

ElderBuddy News

ElderBuddy...Through the Years

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ElderBuddy Continues to

gROW!

Please join us in welcoming our new volunteers!

Jackie Fiore

Marci Sweely

Michelle Blaha

Carole Smith

Eileen Fonash

Lynn Marchini

Narmada Gunawardena

Aondowase "Kennie" Anum

Robert Williams

Laura King

Carol Yost

It's hard to believe that the ElderBuddy Program is now in its fourth year. As we look back over those years, it's so gratifying to know that six volunteers who helped us launch the program in 2003 are still active with the program today. We salute their dedication and would like to tell you a little about them.

Jack & Ruth

Jack Mitchell has been visiting his friend, Ruth, for almost three years. They've learned a lot about each other, celebrating their differences and enjoying common interests. Regular visits and phone calls continue to enhance their relationship, and Jack is always on the look-out for ways that he can help make Ruth's life a little easier.

Mutz & Margaret

Mutz Trigg got to know her ElderBuddy, Margaret, early on in the program. Margaret enjoyed having Mutz join her for dinner, giving them time to share their ideas, background and interests. They've kept their friendship alive even through periods of illness and busy schedules by sending cards and notes.....**and then came Hazel!** Mutz is also now visiting her new ElderBuddy, Hazel.

Pattie & Ruth

Pattie Painter has enjoyed a long and very fulfilling relationship with her ElderBuddy, Ruth. Even when Ruth had to move to a new facility, Pattie continued to visit, and they have developed a very special bond over the years. Ruth has had some recent health challenges, yet Pattie says she has such a positive attitude and maintains her active lifestyle. Both would agree that they benefit greatly from their continuing friendship.

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The ElderBuddy Program matches AstraZeneca employee volunteers with elderly residents who live in local nonprofit senior housing facilities and are looking for companionship. Volunteers act as "friendly visitors" and develop a one-on-one relationship with the resident. The Family & Workplace Connection coordinates the matches and provides ongoing support and guidance to ElderBuddy participants.

For more information on ElderBuddy, contact:
 Kathy Hyde at 302-479-1696 or via email at khyde@familyandworkplace.org
 Barbara Vassos at 302-479-1667 or via email at bvassos@familyandworkplace.org

ElderBuddy...Through the Years (continued)

Lou & Sam

Lou Ryan and his friend, Sam, have been enjoying each other's company for years. They met while Sam was able to live independently, and continued visiting as Sam made the transition into a nursing home. Lou and Sam rarely miss their weekly chats, and know that their friendship has greatly enriched both their lives.

Charlotte & Mary

When Charlotte Biselis and Mary met through ElderBuddy almost three years ago, they quickly found that they had some common experiences that allowed them to understand and support each other in a special way. Their relationship has grown through relaxing chats in the garden, attending musicals and other entertaining events together, and celebrating birthdays and holidays. When they can't get together, they keep in touch through phone calls and cards.

Charlene & Gladys

Charlene Kellum-Jackson recognized the value of a program like ElderBuddy when she first heard about it. She and Gladys met in May 2003, and began their year-long friendship. They got to know each other over ice cream, favorite recipes and stories about their lives and families. Gladys was delighted when Charlene had a photo of the two of them framed as a gift for her.....**and then came Letitia!** Recently, Charlene met her new ElderBuddy, Letitia. They have become fast friends, and are really enjoying their visits.

So, many, many thanks, Jack, Mutz, Pattie, Lou, Charlotte and Charlene – and all of you in the ElderBuddy Program for finding some time in your busy lives to get to know these wonderful seniors and appreciate all that they have to offer.

Don't Worry! Be Happy! Your Life Could Depend On It!

When we think about improving our health, things like exercise, the South Beach Diet and a scrumptious tofu stir-fry immediately come to mind. Who would have ever guessed that something as easy and delightful as laughter could play a role in our pursuit of a healthy, happy life style? But studies at major universities and health centers are telling us just that. Want to add more laughter to your life? Try some of the following suggestions:

- Spend some time observing children. Kids are laughter junkies! On average they laugh around 300 – 400 times a day, compared to an adult's 15 – 20 times a day.
- Look for the everyday humor – the absurd, silly, incongruous activities that go on around you each day, and take time to laugh at them.
- Increase your exposure to comedies – TV comedies, joke books, funny movies, etc.
- Spend more time with funny people and those who help you see the bright side of things.



Helpful Hints...

ElderBuddy volunteer, Tamy Raina says she's really enjoying her ElderBuddy visits and has found some ways to enrich their relationship. You might want to give them a try, too.

- Meet for lunch where your elder lives – this gives them an opportunity to “show you off” to their friends.
- Share interests – find things you both enjoy and celebrate them.
- Include other members of your family in some visits.
- Telephone weekly to keep in touch.

If you have ideas you'd like to share, let us know and we'll let others know.

AstraZeneca Supports Seniors

The **ElderBuddy Program** is one of many initiatives created and funded by AstraZeneca to support the elderly in our community. The Family & Workplace Connection manages the program, but AstraZeneca employee and retiree volunteers provide the warm smiles, ongoing companionship and helpful support that many Delaware seniors enjoy through the program.

Having identified support of seniors as a priority, AstraZeneca is committed to improving the health and quality of life of older residents by providing charitable contributions and volunteerism in support of key initiatives such as:

- **Elder Online** – A new online resource for the elderly, their families, and social service professionals working with seniors
- **Caring Partners** – Coalition of elder care professionals working to support caregivers through online resources and a speakers bureau
- **Healthy Living Expo (Senior Beach Day)** – Annual event at Rehoboth Beach
- **Wilmington Senior Center's Time of Your Life** – Lecture series for older adults to encourage healthier living
- **Newark Senior Center's Life Options Fair** – Annual event to encourage community involvement for retirees
- **60 Plus Medical Transportation Program** – Enables Generations Home Care to provide a free transportation option for Delawareans 60 years of age or older to help them get to medical or health related appointments
- **The Lifeline Program of the American Red Cross** – Enables Red Cross to provide free equipment installation for home-based emergency response system for seniors
- **Meals on Wheels** - which delivers meals to homebound seniors

For more information about AZ's support for seniors, and its overall support for the community, please log on to the company's external website: www.astrazeneca-us.com or the internal intranet (Corporate Affairs/Volunteerism & Charitable Contributions).

Dear Elda...

Dear Elda is a column you will see in each issue of the ElderBuddy News. Elda will answer your questions about the ElderBuddy Program, senior community services, or aging in general. Send Elda your questions by e-mailing elderbuddy@familyandworkplace.org or calling 302-479-1667.

Dear Elda: I am 80 years old and just learned how to use a computer. My ElderBuddy volunteer helped me. Is there any way I can use my computer to find the names of Companion Agencies in Wilmington? Signed, Molly

Dear Molly:

You're in luck! There is a new program called **ElderOnline**, provided by The Family & Workplace Connection that will give you that information. All you do is go to the website www.familyandworkplace.org, click on the **ElderOnline** button and answer some basic questions about your elder care needs. Click the "Submit" button, and a list of providers will pop right up giving you names, addresses and phone numbers for elder care services that can meet your needs. If you're not sure exactly what kind of service you need, review our handy Tip Sheets to help you decide. And best of all, Molly, this service is completely free, thanks to the generous support of AstraZeneca, AARP Delaware, and other community partners. Information is available on all kinds of elder care services, such as companion services, home health services, transportation programs, assisted living, legal services, and much more. Isn't it amazing what computers can do! I hope you find **ElderOnline** helpful – you can use it as often as you like. You can also call for elder care information at 302-479-1660 or 800-660-6602.

A Springtime Surprise

ElderBuddy volunteers had the pleasure recently of providing a little spring-time cheer to the elders they visit through the program. As part of their support for the American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days fundraiser, AstraZeneca purchased daffodil plants for all the seniors who participate in ElderBuddy. The flowers provide a lovely reminder for all that those warm spring days we long for are definitely on the way! Many thanks to ElderBuddy, Jack Mitchell, for suggesting this idea and to AstraZeneca for supporting it.

The ElderBuddy News is published quarterly, and is a great way for all of us in the ElderBuddy Program to keep in touch and share our ideas. If you have information you'd like us to include, please send it along to:

elderbuddy@familyandworkplace.org

or call

Kathy Hyde at 302-479-1696