

# **"Health and Resources: Using Free Services in Your Community"**

**November 10, 2007 - 21 O' Fallon**

**Lorie Ledbetter, St. Louis Area Agency for Aging**

**Introduction:** We welcome Lorie Ledbetter from the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging to our monthly meeting. Prime Timers are interested in this agency for three reasons. First, we want to understand how your agency operates because we will eventually be clients of your agency. It is important for us to know how to access your services and to insure that they are delivered in a professional, supportive and nondiscriminatory manner. Second, many of us are caregivers for seniors in our family or among our gay friends. Again we want to insure that this care is professional, supportive and without discrimination for the ones we love. Third, as an organization, we are interested in the following: 1) preparing our members for the challenges of aging, 2) providing social activities that help prevent isolation, alienation and depression associated with aging and 3) partnering with other organizations who share our goal of insuring professional, supportive care for every aging senior whatever their sexual orientation.

Lorie handed out brochures on the various services provided by the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging. She explained that the agency's objective is to help seniors live independently in their own home as long as they can. This objective is accomplished by providing "In Home Services", "Community Services" and "Ombudsman Services for Complaint Resolution."

Lorie proceeded to highlight each of the services. They are listed below and taken from the website of the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging at <http://stlouis.missouri.org/government/hslaaa.html> .

## **In Home Services**

- **Home Delivered Meals** (sometimes called "Meals on Wheels") This meal provides one third of the daily recommended nutrition, five days a week, to persons who cannot shop and prepare food for themselves.
- **Personal Care:** Provides (non-medical) hands-on care that is needed for daily living. Contractors make regularly scheduled visits and follow a written care plan. Tasks include bathing, shampooing hair and shaving.
- **Homemaker Chore Services** provides cooking, cleaning, laundry and general household tasks that do not involve direct care of the older person.
- **Respite Care:** helps family members who are caring for an older relative in their home by giving them a break or respite, from care giving responsibilities. Individual care for an older person in their home or an Adult Day Center may be utilized while primary care giver is away.

## Community Services

- **Senior Centers with Meals Programs:** St. Louis has 23 senior centers and 12 nutrition sites in public housing that support nutrition, social, physical and recreational activities. Their programs are well planned and supervised, and are developed carefully to get people involved.
- **Transportation Services** allow older persons to access other needed services such as medical, shopping, senior centers and necessary businesses.
- **Information & Referral Services** can answer questions about the availability of service, the eligibility requirements and how to contact the appropriate agency.
- **Health Promotion:** SLAAA has a new contract with a medical doctor to provide health promotion/disease prevention services, such as education about good health habits, physical fitness, and proper nutrition.
- **Senior Community Employment Program (Title V)** provides employment training opportunities for eligible seniors aged 55 and over.
- **Legal Assistance:** Contract with Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Inc. to help safeguard the rights and interests of older persons, to protect them and their property, and to provide advice and counsel to older persons and their families with financial and business concerns, such as Power of Attorney, Advance Health Care Directives, Guardianship, and Wills.
- **Housing Options:** SLAAA fosters development of additional housing alternatives, such as, home sharing, group residences, and exchanging housing equity for needed cash.

## Institutional Services/Ombudsman Services for Complaint Resolution

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program to investigate and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of older St. Louisans who are residents of long term care facilities.

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*Notes prepared by Dennis Hostetler, Secretary of Prime Timers St. Louis*