



## **DYNAMIC AGING**

### ***Choices for a Healthier Future***

The theme for May's Older Americans Month is "Making Choices for a Healthier Future." Never has it been more evident that one of the biggest challenges facing the United States is how we will care for our grandparents, parents, and loved ones as they age. With the aging of 78 million baby boomers who will begin to turn 65 in 2011, there is widespread agreement that this shift in our nation's demographics will have profound implications for our economic and social landscapes at the national, state and community level.

Federal, state and community leaders are witnessing sweeping fundamental transformations in the way we think about and deliver health and long term care in this country. More and more we hear that the overwhelming preference of the American people is to remain at home for as long as possible and to have choice and control over how and where they live as they age. The nation's national aging services network, led by the U.S. Administration on Aging and comprised of State, tribal and area agencies on aging, as well as more than 29,000 community service providers, caregivers and volunteers, know this and have worked hard to carry out their mission under the Older Americans Act to provide for and protect the independence and dignity of our older citizens.

Our local community has several initiatives that encourage us all to work together toward healthier futures as we age.

- An innovative concept in community living for area senior citizens has moved ahead after a series of meetings and consultations held last week in Bridgton. For more information, contact Ingrid von Kannewurff at 647-5389.
- The recently created "Caregiving Grandparents Support and Education Group," sponsored through a mini grant from the Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA), will be providing a free luncheon and presentation on *Stress Management for Kinship Parents* at the Naples Municipal Building on Thursday, May 10, 11:30 - 1:30.
- The Lake Region Elder Network, a collaboration between Healthy Options Together and SMAA, meets the first Thursday of alternate months at the Naples Municipal Building from 9 - 10:30 am. The purpose of the Network is to identify needs in the community, promote awareness of existing resources, and develop new resources for unmet needs for adults 60+ in the Lakes Region.
- The "Caring for Your Aging Family Members Support Group," cosponsored by SMAA and the Alzheimers Association, meets the second Wednesday of each month from 1:30 - 3 pm at the Bridgton Community Center. Contact Lorraine at 647-3116 for more info.
- *A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls*, sponsored by SMAA and the Partnership for Healthy Aging, is a 9 class series offered at different locations throughout the Lakes Region.

The purpose of *A Matter of Balance* is to reduce the fear of failing and increase activity levels among older adults, thus improving quality of life and independence.

- In addition to a vast number of exercise options, our area is rich in senior meal sites that provide both nutritious meals and social connectedness. Both the meal sites and the locations for physical activity are listed in the free Senior Health Guide available at various community locations. An update to this guide is planned for early Fall.

Unless otherwise noted, contact Dona Forke at 693-4545 for more information on the above initiatives.