



**HENRY STREET
SETTLEMENT**

SENIOR COMPANION COURIER

WINTER / SPRING 2010

265 HENRY STREET, NEW YORK NY 10002 212.766.9200 WWW.HENRYSTREET.ORG



Featured SENIOR COMPANION

Ray Stern, an author, activist and retired philosophy professor, has another title he wears proudly these days — that of Senior Companion. Ray serves as a Senior Companion to three individuals for whom he provides friendly visiting, shopping and escort services, and much more. He speaks with pride of his clients, calling one “wonderful” and noting another’s musical talents. While he enjoys providing Senior Companion services, he was concerned that his clients remained isolated. His solution? Introduce them to one another! His actions have led to the development of an informal support network among his clients, and one for which they’re grateful. They can reach out to one another when they are in need of company or just a friendly hello.

Ray is the author of *The Old Ladies*, a collection of stories about anti-Semitism. As a social activist, he organized a conference and joined the peace movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King. As a teacher, he encouraged his students to work for justice. The same activist spirit that motivated Ray’s involvement in the civil rights movement is what keeps him involved today, despite a bout with cancer and two vocal chord surgeries.

—Daren Van Lee

director’s corner

Spreading the Word in 2010

The year 2009 is now behind us, but let’s take a few moments to reflect on what an incredible year it was for the Henry Street Settlement Senior Companion Program. Working together, 134 Senior Companions provided 107,689 hours of service to more than 300 clients. The Senior Companions have pulled together and had a phenomenal impact on the lives of people who really needed these services. As we look forward to 2010 and beyond, let us come together to work toward a shared vision of bringing this program into the lives of more people than ever. I am challenging each person who reads this to share the program with the people you come across in your lives: your friends, relatives, colleagues, neighbors and community members. I ask you to encourage them to get involved. They can volunteer, donate or simply spread the word to someone in need. So as we look to the future, I charge you with the awesome responsibility of helping us continue to grow, and to impact lives. I wish you happiness, health and great service in this New Year.

—Jennifer Fields Joseph, Senior Companion Program Director



Dental Hygiene TIPS

- Brush your teeth at least twice daily.
- Replace your toothbrush every three to four months.
- Flossing teeth helps remove plaque and food particles. Clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner to prevent tooth decay.
- Eat a balanced diet and try to limit eating between meals.
- Visit your dentist regularly for oral exams and cleanings.

Source: American Dental Association

Energy Conservation TIPS for WINTER WEATHER

Winter weatherization saves energy and will also save you money.

Air Leaks

Use caulk or weather stripping to seal up any air leaks from window frames, baseboards, electrical outlet and switch plates, wall- or window-mounted air conditioners, and other openings, such as pipes and wiring coming through ceilings, floors and walls.

Thermostat Settings

Health permitting, set your thermostat to 68 degrees during the day and 60 degrees at night and when no one is home.

Each degree over 68 can increase by three percent the amount of energy you use for heating.

Keep Registers Clean

Keep warm-air vents clean to permit proper air-flow.

Reflectors

Radiators can lose heat into exterior walls. Reduce this loss by placing reflectors between the wall and the radiator.

Heat Flow

Keep drapes or furniture away from radiators and baseboard heaters so heat can flow freely.

Unused Rooms

Close doors and warm-air vents in unused rooms.

Air Conditioners

Remove window air conditioners when the weather gets cool. If it is not possible to remove air conditioners, enclose them with a cover.

Maintain Humidity Levels

Use an efficient humidifier to maintain comfortable humidity levels and help you conserve heat.

Proper humidity helps you feel comfortable without turning up the heat.

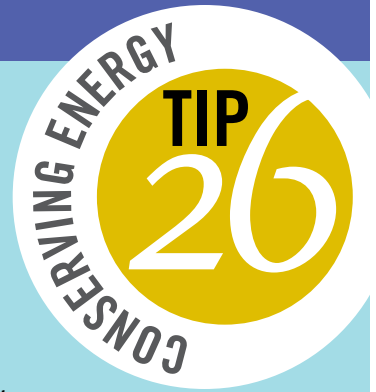
Ceiling Fans

Use ceiling fans to circulate warm air in winter, especially in rooms with high ceilings.

Curtains

If your windows are well-insulated, open the curtains on sunny days in the winter months and close them at night to keep the heat in.

Source: Con Edison



Can YOU Become a SENIOR COMPANION?



Henry Street Settlement is seeking healthy, active adults age 55 or older to become Senior Companions. Senior Companions are volunteers who provide assistance, respite and company for frail, isolated or homebound older adults.

Senior Companions volunteer between 15 and 40 hours each week. All volunteers receive comprehensive pre-service training, monthly in-service training, and may qualify for a tax-free stipend. Volunteer positions are available in all five boroughs.

For more information, please call 212.406.5044, or e-mail jjoseph@henrystreet.org



Medical Minute: Your HEALTHY HEART

Now that the holiday season — with all that good food and drink — is over, it's time to focus on pursuing good heart health. Over one million individuals suffer a heart attack every year in the U.S. How can you avoid being one of them? See your doctor at least once a year to get your blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose (blood sugar) levels checked. And then listen to your doctor's advice. Heart trouble, or coronary artery disease, is the hardening of the arteries which supply the heart with oxygen and food. Most of us are familiar with risk factors for heart attacks: high cholesterol, diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure, cigarette smoking, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle (not enough exercise). Below, we take a closer look at some of the most treatable risk factors.



Jerry J. Lasser, M.D., speaks about health issues with seniors at Henry Street's Good Companions Senior Center.

High Cholesterol

The link between elevated cholesterol and heart attacks has been known for a long time. Over the years, the ideal total cholesterol number has been lowered by medical researchers and, at present, is said to be less than 200. There is good cholesterol (HDL) and bad cholesterol (LDL). The good should be more than 40 and the bad less than 100.

How do you treat high cholesterol? The first way is with diet, by limiting fat in meat, dairy goods, pastries and a lot of other tasty and enjoyable foods. If diet does not work, then medication — usually a statin — is needed. There are many effective statins to choose from, some stronger than others.

High Blood Pressure

About 33 percent of adult Americans have high blood pressure, but many are not aware of the problem. Because high blood pressure — which is very treatable — often doesn't have symptoms, people may

not know they have it, until they get their blood pressure checked. Normal blood pressure is considered to be 120/80 and borderline high blood pressure is 120-139/80-89. High blood pressure of 140/90 needs treatment. Some 95 percent of people with high blood pressure have essential hypertension, meaning no specific reason can be found for the problem. There are rare causes for high blood pressure; these need to be ruled out by the physician with blood tests and other procedures.

Treatment for essential hypertension starts with diet, as some people are salt sensitive. So, replacing salt with a salt substitute can work. However, it usually takes medication — up to three different pills — to control the hypertension. One starts with a water pill, or diuretic. There are numerous medications for high blood pressure and the doctor must choose which one he or she thinks is appropriate. If the medication does not work, another one is tried until an effective medication is found. All medications

have side effects, so it's important to find the one that the patient can best tolerate.

Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a major risk factor for heart attacks and strokes. Diabetes is associated with progressive hardening of the arteries which reduces blood flow to the brain and to the heart. With careful management of the blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure, one can slow the progression of the disease. If this fails, then insulin by injection is the next option. Weight control by diet and exercise are helpful in the management of diabetic heart trouble.

(It is well known by many in the medical community that red wine works well in keeping the heart healthy. I do not think that Italian wine is better than French or American red wine. Consequently, one or two glasses of red wine (not bottles) a day has good effect on your heart and also makes one feel better.

— Jerry J. Lasser, MD

IN-SERVICE Training Dates

All training sessions will begin promptly at 10 a.m.

MARCH

Wednesday, March 3

Davidson Senior Center
950 Union Avenue, Bronx

Wednesday, March 17

Hartley House
413 West 46th Street, Manhattan

Wednesday, March 24

Rochdale Village NORC
69-65 137th Avenue, Jamaica

APRIL

Wednesday, April 7

Davidson Senior Center
950 Union Avenue, Bronx

Wednesday, April 21

Hartley House
413 West 46th Street, Manhattan

MAY

Wednesday, May 5

Davidson Senior Center
950 Union Avenue, Bronx

Wednesday, May 19

Hartley House
413 West 46th Street, Manhattan

Wednesday, May 27

Rochdale Village NORC
69-65 137th Avenue, Jamaica

Brooklyn Training Dates To Be Announced

There will be no training session held in June due to our annual Spring Recognition Event.



Senior Companions are healthy older adults who help other older adults live independently by providing companionship and other services in all five boroughs of New York City. Senior Companions must be 55 years or older, in good health, have a limited income and able to travel on mass transit. Volunteers devote between 15 and 40 hours weekly and may qualify for a tax-free stipend.

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