STAR

Resident Newsletter :: Summer 2009

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Service Spotlight... Carrier Alert Program

The Carrier Alert program can offer you the comfort of knowing that someone who visits your home regularly can call for help if you need it. The free service has been developed especially for older adults and the housebound—people who may have difficulty reaching vital services because of an accident or sudden illness.

Carrier Alert is a joint program of the National Association of Letter Carriers and the Postal Service, but its foundation is built on the local service organization, which might be the local United Way, Red Cross or Agency on Aging. The agency handles promotion, registration, administration, establishing local procedures and funding.

When a Carrier notes something unusual concerning a patron registered with Carrier Alert, he or she reports it to a postal supervisor or other designated individual who in turn contacts the sponsoring local agency. They check on the person and if something's wrong, contact family, police or emergency services as appropriate.

Because participation is voluntary and operation depends on local agencies, the Carrier Alert program is well established in some regions and little known in others. Delivering mail to the same residences day after day, letter carriers become familiar with customer's habits and often notice changes in routine that mean a patron is in distress. Accumulating mail is a common clue, but lights burning in midday, pet dogs crying, drawn draperies, or no tracks in the snow--all can signal trouble within. To find out if there is a Carrier Alert program operating in your neighborhood contact your Service Coordinator or local post office.

Floyd Murphy checks his mail box. Floyd lives at Misssouri View Apartments.

How Carrier Alert Works

- Interested postal patrons register to participate in the program. Your local postmaster can give you more details on registration.
- Your letter carrier will be authorized to place a Carrier Alert symbol in your mailbox which will alert all letter carriers to watch your mail for any signs of distress such as an unusual accumulation.
- If your letter carrier finds an accumulation of mail, and you have not covered the sticker to signal that you will be away for a few days, he or she will notify the agency where you are registered or report your name to the postal supervisor who will report it to the agency.
- The social service agency will then try to contact you by phone. If you cannot be reached, the agency personnel will try to contact a friend or relative whom you have listed as a contact in the event of an emergency.
- If a friend or a relative cannot be reached, the social service agency will send a worker to your home to check on your health and well-being.

Source: www.nalc.org

Food Stamp Program Undergoes Changes

Effective July 1, 2009, the Food Stamp Program is changing its name and some of the programs that are utilized by many residents. According to Judy Toelle, Administrator for the program in Pierre, the Food Stamp Program's name will be changed to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. It will be referred to as SNAP. Residents have been receiving letters from the Department of Social Services (DSS) explaining the revised eligibility requirements.

SNAP is a US Department of Agriculture program. On July 1, 2009, new poverty guidelines were implemented, causing States to adjust their eligibility guidelines. The most prominent changes are:

- Individuals receiving full food stamp benefits will no longer get additional benefits for the Sales Tax on Food Refund program. They will still receive their regular food stamp benefit which may be adjusted upward a little.
- Individuals who have previously only used the Sales Tax on Food Refund benefit, approximately $29 over a three month period for a single person, may no longer be eligible for the benefit. However, they may be able to qualify for regular food stamp benefits. This involves completing a yearly application. For an individual, the asset level must be $3,000 or less.

Who is eligible for the Sales Tax on Food Refund Program? Individual monthly incomes will need to fit between a minimum and maximum range. This seems confusing, as in the past most programs only require a person to not go over the maximum income allowance to be eligible for the program. The window of eligibility for the Sales Tax on Food Refund starting July 1, 2009 is:

$1,128 up to $1,354 for a single person
$1,518 up to $1,822 for a family of two

If your income is above or below these guidelines, you do not qualify for the Sales Tax on Food Program. If you received a letter from DSS about your eligibility and need clarification or assistance please contact your Service Coordinator.

Reminder: Energy Assistance Available

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) provides financial assistance to South Dakota households that meet income guidelines. Assistance is available to homeowners and renters for charges incurred from the regular October through April meter readings. If you have an actual heating bill, the program pays the qualifying benefit directly to the energy company. If your heat is included in your rent, you may be eligible to receive a check for the qualified amount and the check is signed over to the apartment management company and thusly, you pay that much less for your rent during October through April. After the LIEAP payments end, your rent will return to its original amount.

The 2009-2010 heating season income limits are based on a maximum three month income of $4,332 for a one person household ($1,444 per month). For a two person household the three month income limit is $5,826 ($1,942 per month). Proof of the previous three months of income must be submitted with the application

Applications are now available. Please see your Service Coordinator if you have questions or need assistance completing the form.

SCAMS

New scams are popping up all the time and unfortunately, people are falling for them. Here are few scams that have affected South Dakota residents:

Grandparent Scam: Grandchild is in an accident, send money to Canada. The use of fear and emotion is the basis of this scam. Please call your grandchild before making a trip to the bank.

Jury Duty Scam: The scammer, posing as a local court services worker tells you that a warrant has been issued for your arrest because of failure to report to jury duty. Court services workers do not call and ask for personal information, like your date of birth and Social Security number.

NEVER give out personal information to anyone over the telephone, cell phone, Internet or through regular mail!

Fire Safety - We're all Responsible

Everyone is at risk when there is fire, but persons over 65, very young children and those with physical disabilities are in greatest danger. Because fires are so unpredictable, knowing ahead of time what to do and where to go during a fire will save lives.

Larry Nickles, Yankton Fire Marshall, recently presented a fire safety program to the residents at Canyon Ridge Apartments. He stressed two main points –evacuation and accountability. Evacuation includes knowing at least two safe exits in advance of the fire. This is true even when you are at the grocery store or other community events. Smoke often makes the hallways or rooms hard to navigate. Know where the stairways and exit doors are located. Never use the elevator during a fire. Accountability means having a designated safe meeting place where you and others will check in outside the building. Never go back into the burning building. Let the professionals handle the fire.

Smoke detectors are your first line of defense. Smoke inhalation is responsible for approximately 75% of all fire-related deaths. Just one breath of super-heated smoke can knock you unconscious. Properly operating smoke detectors will alert you to developing fires and allow you time to evacuate. Never remove batteries from the smoke detector. In apartment dwellings, the detectors are tested regularly for you. Never block fire doors open or block the fire doors with boxes, chairs or other clutter.

If you hear a fire alarm in the building, what are you going to do? Don't ignore it. ***Always*** treat a fire alarm as the real thing. Proceed with caution and stay calm. Check all doors for heat before opening them. If the door is hot, do not open it. Opening doors brings in a new supply of oxygen for the fire. If the door feels cool, open it slowly. You may need to slam it shut if the fire is moving toward you. Proceed to the closest and safest exit. Remember that smoke rises, so keep low to the floor and take short breaths through your nose. If possible hold a damp cloth over your nose and mouth as you evacuate the building. Once outside, go directly to your designated safe meeting place. Never re-enter the building.

If your exits are blocked by smoke, staying in your apartment may be the safest option. Seal the bottom of your doors with damp towels. If the telephone is still working call the fire department and tell them where you are located. If you can open the window slightly that may ventilate the room for you. You can signal firefighters by waving a cloth out the window or using a flashlight at night. The firefighters will go to each unit when they check the building searching for residents. If your clothes start on fire drop gently to the floor, cover your face with your hands and roll over and over to extinguish the flames.

Individual responsibility is important. Everyone can make the apartment building a safer place by maintaining their unit properly by reducing clutter, not storing items on stove tops and in ovens and keeping furniture, drapes and other flammables a safe distance from heating units. If you burn candles, monitor them and don't place them near flammable items. Always extinguish the candle when you leave the room. Batteries, hair dryers, curling irons, coffeepots and deep fat fryers are frequently the cause of household fires.

Remember a fast reaction to a disaster is made easier when you have thought about a plan ahead of time and feel comfortable about knowing what to do. The fire department is there to do the major work and should always be called when a fire is suspected or unusual smoke is present. Everyone needs to be serious about their responsibilities when it comes to planning for, and practicing what to do, in the case of a fire. Be prepared by learning how to keep your environment fire safe and planning your escape route.

Larry Nickles, Yankton Fire Marshal, shares fire safety tips with the residents at Canyon Ridge Apartments.

Events Across the State

These Towne Square residents, and friend, pose with decorations from a Hawaiian Luau.

Gold Mountain Apartments celebrate the holidays. Nancy shows her Irish spirit. The Easter Bunny, Susan, also stopped in for a visit.

Kathleen, far left, and Leona, Grand Valley residents, enjoyed some birthday treats.

River Ridge Apartments honored their Volunteers on April 14th. STAR Coordinator Linda Taylor presented certificates and packets of seeds because Volunteers plant seeds of kindness, and mints because your service is mint to us!

Fresh homemade rolls, coffee and juice are enjoyed by Columbus Heights Apartment residents.

Hank and Evelyn, from Gold Mountain, enjoy looking through an old high school yearbook.

Advanced Directives

Have you thought about the medical care you want at the end of your life? What types of treatment do you want? Are there treatments you are certain you do not want? Facing these questions can be hard, but doing so now will help ensure that your final wishes are respected.

An Advance Directive specifies what kind of medical care you want at the end of your life. If you do not have an Advance Directive, your doctor and family members will not know what you want done if you are incapacitated. They will be left to make decisions about your health care that may go against your wishes.

One type of Advance Directive is a Living Will. A Living Will provides detailed instructions about your preferences if you are incapacitated and require medical care to stay alive. In a Living Will you specify the types of treatment you want and those you do not want.

Another form of Advance Directive is a Medical Power of Attorney. With this document you choose a trusted loved one, family member or friend to make medical decisions for you. Other names for this document are a "durable power of attorney" or "health care proxy."

Speaking with your doctor is a good place to start if you are interested in setting up an Advance Directive. It may also be helpful to get legal advice from your lawyer or legal aid service. While the document does not need to be drawn up by a lawyer, it does need to meet the certain standards of the law. It also must be signed in the presence of witnesses. If you change your mind after the Advance Directive is signed, you can revise the Advance Directive. This gives you the power and dignity to choose your end of life care.

Once you have your Advance Directive, be certain to give a copy to your physician. You should also give copies to your family, friends and attorney. Most importantly, give a copy to the person you have named as your decision maker so they are aware of your wishes. Facing end of life issues is challenging but letting others know your wishes now will make things easier for you and your loved ones should you ever become incapacitated.

Connect with the Children in your Life

Sharing activities with the kids in your life can be fun. All activities don't have to revolve around amusement parks and other children's venues. Simply sharing some of your own interests and talents with your grandchildren and the youth you mentor can enrich all of your lives. Try some of these activities:

Relax. Sit together and enjoy a real conversation. Ask about their school, friends, interests and dreams. In a culture that puts so much emphasis on doing, it can be rewarding to just simply be.

Play Games. Keep a stash of board games and playing cards. Games are not just for fun. They help you teach a child to be a good sport and play fairly.

Take a Trip. Share some of your favorite places by traveling with your grandchildren or by taking a walk through a photo album.

Head Outdoors. Take kids to a local park or beach. Listen to the sounds of nature or collect rocks. Simple activities are fascinating to young children.

Share Hobbies. If the children in your life have a special hobby, like collecting trading cards or reading a particular book series, become familiar with those things so you can connect with the child. Share you hobbies with them as well.

Bake Cookies. Let children make a mess while they learn about measurements and ingredients.

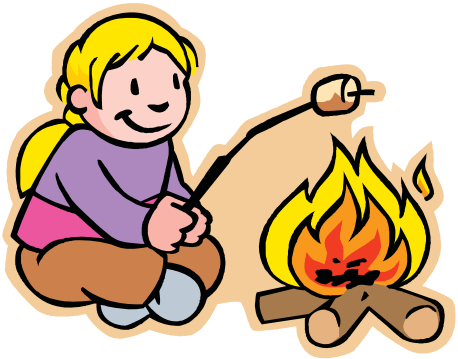
Pass on History. Tell your grandchildren about their family history. Encourage them to take an interest in their ancestors. Make a family tree with photos.

Source: Life Advice, August 2007

Summer Fun Word Find

C	E	L	A	S	D	R	A	Y	O	P	L
I	O	N	A	H	A	R	D	F	U	A	E
N	I	U	R	E	U	N	I	O	N	E	M
C	N	A	N	A	L	R	R	R	B	S	O
I	Y	W	A	T	E	R	M	E	L	O	N
P	R	B	L	W	Y	E	N	L	E	H	A
D	W	A	O	A	H	F	A	K	A	N	D
E	N	R	H	V	L	B	A	N	N	E	E
S	K	L	E	E	E	P	A	I	V	D	A
S	S	S	C	S	U	I	E	R	R	R	N
P	A	R	A	D	E	L	O	P	Y	A	R
T	A	B	T	E	H	E	N	S	A	G	N

BASEBALL
COUNTY FAIR
FIREWORKS
GARDEN HOSE
HEAT WAVE
LEMONADE
PARADE
PICNIC
REUNION
SPRINKLER
WATERMELON
YARD SALE



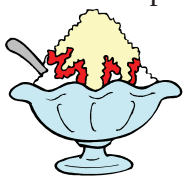
HOW GIRLS MAKE S'MORES
(1) Place chocolate bars on graham crackers.
(2) Toast marshmallows.
(3) Place toasted marshmallows on candy bars to melt chocolate.
(4) Press graham crackers together and enjoy!

HOW BOYS MAKE S'MORES
(1) Eat chocolate bars.
(2) Eat marshmallows.
(3) Throw graham crackers at other boys.

Source: www.geocities.com/suarezgfam/Smores

Upcoming Events

July	August	September
- UV Safety Month - National Blueberry Month - Strawberry Sundae Day July 7 - Barbershop Music Appreciation Day July 13 - National Lasagna Day July 29	- Cataract Awareness Month - National Immunization Awareness Month - Peach Month - Ice Cream Sandwich Day August 2 - Watermelon Day August 3 - S'mores Day August 10	- Healthy Aging Month - Whole Grains Month - National Cholesterol Education Month - Classical Music Month - Read a Book Day September 6



Be Prepared for Severe Weather

Living in South Dakota we don't have to worry or prepare for hurricanes or tsunamis but we do have the possibility of tornados, thunderstorms, flash floods, hail and strong winds. Here's what you can do to better prepare yourself for such an emergency.

Before lightning strikes …

- Keep an eye on the sky. Look for darkening skies, flashes of light or increasing wind. Listen for the sound of thunder. Thunderstorms frequently occur in the late afternoon and at night in the Plains states.
- If you hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to a safe place. Find shelter in a building or car. Keep windows closed. Avoid using the telephone or other electrical appliances. Avoid taking a bath, shower or running water for any purpose. Turn off the air conditioner to prevent a power surge from overloading the compressor. Draw blinds and curtains over windows to contain possible shattering glass.
- If you are caught outside, get away from lakes and other bodies of water immediately. Go to a low lying, open place away from trees, poles and other metal objects. Make sure the place you pick is not prone to flooding. Be a small target. Squat on the ground with your hands on your knees and your head between them. Don't lie down on the ground – this makes you a larger target.

Tornado preparedness includes…

- Picking a place where you should gather if a tornado is headed your way. It should be a lower level, a center hallway, bathroom or closet away from windows. In a several story building, you may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Pick a place in a hallway in the center of the building.
- If you are outside, hurry to a basement of a nearby sturdy building or lie flat in a ditch or other low lying area.
- If you are in a car or mobile home, get out immediately and head for safety.

What to listen for…

- Severe weather warnings are passed to local radio and television stations and are broadcast over NOAA Weather Radio stations serving the warned areas.
- Stay tuned for storm warnings. A thunderstorm or tornado **WATCH** is issued when conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop. Watches are intended to heighten public awareness and should not be confused with warnings. A **WARNING** means that severe weather is imminent. The severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated on radar. Go to safety immediately.

After the storm…

- Stay away from storm damaged areas. Watch out for fallen power lines.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions.
- Use a flashlight to inspect for any damage.
- Contact family as soon as possible to let them know your status.

Where will you be when disaster strikes? You could be anywhere --- at home, in the car, shopping. Disaster may force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services such as water, gas, electricity and phone were cut off? Everyone should think ahead and know how to react in case of severe weather.

Information provided by the American Red Cross, NOAA and FEMA

All Star Recipes

Double Boiler Raisin Bread Pudding for Two - Karleen Kirchner

1/4 cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons raisins
1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
3/4 cup milk
1 egg
2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
2 slices frozen or firm bread - easier to spread and cube

Grease the bottom and half way up the side of a double boiler insert. Pack brown sugar on the bottom of the insert. Top with raisins. Butter bread slices, sprinkle with cinnamon and cut into 1/2" cubes. Whisk together milk, egg, sugar and vanilla. Stir in bread cubes. Carefully layer mixture over the brown sugar. Fill bottom of a double boiler with cold water. Cover and cook over low heat until set in the center, about 1 hour. Spoon pudding into dishes and top with raisin sauce.

Napa Cabbage Salad - Mary Beth Jacobson

1 cup silvered almonds, chopped
3 to 4 tablespoons sesame seeds
1 bunch green onions
1 green pepper
1 head Napa or Chinese cabbage
1 pkg. chicken flavored ramen noodles

Dressing:
3/4 cup vegetable oil
3 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon pepper
6 tablespoons vinegar
Seasoning packet from ramen noodles

In dry frying pan over medium heat, toast the almonds and sesame seeds. Chop the cabbage, onions and green pepper. Mix together. Just before serving, crunch up the dry ramen noodles and mix in the dressing. Also works well with packaged broccoli slaw. I usually half the ingredients for the dressing.

Rhubarb Muffins - Linda Taylor

2 1/2 cup flour
1 1/4 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup buttermilk
1 egg
1 1/4 cup brown sugar
1 1/3 cup diced rhubarb
1/2 cup chopped nuts
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 cup oil

Topping:
1 tablespoon melted butter
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/3 cup sugar

Beat buttermilk, oil and egg. Add sifted dry ingredients. Fold in nuts and rhubarb. Pour into tines. Sprinkle topping on top. Bake at 425 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. Makes 18 muffins.

Please submit items for the Fall 2009 Newsletter to your Supportive Service Coordinators by September 1st.

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Presho Courts, Presho
River Ridge, Mobridge
Senechal, Philip
Sherman, Aberdeen

STAR Resident Newsletter is provided by the South Dakota Housing Development Authority for your interest and enjoyment. If you need any assistance with services, referrals or have special questions, please contact your Supportive Service Coordinator. Suggestions for future articles or news items can be directed to Lee, Mary Beth, Linda or Tracy Laqua, newsletter editor.

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

SOUTH DAKOTA HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY