



# Embrace!

Newsletter of the N.C. Coalition for Long-Term Care Enhancement

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## Special points of interest:

- Dreams can come true
- Another round of grants
- Creativity and aging
- One man's trash...

**Embrace!** is a project of the N.C. Coalition for Long-Term Care Enhancement. To respond to articles, contact the editor:

Jill Nothstine,  
(704) 637-2870 or at  
j.nothstine@lsanc.net.

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## MAKING WISHES COME TRUE

By Leslie Jarema, NHA

The Forest at Duke CCRC, located in Durham, is making wishes come true for its health care residents.

As the administrator, I was inspired to incorporate a “make a wish” program for our residents.

They were asked, “If you had one wish, what would it be?” One resident said “I would love to go to the beach and put my toes in the sand one more time”. So the health services team and I immediately jumped in. This took planning and coordinating, but through diligence, we worked through the details and made it come to fruition in a matter of weeks. Once we assembled several other residents, we rented a house on Oak Island for 3 days and 2 nights. Next, we contacted resident families for permission and expenses

for the trip, and we gathered staff including a nurse, a nursing assistant, social worker, and an activities coordinator. After gassing up the bus, we were ready to go!

On the trip, we took the resi-



What could be better than sitting in the warm sun by the ocean? For Ruth Patterson and Lola Williams from the Forest at Duke, it is literally a dream come true. (see more photos on pages 5,6)

dents to the beach and to a fabulous seafood restaurant. We also toured Southport and enjoyed a horse drawn carriage ride. But most importantly, our residents were able to relax in a beautiful two-story beach home and enjoy the ocean breeze. The weather was a perfect temperature with sunny skies. All in all it was a perfect trip.

And this is just the beginning of

making wishes come true . . .

Leslie is the administrator at The Forest at Duke in Durham and can be reached at <leslie@forestduke.org>.

## 18 Nursing Homes Win Enhancement Grants

RALEIGH – Eighteen North Carolina nursing homes are receiving grant funds starting fall 2009 to improve facilities to the benefit of their residents. Improvements range from outdoor gardens that are wheelchair accessible to bistros and ice cream parlors.

The two-year grants are financed by fines paid to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services by homes that have been cited for deficiencies in the provision of services under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA). The goal is to help de-institutionalize the care setting, while providing enhancements that residents can enjoy. Fifty-two applications were screened by a selection committee to determine the winning proposals.

“The grant efforts help facilities achieve our goal of having the best nursing homes,” said Becky Wertz, grant contract administrator for the Nursing Home Licensure and Certification Section of the Division of Health Service Regulation. “It is a good feeling to know our residents benefit from these culture changes.”

Grant winners are required to develop a method for monitoring the effects of the improvements on the facility’s residents and staff, and for sustaining the projects after

grant funds are spent. The grant selection process is run jointly by the Division of Health Service Regulation’s Nursing Home Licensure and Certification Section and the N.C. Coalition for Long-Term Care Enhancement.

“We are excited about the number of applicants this year and their desire to promote culture change in nursing homes by enhancing the environment,” said Leslie Jarema, chairperson of the coalition. “North Carolina prides itself in having the first state coalition to promote enhancements in long-term care.”

Here are the grant winners, a brief project description and the amount:

- Autumn Care of Drexel, outdoor garden area, \$24,000
- Blowing Rock Hospital Long-Term Care, outdoor activity and garden area, \$12,794
- Brian Center of Lincoln, aviaries, \$9,085
- Capital Nursing and Rehabilitation Center of Raleigh, aviary, wheelchair height gardening, \$13,377
- Century Care of Cherryville, enhanced bathing, \$15,290
- Croasdaile Village of Durham, It’s Never 2 Late (IN2L) adaptive computer system, \$18,845
- Davis Health Care of Wilmington, transform special care unit into a resident centered area, \$11,800
- Highland Farms Retirement Community of Black Mountain, courtyard, \$24,000
- Longleaf Neuro-Medical Treatment Center of Wilson, convert off-unit space for multiple activities including theater and game space, \$24,000
- Lutheran Home Albemarle, patio, pergola, ice cream parlor, \$24,000
- Lutheran Home Hickory, bistro, \$24,000
- Lutheran Home Hickory West, outdoor recreation area, \$23,307
- Lutheran Home Trinity Oaks, IN2L adaptive computer system, \$24,000
- Lutheran Home Winston Salem, IN2L adaptive computer system, \$22,500
- Mary Gran Nursing Center of Clinton, L.I.F.E (Living Is For Everyone) – multi purpose activity room, \$20,041
- Pisgah Manor Healthcare Center of Candler,

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enhanced dining, \$8,729

- St. Joseph of the Pines of Southern Pines, IN2L adaptive computer system, and horticultural therapy, \$23,995
- White Oak Manor, Rutherfordton, courtyard, \$10,988

## Like Chocolate to the Brain!

By Lia C.G. Miller

When I talk about creative programs with staff, I hear far too often “My people can’t do that,” whether “that” is painting, storytelling, music or poetry. With all the pressures of our jobs, we sometimes become immune to the potential of the people around us, but creativity is not only for the healthy, active and able-bodied; and it doesn’t have to be hard work for the staff. Hopefully, the information in this article will provide useful tips to help you tap into your own creativity and “enchant” some of your current programs. You might even be inspired to create your own “Think Tank” with residents and encourage them to take ownership, use their imaginations, and create the kinds of activities they will find fulfilling.

When some people hear the word creativity they immedi-

ately say, “Oh, I’m not creative. I can’t even draw a straight line.” But creativity is much more than drawing or painting. It is a big part of who we are - how we interact with others, make decisions, dress, decorate, and even drive. Creativity is “something new added to the world that has value,” according to the National Center for Creative Aging.

But, does creativity matter?

The late Dr. Gene Cohen, director of the Center on Aging, Health, and Humanities at George Washington University answered that question through his ground-breaking research study called “The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults” (more commonly referred to as The Creativity and Aging Study). Cohen, who was known as the



Participants in ACE at River Landing are completely enthralled by the process of oil painting during the CCA-NC PaintAbilities Class.

go-to expert on matters concerning the mature brain and its lifelong capacity for learning and creativity, was the principal investigator for this

national, three-year longitudinal study.

“What is remarkable in this study is that after one year the Intervention Group, in contrast to the Control Group, is showing areas of actual stabilization and improvement apart from decline—despite an average age which is greater than life expectancy [80],” stated Cohen. “These results point to true health promotion and disease prevention effects...”

The study found that older adults participating in professionally conducted arts programs (1) used less medication; (2) had fewer doctor visits; (3) experienced elevated mood; (4) showed an increase in the level of independent functioning, where normally decline would have been expected; (5) did better on scales for depression, loneliness, and morale; and (6) exhibited an increase in number of activities, while the control group members experienced a decrease. In short, this research demonstrates that involvement in challenging participatory arts programs has a positive effect on physical health, mental health, and social functioning in older adults, regardless of their ability. (The executive summary is

available at [www.gwumc.edu/cahh/rsch/index.htm](http://www.gwumc.edu/cahh/rsch/index.htm))

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So, now we know that it matters – that creativity can improve one's health - what next? How do we incorporate it into our already overburdened schedules? Well, fortunately you don't have to start from scratch!

Wonderful suggestions for "enchanting" existing activities can be found in Dr. Anne Bastings paper entitled "How Can We Radically Transform Activities in Long Term-Care?" Basting, director of UWM Center on Age & Community, assoc. professor of Theatre, Peck School of the Arts and founder of Time-Slips, brought together leaders from both the arts and aging worlds to find ways to create more meaningful, purposeful activities which address the individual needs of long-term care residents. These are just a few of the comments that resonated with me:

- Aging isn't one size fits all, but is very diverse among different groups.
- There is an emphasis on planning and entertaining, rather than orienting toward what people want, which is engaging rather than just observing.
- Activities should celebrate individual expression.
- Activities should have a greater social con-

sciousness, a connection to a larger group.

- Activities should be purposeful and provide pleasure.

The full White Paper is available online at (<http://www.aging.uwm.edu>)

As Cohen stated "Any activity that optimally uses both the right and left hemispheres is like chocolate to the brain." Cohen, who also authored two books, The Mature Mind (Basic Books, 2006) and The Creative Age (William Morrow, 2000), said that essentially humans have "two brains." He noted that it's a redundant system, similar to a human having two kidneys when only one is needed. When performing a new creative task, a mature brain will use the left hemisphere but also borrow from the area of the right hemisphere that corresponds with it. "It's as if we've switched from two-wheel to all-wheel drive!" He also noted that "Creative activities such as painting, music, and writing are all good examples of what the brain finds fulfilling."

With all this research and new information, we are finally reaching a turning point in society's view of aging. Yes, growing older is fraught with problems, no doubt. But it is also full of new potential, and we, as staff working with older adults are the ones who are responsible for providing opportunities for them to ac-

cess that potential. Give it a try - you just may be surprised by how fulfilling the process can be for everyone involved!

CCA-NC is planning a Creative Aging Symposium to be held May 6-7 2010 in Greensboro. For more information contact Lia at 336-253-0856 or <[lia@cca-nc.org](mailto:lia@cca-nc.org)> or visit the website at [www.cca-nc.org](http://www.cca-nc.org).

Lia Miller is executive director of the Center for Creative Aging-NC (CCA-NC) and Shepherd's Center of Greensboro and can be reached at (336) 253-0856.

## Have You Looked At Your Trash Lately?

By Alan Finlayson, NHA

It started with an overturned trash container.

No one likes to pick up spilled trash; nursing home trash doubly so. As I collected the garbage (and looked for discarded linen, as all Administrators do) I considered where this trash would spend the rest of its days, and I didn't like the answer. Much of the garbage would not break down over a reasonable period. It occurred to me that we could do better.

This thought seemed to roam around and collect others. Where else could we leave less of a negative impact? What do we consume, waste, or simply lose? A Skilled Nursing Facility is ripe with opportunities to capture wasted energy and discard

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less refuse which is slow to break down.

I thought the best place to start would be at the beginning, so I went to central supply. Many of the items came individually wrapped, and we set out to find items which came in bulk and could be stored that way until used. We targeted Styrofoam (for some reason, my nemesis) and found a suitable replacement cup. Dietary supplies were next; no more ordering Styrofoam plates. Emergency stock is now paper, and all the daily use items are washable multi-use.

Cleaning chemicals are used in large amounts in SNFs, so the search was on for alternatives to our present chemicals. We located a local company (isn't it funny how that works?) which has biodegradable chemicals for general purpose and disinfecting. Bringing those online also eliminated several products we used, and now we only have two cleaning chemicals to contend with for storage, training, and tracking. Furthermore, they are supplied in bulk, utilize point of use mixing, and the container they come in is recyclable.

A simple paper towel study led us to our current product (from the same company), and we drastically lowered use and virtually eliminated the typical wad of unused paper towels in the trash. We gathered enough data on our old product that we have good comparisons

of the two products to see how much we lowered waste with the new product.

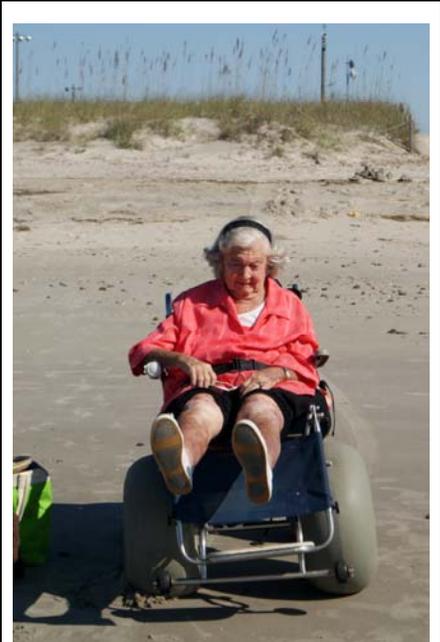
When I looked at hand soap dispensers, I really had to take a deep breath, as the proposed product was expensive. We dated soap containers of our last product and tracked the use closely. Then we installed the new foaming soap containers at select sinks and tracked the replacement time. The new soap containers cost twice as much, but last three to four times longer - proving a little homework will offset the initial fear of the cost. One thing I hadn't factored is the lessened workload of the environmental services staff, and we have "air dispensers" rarely, critical in infection control efforts.

The "less waste" momentum picked up with the staff, and that led us to: capturing AC condenser water for irrigation, having motion sensor switches in utility closets, having a central battery disposal recycling spot, capturing all waste paper and ensuring the shredding company recycles, utilizing solar for outdoor lighting where appropriate, capturing the fryer oil and giving it to a business which burns it in their vehicles, using timers for lights which don't need to be on at night; and the list goes on.

If you look, and ask your staff to look, you'll be amazed at what easy – and often free - things you can do at your facility to lessen your environmental impact. A great place to

start this process is by looking at your delivery trucks when they show up, or in the trash dumpster.

Alan Finlayson is the administrator at Sanford Health and Rehab in Sanford, and can be reached at (919) 777-0753.



More pictures from the front page story, "Making Wishes Come True". Above, Joan Englund enjoys sunning her legs by the shore. Harold Maxwell (below) finds the seafood's fresher when you get it at the beach.



**THE NORTH CAROLINA COALITION FOR  
LONG-TERM CARE ENHANCEMENT**

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To contact the Coalition, please email us at [alice@lctenhance.com](mailto:alice@lctenhance.com).



*Enhancing the lives of residents  
and staff in North Carolina's  
long-term care settings*

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The North Carolina Coalition for  
Long-Term Care Enhancement  
2711 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina  
27699-2711



How long as it been since you were on your last carriage ride? Probably not as long ago as its been for your residents. But for Ruth Patterson and Lola Williams from The Forest at Duke, they can now measure that time in months instead of years. The two were part of a group from the Forest who enjoyed a dream come true when they participated in the facility's "Make-A-Wish" program. It may take some serious planning and preparation, but vacations and overnight outings shouldn't be out of reach for all nursing home residents. To see how The Forest did it, be sure to read the article on the front page of this newsletter. And be sure to share this story and the rest of the newsletter with your staff.



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