

Capital District Senior Issues FORUM

January 2011



2010 Lifetime Awards Ceremony a Moving Tribute

The 13th annual Capital District Senior Issues Forum Lifetime Achievement Awards ceremony in Albany was held on October 19, 2010 at Congregation Beth Emeth – the 11th such ceremony graciously hosted by Beth Emeth. The 47 honorees for 2010 included 21 men and 26 women ranging in age from 85 to 100. Fifteen honorees were age 90 and older - demonstrating that a growing number of seniors are living active and fruitful lives at an advanced age.

Each honoree was recognized for one of the following categories: business, military service, faith-based service, care giving and community service. Several honorees commented that they were flattered to receive such an honor for their lifetime achievements, but reflected that “doing for others and doing what was the right thing to do” was just their natural way of living a good life.

The ceremony was an inspirational and incredible event, enjoyed by the honorees, their families and all the invited guests and presenters. I speak for all those involved when I say it was our honor to recognize these very special seniors.

Submitted by: Christine Cary, Ceremony Chair

Thank You to Forum Contributors

The Capital District Senior Issues Forum thanks the following organizations and individuals for their financial and in-kind contributions to support the Senior Lifetime Achievement Award Ceremony and other Forum programs for 2010.

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- The Eddy Housing Division

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Program Promoted Dialogue with Government on the Needs of Seniors

To provide answers to the question “What needs to change?” a dialogue between invited State and County government officials and agency representatives, advocacy groups and individuals from the Capital District was hosted by Albany Guardian Society and the Capital District Senior Issues Forum on November 18, 2010 to provide Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the State Legislature with issues to be resolved to create aging-friendly livable communities in New York State.

The answer to the question depended on the perspective of each speaker in identifying the priorities for improving the lives of seniors. The acting director of the State Office for Aging stressed the need to develop Community Empowerment and encouraged engagement at the local level. The AARP Associate State Director for Community Outreach explained that the goal should be to keep seniors in the community. The Director of the Center for Senior Living & Community Services for NYASHA said that there needs to be a new model for senior housing and long-term care. The Programs & Services Director for the Town of Colonie talked about the

need for a change in legislation to permit more collaboration between agencies and funding sources within local communities to make more efficient use of services and funds, i.e. sharing transportation. An active community advocate called for attention to the public mood when deciding what needs to change. A participant in the Kinship Caregivers program stressed the great benefits of the program both financially and emotionally and the importance of continuing the program. A husband and caregiver gave an impassioned plea for support to continue home care assistance and physical therapy for his wife and also talked about the frustration he has encountered when trying to navigate the legislative and health care systems. Individual seniors asked persons at all levels of care to treat them with kindness and dignity and requested help in taking care of the little things while the governments and agencies work through the big things. The biggest question of the younger generation: “Do we have to get rich if we plan to get old?”

During the course of the 2-hour dialogue it became apparent that the priority alluded to by each speaker was for each layer of government to accept responsibility to meet the social, physical, and emotional needs of the expanding number of seniors, rich and poor, healthy and infirm, by continuing to develop, fund and offer programs that allow our older population to live in appropriate and caring surroundings.

Many of the speakers stressed the need to continue and/or restore funding for specific programs such as NY Connects, Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Expanded In-Home Services to the Elderly Program (EISEP), Respite Care, Senior Day Programs, Supportive Services Title III B of the Older American Act, and the Kinship Program. However, there were some specific needs identified that could be acted upon. Not all of the identified needs can or should be handled by legislation at the state level. In fact citizens groups, chambers of commerce and local governments can deal with a large portion of the identified needs in an effort to create more livable communities for all.

Financing is the biggest barrier to making changes since there are budget deficits at every level of government and grant funding is drying

up. There also continue to be greater and greater needs as the population ages.

Some of the other problems raised by the panelists and the audience were:

- The lack of collaboration between levels of government.
- The need for walkable communities.
- The need to do more to combat hunger.
- The importance of communication between providers and family caregivers.
- A need for new models of senior housing.
- Affordable assisted living, more government-supported assisted living or subsidized housing with assistance available.
- The need for the state to attract and retain younger workers.

Strategies to solve the problems:

- Identify the services the seniors find most important by asking the seniors and their caregivers what services they use.
- Determine the services needed to keep seniors in their community and the level of funding needed at the local, county, state and federal levels.
- Make information needed to navigate the systems available and easy to understand.
- Engage governments, faith communities, organizations, and individuals in coalition building to assume more responsibility for local citizens.
- Develop a working concept of Community Empowerment.

A sincere thank you to the panelists:

Greg Olson, MSW
Acting Director, NYS Office for the Aging

Hon. Michael G. Breslin
Albany County Executive

Michael Burgess
Former Director, NYS Office for Aging

Catherine Bern-Smith
Senate Committee On Aging

Erin Cunningham
NYS Assembly Committee on Aging

- Submitted by
Patricia Binzer, EdD

FINAL REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE

A detailed report on the proceedings of the program, which includes an account of the problems and solutions as well as a glossary and full list of participants, is available. Email the Capital District Senior Issues Forum at cdsif@yahoo.com or through our Facebook page.

Albany County Names Glassanos New Aging Commissioner

CDSIF Steering Committee Chair Judy Glassanos, RN, has been appointed by Albany County Executive Michael Breslin as Commissioner of the Albany County Department for Aging. The appointment is subject to the approval of the Albany County Legislature.

Judy founded the Stars Intergen Corporation and served as executive director until 2003. She also served as the volunteer coordinator for the Albany County Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program.

“Judy has played a key role in implementing many of the county’s aging programs to enable seniors to remain independent and to provide support for families and caregivers,” said Breslin. “Her active involvement in the community has made her keenly aware of the needs and issues facing seniors. She has the experience and leadership to continue to improve the quality of life for seniors in Albany County.”

Judy is a registered nurse and has worked in area nursing homes and hospitals, most recently in the Teresian House Nursing Home’s Alzheimer’s Dementia Unit.

“I am honored the County Executive has selected me to serve as the commissioner of the Department for Aging,” said Glassanos. “I will continue to strive to uphold the department’s mission to provide the highest quality supportive services to Albany County seniors, their families and caregivers.”



New Initiative to Help Faith Communities Support Aging in Place

Capital District Senior Issues Forum (CDSIF) and Albany Guardian Society are inviting faith-based organizations and the four counties in the Capital District to help develop a 2011 program highlighting “Roles Faith Communities Now Play to Support Seniors Aging in Place” and “Community Resources Available to Help Faith Communities Educate Their Members.”

The program will take advantages of the relationships established by the CDSIF Advisory Committee during the past decade. The Advisory Committee Chair is Deborah Damm O’Brien, Executive Director, DePaul Housing Management, Catholic Charities Housing; Catholic Charities Senior Services; members include K. Balasubramanian, Hindu Temple; Rev. Dr. George Brennan, D. Min., Executive Director, Capital Area Council of Churches; Rev. Robert Graves, Pastor, Welcome Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Albany; and Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beth Emeth, Albany. The Rev. Dr. Brennan will be installed as the Council’s new Executive Director on January 23.

The Forum’s Steering Committee includes representation from Catholic Charities, Capital Area Council of Churches, FOCUS Churches, and Jewish Family Services. Several additional congregations and faith groups have agreed to send representatives to the Planning Committee.

Questions which will be directed to representatives from participating congregations and other faith groups:

- What do you like about your congregation’s (or group’s) outreach and support efforts for seniors aging in place?
- What do you see as unmet needs for seniors with whom you work and who are aging in place?
- Do you ever wish you had information on additional services that are available for families from counties that operate the NY Connects program, from an Alzheimer’s

Disease Assistance Clinic, from Hospice, from Day Care Centers and other programs that support a caregiver with a family member who is aging in place? From other public and private that provide direct services?

Questions for agencies and other providers on the planning committee:

- Can you help meet any of the articulated needs? For an individual congregation? For a group of congregations?
- Would you like to work more closely with faith communities in the future?

Westminster Presbyterian Church of Albany and the Albany County Department for Aging joined with Northeast Health and other downtown Albany churches to sponsor “Fall Festivals for Seniors” in October 2009 and 2010. The program, informally named “one big hug,” successfully got information to individual seniors that they had not previously had.

To get on the mailing list for the initial meeting of the planning committee, please email director@albanyguardiansociety.org or lwilson502@aol.com by January 31.



Legislative Forum on Aging Issues

March 2

NYS Coalition for the Aging, Inc. has scheduled its 2011 Legislative Forum for March 2nd at the Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY in Meeting Room 5 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The theme is “*Health Value of Social Services: Aging in Place IS Affordable.*”

Persons on the Coalition’s email list will receive invitations. To get on the Coalition list, email joanne@coalitionforaging.org.



Fund-raiser for Dementia Care Mission Trip to Ghana

Representatives from Northeast Health, the University at Albany, the Senior Issues Forum, and Westminster Presbyterian Church will be among those invited to a Friday, April 29

fund-raiser and reception at Westminster Church, 85 Chestnut Street, Albany 12210. Ghanaian style meat pies and Ghanaian salad will be served.

The purpose of the 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. program will be to share information and raise money for a 2011 program on dementia care in Ghana – a follow-up to a successful 2009 mission trip.

Katharine Brian-Lawson, Dean, Social Welfare, University at Albany and Diane Van Dusen, LMSW, Clinical manager, Eddy Alzheimer's Services will both talk about what participants in the Church mission trips are learning. Westminster Presbyterian Church of Albany is seeking to put a greater emphasis upon emotional support for patients with dementia – based on what has been learned from Ghanaian Presbyterian Churches.

To get on the April 29 mailing list or to obtain additional information, email Diane Van Dusen (Vandused@nehealth.com) or Lois Wilson (LWilson502@aol.com).



Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) Update

The New York State Department of Health updated the MOLST form in June of 2010 to make it more user-friendly and to align it with the Family Health Care Decisions Act (FHCDA) that went into effect on June 1, 2010.

MOLST instructions and legal requirement checklists for are updated and posted on www.health.state.ny.us.

In addition to the MOLST form itself, the Department has developed legal requirements checklists. These checklists are **NOT** intended for use with patients with developmental disabilities who lack medical decision-making capacity or with patients with mental illness in a mental hygiene facility.

The checklists are intended to assist providers in satisfying the complex legal requirements associated with decisions concerning life-sustaining treatment for all other

patients. They are guidance documents, and the use of these checklists is not mandatory. However, providers that do not use the checklists must use an alternative method for assuring that they adhere strictly to all legal requirements for completing the form, including requirements related to securing informed consent to the medical orders from the proper person, making the clinical judgments necessary to support orders withholding or withdrawing life sustaining treatment and, where applicable, securing ethics committee approval and witnesses to the consent.

The Family Health Care Decisions Act does not eliminate the need for open and honest conversations with loved ones about wishes and desires for medical care. And it does not eliminate the need to have advance care directives on file with your doctors, your attorney and your family members. The Advance Care Planning page on CompassionAndSupport.org has been revised to align with FHCDA.

-- Patricia A. Bomba M.D., F.A.C.P.
Vice President and Medical Director, Geriatrics
Excellus BlueCross BlueShield; Chair, MOLST Statewide
Implementation Team Leader, Community-wide End-of-
life/Palliative Care Initiative .



Vintage Pride - Supporting LGBT Older Adults

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) seniors experience many unique challenges growing older at the intersection of ageism and homophobia. Historical prejudice against today's LGBT seniors may have disrupted their lives, connections to their families of origin, the chance to have and raise their own children, and their opportunities to earn a living and save for retirement. The stigma associated with being LGBT and older continues to stand in the way of full community participation for many LGBT seniors.

LGBT seniors disproportionately experience social isolation. Many seniors find themselves seeking services from providers who have not encountered an openly gay or transgender person, or who are not aware of their unique needs.

To fill this gap, the Capital District Gay and Lesbian Community Council launched a program called Vintage Pride two years ago. The program connects LGBT seniors to each other through a regular schedule of social programs. Vintage Pride staff is available to deliver free training to human service providers about how to welcome LGBT clients and better meet their needs.

To learn about Vintage Pride, to set up training or to get involved, contact Program Director Curran Saile at csaile@cdglcc.org or call 462-6138. Saile said, "We look forward to working with you so that all our region's seniors can experience the best care!"



Where to find reliable health information on the Internet

Today's sources of health-related information are everywhere - on the evening news, in the newspapers, in medication commercials, on the Internet, and on talk shows. Consumers need to be very cautious about who we listen to and what we are being told about our health care needs. Often, these news stories focus on medical "break-throughs" and reports of research studies which are connected to diseases and disorders that tug at our heart strings: cancer, Alzheimer's, autism, to name a few.

We need to approach health news with common sense. Talk with a trusted health care provider and remember that well-meaning friends may not be the best source of information. There are also some websites that provide reliable and well-researched health information.

Medication, vaccines, cosmetics, medical devices information
<http://www.fda.gov/>

Seniors' health issues
<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/>

General health and disease information
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>

Heart, lung and blood vessel diseases
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/>

Food and nutrition information
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/>

General health topics, safety at home, infectious diseases
<http://www.cdc.gov/>

Cancer topics
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics>

-- Submitted by Mary A. Linton, RN, MA

CDSIF INFORMATION



CDSIF Steering Committee Schedule for 2011

CDSIF Steering Committee Chair Judy Glassanos has released meeting dates for 2011:

February 10 8 - 9:30 am

May 12 8 - 9:30 am

August 11 3:30 - 5 p.m.

November 10 8 - 9:30 a.m.

The Albany Guardian Society has graciously offered to host our meetings at 12 Corporate Woods Boulevard, Albany.



Become a CDSIF Fan on Facebook

How familiar are you with Facebook? Did you know that CDSIF has its own page where you can get the latest news, events and activities of the Forum?

If you're not already a Facebook user, become one today! It's free to use, and easy to create your profile just open your web browser and go to www.facebook.com and type in the search Capital District Senior Issues Forum.

We hope you'll LIKE us. See you online!



CDSIF Ceremony Booklet Compilations Seeking a Good Home

CDSIF has about 30 copies of a special publication, *“Lifetime Achievements of Capital Region Seniors: Biographies of 353 Seniors Age 85 and Older Honored by The Capital District Senior Issues Forum, 1998 – 2005”* that must be moved from their storage place. Please contact Bridget Walsh at bwalsh02@verizon.net if you would like one (or more) copies. They are ideal for library, archives and historical societies. Schools may be interested in using them as teaching aids. The biographies are compelling, filled with history and brimming with the accomplishments of the men and women of the Capital District.

Personal News of Senior Honorees

Our sympathy to the families and friends of:

- Doris M. Bradt, age 92. A 2004 honoree, she died October 29, 2010.
- Ruth N. Carpenter, age 92. A 2005 honoree, she died April 8, 2010.
- Evelyn Chapman, age 99. A 2005 honoree in Albany, she died September 3, 2010.
- Marjorie Crangle, age 93. A 2007 honoree, she died October 7, 2010.
- Goldie Crenshaw, age 95. A 2002 honoree, she died January 1, 2011.
- Doris R. Creegan, age 92. A 2005 honoree in Albany, she died September 21, 1910.
- William Davis, age 97. A 2001 honoree, he died December 10, 2010.
- Katherine (Kay) Dixon, age 92. A 2009 honoree, she died March 27, 2010.
- Margaret M. Doolin, age 96. A 2002 honoree, she died December 13, 2010.
- Peter J. Endres, age 98. A 2007 honoree, he died June 18, 2010.
- Anita Gilbert, age 89. A 2008 honoree, she died December 22, 2009.
- William Gilbert, age 87. A 2009 honoree, he died December 8, 2010.

- Dorothy Haker, age 95. A 2000 honoree, she died July 11, 2010.
- Helen M. Hughes, age 92. A 2005 honoree in Albany, she died December 3, 2010.
- Mary Hughes, age 95. A 2003 honoree, she died March 8, 2010.
- Frederick A. Klemm, age 97. A 2005 honoree in Albany, he died Nov. 29, 2010.
- Lucille (Lu) Knighton, age 92. A 2003 honoree, she died August 27, 2010.
- Gladys Maguire, age 98. A 2005 honoree, she died March 26, 2010.
- James McKee Jr., age 91. A 2003 honoree, he died July 6, 2010.
- Jane Ordway, age 94. A 2003 honoree, she died September 13, 2010.
- Helen Quirini, age 90. A 2005 honoree in Schenectady, she died October 14, 2010.
- Marion Rising, age 102. A 1998 honoree, she died September 16, 2010.
- Antonie Semenak, age 90. A 2006 honoree, she died November 23, 2010.
- Robert Shedd, age 88. A 2007 honoree, he died June 12, 2010.
- Peter Tezbir, age 93. A 2004 honoree, he died August 20, 2010.
- Leslie A. Warner, 93. A 2002 honoree, he died January 1, 2011.

Forum Address

Send contributions and mailing list corrections to:
Capital District Senior Issues Forum, P.O. Box 367, Glenmont, NY 12077. Checks payable to Catholic Charities; memo: “Sr. Issues Forum.”

The Capital District Senior Issues Forum is a voluntary initiative among faith communities, organizations and individuals that provides support for seniors in the Capital District through education and dialogue.

Newsletter Editors: Lois Wilson, Bridget Walsh



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The April newsletter will report on nominations for the 2011 Lifetime Achievement Awards Ceremony.

Capital District Senior Issues Forum
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