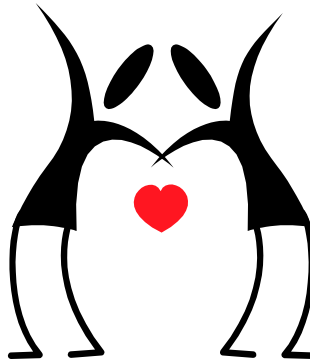


ElderConnections
February, 2005

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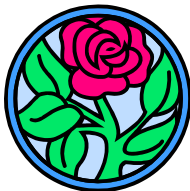


**where aging is for everyone...
aging is *becoming*...
and the spirit is *ageless***

ElderConnections

is a bi-monthly e-newsletter dedicated to the promotion of positive aging, spiritual health and well-being of older adults and their families – offering information, resources, model ministries, stories, and humor! Visit our web-site at www.civic.bev.net/oam. Jan McGilliard, Editor

Connections of the Heart



Valentine's Day has come and gone with its variety of expressions of remembrance and love....the exchange of cards, friendly phone calls and e-mails to those we're thinking of....the buying and consuming of candy and chocolates (nearly 25 pounds per year for every American!)...flowers offered in love and friendship, reminding us that with a bit more patience Spring will come with more blooms to bless our

days.

While the history of Valentine's Day and its patron saint remain somewhat a mystery, it has vestiges of Christian and ancient Roman tradition. To read some of the stories attributed to St. Valentine, visit the following site:

<http://www.historychannel.com/exhibits/valentine/?page=history>. The stories certainly emphasize St. Valentine's appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure.

We never outgrow our love of being remembered – so as this year progresses, take a few extra minutes to offer signs of Christ's love (and therefore ours) to those who need to be remembered throughout the year. Make a visit or a call to someone who is staying close to home these days; send a written note – circulate pre-addressed cards in church school classes and meetings of all ages and get lots of signatures! E-mail is quick and easy for those who communicate this way. Make someone laugh. Make an extra loaf of bread or other baked goods and deliver with a warm hug, handshake, or smile – whatever seems appropriate. Spread random acts of kindness everywhere. God's love is contagious when shared.



February is Heart Awareness Month! Go Red for Women is a nationwide campaign to raise awareness about heart disease in women. Red is a symbol for women and heart disease. But red is more than a color; it's the power of women investing in their heart health. Visit the Heart Association web site to learn the many ways you can be involved in advocacy for healthy hearts:

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200000>

Speaking of health – from Pat Gleich, Health Ministries USA

There are some promising new studies exploring the relationship between religion and health. Recent work in the development of instruments that would provide an empirical measure religiousness and spirituality, and health status would seem to reaffirm the need for active ministries of health. They also provide guidance in specific ways that congregational health ministries can be helpful. **A new book, Religious Influences on Health and Well-Being in the Elderly**, edited by K. Warner Schaie, PhD Neal Krause, PhD, and Alan Booth, PhD, cites much of the research and explores key dimensions of religion that are thought to exert a positive influence on the health and well-being of older people. Among the key facets of religion that are examined are church attendance, prayer, religious coping, and forgiveness. You might find it interesting.

Health Ministries USA web site is one you should visit often!

<http://www.pcusa.org/health/usa/>

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Building the body of Christ

Congregational Care Teams are one way to strengthen the ties that bind us as followers of Christ, who came to teach us how to love and serve each other. *There's a season for everything under heaven.....*and that means there's a time when we'll need folks to surround us with their care and love, providing practical assistance as we journey through a life transition, a loss, an illness, injury, or surgery, the arrival of a new baby, downsizing and moving to new living quarters.

Most of the time, however, we can be of assistance to others, no matter what our age or stage in life. It's a win-win situation! Congregational Care Teams work in any size congregation and are conducive to our active lifestyles. We *can* provide care without neglecting ourselves or experiencing burnout. To learn more about Care Teams, visit the above-mentioned Health Ministries Website. Seminars on Care Team Ministry are available through **ElderConnections**. Jan McGilliard is qualified to teach and preach on this subject! See contact information at the top of this newsletter.

For your calendar – very important!!!

[The National Interfaith Coalition on Aging\(NICA\) cordially invites you to learn about The Access to Benefits Coalition which seeks to help low income beneficiaries in congregations, parishes, and communities lower the cost of their medications. On Tuesday, February 22nd at 2PM Eastern time, NCOA will be facilitating a one-hour teleconference/web cast that will provide an overview of ABC and demonstrate the Benefits CheckUp Rx program. We would like for each of you to be a part of this unique instructional opportunity.](#)

WHAT is ABC? – see below!

[The Access to Benefits Coalition \(ABC\) is dedicated to ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries with lower incomes know about and can make the best use of some available resources for reducing the costs of prescription drugs, including the Medicare-approved drug discount card program and the Medicare prescription drug benefit.](#)

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

[You can go to an ABC host site or use your own computer. Click here](#) to view contact information for your local ABC Coalition who can share with you further information about the host site nearest you! This could be a great way to learn more about the coalition in your area as well as other faith-based groups. If you choose to go to a nearby coalition host site they will also provide all the necessary equipment. Other advantages are that they will be able to answer your questions and discuss their outreach experiences thus far. If you choose to use your own computer you will need a telephone with speakerphone option and computer with internet access and monitor. **Only 48 sites** will be able to participate. Please make an e-mail reservation with rita.chow@ncoa.org

TAKE ACTION!

The goal of the Coalition is to **quickly** and **measurably** educate Medicare beneficiaries with lower incomes. Join NICA in these efforts by contacting your local ABC now about how you would like to participate in the upcoming teleconference/web cast. Or if you choose to go it alone and use your own computer to access the teleconference/web case, you will still need to make a reservation soon.

DIAL-IN INFORMATION

On February 22nd at 2pm Eastern time, dial in: 1-888-330-9549; PIN 131800#

To find out more about ABC please visit the website at
www.accesstobenefits.org.

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Mark your calendars!

May is Older Adults Month: The **Older Adult Week Planning Guide for 2005** is ready!
Go to the website listed below for more details.

June 8-11, 2005: Annual **POAMN Conference** (Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network) in Austin, TX

June 16-19, 2005: Annual **ARMSS Conference** (Association of Retired Ministers, Spouses, and Survivors) in Kansas City, KS.

Go to the following link for details! <http://www.pcusa.org/olderadults/>

Think Spring!!!

Jan McGilliard, Editor
ElderConnections