

Is Dad getting all his VA benefits?

Fathers Day is in June which makes it the perfect time to make sure the men in your family are getting all their benefits.

The Veterans' Administration offers a Special Pension with Aid and Attendance benefit that is largely unknown. Some reports indicate it is **being claimed by only one in seven** who is eligible for it. It can pay for in-home caretakers, a skilled nursing facility, and assisted living. Low income veterans of all wars can qualify. Their disability does not have to be war-related and spouses of deceased veterans are also eligible.



This is part of the **VA Improved Pension program** that allows for Veterans and surviving spouses who require the regular attendance of another person to assist in activities of daily living (e.g.: eating, bathing, dressing, toileting) to receive additional monetary benefits. It also includes

individuals who are blind or a patient in a nursing home because of mental or physical incapacity. Assisted care in an assisted living facility also qualifies.

This most important benefit is overlooked by many families with Veterans or surviving spouses who need additional monies to help care for ailing parents or loved ones. This is a "pension benefit" and is not dependent upon service-related injuries for compensation. Most Veterans who are in need of assistance qualify for this pension. A Veteran is eligible for up to \$1,519 per month, while a surviving spouse is eligible for up to \$976 per month. A couple is eligible for up to \$1,801 per month.

The application process is long and the VA recommends that you go through a VA benefits counselor. Many of the Ethos clients have worked successfully with Paul Keough. He is the benefits counselor from the City of Boston's Dept of Veterans' services. You can contact Mr. Keough at **617-635-3026**.

Stress Busters for Caregivers

Ethos AgeWell West Roxbury and the Caregiver Alliance present "Stress Busters for Caregivers." Swing into your summer by learning techniques of stress reduction at this interactive workshop designed just for you.

When you arrive you will get your own mini relaxation monitor. It is a little bio-feedback patch which will show your level of relaxation.



The **Ethos Family Caregiver Advisor, Leslie Ahern**, will then teach you some relaxation and deep breathing exercises. You will be taking your patch home with you so you can practice what you have learned.

Then, you are in for a treat as **Certified Laughter Leader, Paul Antokolsky** will teach you how to create some hearty laughter, even when you don't feel like laughing. Laughter is, as they say, the best medicine so learn how to laugh at the times you could really use it. We will also be doing some light yoga stretches, but everything can be done from your chair if that is where you



Laughter for a Healthy Heart

feel most confident and comfortable. You will receive handouts so you can continue your laughter exercises at home.



**St. Theresa's Church Pavilion
Tuesday, June 24th
6:30- 8:00 PM
West Roxbury**

**Light Supper Served
Program is Free but you must
pre-register by calling Cathy Slade
at 617-522- 6700 x 316**

Justice O'Connor Speaks Out

Retired Justice Sandra Day O'Connor took her family's private battle with Alzheimer's disease public last month as she urged Congress to speed research and aid to fight the coming epidemic of the mind-destroying illness.



"Our nation certainly is ready to get deadly serious about this deadly disease," she told the Senate Special

Committee on Aging. She has a personal stake. "My beloved husband John suffers Alzheimer's," she said. "He is not in very good shape at present."

O'Connor stepped down as the first female Supreme Court justice in 2005 to take care of her husband. The caregivers' struggle of balancing eldercare and their work has now reached even those in the highest echelons. "I suspect that you will not hear from many of my fellow caregivers directly," said O'Connor, "simply because they do not have the resources to take time away from their loved ones in order to come before you,"

The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 10 million people share the overwhelming task of caring for the more than 5 million Americans living with the disease. Those numbers will skyrocket as 16 million people are forecast to have the illness by mid-century.

A group of scientists, former politicians and well-known names like O'Connor have teamed up to create what they call a "national strategy" to jumpstart efforts to speed research into new Alzheimer's treatments and improve help for caregivers. "Public funding for Alzheimer's has been stagnant for five years," O'Connor noted. "We all are running out of time".

You can keep up with these efforts by staying in touch with the Alzheimer's Association. You can become an advocate without ever leaving your home. Download the Advocate resource guide from this website.

http://www.alz.org/join_the_cause_resources

Caregiving on Community TV

Age Wise Boston: Bridging Generations

The BNN Live cable show is on every second Tuesday of the month at 2:30 PM on Comcast channel 9 and RCN channel 15.



Taking Care

Family Care Advisor **Leslie Ahern** and her husband **Paul Antokolsky** who is a elder care specialist and SHINE counselor host their one-hour

show "**Taking Care**" **Live every Wednesday at 6:00 PM** on Comcast channel 9 and RCN channel 15. The program is then repeated on Friday at 10:00 AM and Sunday at noon.

Caregiver Support Groups

Join other caregivers for refreshments and discussion in a caring, relaxed, and confidential setting on a monthly basis. Everyone is welcome and there is no charge. Refreshments are provided. If this is your first time coming to a group, **please contact the group leader first.**



LGBT* Caregiver Support Group

Monday, June 2, 2008 from 6:00 -7:30 PM

at the Ethos' office in Jamaica Plain

Contact: **Joanne Peskowitz (617) 271-4182**

*Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender

Roslindale Evening Support Group

will meet Thursday, **June 19, 2008** at 6:00 PM at the Boston Rehabilitation Center in Roslindale. It is accessible to MBTA and there is free parking. Refreshments are provided. Contact: **Leslie Ahern 617-522-6700 x376**

Are you interested in participating in a Downtown Lunchtime Caregiver Support Group? If so, please contact **Betsy Downtown** at 617-635-3979.



For more information, please contact:

Leslie Ahern

Family Care Advisor

ETHOS, 555 Amory Street, Jamaica, Plain, MA 02130

617-522-6700 x376