Everyone Wins with Adult Family Care
From the desk of Roseann Martoccia, Executive Director

Home is where everyone would like to be. Care in a family setting offers people comfort and meets their needs for long term services and support.

WMEC’s Adult Family Care (AFC) Program helps people be supported in the home of a family member who is their primary caregiver, or in the home of a host family. In either case, the emphasis is on family care. A family member may be the paid caregiver for a relative with the exception of one’s spouse, guardian or active power of attorney. An interdisciplinary team of WMEC Case Management and Nursing staff assesses the participant’s needs, and then works with the caregiver and participant to develop a care plan that is designed to meet the participant’s personal health and wellness goals. Care is provided at home with a private room, meals and transportation to appointments, and assistance with personal care and household tasks.

Adult Family Care (also called Adult Foster Care) creates a win-win situation for both caregivers and care recipients. Caregivers are compensated for caring for a loved one which is helpful if caregiving does not allow them to work outside the home. Non-related caregivers are compensated for using their skills and talents to provide care by opening their home to someone needing care and support. For the person receiving care, they are at home and included in the household activities, family time and outings. Often this family care model is combined with other services like Adult Day Health or other day programs so the person remains engaged in the community and caregivers get a break from 24/7 caregiving. The caregiver receives a non-taxable monthly payment for providing room, meals, and help with physical assistance and transportation. Medical and non-medical leaves of absences are part of the annual calendar for AFC caregivers, in the event care out of the home is needed for the recipient, as well as to provide the caregiver well deserved time off. Mass Health, third party payers and private pay options are available to cover the costs of the program.

Our Call Center staff are available to answer questions and help you navigate resources for in home and community support. Whether you are an elder, an adult with disabilities or chronic condition, or a parent/guardian of a child with special needs, contact WMEC to explore in home supports and services. Adult Family Care is available to anyone 16 and over, and is a great option if you would like to open your home and heart or if you are already supporting a loved one at home as a caregiver. WMEC’s AFC program is accredited through the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) in Case Management for Long Term Services and Supports. This accreditation demonstrates WMEC’s commitment to quality service for participants, caregivers and our health care partners.

Continue reading to learn about the many benefits of Adult Family Care from a WMEC caregiver’s perspective!

Family care for your loved one, peace of mind for you.

Our Adult Foster Care Program supports older adults and people with disabilities in your family’s home or in a host family’s home.

www.wmeldercare.org | (413) 538-9020
Ask Heidi Flagg why she serves as a caregiver for WMEC’s Adult Family Care (AFC) program, and you can tell from her response that caring for others is just in her nature.

“I became involved in AFC in 2007, when my aunt Theresa (who had Down Syndrome) needed help,” shared Heidi, who is mom to Austin, 16, and Madison, 15. “I felt good knowing that my family could give Theresa a home and family, instead of her having to live in a long-term care facility.”

A few years after the Flaggs took in Theresa, they opened their home to another AFC consumer named Susan. According to Heidi, Susan quickly became “a regular member of the family” and remains so to this day.

Heidi is quick to point out that the benefit of the AFC program is mutual. “Theresa was like a sister to my kids,” she shared. “Susan helps out with Austin and Madison a lot. She reads to them and plays games with them, and really thinks of them as her grandkids. It’s truly a blessing for us to have this experience. We’ve enjoyed it so much!”

If you would like to learn more about WMEC’s Adult Family Care program, please contact Michael Keefe (mkeefe@wmeldercare.org or 413-538-9020, ext. 341), contact our Information and Referral staff (413-538-9020, info@wmeldercare.org) or chat with us at www.wmeldercare.org.

Memory Training Workshop Coming to Ware

Did you know that WMEC offers several FREE evidence-based trainings to elders and caregivers throughout the year?

This spring, we are excited to team up with the Ware Senior Center to offer a new program called “Memory Training.”

Memory Training is an innovative, educational course that teaches individuals techniques to improve their memory in a fun, interactive classroom environment. It combines trainer presentations with group discussions, memory checks, and skill-building exercises for people with mild memory concerns. Each course is 2 hours, once per week, for 4 consecutive weeks.

We focus on the four top memory challenges:

- Forgetting names and faces
- Forgetting to do things in the future...like keeping an appointment, passing on a phone message, or forgetting why you walked into a room
- Forgetting where you put things like keys, glasses or a wallet
- Inability to immediately recall something you know (“tip of the tongue” memory slips).

The course is not intended for people with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia; rather, it’s for those who are experiencing normal age-related memory challenges.

Registration is required and will fill up fast for this popular workshop! Please contact Ginger Cruickshank (413/538-9020, ext. 337 or vcruickshank@wmeldercare.org) to sign up.

Stand Up and Be Counted! What to Know About the 2020 Census

Every 10 years, the United States counts everyone living in the country on April 1, regardless of their nationality or living situation. Below are common questions about the Census.

What’s in it for me?
The 2020 Census is an opportunity to create a better future for our communities and the next generation by providing an up-to-date count of our population. The data collected will help determine how over $675 billion in federal funding is distributed each year for things like Medicare and Medicaid, housing assistance, public transportation, and elder services. In addition, Census data will determine your political representation for the next 10 years at local, state, and federal levels.

Will my information be shared?
Your personal information is protected by law and is never released to other local, state or federal agencies. Your census responses are confidential, and will not affect your tax status or your insurance premiums.

Will it take a lot of time to respond to the Census?
Responding to the Census is easy. You can do it online or over the phone in 13 languages, or wait for the paper form to be delivered to you.

Learn more at 2020census.gov.
WMEC is proud to announce that it is participating in March for Meals – a month-long, nationwide celebration of Meal on Wheels and our senior neighbors who rely on the vital service to remain healthy and independent at home.

Now in its 18th year, March for Meals commemorates the historic day in March 1972 when President Nixon signed into law a measure that amended the Older Americans Act of 1965 and established a national nutrition program for seniors 60 years and older. This national campaign generates public awareness about senior hunger and isolation, and celebrates the invaluable services provided by senior nutrition programs like those offered by WestMass ElderCare.

“The month of March is a fitting time to not only celebrate the successful history of Meals on Wheels, but also bring us together to support a solution that will strengthen communities into the future,” said Ellie Hollander, President and CEO of Meals on Wheels America. “With 12,000 Americans turning 60 each day, now is the time to invest in these vital programs so that we can provide every senior in need with the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks that will enable them to live healthier and independent in their own homes.”

WMEC celebrated March for Meals by inviting local leaders and legislators to join our Meals on Wheels Open House on Friday, March 6. Local leaders were teamed up with a WMEC Meals on Wheels Driver to deliver hot meals to their homebound constituents.

Want to support Meals on Wheels?
Look for our “March for Meals” donation boxes at your local stores and restaurants throughout March, or donate online at www.wmeldercare.org.

**Want to Lower Your Medicare Costs?**

On January 1, 2020 the income and asset limits for the Medicare Savings Programs (also called the “MassHealth Buy-In”) increased. If you qualify, these programs will pay your Part B premium and in some cases your Part A and B deductibles, co-pays and Part A premium (if you have one). In addition, you will automatically receive Extra Help, a program that will lower your Medicare Part D premium and co-pays.

To qualify, your income and assets must be below the following thresholds:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Assets</th>
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<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married Couple</td>
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Prescription drug co-payments with Extra Help effective 1-1-20:

- Generic: Per 30-Day Supply $3.60
- Brand Name: $8.95

Questions about how to apply for the Medicare Savings Plan?
WMEC’s SHINE Counselors can assist you with the application process and any questions you may have. Call 1-800-538-9020 or email info@wmeldercare.org.

Interested in Receiving Our Newsletter by Email?
WestMass ElderCare is offering our Changing Seasons Newsletter via email. If you would like to receive our newsletter by email (instead of a paper copy mailed to your home/office), please provide us with your email address. Please put “Newsletter” in the subject line and send to: newsletter@wmeldercare.org

(Disclaimer: It is the policy of WestMass ElderCare to protect email addresses provided to us. We will not share your email with other individuals or organizations).
Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of $____________________
In Memory of________________________________________
In Honor of_________________________________________
Name:________________________________________________________
Address:______________________________________________________
City:___________________________ State:__________ Zip:___________
Email Address:_______________________________________________

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WestMass ElderCare

4 Valley Mill Road, Holyoke, MA 01040

WMEC Services include:
- Adult Family Care
- Adult Day Health
- Care Coordination
- Care Management
- Care Transitions
- Caregiver Support & Respite Care
- Community Dining
- In Home Care
- Housing Options
- Information & Referral
- Meals on Wheels
- Money Management/Bill Pay
- Nursing Home Selection and Screening
- Ombudsman Service
- Options Counseling
- Personal Care Assistance
- Rainbow Supper Club
- SHINE (health insurance counseling)
- Transportation Support
- Volunteer Opportunities & Internships

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES OUR MISSION POSSIBLE!

If you do not want to receive future fundraising requests supporting WestMass ElderCare please call us at 413-538-9020 to have yourself removed from our mailing list.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!