

SOCIALLY SPEAKING!

AARP has cited research showing that social detachment is as detrimental to health as smoking or obesity. And the best prevention plan for staying cognitively sharp is regular exercise, intellectual stimulation, and social interaction.

HomePorts sponsors periodic social events including a monthly (Dutch treat) lunch at a local restaurant. Encourage your parent(s) to participate. Transportation is available for those unable to drive.



HomePorts members gather monthly for lunch at the Fish Whistle Restaurant.

Members Martha Holland and Catherine Brereton talk with State Delegate Jay Jacobs from Rock Hall.

HOMEPORTS 2012 FACTS AT A GLANCE

Office Location: Town Hall, 118 Cross Street, Chestertown
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 114, Chestertown, MD 21620
Year Founded: Incorporated in the State of Maryland, 2007, with service beginning in 2008
Tax Status: IRS qualified 501(c)(3) organization (non-profit)
Web Site: www.homeports.org
Telephone: 443-480-0940
Email Address: info@homeports.org
Member Households: 79, which include 120 individuals
2012 Budget: \$78,600
Volunteer Hours Worked in 2012: over 400
(The value of a volunteer hour in Maryland is \$22.32 according to the AARP Bulletin, December 2011)
No. of Referrals Made to Paid Providers (Vendors) in 2012: 75
Most Frequent Volunteer Service Requested: Local Transportation
Most Frequent Paid Provider Services Requested: Home Maintenance & Repair

Affiliations and Partnerships:

Kent County Chamber of Commerce
Upper Shore Aging, Inc.
Washington College
Rebuilding Together Kent County
Chester River Health System
Chester Valley Ministerial Association
Village-to-Village Network

HomePorts, Inc.
Town Hall Building
118 N. Cross Street
P.O. Box 114
Chestertown, MD 21620

Karen Wright
Executive Director
443-480-0940
info@homeports.org
www.homeports.org

HomePorts is a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership alliance providing access to a wide range of services designed to offer mature adults what they need to remain in their own homes. Membership is available to those over 55 in Kent County and the adjacent area in Queen Anne's County within the 21620 zip code.



Families

INFORMATION & RESOURCES FOR HOMEPORTS FAMILIES

WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO & WHY WE DO IT

The motto of HomePorts is "Keeping Home a Safe Harbor". A greater Kent County non-profit membership organization for those 55 and older, we help members to prolong independent living and reduce the demands on the healthcare and social services systems.

According to AARP, over 90% of those over 65 want to remain in their own homes as they age. "All of our research indicates that people want to stay in their homes and communities as long as possible. Their homes are the safest, most comfortable and most cost-effective place to receive care as they age."
Lee Hammond, Past President, AARP.

Founded in 2008, HomePorts is among a rapidly growing number of like-minded, successful grassroots, member-driven "villages" developing in communities across the country. An initial home safety evaluation is offered, and social, educational, and cultural activities are encouraged. The membership fee is \$350 per year per household, with a scholarship program for those with a limited income.

Vendor Services



HomePorts provides its members with free referrals for transportation, home maintenance and repairs, yard work, housekeeping, pet care, companion care, technology assistance, bill-paying, and other home services. All providers used are interviewed and approved by a review committee and are local business persons.

Please encourage your parents to use these vendors! Older people are frequently reluctant to spend money, but it is important for your parents to be safe and comfortable in their home. Many offer member discounts. Be sure to get estimates in advance for work requested.

Education

In addition to volunteer and paid provider assistance, HomePorts offers members periodic educational programs on topics of interest to older adults. Examples of recent free programs include:

- Communicating with the Hearing-Impaired
- Staying Fiends with Your Computer
- Power Over Pain: You've Got What It Takes
- Vision Loss
- New State of Maryland Advance Directive Form

"To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living."

Henri Frederic Amiel

Over 22% of those living in Kent County are over 65, compared to 12% throughout the state of Maryland.

In 2012, 10.9% of our County seniors were over 85. There are twice as many seniors as there are school-age children in Kent County, and the average age is quickly rising. Public services for seniors do not have adequate resources to meet the demands.

In Maryland there are presently 10 to 15 aging-in-place "villages". We are proud that HomePorts was among the first and is the only group to cover a significant geographic area. We also have the only organized group of volunteers helping seniors in Kent County. Over 60 HomePorts volunteers are available to help members free of charge with local transportation, shopping and home visits. Rides constitute our most frequent requests.

At the request of several members we have compiled this newsletter to better acquaint you with HomePorts and some important issues. HomePorts is truly a member-driven organization ... we welcome your feedback and suggestions.

DID YOU KNOW

As we grow older there are many topics that we need to consider and understand. HomePorts regularly provides information to our members that touch on healthcare, finances, security, and safety to name a few. We encourage you to be aware of some of this information and the types of issues that face our older family members today.

Age-Related Hearing Loss



One-third of those between 65 and 74 and one-half of those 85 and older experience loss of hearing. Only one in four with a hearing impairment wears a hearing device. There is a direct relationship between hearing loss and overall health and well-being. Encourage your parents to get tested if symptoms develop. Stress often accompanies hearing loss.

Medicare Issues

HomePorts does not handle medical issues. Members should obtain help from their health care team. But as a family member, you should be aware of general Medicare provisions. From participating doctors, preventive services include a yearly "wellness" visit, prostate cancer screenings, pneumococcal shots, obesity screening and counseling, flu shots, glaucoma tests, diabetes self-management training, depression screening, alcohol misuse screening and counseling, cardiovascular screening, and colorectal cancer screening.

Medical bills and Medicare Summary Notices should also be checked to be sure the patient has received the services and/or equipment charged, and there is no double billing. Call the healthcare provider with any questions about unusual or questionable charges.

Emergency Information Cards

Even for those in good health, emergency service responders recommend that all seniors have a card posted on or near the refrigerator with information such as name and number of contact person, medications used, and name of physician. HomePorts has cards available and can mail you one. AARP also recommends a form that the family completes together that contains essential information for use in an emergency - for details, visit: www.aarp.org/aarp-foundation/our-work/housing/info-2012/emergency-disaster-preparedness-plans-for-seniors.html

Communicating Healthcare Decisions

"Having the conversation" can be difficult but is a genuine gift between parents and children. Although Congress passed the Patient Self-Determination Act in 1990 which encouraged making health care directives, 80% of us still do not have an advance directive, sometimes called a "living will".

Supplementing an advance directive, the new Maryland Medical Order for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) form is now required by the Chester River Hospital. A physician must sign the form, ideally after a discussion in the doctor's office. Those transferred from the hospital to a nursing facility, dialysis center, or prescribed home care after a hospital stay must have the form.

Useful web sites include:

www.americanbar.org/groups/law_aging.html
(for American Bar Association guidance)

www.oag.state.md.us/healthpol/
(for State of Maryland Health Decisions Policies)

www.agingwithdignity.org/
(the "Five Wishes" advance directive document)

Avoiding Fraud and Identity Theft



"You've been specially selected to hear this offer." Scams cost seniors billions of dollars a year. Kent County is unfortunately not immune to this scourge. Emphasize to your parents not to share personal information such as social security or bank account numbers unless they know how they will be used.

Hang up on unsolicited calls! If shopping on-line, look for a physical address and phone number. If doubtful, call the number to confirm the legitimacy of the business.

County Emergency Notification System ... Register Today!



When a crisis occurs anywhere in Kent County, Emergency Management officials must be able to reach residents with warnings, information, and updates. In order to ensure that residents can be contacted quickly and effectively, the County has begun using Global Connect's Emergency Notification System, which gives emergency management the ability to call thousands of residents within minutes.

Whether residents need to be informed of a water main break, fast-moving fire, approaching storm, or other crisis, this notification system is an efficient way to reach them with the news. Residents with Verizon land lines are already included in the system's database. Registration for cell phones, emails, text alerts and other phone services is available by going to www.kentcounty.com, then "Government", then "OES-911". Or call 410.810.2276, or email emergencynotification@kentgov.org.

Financial Support

Tax-deductible donations are most welcome. Only 40% of our annual \$75,000 budget is covered by member dues. And a portion of all donations is allocated to the support of scholarships for members on limited incomes. A gift certificate for membership makes an ideal holiday or birthday present!

"Large affairs are not performed by muscle, speed, nimbleness, but by reflection, character, judgment. In age, these qualities are not diminished but augmented."

Cicero

THIRD ANNUAL HEALTHY AGING SYMPOSIUM

As part of our goal to educate the community and promote successful aging in Kent County, HomePorts will host our Third Annual Healthy Aging Symposium next spring. Our biggest event yet, the Symposium will be held on March 26, 2013, from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm, at the Kent County Middle School in Chestertown.

Partners include the local Area Agency on Aging (Upper Shore Aging, Inc.), Kent County Health Department, and the Chester River Health System. The opening session will feature keynote speaker, Dr. Steven Gambert, Director of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Attendees then will participate in three breakout discussions led by local professionals offering tips for "moving in the right direction":

- Directions in Physical and Mental Health
- Directions to Where You Want to Live
- The Right Direction Legally and Financially

There will be 35 local exhibitors in the fields of health care, home services, home products, and education. Encourage your parent(s) to participate, and arrange to attend with them!



Dr. Steven Gambert
Scheduled Keynote Speaker