freshness: Understanding the Date on the Label

Open dates are calendar dates that are imprinted or stamped on a food label. The date lets consumers know how long a product will remain fresh and safe. All package dates, except expiration dates, should be used as a guide. Companies are not required to print dates on food packages. It is a voluntary practice except for baby foods, which are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration.

Different companies often state dates in different ways. For example, January 1, 2009, could be written in three different ways: month and date such as Jan. 1 or by numbers: 1-9 or 0109.

University of Illinois Extension explains four types of dates on food labels:

- Pull date or Sell By date. This is the last date the company wants the food to be sold.
- Even if the food is sold on the

“sell by” date, it can still be eaten later. It is not a “use by” date for the consumer. Generally, milk is safe and wholesome 7 to 10 days after the date on the label.

- Freshness date or Quality Assurance date. This date suggests how long the manufacturer thinks the food will remain at peak quality. The label might read “Best if used by 1-1-09.”
- Pack date or Package date. This is the date the food was packaged or processed.
- Expiration date. This is the last date a product should be eaten. It might read, “Do not use after January 2009.”

Label dates should be used as a guide to freshness. Consumers should always look for signs of spoilage when using packaged foods. These include mold, an off color or a bad smell. Spoiled food should be discarded but never tasted.

— West Suburban Senior Services -  
*The Senior Chronicle*

