

FREE TRAINING: BECOME AN ADVOCATE FOR ELDERS!

Learn to advocate for residents of local long-term care facilities

Want to volunteer to make a difference in your community? The next Long-Term Care Ombudsman training is your chance! Volunteers in Greenfield, Shelburne Falls, Athol, and Turners Falls are especially needed.

Attend the next free volunteer training for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program on October 3 and 4, 2018, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and October 5, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with breaks for lunch, in Holyoke, Mass.

With questions or to apply, call Trevor Boeding, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program director at LifePath, at 413-773-5555 x2241 or 978-544-2259 x2241, or email tboeding@LifePathMA.org. Even if you can't make it to this training, you can still reach out to be added to the list for a future session. Find application materials and more information at LifePathMA.org.

Robert Amyot has visited with and advocated for residents living at Quabbin Valley Healthcare as a volunteer Ombudsman with LifePath for

over five years. "I've always seemed to relate well talking to people who are my age or older," says Robert.

"The skills helpful to be an Ombudsman are good people skills, good listening skills, level-headedness, and comfort in helping to advocate for another's needs to be met," says Trevor. "It is not necessary to have healthcare knowledge or experience. Training is provided to fill in the gaps."

This summer, Robert received an award for his work to improve the quality of life for those living in the North Quabbin region through LifePath's Ombudsman program.

When he first started volunteering all those years ago, Robert found he was nervous. "Especially when you start out, you really need a lot of guidance."

The structure of the ongoing training put his mind at ease. Robert and Trevor did introductory visits together. "I always keep his phone number handy," says Robert. "I can call from my car if I need to have an answer right away."

Regular meetings with other Ombudsman volunteers have also helped him along the way. "We can hear what a variety of other situations are occurring," says Robert, which helps with similar situations that may arise in the future.

Such situations have included:

- helping a resident get the the help they need to locate missing or lost clothing or other personal items
- helping a resident to have their dietary needs met, i.e. vegetarian, creamers with coffee, etc.
- ensuring residents have access to information about their choices and options, both at the facility and in the community
- making sure their rights are respected
- helping to improve quality of life for residents by advocating for activities

Thanks to the Ombudsman, "People are so much better off and happier," says Robert. "It gives me a lot of satisfaction to be able to advocate for them."

Interested volunteers must successfully complete the application process, which includes CORI, reference checks, and an interview with the program director, before attending the training. Volunteers are reimbursed for their mileage to and from the facility to which they are assigned.



Robert Amyot, a Long-Term Care Ombudsman volunteer with LifePath, recently received a Spotlight Award from Heather Bialecki-Canning, executive director of the North Quabbin Community Coalition. Robert was recognized for his work to improve the quality of life for those living in the North Quabbin region.

RSVP: YOU'RE INVITED TO VOLUNTEER

The many benefits of being a volunteer with RSVP

By Pat Sicard & Lindsay Bennett-Jacobs, RSVP of the Pioneer Valley

RSVP of the Pioneer Valley is the volunteer center for people age 55 and over in the Pioneer Valley. Since 1973, we have provided individualized attention, matching volunteer interests, skills, experience and availability with the needs of area nonprofits. Currently, 640 RSVP volunteers serve at 57 volunteer sites in Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden County. New volunteers are referred to RSVP most often by satisfied current volunteers.

RSVP is a good choice for both volunteers

and nonprofits, offering benefits beyond the expert matching services that create long-term satisfaction. RSVP's successful connections have resulted in a 91% volunteer retention rate of one year or more. RSVP has over 300 volunteer positions in towns and cities throughout Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden counties that can accommodate most interests. RSVP staff members also share their volunteer management knowledge through workshops, presentations, and one-on-one mentorship of volunteer managers, increasing the region's capacity to support volunteer programs. RSVP's site partners benefit from many volunteers specializing in marketing, strategic planning, data management

and more, who act as short-term consultants.

In addition to enjoying a personal connection to RSVP staff, volunteers receive news of events, sites, and opportunities each month through RSVP's electronic newsletter. Volunteers who travel in order to volunteer may request mileage reimbursement of up to \$15 per month. All volunteers are covered by supplemental general liability insurance that is free to them. Volunteers who serve 50 or more hours each year are invited to the Log Cabin in Holyoke each September for the Volunteer Recognition Luncheon to enjoy an exceptional meal, President's Awards, a remarkable raffle, and the good company of other volunteers.

To get started as an RSVP volunteer, contact Pat Sicard, RSVP volunteer manager, at 413-387-4558 or psicard@hcg-ma.org.

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INFORMATION & CAREGIVER RESOURCE CORNER

Safe driving resources for folks who are getting older

By Laurie Deskavich, Information & Caregiver Resource Center Program Director, LifePath

Although getting older doesn't mean your driving ability will get worse, it's important to be aware of how age-related factors and health conditions may affect your driving skills.

Q: How might my age affect my ability to drive?

A: According to AAA, the automotive motor club association, things that might affect your driving safety as you age include:

- **Physical changes:** such as mobility, alertness, coordination, and response times.
- **Vision changes:** such as the way your eyes focus, can have an impact on driving safety.
- **Hearing changes:** inability to hear ambulance or police sirens, car horns, motorists, or pedestrians could have an impact on driving safety.
- **Cognitive problems:** According to AAA, our ability to process information tends to slow down as we get older. People with certain conditions like dementia might not be able to react appropriately to traffic situations and might not react properly to traffic signs and pavement markings.
- **Medications:** some prescription drugs may have side effects, such as drowsiness, that make driving dangerous. Read the labels carefully.

Be proactive: schedule regular appointments with your physician to monitor or stiffness in your joints, any chronic conditions, fatigue, and stress. In addition to visiting your physician for general health checkups, vision and hearing screenings also need to be performed regularly.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when you are out on the road:

- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, ALWAYS have them while driving.
- Be aware of conditions that might be affecting your vision, such as:
 - Cataracts
 - Glaucoma
 - Macular degeneration
- If you feel like your vision is worsening, consult with your optometrist.
- Recognize signs of trouble seeing at night.
- If you have problems hearing other vehicles or emergency sirens when you drive, consult an audiologist.
- Keep the noise inside the vehicle to a minimum.

It's important to be aware of any limitations that you find yourself up against, so that you can make necessary adjustments to ensure safety for yourself and those around you. Some of these adjustments can include the



Though safe driving may become more challenging with age, there are many adjustments you can make to better ensure the safety of your vehicle and those around you.

following:

- Increase your following distance.
- Use the brakes early.
- Avoid busy areas.
- Try to anticipate rather than react.
- Keep the steering wheel at a comfortable distance from your chest.
- Raise the height of the seat so that your eyes are above the steering wheel.
- Move your side mirrors to avoid blind spots.
- Raise or lower the headrest so that it is directly behind your head.

There are certain times when senior drivers will be more at risk. For this reason, try to avoid driving in inclement weather, at night, or during rush hour when possible.

Brushing up on your driving skills is one way to help you stay safe while driving. Consider taking a mature driver safety course. AAA's "Roadwise Driver" is a course to help you with:

- Extending your safe driving career
- Distractions, drowsiness, aggressive driving & road rage
- Managing visibility, time & space
- Alcohol & medications
- Comfort & safety tips

Finally, be prepared for the unexpected. If you have the right items in your emergency roadside kit, such as reflective triangles, you can safely deal with any problems that arise. A basic roadside emergency kit should include some of the following items:

- Jumper cables
- Flares or triangle reflectors
- A quart or more of motor oil
- A gallon of coolant
- First-aid kit
- Blanket or space blanket
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Tool kit with screwdrivers, pliers, adjustable wrench, pocket knife
- A can of tire inflator and sealant
- Tire pressure gauge
- Paper towels
- Spray bottle with washer fluid
- Ice scraper
- Pen and paper
- Granola or energy bars
- Bottled water

Learn more safe driving tips online at seniordriving.aaa.com.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION CONSUMER INFORMATION

Have you heard about "You've Won!" scams?

Here's how they work: You get a card, a call, or an email telling you that you won! Maybe it's a trip or a prize, a lottery or a sweepstakes. The person calling is so excited and can't wait for you to get your winnings.

But here's what happens next: they tell you there's a fee, some taxes, or customs duties to pay. And then they ask for your credit card number or bank account information, or they ask you to wire money.

Either way, you lose money instead of winning it. You don't ever get that big prize. Instead, you get more requests for money, and more promises that you won big.

Here's what you can do:

1. Keep your money – and your information – to yourself. Never share your financial information with someone who contacts you and claims to need it. And never wire money to anyone who

"Keep your money – and your information – to yourself. Never share your financial information with someone who contacts you and claims to need it. And never wire money to anyone who asks you to."

asks you to.

2. Pass this information on to a friend. You probably throw away these kinds of scams or hang up when you get these calls. But you probably know someone who could use a friendly reminder.

Please report scams

If you spot a scam, please report it to the Federal Trade Commission.

- Call the FTC at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) or TTY 1-866-653-4261
- Go online: ftc.gov/complaint

Your complaint can help protect other people. By filing a complaint, you can help the FTC's investigators identify the scammers and stop them before they can get someone's hard-earned money. It really makes a difference.

Want to know more? Sign up for scam alerts at ftc.gov/subscribe.

Article reprinted from the Federal Trade Commission website at consumer.ftc.gov.