



**Graceful Living**  
HOME CARE

# The Senior's Choice Connection

WINTER '08

www.GracefulLivingHomeCare.com

651-705-7212

## CAREGIVER PROFILE



Our caregivers are totally committed, highly qualified and carefully selected individuals who are personally and thoroughly screened, bonded and insured.

Most importantly our caregivers are dependable and extraordinarily caring of others. In addition to their previous experience, our caregivers receive continuous training that includes a specialized curriculum exclusive to The Senior's Choice that results in them becoming Certified Companion Aides™. These highly qualified and trained caregivers are ready to help you and your loved ones with a variety of daily activities such as:

- \* Caring companionship
- \* Meal planning and preparation
- \* Incidental transportation
- \* Running errands
- \* Light housekeeping
- \* Medication reminders
- \* Assistance with bathing and grooming
- \* Assistance with bill paying
- \* Information and referral services

Our personalized and affordable services are available 7 days a week and can range from a few hours a day to 24 hour and live in care.

## Welcome to the Winter '08 Issue

We hope you enjoy our Winter 2008 issue, and we are proud to announce our Winter 2008 Caregiver of the Season winner, **Denise Brown**.

Denise has been with RetireEase for over 3 years. Throughout her entire tenure with us, she has consistently performed her duties with excellence and has exemplified the heart of RetireEase and the ideal caregiver with every client she has served. She is often requested by name and shows a passion for her work. I could give many stories that make us proud of her, but I'll share the latest, which just came to my attention yesterday.

Denise was assigned to an overnight shift with a new Hospice client. It was our third night in the account and Denise's first night. It was obvious to the family that this would be their mom's final night on this side of eternity so they made the call to Hospice and just waited. Although there was nothing but silence in the room, it seemed loud with anticipation, fear and sadness. Then out of what seemed to be nowhere, a sweet voice broke the silence with a beautiful a capella version of Amazing Grace. It was Denise.

The family describes an incredible peace that rested over the room as she sang, which remained as the

family stayed by their mom's side to ease her into eternity.

Amazement filled their hearts as this complete stranger sang with such conviction. They conveyed to us that they could tell she was singing from a genuine heart of love, concern and compassion. Although they have a caregiver with their dad from a competitor, they immediately saw the difference. Denise was a "true caregiver."

Their mother did pass away that night. Denise stayed by their side until all things were settled. Afterward they called us to let us know that it would be their honor and privilege to have Denise attend her funeral and sing Amazing Grace for their mother, one more time.

That funeral is today, and she didn't hesitate to put all things aside to fulfill their wishes. Denise is amazing and she makes us all proud of what we do, everyday. She is a one of a kind caregiver.

Julie-Ann Parrott  
RetireEase

Best wishes,  
**Steve Everhart**,  
President & CEO,  
*The Senior's Choice*



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## SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

### The Short Story on Napping

More than 85% of mammalian species are polyphasic sleepers, meaning that they sleep for short periods throughout the day. Humans are part of the minority of monophasic sleepers, meaning that our days are divided into two distinct periods, one for sleep and one for wakefulness. However, it is not clear that this is the natural sleep pattern of humans. Young children and elderly persons nap, for example, and napping is a very important aspect of many cultures.

As a nation, the United States appears to be becoming more and more sleep-deprived. And it may be our busy lifestyle that keeps us from napping. While naps do not necessarily make up for inadequate or poor quality nighttime sleep, a short nap of 20-40 minutes can help to improve mood, alertness and performance. Nappers are in good company: Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Napoleon, Albert Einstein, and Thomas Edison are known to have valued an afternoon nap.

#### Types of Naps

There are three basic types of naps:

- **Planned napping** (also called preparatory napping) involves taking a nap before you actually get sleepy. You may use this technique when you know that you will be up later than your normal bed time or as a mechanism to ward off getting tired earlier.
- **Emergency napping** occurs when you are suddenly very tired and cannot continue with the activity you were originally engaged in. This type of nap can be used to combat drowsy driving or fatigue while using heavy and dangerous machinery.
- **Habitual napping** is practiced when a person takes a nap at the same time each day. Young children may fall asleep at about the same time each afternoon or an adult might take a short nap after lunch each day.

#### Tips for Good Napping

- **The right length:** A short nap is usually recommended (20-40 minutes) for short-term alertness. This type of nap provides significant benefit for improved alertness and performance without leaving you feeling groggy or interfering with nighttime sleep.
- **The right environment:** Your surroundings can greatly impact your ability to fall asleep. Make sure that you have a restful place to lie down and that the temperature in the room is comfortable. Try to limit the amount of noise heard and the extent of the light filtering in. While some studies have shown that just spending time in bed can be beneficial, it is better to try to catch some zzz's.
- **The right time:** Plan to take your nap at a good time in your daily sleep-wake cycle; for most, sometime between noon and 4 pm is best.

#### Benefits of Napping

- Naps can restore alertness, enhance performance, and reduce mistakes and accidents. A study at NASA on sleepy

military pilots and astronauts found that a 40-minute nap improved performance by 34% and alertness 100%.

- Naps can increase alertness in the period directly following the nap and may extend alertness a few hours later in the day.
- Scheduled napping has also been prescribed for those who are affected by narcolepsy.
- Napping has psychological benefits. A nap can be a pleasant luxury, a mini-vacation. It can provide an easy way to get some relaxation and rejuvenation.

#### Negative Effects of Napping

- Sleep inertia is defined as the feeling of grogginess and disorientation that can come with awakening from a deep sleep. While this state usually only lasts for a few minutes to a half-hour, it can be detrimental to those who must perform immediately after waking from a napping period.
- Napping can also have a negative effect on other sleeping periods. A long nap or a nap taken too late in the day may adversely affect the length and quality of nighttime sleep.

*Reprinted from [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)*



## ROTATING TOPIC:

### Social Security Hike Largest in 26 Years

More than 34.9 million older Americans will get a 5.8 percent increase in their Social Security benefits next year – the largest hike in 26 years.

Rising inflation drove the 2009 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to greatly surpass this year's 2.3 percent raise. The 5.8 percent adjustment is the highest since 1982.

And in more welcome news, the standard Medicare premium for 2009 will remain unchanged from \$96.40. Premiums will rise only for single people earning more than \$85,000

annually, or for couples earning more than \$170,000.

Still, recipients won't come out ahead by much, says Alicia Munnell, director of the Center for Retirement Research (CRR) at Boston College. Because Medicare Part B premiums – deducted automatically from Social Security benefits – generally rise faster than the COLA, "the net benefit will not keep pace with inflation."

From 2000 to 2007, Medicare premiums rose faster than the COLA – 9.8 percent per year compared to 2.7 percent.

*Continued on page 3*

## Specialists to Know About

### FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES



#### Senior Move Managers

Helping a parent pare down to move to a smaller place? It's not easy, physically or emotionally – but there are pros who know how to help. Check out the National Association of Senior Move Managers. Their website ([nasm.org](http://nasm.org)) offers both advice and a locator feature to find a nearby service. Or get referrals from geriatric care managers, elder law attorneys and retirement communities whose clients have used such services. Ask if the company is insured and does quality assessments. Also inquire if employees have worker's compensation insurance and are pre-screened, including a criminal-background check.

#### Elder Law Attorneys

How can you organize a house transfer to secure family property? Do you want to establish a trust to protect assets and reduce inheritance taxes – or provide for a special-needs child? The National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Inc. (NAELA, is a non-profit association that assists lawyers, bar organizations and others who work with older clients and their families. NAELA's mission is to

establish its members as "the premier providers of legal advocacy, guidance and services to enhance the lives of people with special needs and people as they age."

NAELA's website has an elder law attorney locator and outlines the types of legal issues for which you might call one. Because elder law is becoming more complex and most elder law attorneys do not specialize in all areas, the website offers guidance in terms of finding the expertise you need. A plus: Elder law attorneys often have a network of social workers, psychologists and other appropriate professionals. Call NAELA at (520) 881-4005 or go to [www.naela.org](http://www.naela.org).

#### Docs Who Make House Calls

They come with their legendary black bags filled with old-fashioned tools of the trade-stethoscope, blood-pressure cuffs, and more. But today's house-call physicians can also perform sophisticated tests in the home, such as X-rays, blood tests, EKGs, sonograms, and echocardiograms. Homebound patients can get the tests they need without being wrenched out of a

sickbed and laboriously transported to a doctor's office.

Most patients treated by home-care physicians are Medicare recipients, qualifying for house calls under Medicare if they have a medical condition that substantially limits their ability to leave home. "Patients who qualify for Medicare's home-care services get visits by nurses or therapists for a limited period after being hospitalized. But those who qualify for medical house calls can receive care comparable to that in a physician's office for acute or chronic conditions, and without any time limit," says Constance Row, executive director of the American Academy of Home Care Physicians (AAHCP).

To find a medical house-calls program in your area, contact the AAHCP by calling (410) 676-7966 or go to [www.aahcp.org](http://www.aahcp.org).

*Reprinted from [www.caringtoday.com](http://www.caringtoday.com)  
<http://www.caringtoday.com/get-basic-caregiving/specialists-to-know-about>*

*(Social Security, continued from page 2)*

David Certner, legislative policy director for AARP, called the COLA "a welcome development" in light of the economic downturn and the erosion of people's retirement savings, but cautioned that it would only go so far.

"As the global markets continue to fluctuate wildly, the retirement savings of millions of Americans are put in jeopardy," he said. "As the costs of everyday living expenses continue to rise, people living on fixed incomes have been among those hardest hit by the financial crisis. While the COLA is larger than in recent years, so are costs for food, energy and health care."

An estimated 50 million Americans collect Social Security benefits, including retirees and their dependents, survivors, and

people with disabilities and their dependents. Since 1975, retiree benefits have been adjusted annually to keep pace with inflation.

To track inflation's impact on older Americans in particular, the Bureau of Labor Statistics developed an experimental consumer price index called the CPI-E, which measures the costs of goods and services that people age 62 and older are more likely to rely on, such as health care.

A 25-year study of the CPI-E, released in April, found that older adults on average faced an annual 3.3 percent inflation rate, compared with 3 percent for most other consumers.

Not surprisingly, the cost of medical care was largely to blame. It rose 269 percent

from December 1982 through December 2007; inflation for other goods and services during that time was 115 percent.

Monique Morrissey, an economist with the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, called the higher inflation rate for older people very significant.

"Almost every year, they've fallen farther behind, and most of the reason for that is health care costs. When Social Security is all you're living on, it makes a difference."

by Carole Fleck, AARP Bulletin Today

*Excerpted from:*

*[http://bulletin.aarp.org/yourmoney/socialsecurity/articles/social\\_security\\_hike\\_large](http://bulletin.aarp.org/yourmoney/socialsecurity/articles/social_security_hike_large)*



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## SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

### Important Lessons Learned

#### Words to the wise from those with experience.

I've tried to be self-sufficient, but I realize I can't do it alone. It's a humbling experience to realize that I need the help of others. So, when I'm anxious, I talk it out with people who offer emotional support.

– Robin Tobler, Anaheim, CA

I recommend keeping a journal. After being with my mother, I write down what happened, what we talked about, how I'm feeling. It helps me reach another level of spiritual awareness.

– Carlos Figueroa, New York, NY

I joined a yoga class for the first time. I was embarrassed because everyone was so much better, but now I can do more and more. I go twice a week during my lunch hour. After every class, I feel better about myself.

– Josephine Ndinyah-Akpedonu, Stamford, CT

I realized that I cannot change the illnesses, I cannot prevent my family from slipping away. I can only change how I respond to it. I realized I had to push through my pain and that, once I did, I would be able to enjoy my family.

– Debbie Newsham, Eagle River, AK

Recognize that there may be conflicting emotions as a loved one returns to wellness. You've given up part of your identity, maybe even put the rest of your life on hold. Claim it back. Your loved one is giving you permission to do so.

– Penny Pearlman, Westport, CT

I've learned that life is so short you can't afford to hold grudges. You only hurt yourself. Yes, we have the usual grumbling about who does what, but you have to get past it. Otherwise, it won't help anyone.

– Juana Casillas, Tucson, AZ

It's important to find out how to take care of yourself. I get deep-tissue massages for stress and go to a chiropractor for pain in my neck, shoulders and back.

– Beth Wyman, Yonkers, NY

Every caregiver deserves a moment alone to refresh and renew and revitalize.

– Nancy Mercier, West Palm Beach, FL

Caregiving is often frustrating, but it also is extremely rewarding. We have learned so much from taking care of Dad, patience being what comes to mind first.

– Megan Swearingen, Washington, IL

Reprinted from [caringtoday.com](http://www.caringtoday.com)

<http://www.caringtoday.com/get-basic-caregiving/important-lessons-learned>