



Central Vermont Council on Aging

Information and Resources for Seniors

February/March 2010

Governor's Budget Severs the Safety Net for Seniors

Proposed cuts include:

- ◆ Elimination of state grants to the Neighbor to Neighbor AmeriCorps (N2N), Senior Companion (SC), Foster Grandparents and Long Term Care Ombudsman programs. Without these state grants to leverage federal funds, we may lose the N2N and SC programs.
- ◆ Curtailing services and payments for case management and personal care services in the Choices for Care program.
- ◆ Cuts to Area Agencies on Aging, Adult Day programs and transportation for dialysis.
- ◆ Elimination of programs in senior housing.
- ◆ Elimination of the Direct Care Worker Registry and the Home Access Program.



"There is no way to sugar-coat this: Governor Douglas' proposed 2011 budget is a disaster for seniors. This budget essentially reverses the progress the state has made in shifting the balance from more expensive nursing home care to less expensive home based care."

Beth Stern,
CVCOA Executive Director

What does this mean to elders and their families, to CVCOA and to Vermont?

If we lose Neighbor to Neighbor AmeriCorps:

- ◆ Over 700 seniors and people with disabilities lose over 1000 hours of direct services.
- ◆ Over 5000 seniors in Vermont lose over 300 healthy aging programs.
- ◆ Vermont loses the 20 jobs held by members each year.
- ◆ Vermont loses over \$200,000 in federal funds.

If we lose the Senior Companion program:

- ◆ Over 70 low income elders will lose their small stipend, and a unique opportunity to remain physically and mentally active.
- ◆ The 400 frail seniors they support will lose over 70,000 hours of companionship, transportation and activity, allowing them to stay at home.
- ◆ Vermont loses over \$300,000 in federal funds.



"Each of these programs represents a spoke in the wheel of helping seniors stay independent at home, stay active and healthy, and allow them and their caregivers access to information that they need. If these programs weaken or disappear, the stability of the service system for seniors becomes compromised and unable to function effectively."



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Our Mission

Central Vermont Council on Aging (CVCOA) supports elders and family caregivers in leading healthy, independent, meaningful and dignified lives in their homes & communities.

CVCOA serves adults 60 years of age and older, as well as family members and caregivers.

We serve 54 towns, including all towns in the counties of Lamoille, Orange (except Thetford) and Washington, and also the towns of Bethel, Granville, Hancock, Pittsfield, Rochester, Royalton, Sharon and Stockbridge.

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Central VT Council on Aging
 30 Washington Street
 Barre, VT 05641
 Phone: 802-479-0531 (V/TTY)
 Fax: 1-802-479-4235
 Toll free: 1-877-379-2600
 Email: cvcoa@cvcoa.org
 www.cvcoa.org

Editor: Jeanne Kern
 jkern@cvcoa.org

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Director's Corner

Beth Stern
 Executive Director



Safety Net Severed, continued

If cuts to Central Vermont Council on Aging and other Area Agencies on Aging are imposed:

- ◆ Fewer elders and their families will be served.
- ◆ Cuts would **reduce staffing** in our Case Management program, eliminating services for hundreds of seniors and their families.
- ◆ It would also affect our ability to pay senior centers and meals programs for Congregate and Home Delivered Meals, meaning **possible waiting lists or the loss of thousands of meals.**
- ◆ We would have to **eliminate our caregiver respite funds**, which provide hundreds of hours of needed respite for family caregivers.

What can we do to prevent this erosion of services to elders?

Those who work with and serve elders know that this is the toughest budget year we have seen in years. We know that everyone must share the pain and that everyone must compromise. We are ready to discuss how we can help with these decisions in ways that do the least harm to vulnerable seniors. We have ideas that generate sustainable income for these services and do not decimate the home based service infrastructure to the point of no return.

“These and other programs mentioned are low cost alternatives that bring in many millions of federal dollars and save the state money by preventing unnecessary emergency room use and nursing home admission. According to a nationwide research study, investing \$1 in senior nutrition programs saves \$3.25 in health care costs.”

Please help preserve the safety net for seniors. Call or write your legislator and tell them what these programs mean to you. Write letters to the editor. Testify at the statehouse or let us tell your story for you. We can provide you with more details about the cuts or with assistance in any of the above activities. Together, we can succeed!

Without Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) AmeriCorps...

Clients such as the gentleman in Post Mills would not have received help repairing his bookshelf and cleaning up the clutter that had made his entryway almost impassable. This was preventing him from making a badly needed call to a plumber.

CVCOA's team of four N2N members - Marie, Sandy, Brianna & Leslie - have already visited and assisted over 87 elders. A short list of services performed includes: packing/sorting/cleaning for moves; computer help; shoveling snow & stacking wood; organizing a kitchen; transportation to doctor's appointments & surgeries; and providing socialization.



"If a request is not within our bounds to accomplish, either too technical or long term, we recruit volunteers to take up where we leave off," explains Sarah Semler, Regional Coordinator. *"This winter our volunteer handyman, George, fixed a door that had been broken into and now this elderly woman can lock her door again. We continue to successfully match people with volunteers who can provide friendly visits and transportation to exercise programs and doctor's appointments."*

Without N2N members the community will lose a variety of Healthy Aging Programs (HAPs). A sampling of the HAPs offered currently:

- ◆ *RSVP Bone Builder programs at Project Independence in Barre, Pioneer Apartments in Montpelier, the Roxbury Senior Center & Williamstown Square.*
- ◆ *Laughter Yoga at Lamoille View Senior Housing in Morrisville, Project Independence & Pioneer Apartments.*
- ◆ *Seated Yoga at Riverbend Residential Care Home in Chelsea & the Randolph Senior Center.*
- ◆ *Food safety and nutrition programs in Orange county.*
- ◆ *Art instruction at Out and About in Morrisville.*

Take the Pledge to End Senior Hunger

Nearly 6 million seniors face the threat of hunger according to a 2007 research report sponsored by the Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA). What can you do?

Take the Pledge to End Senior Hunger by 2020. Visit www.mowaa.org/pledge and become one of the 6 million people MOWAA is recruiting to stand up and pledge to do what it takes to end senior hunger. Generate awareness of senior hunger in your community. Make a donation to CVCOA's Nutrition Program or your local Meals on Wheels program. Become a volunteer driver. Help out in the kitchen preparing meals.

CVCOA encourages you to visit the website and take the pledge. Please click on "I volunteer" or "I work" and complete the form, naming CVCOA or your local mealsite/Meals on Wheels program as the organization you support. Your "pledge" will help in the fight to end hunger, and each signature will help raise funds for CVCOA or your local meal program. Thank you for doing your part *"so that no senior goes hungry."*



If the Senior Companion Program Didn't Exist...

Betty Bell, 77, who has been serving as a Senior Companion for over 6 years, would lose her \$2.65/hour stipend and the elders she serves would lose her companionship and help. A typical 40 hour week for Betty?

- ◆ *I take a woman to visit her husband in a nursing home and then we go to the bank.*
- ◆ *I help a client get dressed and take her to the senior center for lunch. Sometimes we go to a friend's house for lunch.*



Senior Companion Ruth Hood (l.) shopping with Donna Keough at Rite Aid in Montpelier. Ruth helps Donna & her husband Harold who is wheelchair bound with errands during the winter.

- ◆ *I visit a 94 year old woman who is very frail but still likes to get out for a ride to the dollar store. She lives in the home she was born in as did her father and grandfather.*
- ◆ *I bring word games to a 96 year old woman and take another client with a fractured hip to church on Sundays.*
- ◆ *I bring a client to the senior center for lunch and then out for small errands and a stop at the pharmacy.*

All of the Senior Companions have similar weeks helping elders in their steadfast and conscientious way, making a difference one person at a time.

CVCOA has 15 Senior Companions going strong, visiting 94 elders in their homes, keeping their spirits up and providing daily help to get through what is increasingly a complicated world.

All About Alzheimer's...

An education program for family caregivers of those with Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders.

April 6th Part I & April 13th Part II
6:00 - 9:00 pm at Central Vermont Hospital

Gain a basic understanding of memory loss, dementia & Alzheimer's disease. Learn about changes in communication, function & behavior, as well as practical information & strategies to help deal with those changes.

Call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-642-5119
or visit www.cvcoa.org for a registration form & more information

Presented by the VT Alzheimer's Assn & sponsored by CVCOA.

Dear CVCOA:

... I am sending a small donation to the Council in recognition of the marvelous, helpful and most courteous service provided to Mrs. Stone and me by Ellie Hayes last month when we considered changing our Medicare D drug plans. Ellie knew exactly how to proceed and was both helpful and thorough in explaining the ups and downs of the various offerings.

Thanks to Ellie, I believe we are well on our way to a more cost effective year with our prescription drug program.

Thanks very much.

Sincerely,
 John C. Stone II and Marcia K. Stone

Gemma's Legacy



"I think RSVP, Senior Companion and Neighbor to Neighbor are the best programs!" enthuses Gemma Philcox.

"I came out of retirement for the third time eleven years ago," she laughs, "to begin working as an administrative assistant for RSVP." Now 90, Gemma continues to work at home on her computer in her Barre apartment, taking occasional trips into the office.

Why? She likes the work.
"You have to keep your mind open and working."

Gemma's Legacy:

Gift of money to RSVP

Gift of wisdom to all:

"Keep your mind open and working."

And she is committed to RSVP and its mission to meet community needs through meaningful use of skills and knowledge in volunteer service to non-profit organizations. So much so, that Gemma is leaving a legacy to the program. Gemma has a proviso on her IRA that any remaining funds after her death will come to CVCOA to be used by RSVP.

Why is she giving? "The Council on Aging has a number of programs that benefit people like myself." Case managers and the Senior Helpline staff "make things clear and help in every way they can" to connect elders to programs and benefits that help them remain independent.

You too can leave a legacy of commitment & support to the elders in our communities.

We invite you to speak to us and to consult your legal/ financial counselors about including CVCOA in your will.

And don't forget to share all the wisdom it took you a lifetime to learn....

Contributions in honor of:

Ritch & Amy Berger

- Nick Marro & Linda Berger

CVCOA Employees

- John J. Gardner,
Gardner Insurance Services

Suzan Condon

- Ilse Krutak

Muffie Conlon

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The Skinner Family

- Karin & Stephen Barndollar

Contributions in memory of:

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- Robert Borden

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- Sen. Bill Doyle

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- Clifton Thompson
- Vermont Federal Credit Union



Thank You!

Thank you for helping elders in our communities to age with independence and dignity through your generous support of CVCOA and its many programs, including Home Share of Central Vermont, RSVP, Senior Companion and Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) AmeriCorps.

We apologize for any names we may have inadvertently omitted.

Donations received October 2009 - January 2010

Jane B. Cook 1992 Charitable Foundation . . . \$10,000 grant to Home Share of Central Vermont (HSCVT)

Max & Victoria Dreyfus Foundation . . . \$7500 grant to HSCVT

Meals on Wheels Association of America/ Walmart Impact Grant . . . \$5715 grant to CVCOA

Jack & Dorothy Byrne Foundation, Inc. . . . \$ 5000 donation to N2N AmeriCorps

Citizens Bank . . . \$2000 donation to HSCVT

Anonymous . . . \$1000 donation to CVCOA

Peter Bachman & Annie Christopher Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation . . . \$1000 donation to CVCOA

John Gardner, Gardner Insurance Services . . . \$1000 donation to HSCVT

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Central Vermont Council on Aging
30 Washington Street
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CVCOA — helping central Vermonters age with independence and dignity.

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The Art of Creative Aging

In celebration of Older Americans Month in May, Central Vermont Council on Aging is presenting *The Art of Creative Aging*. We are inviting older (70+) visual artists living in the CVCOA service area to submit recent original work for a juried show which will be on display from May 1st through June 30th at the Kellogg- Hubbard Library in Montpelier.

A reception will be held at the library on Thursday, May 6th, 6 to 8 pm to meet the artists. A silent auction of the artwork will begin that evening, and continue throughout the two-month exhibit.

“ Creativity makes us more emotionally resilient and better able to cope with life’s adversity and losses. Just as exercise improves our muscle tone, when we are creatively engaged, our emotional tone is elevated.”

Gene Cohen, MD, PhD,
author of *The Mature Mind:
The Positive Power of the Aging Brain*

Interested artists will submit three photographs of their art (created since their 70th birthday) for review by the jury. The deadline for submission is April 1st. Photos are to be mailed to CVCOA Creative Aging, 30 Washington Street, Barre VT 05641. If chosen to exhibit their work, artists will establish a minimum bid considering 40% of the sale for CVCOA.

For more information, please contact Margaret Harmon at mharmon@cvcoa.org or 229-0624.



Costantino Genini, E tcher
(1904 -1998) of Barre, at age 84.

Photograph by Jamie Cope