

Area Agency on Aging *Connections*

ACAAA sponsors annual Day of Learning and Appreciation

By Daniel Casciato
For Pittsburgh Senior News

Direct care workers form the backbone of Allegheny County's long-term care system. These workers go into the homes of seniors who have disabilities or a chronic illness and they assist them with homemaking and personal care; they also provide services in adult day care settings.

Because of the challenges and relatively low pay that come with the job, it's becoming more difficult to find people who will do this work. Five years ago, the state provided the Direct Care Worker Initiative grant to all

of the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) for the purpose of recruitment and retention of direct care workers. The Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging (ACAAA) set aside a portion of their funds to hold an annual Days of Learning and Appreciation.

"The purpose is to honor and recognize our direct care workers and let them have a wonderful day," said Janet Mitchell, consultant for ACAAA.

The day also includes educational seminars to discuss common diseases and treatments that direct care workers encounter in caring for senior consumers. There are also educational programs for

the workers' own personal health and well being.

This year's two-day event, called Let Your Spirit Soar 2007, featured Alzheimer's disease and dementia because they present some of the most frequent challenges faced by workers. The primary focus for the day was on stroke prevention and knowing the signs and symptoms. Workers were also able to do their own personal screening. Other programs presented at the event helped workers who care for seniors who have had a stroke.

The event was held April 24 and 25 at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Nearly 100 people attended each day. Because ACAAA is pulling close to 200 workers out of the field, they always make this a two-day event instead of one day to minimize the impact it has on the agencies and consumers they serve.

Funds are set aside from the grant to reimburse the workers for a workday, which is important because many of them cannot afford to lose a day's pay.

"We don't do enough for these workers," said Janet. "They are wonderful people and I don't think many realize what good people they are." *PSN*

May Menu

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
This menu is for senior centers and home-delivered meals funded in part by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Area Agency on Aging.	¹ Stuffed pepper, whipped potatoes, tossed salad, mixed fruit.	² City chicken, gourmet potatoes, glazed carrots, strawberry rhubarb pie.	³ Smothered Swiss steak, noodles, green beans, orange.	⁴ Chicken leg and thigh, basil and tomato couscous, spinach salad, apple.
⁷ Lemon pepper cod, stewed tomatoes and zucchini, pickled beets, bananas.	⁸ Hot turkey sandwich, whipped potatoes, mixed vegetables, jelly roll.	⁹ Porcupine meatballs, cauliflower, tomato corn salsa, apple.	¹⁰ Tuna tomato pasta, tossed salad, green beans, lime sorbet.	¹¹ Moroccan chicken and rice, broccoli, peach slices.
¹⁴ Roast beef, whipped potatoes, vegetable medley, apricots.	¹⁵ Ham balls, red cabbage, whipped yams, brownie.	¹⁶ Tuna and pea salad, tomatoes, pasta shell salad, gelatin with fruit cocktail.	¹⁷ Beef Lombardi, tossed salad, apple.	¹⁸ Chunky chicken salad, broccoli slaw, potato salad, raspberry sherbet.
²¹ Turkey breast, glazed yams, brussels sprouts, pear halves.	²² Pasta and cheese, tossed salad, fruit.	²³ Meatloaf, garlic whipped potatoes, carrots, chocolate pound cake.	²⁴ Baked ham, scalloped potatoes, mixed vegetables, blueberry crisp.	²⁵ Cold plate: Tropical chicken salad, cherry tomatoes, watermelon gelatin.
²⁸ Memorial Day: Closed	²⁹ Round steak, rosemary potatoes, vegetables, apple raisin crisp.	³⁰ Chicken leg and thigh, au gratin potatoes, tomatoes and cucumbers, cookies.	³¹ Stuffed cabbage, whipped potatoes, tossed salad, Klondike.	Centers are open Monday through Friday. Call (412) 350-5460 for more information.