

Area Agency on Aging *Connections*

Accessing services is easy with ACAA's SeniorLine

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For Pittsburgh Senior News

Pittsburgh resident Pam Hintz needed help for her mother, 73-year-old Corrine Puglin, who was in need of personal care.

Pam didn't know where to begin; then she heard about SeniorLine of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Area Agency on Aging (ACAAA).

"The SeniorLine was a lifesaver," Pam said. "They helped me out with the application process" and within a relatively short time, she reports, "my mom began to receive personal care services. I'm so glad I called the SeniorLine. It may not sound like a big deal, but parents can run you ragged and if you can get help, it's worth it. I don't know what I would do without their help."

ACAAA offers programs and services for seniors ranging from the more independent to those who are frail and require assistance to remain at home.

Corrine, a West Mifflin resident, has someone come to her apartment now for two hours a day to clean, do her laundry and help her take a shower. Because of her income level, the services are free for Corrine.

"It helps me out so much because I work full time and running back and forth for her was becoming difficult," said Pam. "I've been very pleased and happy with the service they've been providing for her. They've been a big help to both me and my mom. Now I can visit with her and don't have to worry about doing chores."



Chuck LeClaire/Pittsburgh Senior News

Riverview Community Action Center Executive Director Don Butler details the exciting programs offered to client Ann Cramer.

Pam had special praise for the ACAA caseworkers.

"They have all been so nice and they take the time to listen to you," she said. "This agency has been helpful and so quick - that's what was so nice about the process. I highly recommend the ACAA and SeniorLine to others going through the same thing with their parents."

Many caregivers and seniors do not know who to call or what services can be provided; SeniorLine is the main point of entry to ACAA services and their network of providers.

ACAAA offers programs and services for seniors ranging from the more independent to those who are frail and require assistance to remain at home. By calling SeniorLine (412) 350-5460, you can reach professional care managers who can assist with information and referral on ACAA services and community programs. In addition, care managers may also provide assistance with applications to entitlement programs such as: Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly (PACE), Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Property Tax

assistance programs and Rental Rebate.

When calling SeniorLine, you will be connected with a care manager who can answer questions about aging-related services and guide you through the application process for necessary services.

According to Ethel Novogradac, ACAA's information and referral aging care manager supervisor, if you are a senior who requires assistance to remain in your home, ACAA can provide information on a number of programs and services that will enable you to do so. If a senior is deemed "in need" and they agree to a visit, an onsite assessment is arranged in the person's place of residence.

"We will have someone come and visit you to answer any of your questions and learn about your needs and how we can help," explains Ethel. "Then we can help you to explore the best care options for you."

Care options can include senior companions, caregiver support or respite care, home delivered meals, chore service, personal assistance with daily living activities, adult foster care, home

health care and nursing home alternatives. If you have questions about these types of ongoing services, begin by calling SeniorLine.

ACAAA also serves independent, well seniors by providing an array of life enrichment activities. "We help seniors of all ages and health conditions," Ethel said. "If you're simply looking for something to do in your community, or if you want to participate as a volunteer, our information and referral coordinators can give you a general idea of what's happening in your particular neighborhood."

Some programs for healthy seniors includes various volunteer placements, senior work training and employment opportunities, and a host of enlivening exercise and wellness programs at senior community centers.

Anyone can contact SeniorLine—consumers, concerned family members, friends, neighbors and professionals in the community (such as social workers, home health agencies and clergy) can call on behalf of consumers. You do not need to have power of attorney to make the call.

Information about ACAA's various services can be accessed in three ways:

- Call SeniorLine at (412) 350-5460. If you are hearing impaired, contact ACAA at (412) 350-2727 to obtain use of a TDD/TTY machine.
- Visit ACAA at www.county.allegheny.pa.us/dhs/aaa/
- Visit one of ACAA's partner agencies. All of these supporting agencies welcome walk-in consumers and are more than willing to answer any questions or concerns you might have. Information and referral coordinators are available at the locations to assist you with information on programs and resources, and can provide assistance with applications to entitlement programs. To obtain a list of the agencies, visit www.county.allegheny.pa.us/dhs/aaa/help.asp or call SeniorLine. *PSN*