

Seniors' Connection

To the High Country

Thousands of North Carolinians, including older adults in the High Country, are potentially eligible for the Low Income Subsidy (LIS) and Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) which help pay for prescription drugs and Medicare co-pays and deductibles. This is not a new program, but it is estimated that 2,819 residents in the Region D have not applied for these benefits.



To qualify for Extra Help/Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) an individual's income limit is \$1,353.75/month and assets/resource limit of \$12,510. Note that the assets/resource limit does not include a home, car, burial plot and up to \$1,500 for burial expenses. For a married couple living together, the income limit is \$1,821.25 with an asset/resource limit of \$25,010. Note that individuals with fewer assets and a lower monthly income, may qualify for a Medicare Savings Program, which offers assistance with prescription drugs as well as Medicare Part A and B deductibles and co-pays.

The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature, the Area Agency on Aging, the local senior centers, and the SHIP Coordinators in each of the seven counties are working in

How do you apply for LIS?

Call SHIP toll-free at 1-800-443-9354 for assistance completing the online application or paper application.

- Applications are processed by Social Security. They determine a person's level of eligibility. **Apply by phone at 1-800-772-1213 or TTY 1-800-325-0778, 7am-7pm Monday-Friday or online at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html>.**

- Social Security will send a letter to the applicant notifying them if they have been approved and at what level.

partnership to develop and implement a plan to provide outreach and application assistance to individuals who may be eligible. "Our challenge is to take the LIS message beyond the usual agency based efforts to reach a broader audience," said Anita Davie, Director of the High Country Area Agency on Aging.

The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature will launch the "Relay for Extra Help" Campaign on October 7th with a relay in the Capital city. Following the STHL launch, watch for public announcements about outreach events and enrollment assistance in each of the seven counties (Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey) served by Region D.

For additional information on this campaign, you may contact Anita Davie, AAA Director, or Tonia Cook, Contracts Manager/Aging Program Coordinator, toll free at 1-866-219-3643 or via email at adavie@regiond.org or tcook@regiond.org.

Generosity of Area Businesses, Sponsors and Donors Make the HCCF 3rd Annual Benefit Auction a Huge Success

The High Country Caregiver Foundation hosted its 3rd Annual Benefit Auction on Friday, August 15th at Lees-McRae Evans Auditorium. The event was attended by more than one hundred fifty enthusiastic bidders who checked out the multitude of items donated by local supporters. Items up for bid included fabulous out of town and local vacation packages, fine jewelry, artwork, pottery, shrubbery, gift certificates to some of the areas best restaurants and much more. Barbeque plates from Sledgehammer Charlie's were available for \$10 donations while music was provided by local artist Diana & Sarvis Ridge.

"With the proceeds generated from the auction, we hope to award an additional twenty \$500 respite vouchers to family caregivers in Avery and Watauga Counties this year", stated Brenda Reece, High Country Caregiver Foundation (HCCF) Executive Director.

HCCF is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization initiated in 2007 and through the hard work of its volunteer board members, fifty-four vouchers have been issued to date. "Our goal is to create awareness of caregiving issues and improve the quality of life for caregivers and those they care for through advocacy, information & referral, education, emotional support and supplemental and respite services" stated Reece.

The HCCF would like to thank this year's sponsors, who included: High Country Council of Governments, Reins-Sturdivant Funeral Services, Medi Home Care & Hospice, Glenbridge Health & Rehabilitation, Deerfield Ridge Assisted Living and Bayada Nurses, which without their generosity and support the HCCF could not have been as successful in their efforts to assist local family caregivers.

Community Resource Forum

for Providers and Caregivers of Adults

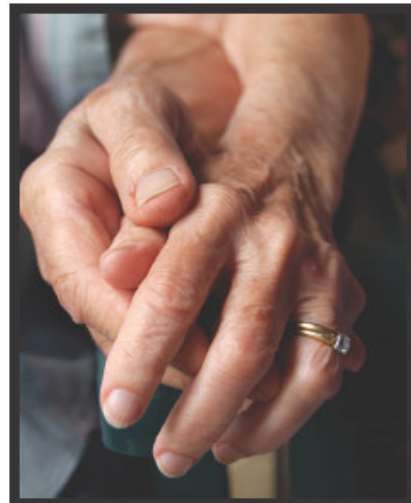


WHEN: October 21st

WHERE: Watauga Medical Center
AHEC Auditorium

TIME: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Free Event with lunch provided



RSVP @ 265-8090, caregivers encouraged to attend!

The Brookdale Foundation Group

The Brookdale Foundation

The Glendale Foundation

Ramapo Trust

Recently, The Brookdale Foundation Group awarded 40 grants nationwide for the development of new dementia-specific, social model day programs. The High Country Region is the recipient of two of the 40 awards. The goal of the programs will be to provide the opportunity for the care recipient to engage in a short-term program of meaningful social and recreational activities in a secure and supportive setting in order to maximize their cognitive and social abilities while providing relief to the caregiver and access to services in the community; thereby, assisting the individuals to remain in their home.

The Mitchell County Health Partnership in partnership with local churches and the High Country Area Agency on Aging, earned one of the awards to develop a group respite program at the First Baptist Church in Spruce Pine. There are currently no group respite programs or adult day care centers in Mitchell County. Group respite and adult day care services were identified as unmet needs in Mitchell County during the development of the High Country Area Plan on Aging (2008-2012) and the Solution for Seniors, a comprehensive planning process currently under way for Mitchell County older adults.

The High Country Area Agency on Aging in partnership with Deerfield Ridge Assisted Living in Boone is also the recipient of a new Brookdale grant. Watauga County currently does not have a group respite program or adult day care center. Therefore, "the award of this grant is so timely and appreciated with the closing of the Blowing Rock Adult Day Care Center. This program will help fill the gap until a new adult day care center can be developed." stated Brenda Reece, Family Caregiver Support Specialist with the AAA.

Both programs are scheduled to be open by the first of November.

The Brookdale Foundation Group
950 Third Ave.
19th Floor
New York, NY 10022

Visit their website for
FREE Publications

2009 Group Respite Program Grantees

Congratulations and welcome to all our new grantees

Friendship Adult Day Care Inc., Santa Barbara, CA
OPICA Adult Day Care Center, Inc., Los Angeles, CA
Bay Area Community Service, Oakland, CA
WISE & Healthy Aging, Santa Monica, CA
Colchester Senior Center, Colchester, CT
Alzheimer's Resource Center of CT, Inc., Plantsville, CT
Community Aging & Retirement Services, Inc., Port Richey, FL
Jewish Community Center, New Orleans, LA
High Country CoG/Area Agency on Aging, Boone, NC
North Carolina Baptist Hospital, Winston-Salem, NC
Mitchell Community Health Partnership, Bakersville, NC
Nevada Senior Services, Las Vegas, NV
St Stephen's Episcopal Church, St Stephen, SC
Shenandoah AAA, Front Royal, VA
Skagit Adult Day Care, Burlington, WA
Olympic Community Action Programs, Port Angeles, WA
United Community Center, Inc., Milwaukee, WI
NEW Curative Rehabilitation, Inc., Green Bay, WI
Aging & Disability Resource Center of Portage County, Stevens Point, WI
Clement Manor, Inc., Greenfield, WI
Senior Services, Midland County Council on Aging, Midland, MI
St Paul Lutheran Church, Sheboygan Falls, WI

<http://www.brookdalefoundation.org/publicationspage.html>

September 13th is National Grandparents Day

Thank a Relative Caregiver!

According to the U.S. 2000 Census, there were close to 2.5 million households with grandparents raising their grandchildren. No doubt, that number has increased substantially in the past nine years.



Additionally, the figure does not even count other relatives acting as parents such as people raising their brother or sister's children, younger siblings, cousins or, even yet, raising their niece or nephew's children. Moreover, fifty-seven percent of grandparents raising their grandchildren are still in

the work force and 17% are living in poverty. In North Carolina alone, in 2000, there were more than 135,000 children living in grandparent-headed households and another 40,000 kids living in households headed by other family members.

When grandparents or other relatives become the full-time parent, it may be because there was the death of a parent or a parent is away in the military; this is happening more than we like right now with devastating effects. It may also be because a child was having problems with his/her social environment and needed a change, but more often than not, there is a correlation between alcohol and drug abuse and neglect on the part of the parents. The parent(s) may be mentally ill, incarcerated, or simply and unfortunately incapable of caring for their children.



Increasing drug use among adults, high divorce rates and a poor economy have significantly altered the "traditional" family in the past 30 years. As a result, more and more grandparents find themselves once again taking on the role of surrogate parenting. These grandparents, once planning their retirements and looking forward to their "golden years", are now finding themselves in a parental role for a second time.

High Country Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP), created with a seed grant from the Brookdale Foundation and support from Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation and the High Country Council of Governments is gearing up for its second year of operation. To date, twenty relative caregivers are registered for the program. Services available include assistance with legal fees, school related expenses and summer camps, monthly support groups, information and referral, educational seminars, recreational activities, Holidays for Kids and a resource lending library. High Country RAPP sessions are conducted on the last Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the High Country Council of Governments.



In 1978 President Jimmy Carter declared the first Sunday after Labor Day, National Grandparents Day. Honor those in the community who have taken on this selfless and often under appreciated act by telling them that you appreciate their efforts. A simple thank you and words of appreciation often goes a long way.

Area Agency on Aging says Farewell

“Outstanding Senior Tar Heel Legislators”

With this issue of the Senior Connection, we say goodbye to two strong supporters of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and never tiring advocates for older adults in this region and across the state. Michael “Mike” Foster, Yancey County Delegate (2004-2009), passed away on July 28th, while Robert Johnston, Former Wilkes County Delegate (2002-2009) passed away on August 22nd. Both of these men demonstrated that they were dedicated to improving the lives of older adults, not only in their communities but throughout the state and nation by advocating for legislation, which would address and recognize the needs of older adults.

Mike was a member of the St. Thomas Episcopal Church and the Burnsville Lions Club. He was a retired Navy Lt. Commander, LCDR as well as a retired GEO Physical Computer Operations Manager at Exxon Corporation. He was an active member of various other civic organizations and recently dedicated much of his time to advocating for a new senior center in Yancey County.



Mike accepts the 2008 Outstanding Senior Tar Heel Legislator Award presented by J.B. Lawrence, High Country COG Chairman.

Robert served in the 359th Engineer’s Unit of the Army in Europe in World War II and later graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration, courtesy of the GI Bill. He served on many boards for non-profits and civic organizations and was the founding member of the Wilkes Playmakers and “Seniors on Stage” as well as acted in many of their productions. In his later years, Robert wrote a column, “Senior Chat”, for the *Wilkes Journal-Patriot* as he continued to educate and advocate for older adult issues.



Robert accepts the 2006 Outstanding Senior Tar Heel Legislator Award presented by Kenny Poteat, Former High Country COG Chairman.

Mike and Robert were exceptional individuals with a mission to make a difference. They will be greatly missed by all who knew them!

Family Caregiver Support Program Funds Awarded

In July, the High Country Area Agency on Aging had the opportunity to award two grants to agencies that submitted proposals demonstrating their capacity to utilize Family Caregiver Support Program funds to leverage other funds and resources to support family caregivers in their caregiving role. The awards were made to Ashe Services for Aging, Inc. and Respite Care of Wilkes County, Inc.

Ashe Services for Aging, Inc. was awarded \$6,000 for Assistance with Access. This service will assist caregivers in obtaining access to needed services and resources and will provide follow-up to the client to ensure that services were arranged or that resources were received. These funds will be used to further develop a one-number/one location resource network for older adults, funded in part with a Community Resource Connection state grant and in partnership with service agencies in the county.

Respite Care of Wilkes County, Inc. was also awarded \$6,000 to provide group respite care with supportive services at the Wilkes Senior Center. Wilkes’ proposal listed some twenty agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals with which they would partner to operate and sustain the group respite program. Such partnerships would provide transportation, lunches, snacks, activities and supplies, cleaning products, and much more.

Notes From Your Ombudsman

Alex Jernigan

Community Advisory Committee NEWS

Vacancies

Wilkes County:	
Nursing Home	2
Rest Home	1
Alleghany County	1
Avery County	1
Mitchell County	2
Ashe County	1
Watauga Rest Home	1

New Members:

Ben Strickland:
Watauga Nursing Home

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 Alex Jernigan at 828-265-5434, Ext. 126. Time that is volunteered is time well spent!

Long Term Care Resident's Rights Week

October 4-10, 2009, is National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week, a time to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices many long-term care residents have made to better our community. This year's theme – *Hear Our Voice* – Residents Speak Out About Residents' Rights, was selected to call attention to the fact that residents of long-term care facilities have a voice; and that voice should be part of decision-making in long-term care facilities.

By listening to residents' Voices, they will be treated with dignity and respect of their full individuality; staff and residents will enjoy relationships that enhance their day to day lives; and the long-term care facility will operate more effectively with its day to day activities being based on and developed with consumer involvement.

Many people care about residents - family members, citizen advocates, ombudsmen, facility staff, etc. This care can be truly individualized and focused on each person's needs and preferences.

In 1987, the Nursing Home Reform Law that was passed guarantees nursing home residents their individual rights, including but not limited to: individualized care, respect, dignity, the right to visitation, the right to privacy, the right to complain, and the right to make independent choices.

The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has worked tirelessly for over 30 years to promote residents' rights daily. More than 8,000 volunteers and 1,000 paid staff are advocates for residents in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Authorized under the Older Americans' Act and administered by the Administration on Aging, the program also provides information on how to find a facility, conducts community education sessions, and supports residents, their families and the public with one-on-one consultation regarding long-term care.

Residents' Rights Week is an excellent opportunity to re-affirm our collective commitment to residents' rights and to honor long-term care residents. We strongly encourage the community to participate in Residents' Rights Week activities and to visit residents who continue to be important to our communities and society.

**Please Visit Someone
in a Nursing Home!**



High Country Council of Governments is MOVING!

Workforce Development; Community and Economic Development; Information and Research Assistance; Planning and Management Assistance; Regional Computer Systems; Region D Development Corporation; Regional Transportation Planning Organization as well as the Finance office for all programs.

During the week of September 14th, movers will relocate these departments to 468 New Market Boulevard in Boone. Please be advised that email addresses, phone numbers and extensions for all staff will remain unchanged. However, there may be a slight down time as these services are rolled over to the new office location. We welcome you to visit the new office and let us know how we may be of assistance to you as we serve the communities in our region.



National Family Caregiver Month

National Family Caregiver Month (November) is organized each year by the National Family Caregivers Association and is designated as a time every year to thank, support, educate and empower family caregivers. "This year we are encouraging people to speak up during National Family Caregivers Month," said Suzanne Mintz, NFCA president and CEO. "One of the most important attributes on being an advocate for your loved one is the willingness and the ability to speak up and keep your eye on the ultimate goal, protecting not only the health and safety of your loved ones but for yourself as well."

For additional information, visit:

http://www.thefamilycaregiver.org/national_family_caregiver_month/.

Benefit Yard Sale

WHEN: September 19th

WHERE: 468 New Market Boulevard, Boone
Across from the United Methodist Church Bazaar

TIME: 7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.



Proceeds from the yard sale will benefit local family caregivers in Avery and Watauga Counties.

High Country Area Agency on Aging
P.O. Box 1820
Boone, NC 28607
828-265-5434

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.



**An annual FLU SHOT and a one time
PNEUMONIA VACCINATION could
save a life.**

**HIGH COUNTRY
AREA AGENCY ON
AGING STAFF**

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