

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Karen Wright
Executive Director

I have a theory about time—the longer you live, the smaller a year becomes as a percentage of your life, and therefore time seems to go faster. I can't believe another year has gone by and I've now attended my fourth Village to Village gathering. This year's event was held in Washington, DC, September 29-30 and I attended along with our Volunteer Coordinator, Shannon Smulow, and board member, Muriel Cole. It was a full house with nearly 250 attendees from all over the country. The theme was Many Villages - One Vision - One Voice and centered on the transition of the national Village to Village Network which has lost its major

funding and has restructured. The keynote speaker was DC Mayor Vincent Gray who discussed the growth of villages in our nation's capital.

There were several breakout sessions over the two-day event which included topics such as "Caring for Our Frailest Members with Medical Partnerships and Volunteers", "Empowering Members: Out of the Blue Discussions and Medical Note Taking", "Lessons from Declining Membership to Village Transformation" and "Deepening and Expanding a Village: Neighborhood Groups and Hub & Spoke." As always, I came away energized with some fresh ideas and new priorities for HomePorts.

Mostly though, we get new ideas for how we can enhance our services to our members. Other villages have regular social gatherings—coffees, pot-luck suppers, book clubs, discussion groups—that are very popular with their membership. Would you participate in such events? What would you enjoy? When would be the best time? If you have a chance, call me at 443-480-0940 or email me at Karen@homeports.org and let me know how we can better serve you.

What's Up?

- **October 15**
HomePorts Quarterly Education Program
Authors of the book *OK Now What?* give practical suggestions & guidance for caregivers
Chestertown Town Hall
2nd Floor
10:00 am - 11:00 am
- **October 16**
HomePorts Member Luncheon at the Fish Whistle
12:30 pm

amazon.com

If you're shopping at Amazon.com, please remember to use the link on the HomePorts website (www.homeports.org). Every purchase you make earns a donation to HomePorts! And ... there is no cost to you!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ...

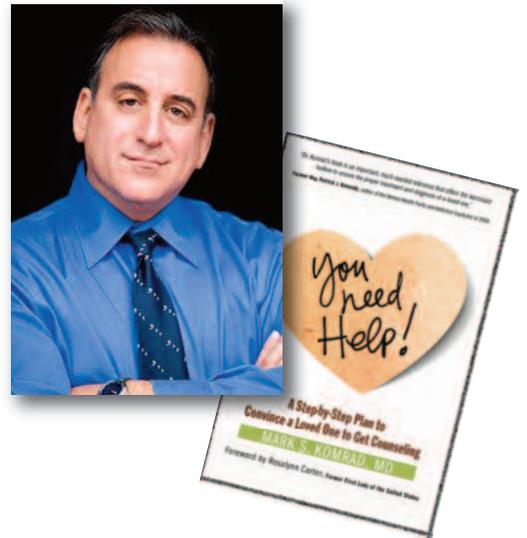
Q. I'm a HomePorts member who no longer drives because of my eyesight. I continue to be so grateful to the volunteers who take me to my doctor and dentist appointments. I offer to pay them but they refuse any money. They are so friendly and gracious. I would like to do something.

A. Very timely question! We have recently mailed our annual appeal letter to members and friends, asking for contributions ... the one request we make each year. A significant part of our funds comes from donations, and any gift you would like to give is much appreciated.

MENTAL HEALTH TOWN MEETING & RESOURCE FAIR

A free Kent and Queen Anne's County Mental Health Town Meeting & Resource Fair will be held Saturday, November 8, from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm at the Presbyterian Church of Chestertown. This event is being held to raise awareness of mental health needs, the importance of getting early intervention and information on local resources to provide help. In providing the first of such events it is hoped that the stigma surrounding mental illness might also be decreased.

The keynote speaker is Mark Komrad, M.D., nationally recognized author of *You Need Help! Convince a Loved One to Get Treatment*. Dr. Komrad is on the clinical and teaching staff of Sheppard Pratt Hospital and Johns Hopkins Hospital.



ALZHEIMERS MEMORY WALK - A GREAT SUCCESS!

Due to limited resources, HomePorts cannot support other non-profit organizations. However, we made an exception for the October 4th Chestertown event to raise funds for and awareness of the need for Alzheimers research. HomePorts members and friends donated generously, contributing to a total of \$4500.00 raised. The event, according to organizers, made more money than any other Alzheimer's fund-raiser on the Eastern Shore this year!



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED ...

The following questions were prepared by Jack Matthews, a HomePorts member ... and are worth thinking about!

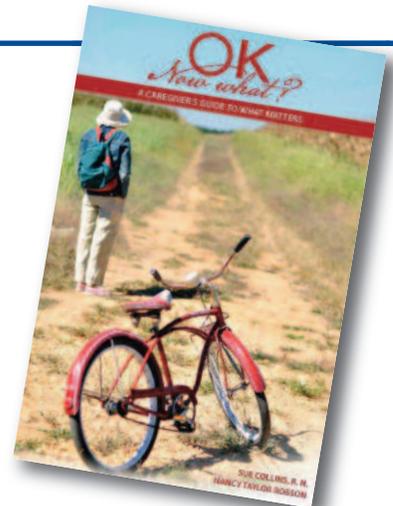


1. If you live in a two story home could you create a bedroom and bath on the first floor? This would enable you to stay home if for any reason you could not handle steps.
 2. Since most falls occur in the bathroom do you have grab bars in strategic locations in the bathroom and shower? These have saved me from several falls.
 3. Is there space in the bathroom for the washer and dryer (over/under if necessary)? Carrying laundry up and down steps is an accident waiting to happen. We have family members who have experienced falls carrying laundry to the basement.
 4. Door knobs become difficult to manage as we age, consider replacing them on frequently used doors, with lever handles.
5. Could a wheel chair ramp be built over your entrance steps? If not, consider the possibility of several connecting ramps to the entrance.
 6. Do you have some way to contact 9-1-1, if lying on the floor? There are numerous systems available or a cell phone, but do not wait until you are on the floor to attempt to order one.
 7. Do you have family or friends to assist in an emergency, and a method to make a contact? A cell phone with which you are very familiar should always be available.
 8. If all doors are locked and you are not able to open one, how would aid be able to enter? A hidden key or give one to a friendly neighbor?
 9. Do you have a paper on your refrigerator with the following information for 9-1-1 responders or emergency room medics: current insurance, doctor's name, medications, pharmacy, medical problems, medical history, family or friend contact name and phone number? I keep a copy in my wallet, making it easy for emergency entry.
 10. If you have a pet(s) who would care for them if you were gone for more than a day? Is the person familiar with your home and your pet, and do they have a key or means to enter?

HOMEPORTS EDUCATION PROGRAM - OCTOBER 15

Caregivers sometimes are reluctant to ask for help, but there is guidance available. Authors of a book reviewed in our May/June newsletter, Sue Collins, RN, and Nancy Taylor Robson, will give practical suggestions and guidance based on their newly-published book "OK, Now What?". The program takes place from 10:00 am to 11:00 am., October 15, Chestertown Town Hall, 2nd floor.

Please call Karen at 443-480-0940, or send an email message to karen@homeports.org, for more information or to register.



WHY JOIN A VILLAGE? THE VALUE OF A VILLAGE ...

Susan McWhinney-Morse, a founder of the first “village”, Beacon Hill Village in Boston says, “Clearly the member-driven, self-governing, and self-funded features of the Village movement strike a deep chord with those dealing with the next phase in the lives of older people. This concept is a powerful source of renewable energy. It is the future. ”

Membership in a Village is considered "lifestyle insurance", being able to maintain your way of life in the community, as well as strengthening community bonds that already exist. As a country, the U.S. ranks low among developed countries in its social services to seniors. Yet, older adults with such supports have better health and well-being, according to many studies. Grass-roots groups like HomePorts make a difference. We encourage non-members to find out more about HomePorts and its benefits to Kent County seniors.



Blog Available for Maryland Villages

While HomePorts remains the largest village, in geographic coverage, within Maryland, there are now countless villages dotting the Western Shore. Leaders have started a blog at marylandagingincommunity.org/. HomePorts members are encouraged to submit thoughts, innovative ideas, and experiences.

DOC IN THE BOX

A new feature for members and friends, by Wayne Benjamin, M.D.



Send your question for Dr. Benjamin to info@homeports.org.

Q. I see that the pharmacies are already advertising the availability of flu shots. Is it too early to get one?

A. No. The ideal time is around October 1. Major outbreaks of flu may occur in February or March, after which the immunity may falter.

Annual vaccination is especially important for young children, people 65 and older, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions such as heart, lung or kidney disease, nervous system disorders, or a weakened immune system.

Flu can also lead to pneumonia. Each year thousands of people in the United States die from flu, and many more are hospitalized. Flu vaccine is the best protection against flu and its complications. Flu vaccine also helps prevent spreading flu from person to person. Inactivated flu vaccine does not contain live flu virus, so you cannot get the flu from this vaccine. Side effects are uncommon. “The ‘super’ flu shot is recognized as indicated for persons over 65 and may provide added immunity to the flu. However, if it is unavailable, it is recommended of primary importance that all folks receive the flu vaccine.