



Senior Connection

High Country
Area Agency on Aging

March 2011

A Matter of Balance Expanding in Region D

Through a partnership with Be Active North Carolina, the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services and the Area Agencies on Aging, **Tonia Cook**, has received training to be **A Matter of Balance Master Trainer**. She is only one of approximately forty Master Trainers in the state of North Carolina. She will have oversight of the current Matter of Balance Coaches in Region D's network of aging providers as well as those Coaches, who will



MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

be trained on **April 4th-5th** at the High Country Council of Governments' office from 9:00am-2:00pm.

Those participants who attend the Matter of

Balance classes learn to view falls and fear of falling as controllable; set realistic goals to increase activity, change their environment to reduce fall risk factors; and exercise to increase their strength and balance.

If you would like to learn more or if you would like to **become a Coach** to facilitate this program, please contact Tonia: tcCook@regiond.org or via phone at 828-265-5434 or toll free at 866-219-3643, Ext. 113.

Inside this issue:

<i>Tichenors Impact</i>	2
<i>New CAC Members</i>	2
<i>Project C.A.R.E.</i>	3
<i>Alex Jernigan's Retirement Celebration</i>	3
<i>High Country Senior Games</i>	4
<i>Blue Ridge Senior Games</i>	5
<i>Living Healthy</i>	6-7
<i>National Professional Social Work Month</i>	8
<i>Older Americans Month</i>	9
<i>R.A.P.P.</i>	9



So Long, It's Been Good To Know You, I've Got To Be Drifting Along ...

I have retired as the Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman effective March 31st. I have thoroughly enjoyed serving the region as the Long Term Care Ombudsman. Most especially, I have enjoyed knowing and working with each Community Advisory Committee member, the Senior Tar Heel Legislature, the DSS and mental health folks, Senior Center staff and all the other service providers and facility staff in our region. Thank you for helping me feel welcome in your community. You are special people who go where many fear.

There will be an interim period before the next Ombudsman is certified. Therefore, if you have questions or concerns please direct them to Anita Davie, AAA Director, High Country Area on Aging at (828) 265-5434, Ext. 122 or Sharon Wilder, State Long Term Care Ombudsman (919) 733-8395. *Thank you so much for all you do!*

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The Tichenors Impact on Mitchell County

With this issue of the AAA newsletter, we want to take time to recognize the contributions of Mary and Clarence Tichenor as members of the NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature and the Advisory Committee on Aging for the High Country Council of Governments' service area. In December, it became necessary for Mary and Clarence to resign for health reasons. While serving on these two bodies, they have helped to accomplish significant advances in services and policies to improve the lives of older adults, not only in their community, Mitchell County, but across the state.

Serving as the Delegate and Alternate for Mitchell County, Mary and Clarence worked with that Senior Tar Heel

Legislative body to secure increased funding for the home and community based



services as well as Project C.A.R.E., which provides respite care and family consultation for caregivers of persons suffering from Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. They advocated diligently for the protection of the most vulnerable older adults suffering from abuse,

neglect and exploitation.

In addition to serving in the Senior Tar Heel Legislature, the Tichenors have worked diligently in Mitchell County to improve the lives of older adults and their families by taking the lead to develop a comprehensive plan for older adults and the county. Mary also took the lead to establish an elder abuse prevention coalition, which continues to meet and work. But of all the things Mary has worked and accomplished, she is most proud of developing an innovative group respite program for family caregivers, recently renamed Mary's Caring Hands, which meets every Friday at the First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine.

Regional Ombudsman Announces...

NEW MEMBERS:

Alleghany County: **Sandra Goodwin**

Alleghany County: **Jim Auburn**

Ashe County: **Lisa Biondi**

Avery County: **Mildred Lane**

Wilkes ACH: **Loray Norris**

Wilkes ACH: **Susie Harris**

Wilkes NH: **Carol Canter**

Yancey County: **Nina Hughes**

VACANCIES:

Wilkes County Nursing Home |

Ashe County |

Avery County |

Mitchell County |

If you are interested in serving as a CAC member in your county, or if you would like to learn more about how to volunteer at a local facility, please contact the High Country Area Agency on Aging at 828-265-5434.

Time that is volunteered is time well spent!



Project C.A.R.E.

Comes to Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties

PROJECT C.A.R.E.

CAREGIVER ALTERNATIVES
TO RUNNING ON EMPTY

Ruth Price, Family Consultant, opened Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty) services for the first time to residents of Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties. Project C.A.R.E. uses a family consultant model to provide consumer-directed respite care and comprehensive support to caregivers of people with dementia. Through family-centered and caregiver-focused community care networks, family consultants create a seamless, coordinated delivery system that is responsive to the needs, values and

preferences of Alzheimer's families. Project C.A.R.E. is administered through the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services with expert consultation and technical assistance provided by the Duke Aging Center Family Support Program. Project C.A.R.E. for Yancey, Mitchell and Avery counties is based within Park Ridge Health, www.parkridgehealth.org, located in Hendersonville. A satellite office is provided in Boone by the High Country Area Agency on Aging. To make an appointment or to speak with Ruth Price, call 828-265-5434 or toll free at 866-219-3643, Ext. 137.

When Ruth was thirteen, she began volunteering in a nursing home where her great-grandmother was a resident suffering from Alzheimer's disease. This family experience inspired her decision to work with the elderly. For the past fifteen years, she has coordinated caregiver wellness programs and consulted with families about how to care for a loved one who has dementia.



Ruth Price, Project C.A.R.E. Family Consultant



Retirement Celebration

Alex Jernigan, Ombudsman

Friday, March 25th

High Country COG Boardroom

9:30-11:00 a.m.

High Country Senior Games

(Serving Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Yancey and any other interested participant)



Every year over 200 residents of Watauga, Avery, Yancey, Mitchell, and Ashe Counties compete locally at the High Country Senior Games in over 50 athletic and art events. The High Country Senior Games is a local “Olympic” event for adults 55 years of age and better. The High Country Senior Games is one of 52 local divisions of the North Carolina Senior Games—a statewide organization dedicated to providing year round health promotion and education for adults.



The High Country Senior Games offers fun and friendly competition in over 50 sport and art events. Included events are track and field, golf, tennis, billiards, bowling, racquetball, shuffleboard, swimming, race walking, bocce, horseshoes, table tennis, basketball, softball and more!

Silver Arts events include a variety of visual, literary, heritage and performing arts such as crocheting, quilting, painting, drawing, poetry, vocal performances, instrumental and much more!

Participants who qualify at the High Country Senior Games local level have the opportunity to compete at the North Carolina Senior Games State Finals, held in Raleigh each year. Those who advance to state competition participate with over 3,000 of the state’s finest athletes and artists. At the State Games, participants can qualify for the National Senior Olympics.

Now is your chance to become part of the High Country Senior Games! **The games will be held May 12th—June 12th.**

For a complete schedule, a registration form, or to volunteer with the Senior Games, contact the Watauga County Parks and Recreation at 828-264-9511 or via email at holly.gates@watgov.org. Those who **register by May 9th** will pay a **discounted registration fee of \$10**. After May 9th, the registration fee is \$12 per person. The registration fee covers entry of one or multiple events. All registered participants will receive a **free High Country Senior Games t-shirt**.

For more information on the North Carolina Senior Games, visit their website at www.ncseniorgames.org.



Silver Arts

What are Silver Arts?

- Performing Arts: Singing, Dancing, Comedy/Drama, Instrumental
- Visual Arts: Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Photography
- Literary Arts: Short Stories, Poetry, Life Experiences, Essay
- Heritage Arts: Quilting, Pottery, Woodworking, Weaving, Crocheting

Enter your talent; you might be surprised at how talented you really are!!



Blue Ridge Senior Games

(Serving Alleghany, Ashe, and Wilkes Counties only)

*“Senior Games keeps our minds and bodies active and gives us a positive outlook on life.”
Bonnie Vaughan, BRSB Participant*

The Blue Ridge Senior Games is a year round health and wellness promotion program that culminates with athletic and art competition for adults age 55 and older. Seniors living in Wilkes, Ashe and Alleghany counties are eligible to compete in the Senior Games, which is part of a statewide coordinated network of fifty-two local games identified as the North Carolina Senior Games, Inc.

Each spring, thousands of seniors participate in local games held across the state. The medal winners qualify for the annual Senior Games State Finals. Every two years, state medalists qualify to compete in the United States National Senior Sports Classic.

The overall idea of Senior Games is to encourage older adults to stay active, renew old skills, learn new skills, and exercise a positive outlook on life. In addition to a wide variety of sporting events and competitions, Blue Ridge Senior Games also offers social events, Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Silver Arts, and Silver Striders.

Sporting Events

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| * Tennis | * Billiards | * Table Tennis |
| * Badminton | * Shuffleboard | * Horseshoes |
| * Croquet | * Bocce Ball | * Golf |
| * Cycling | * Bowling | * Basketball Shoot |
| * Shot-put | * Discus | * Spin Casting |
| * Softball Throw | * Football Throw | * Archery |
| * Standing Long Jump | * Running Long Jump | * Track Events |
| * Swimming Events | * Softball Team | * Bean Bag Toss |
| * Bridge | * Spelling Bee | * Silver Arts |
| * Silver Striders Fun Walk | | |

For additional information or to request a registration packet, contact any of the following Coordinating Sites:

Wilkes Family YMCA
(336) 838-3991

Wilkes Senior Center
(336) 667-5281

Alleghany Senior Center
(336) 372-4640



Living Healthy

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) Frequently Asked Questions

What is CDSMP?

A skill-building workshop series that helps people with one or more chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, chronic pain, hypertension, cancer, arthritis) learn to manage their conditions and their life.

How long is the workshop?

A workshop includes 6 sessions, each one 2.5 hours long. Stanford University recommends holding only one session a week.

Where are the workshops held?

Sessions are held in the community: senior centers, churches, libraries, hospitals, etc.

Who and how many can attend a workshop series?

6 to 15 people with one or more chronic conditions can attend. Their caregivers are also invited to attend.

What do the sessions cover?

- How to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation.
- Exercises for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility & endurance.
- Use of medications.
- Communicating effectively with family, friends and health professionals.
- Nutrition.
- Evaluating new treatments.

How was the Program developed?

The School of Medicine at **Stanford University** received a government research grant to develop a community-based self-management program that assists people with chronic illnesses. Research was completed in 1996.

What were the results?

Over 1,000 people with heart disease, lung disease, stroke or arthritis participated in a randomized, controlled test of the program, and they were followed for up to 3 years. Changes were looked for in: health status; health care; self-efficacy; and self-management behaviors.

What were the results?

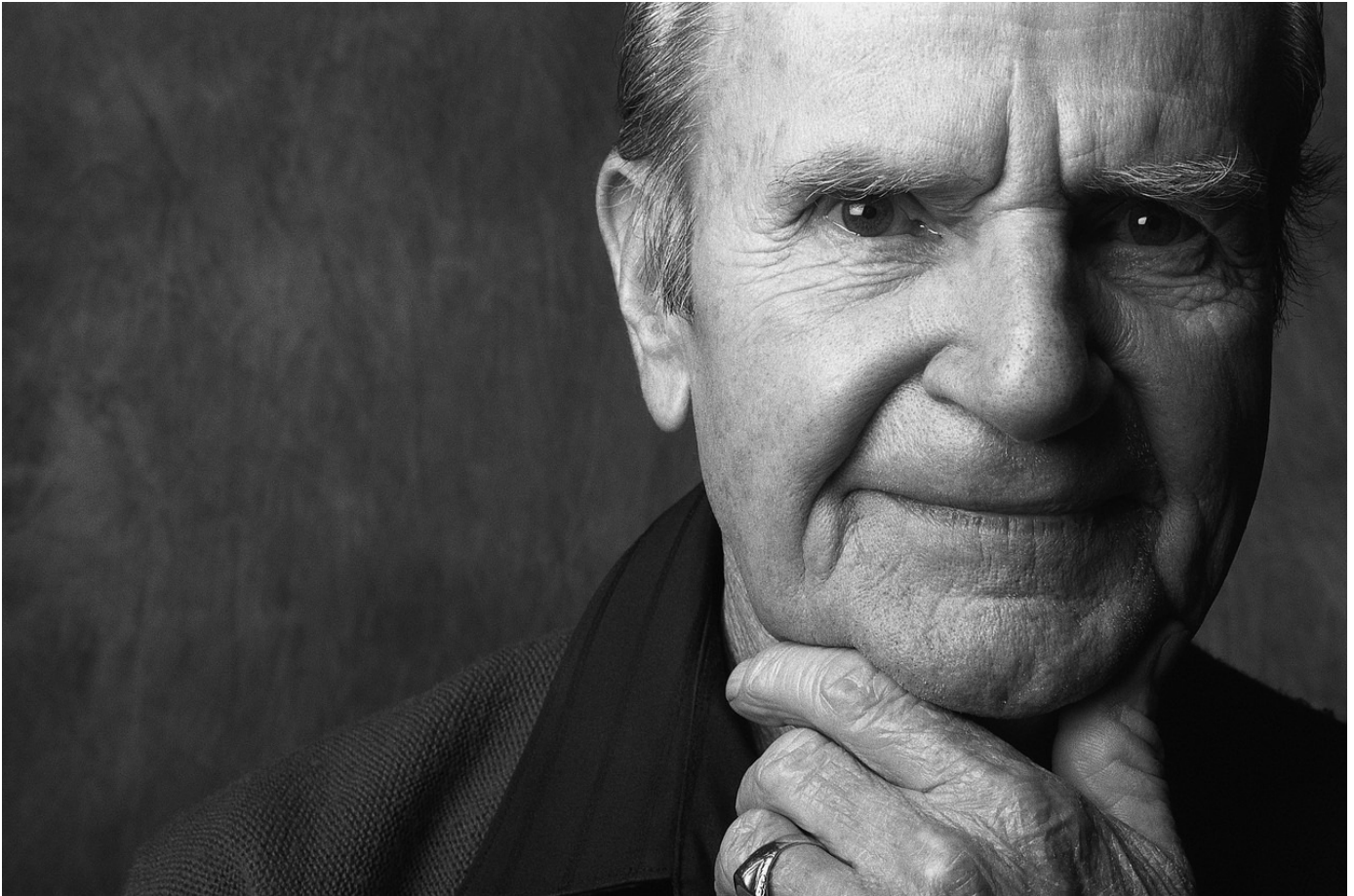
Persons in the program compared to those not in the program, showed significant improvements in: Exercise; cognitive symptom management; communication with physicians; self-reported general health; Health distress; fatigue; disability; social/role activities limitations; reduced days in the hospital as well as fewer outpatient visits.

It's estimated that for every \$1 spent on the program, \$10 is saved.



**LIVING
HEALTHY**

FEEL BETTER
TAKE CHARGE



Living Healthy is a workshop that will help you take control of your ongoing health condition rather than letting it control you!

If you have diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, COPD, fibromyalgia, or any other chronic disease, **Living Healthy** is for you. By attending this **FREE** workshop one time per week for 6 weeks, you will learn how to:

- Manage symptoms
- Communicate effectively with your doctor and other health care professionals
- Lessen your frustration
- Fight fatigue
- Build your confidence
- Make daily tasks easier
- AND...Get more out of life!

For more information about **Living Healthy, or to register for a workshop please call toll free at 866-219-3643, Ext. 113.**



March is National Professional Social Work Month and this year's theme, "Social Workers Change Futures", celebrates the many ways professional social workers make a difference for people every day. In addition to services provided by the High Country Area Agency on Aging and the High Country Caregiver Foundation, social workers can also be found in most non-profit agencies, schools, hospitals, hospices, universities, legislatures, private practices, corporations and the military.

Social Work Month provides an opportunity for social workers to highlight the essential role they play in alleviating some of America's most difficult social problems. Through education, training and dedication, social workers provide assistance in many different practice areas including aging, mental health, child welfare, end of life, healthcare and family violence.

Strengthening people and providing support are priorities of the social work profession. Wherever there is a problem with an individual, family or community, social workers look for the inherent strengths that can be used as a starting point for further growth. This perspective was crucial to the development of the High Country Caregiver Foundation. "The strengths perspective approach fosters hope by focusing on the positive, rather than on feelings of helplessness," says Brenda Reece, Family Caregiver Support Specialist for the High Country Area agency on Aging as well as the Executive Director of the High Country Caregiver Foundation. "Individuals, families and communities can feel empowered by working with their strengths."

As the American population ages, social workers are going to be increasingly called upon to meet the needs of older adults as well their family caregivers. Receiving the diagnosis of an illness can be a confusing time for everyone. Will my loved one be able to handle the

treatment? How will I balance their care with the many other responsibilities I have? How will this affect my job? Who will help me figure all this out?

Together, the High Country Area Agency on Aging and the High Country Caregiver Foundation help to strengthen our communities, expand our options and foster changes that improve life for everyone involved in the caregiving journey by advocating, education and providing short-term respite options for family caregivers in the High Country.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the social work profession is growing faster than average for all occupations, especially in the areas of aging and health care services. There are currently more than 640,000 professional social workers employed in the United States.

To all social workers, we would like to thank you for your commitment to caring.

Older Americans Month 2011 Connecting the Community!

May is Older Americans Month—a tradition dating back to 1963 to honor the legacies and ongoing contributions of older Americans and support them as they enter the next stage in life. When Older Americans Month was established, only 17 million were aged 65 or older. By 2030 that number is expected to reach 71.5 million.

This year's Older Americans Month theme—Connecting the Community - recognizes the diversity and vitality of today's older Americans who span three generations. They lived through wars and hard times, as well as periods of unprecedented prosperity. They pioneered new technologies in medicine, communications, and industry

while spearheading a cultural revolution that won equal rights for minorities, women, and disabled Americans.

These remarkable achievements demonstrated the strength and character of older Americans, and underscored the debt of gratitude we owe to the generations that have given our society so much. However, the contributions of the older Americans are not only in the past. They are supporting each other and their communities in various ways every day.

In fact, older Americans are a core component of service delivery to seniors and work every day to improve the lives of many in their



Older Americans: connecting the community

community! They volunteer at group meals sites and deliver food to homebound older adults; they act as escorts and provide transportation to older adults who do not drive; they help older adults with home repairs; shopping and errands; they help our youth through literacy programs and mentoring; and they improve our communities with countless hours of civic engagement. Their energy and commitment reminds all Americans to do their part to enhance the quality of life for all generations.

The High Country Relatives As Parent Program (RAPP): 1 of 6 Finalists for the National Janet Sainer Award

The Janet Sainer award recognizes the work of a Brookdale RAPP organization that has achieved excellence in the delivery of supportive services to relative caregivers and their families in collaboration and partnership with other organizations. The award also recognizes the creativity, enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of a Brookdale RAPP, which Janet Sainer demonstrated throughout her career.

Janet Sainer was a pioneer and ac-

tivist in the field of aging, developing innovative programs copied nationwide. She was a Special Consultant to the Brookdale Foundation where she focused on the issues faced by grandparents and other relatives raising children. Mrs. Sainer's commitment to the challenges faced by relative caregiver families was evident through her efforts to help agencies across the country recognize the importance of addressing the service needs of kinship care families. She worked diligently to

bring attention to the plight of these special families and provided guidance and encouragement to many in Brookdale's RAPP Network and beyond.

Tough economic times have forced everyone, including the RAPP Network, to buckle down and concentrate on developing partnerships and collaborating with others to ensure that they are able to continue to provide supportive services to relative caregiver families.



**High Country
Area Agency on Aging**

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Dedicated to improving the lives of older adults!



We're on the web!
www.regiond.org

Meet the High Country Area Agency on Aging Staff:

*Anita Davie
AAA Director*

*Alex Jernigan
Long Term Care Regional Ombudsman*

*Tonia Cook
Contracts Manager/Aging Program Coordinator*

*Brenda Reece
Family Caregiver Support Specialist*

Our Vision: A community where all older adults enjoy independence with dignity and respect; wherein, we as the Area Agency on Aging strive to facilitate, collaborate and partner with other agencies and organizations whose vision is enriching the quality of life of older adults and caregivers.



Living Healthy

Workshops are coming to your community!

Contact : Tonia Cook, Regional Living Healthy Coordinator, to find out more!!

tcCook@regiond.org 828-265-5434, Ext. 113