

## News from our Information & Referral Service



Betty Chiang and Janet Roberts have jumped into their new roles as Coordinator and Co-Coordinator of the Information & Referral (I&R) team after Sandy Melnick decided to move on to other pursuits. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, they hosted a potluck luncheon for the team with a great turnout of 13 of their members. The guest speaker was Judy Payne, a SCLH resident and geriatric care manager who provides caregiver counseling to residents and their families. Judy spoke about the different types of care that are available in the local area and described some of the issues that typically confront folks as they are trying to make these life-changing decisions. It was a very informative afternoon that prompted a lot of questions and discussion.

Janet and Betty had gone about upgrading and revising the I&R training manual and gave a new set of contents to all participants so they can update their personal copies. There was also time allocated for answering questions from the team members and lively discussion about the ins and outs of handling calls. One particular item - the team agreed that moving from three-day shifts to two-day shifts would be a great idea and would probably make it even easier to recruit new volunteers.

Because there was so much positive response to the event, Betty and Janet are planning to have these get-togethers every few months.

## Neighbors InDeed Call Stats

Number of calls coming in to our Information & Referral Service:

**2006 – 1800 calls (approximate)**

**2007 – 3020 calls (actual)**

**2008 – 3130 calls (YTD actual as of 10/30)**

It's very likely that we will hit between 3700 and 3800 calls by the end of the year!

That's a lot of phone calls to answer. Kudos to the I&R team!!

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## Data Analysis Project



Many thanks to volunteers Bob Barton and Lydia King for conducting a major effort to mine our data. What did we find?

A large number of calls were classified as "Other" and will require further analysis. However, of our regularly offered Handy Helper services the top five service requests are for help with smoke alarms, furnace filters, sprinkler controllers, garage door lube/adjustments and sprinkler system repairs...in that order. Top categories for I&R referrals to outside resources appear to be for home repairs/services, transportation and home health care. No really major surprises here but having good data can be very valuable when it comes time to make decisions.

## Handy Helper Program



So, how many of those calls that come in to I&R are for Handy Helper Services? Answer: range is between 50-60%. Year-To-Date our Handy Helper volunteers have responded to well over 1600 service calls. Hats off to our intrepid Handy Helpers!! And, as always, glowing remarks are coming in from residents on our comment/donation cards. Our services are so appreciated!



Home Depot continues to be a great supporter of our HH program and on September 19<sup>th</sup> made a presentation at the HH training meeting at Orchard Creek. The topic was water heaters and even Program Coordinator, Larry Schurr, who said he thought he “knew everything” about water heaters ended up learning a lot!

On November 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Bob McBride, who heads up the Handy Helpers equivalent program at Sun City Roseville, will talk about their program which has some different approaches. There will also be speakers to talk about garage doors and heating and air conditioning systems. Please be sure to let Larry know if you’re coming. You can email him at [lsure46@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lsure46@sbcglobal.net) or call him at 543-5320.

Worth noting...Herman Tijsseling has agreed to be the new Co-Coordinator for Handy Helpers. If a Handy Helper needs supplies or has a question, in addition to Larry, you can now contact Herman at 434-7307 or [gitanherm@ssctv.net](mailto:gitanherm@ssctv.net)

Many thanks to Vic Albertazzi, the former Handy Helper Co-Coordinator. Vic also heads up our terrific Dispatcher Team with his Co-Coordinator, Morrow Moore. Vic can now take a break and switch from two hats to one!

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## “How To” Home Maintenance Workshops

Larry Schurr has been running this very successful program that started in the latter part of 2007. Designed to instruct home owners to be able to perform many of the tasks that Handy Helpers offer, these workshops have been very well received. We have held 20 workshops with 209 attendees. Our residents have learned how to lube garage doors, change smoke alarm batteries, adjust thermostats and sprinkler systems and on and on.



We’ve even entered into a collaborative effort with Neighborhood Watch. Any Neighborhood Watch Mailbox Captain can work with Larry to set up a workshop for her/his neighborhood. The added advantage of these NW workshops is that the residents are likely dealing with the same equipment since their houses were built at the same time. That makes demonstrations *much* easier.

Of course, we’re always open to having any resident offer his/her house as a training site. If you or one of your neighbors would like to do that simply call 223-2763 and let us know. The added bonus is that the home owner gets to watch as the instructor goes through the paces on his/her very own equipment.

## Medical Equipment Loan Program

By Jean Ebenholtz



As it enters its second year the Medical Equipment Loan Program is really growing. In September we loaned out 27 different items compared to 7 in September 2007.

Last Spring we reported no calls for a wheelchair ramp. Then we received a call – borrowed a ramp for the client to use and ordered our own easily transportable ramp. We can report that the ramp arrived in early September and has been in constant use – going from one client to the next and is now at the home of a 3<sup>rd</sup> client. Thanks to the NID Board, the second ramp is now on order.

Most residents who need assistance with walking when they leave the hospital are given standard aluminum walkers. The physical therapists who work in our community assisting these same residents prefer the 4-wheel walker with seats so that greater distances can be covered with a smoother gait. The therapists tell their clients to call NID because we have the equipment they will need to achieve a faster, more complete recovery. We are fortunate that so many SCLH residents have donated these special walkers. This enables us to help other residents who are, in turn, so appreciative.

We recently welcomed and trained a new volunteer, Karen Kremesec. When Irene Kos, another volunteer saw the storage area during Karen's training, she remarked how empty it was compared to when she was first trained. That is because probably half our items are out on loan. We all wish for a healthy community but if all the equipment we now own were to be returned, we would not be able to get into the storage area.

Thanks to our community for the equipment donations that keep our program going and growing, to the NID Board for supporting our growth with more equipment as we need it, and to the very active participation of Gary Lancaster and Irene Kos who make it all work.



## Volunteer Opportunities



Now that our **Information & Referral Service** will be moving to two-day shifts we'll be looking for more volunteers to answer our incoming calls. We're also looking for volunteers for our **Dispatcher Team**. The Dispatchers pick up the incoming service requests from I&R and then assign Handy Helpers to go out on service calls. We're on the lookout, too, for someone with marketing materials background. If you know anyone who might be interested in any of these volunteer positions, please have him/her call **223-2763** to request a prospective volunteer packet.



Thanks for all you do for Neighbors InDeed and we wish you and yours a warm, wonderful and Happy Holiday Season!!

