Part of the mission of any Center for Independent Living is to provide systems advocacy, to help identify and help fill gaps that exist at the systemic level when it comes to inclusion, and support of all varieties of disability. It is in this spirit that I am writing this article and asking for your help. The help is needed to support an ongoing effort by The Brain Injury Alliance New Jersey (BIANJ) to create an ABI (acquired brain injury) Fund, a support mechanism for those who are living with the effects of brain injury caused by arteriovenous malformation, stroke, aneurysm, tumor, or other means outside of blunt-trauma.
SUPPORT THE EFFORT TO CREATE AN ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY FUND IN NJ

Currently, there is a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Fund in NJ which provides funds to qualified people with traumatic brain injury when they have exhausted all other funding resources. The key word is “traumatic.” For purposes of the TBI fund, the brain injury must result from an external force. For example, the qualified person may have sustained brain injury through a car crash, a fall, an assault etc. People with acquired brain injury (ABI) do not necessarily fall within this category but are likely to be in a similar situation following injury, and in need of specialty recovery services and supports that are often not covered by health insurances, be they private, Medicare, or Medicaid.

Being diagnosed with multiple disabilities from ABI is devastating for both the person impacted and their loved ones. While all impacted are adjusting to a “new normal” and combatting other ailments that often stem from the initial injury, they may also be subject to intense financial challenges associated with covering the cost of services and supports. These challenges often increase stress and can compromise the focus on healing and maximizing quality of life. Supports and services can range from smaller items (ex: durable medical equipment; diapers) to costly home modifications (ex: overhead Hoyer lift; wheel-in shower; platform chair lift to get upstairs; widened doors inside a house large enough to get out in case of emergencies) and everything else in-between (ex: service coordination; assistive technology; therapies; cognitive, occupational, music, physical, speech; neuro-psychological services; medicine; respite; nursing assistance; legal services).

One of the issues is the collection of data. Both TBI and ABI have a wide variety of causes, however instances of TBI get grouped together and statistics are collected as a whole under the TBI name. ABI does not get the same attention but the numbers of people affected are just as significant. In a 2016 survey it was reported that almost 200,000 New Jersyans age 18 or older had a history of stroke (NJ Department of Health, 2018). According to
the Brain Aneurism Foundation, about 1 in 50 Americans have an unruptured brain aneurysm with 30,000 experiencing a rupture yearly, that’s one person every 18 minutes (Brain Aneurysm Foundation, 2019). Census data from 2016 showed that around 700 New Jersyans are diagnosed with brain cancer each year. These numbers are immense and only cover three sources of acquired brain injury.

It is due to the magnitude of the issue, and the lack of existing support, that the Brain Injury Alliance New Jersey has started this effort. Their plan involves gathering support via petition in order to have a bill introduced in the New Jersey Legislature. Tom Grady, Director of Advocacy & Public Affairs for BIANJ said “Ideally, we would like to have something introduced in March, which is Brain Injury Awareness Month or, although later, September which is Brain Aneurysm Awareness Month. Whether it happens in January, March, or September, the month is not nearly as important as getting it introduced. What matters most is that people with ABI get the support they need”. It is my hope that after reading this you’ve said to yourself “what can I do to help?” Firstly, you can sign the petition to show NJ legislators that you support this initiative. The petition can be found online here: https://bianj.org/abi-fund-petition/

If you or a loved one has been affected by ABI you can reach out to the Brain Injury Alliance NJ to share your story. To learn more about BIANJ, what they do, how they help, and how you could get further involved, please check out their website (www.bianj.org), connect with them on Facebook (www.facebook.com/biaofnj) or contact them by phone on their public help-line (1-800-669-4323, open M-F 9am-5pm).

References


Hi my name is Timika Cheek, I’m 42 years old and I’d like to tell my story about how I got this beautiful new walker. I started this journey about 5 or so years after graduating high school. I wanted to go to physical therapy to learn how to walk again because after high school I stopped walking, and was reliant on a wheelchair. I began physical therapy using the walker I used when I was in school, but I made a mistake and left my walker at physical therapy. I did this because my transportation drivers would give me a hard time about have both a walker and my wheelchair on the vehicle. I asked the therapy provider if I could leave it there and they agreed.

I took part in physical therapy for about a year and a half before something came up and I had to stop for a short while. When I went back I was told my walker was not there anymore and they didn’t know what happened to it. I was shocked and asked the provider to replace it. I had to fight with them but they eventually agreed and gave me a new walker. The new walker was a totally different style (the original was a light, posterior walker which stays behind me, not in front like most do), it had a hard, uncomfortable seat, and it was too heavy for me to maneuver. Even still I was grateful the organization replaced it, though it was not the right one for me.

I didn’t realize at that time that it would take 15 years to find a walker which suited me as well as the original one. I would get motivated to find one and search really hard, get discouraged by the lack of results and stop, find my courage and start again, over and over again. I even contacted my high school who provided my first walker to find the vendor or at least get some information to point me in the right direction with no results. This cycle went on from my early 20’s into my mid 30’s at which point other issues in my life caused me to put the search aside.
Finally, in 2018 I decided to pick the search up again. It was at the Abilities Expo in 2018 that I found, and was able to try, a walker that finally suited me. It was light, it was a posterior design, and the company had attachments to tailor it to my needs. As if the difficulties of just locating the proper equipment wasn’t bad enough, my health insurance companies were just as difficult to navigate. I was told no, then I was told well you have to go through the primary and send a denial to the secondary, both Medicare and Medicaid were passing the buck back & forth but neither were helping educate me about the process! Finally after I don’t know how many calls, I got someone on the phone who helped me understand and even file a grievance, which finally got my health insurance working to help me.

Even after I had this assistance there were struggles. Because I use a power wheelchair most of the time, insurance didn’t want to pay for another mobility aide, even though the walker would help me navigate inside my home, as well as build my strength back so I can use it when I go out and be less reliant on the chair. I had to have my doctor write multiple prescriptions because the insurance companies picked apart every word (the specific language on a prescription and letter of medical necessity is extremely important). After all of the fighting and stress I received my new walker before my birthday in 2019. When it arrived I cried and I was so thankful for all of the help I received along the way from friends who supported me and helped me keep from giving up, to PCIL and other folks who helped me navigate the system and move through each step.

I wanted to share this story to tell others not to give up. Don’t stop. Don’t take no for an answer. Don’t be afraid to ask for help or guidance. Don’t be afraid to complain and fight for what you need. I am an independent person, and at the start of my journey I had little supports, so I had to learn for myself how to tackle things like this. I wish schools would focus more on promoting self-advocacy and preparing youth with disabilities to pursue their needs and goals. When I got my first walker it was handled by the school, I had no idea about the process, the vendor, the costs, nothing. Life is often a struggle, being taught how to fight for my needs may have prevented years of heartbreak. It is my hope that sharing my story might inspire others to fight for themselves.

The Ability Expo is for the community of people with disabilities, caregivers, seniors, and healthcare professionals to showcase to them the latest technologies and products available to them.
I hope the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 find you all happy and healthy. The summer sun gave way to fall breezes, which, in turn, have given way to winter’s chill, but the Community Connections Recreation Program continues to offer fun and engaging activities, no matter the season!

Since the last edition of this regular feature we’ve seen a lot of new faces, made some new connections, and had a lot of fun. In October, we hosted a night of live performances with musicians from the FunkTASKtiks of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, The Music Box and Key of Awesome Music, and improvisational theater performers from the SKIT (Special Kind of Improvisational Theater) program. I’d like to extend a special thanks to St. Mark United Methodist Church for graciously lending us their fellowship hall, and to the Blue

RECREATION CORNER
By Reed Thomas

PCIL consumers posing in their “Ugly Sweater Contest” attire during the Annual PCIL Holiday Party held in December.

Bands play at St. Mark’s United Methodist Church.
Light Music Program for donating not only the sound system, but also two really nice fellas to set it up, operate it, and pack it up when the evening was over! For November, we coordinated a workshop conducted by the folks from SKIT. It featured fun theater exercises and games designed to encourage healthy communication and develop self-confidence. Finally, we closed the year with our annual holiday party. This year saw the best attendance and the most interest we have ever had for this long-standing event!

The party featured classic favorites like the Ugly Sweater Contest, holiday crafts, a photo booth area, and a meal catered by Fred & Pete’s of Hamilton. There was also a musical component as volunteers Anthony Jones and Joe Hoyer played some classic tunes during dinner and led a holiday sing-a-long afterwards. Congratulations to Tina, Tyffany, and Chris, this year’s ugly sweater contest winners!

If you, a loved one, or a friend wants to get involved as a participant or volunteer please contact us. The more we work together, the more successful we will all be, and the more we’ll get to know the communities we share. As the year continues we’ll have lots of great events to look forward to so keep your eyes peeled for those yellow flyers!

Want to know about what we’re doing? To get on the mailing list for the Community Connections Recreation Program please call or email us here at PCIL: (609) 581-4500 / reed.thomas@pcil
“Word salad” was what the neurologists and speech therapists called it immediately after her brain surgery. “Like a file cabinet filled with all the words she knows, that had been accumulated and organized according to category throughout her life, got tipped over and everything spilled out.” Names of people, names of things, names of places all mixed up, with no connection to the things they pertain to. After a spontaneous brain hemorrhage in 2005, my mom could not place the word for “fork” when we put her food tray in front of her. She had no word for “mom” when we showed her a picture of her own mother. The written word was a jumble to her, too. Newspapers, magazines, books were just ink on a page with no meaning. She shook her head slowly when we pointed to ourselves; her husband and children’s names were not there either. My family and I looked at one another, panic rising: as an educator, someone whose entire life was dedicated to teaching children how to express themselves through words, this spelled disaster. She had always been an avid reader, delighting in reading and re-reading beloved classic short stories, just as much as books on children’s developmental psychology. The possibility of her being unable to read was devastating. To make matters worse, the doctors explained that “the brain is largely an unknown. We can never predict the rate of recovery. We have no way to determine if or when she will ever get speech or reading back. All we can do is try.” The word “try” is too limited a word to describe what my mom did then. After regular speech therapy every week, she assigned herself homework every day to review words and categories, practicing speech and writing. She took out all the books she read over the years to the children in her elementary school classrooms and practiced reading them aloud. She played Scattergories with herself to test the number of words in each category she could list. For her, the task to regain her speech and her ability to read was an imperative. To be Camille Lombard meant writing down recipes, reading articles on children’s learning, skimming pieces in fashion magazines, devouring a collection of
F. Scott Fitzgerald’s stories, sharing news with friends by phone, reading to grandchildren on her lap. To be Camille Lombard meant connecting meaningfully with the people in her world, and gaining meaning from the world around her. She would not - could not - live any other way.

Camille Lombard did not try. She did.

Within 3 years she started teaching early education classes at William Paterson University’s satellite program. She pushed past her doubts or hesitations speaking in front of a classroom of adult students driven by her commitment to fostering excellent young teachers. She worked on her introduction, and spoke it without shame: I am a brain injury survivor, and sometimes I have difficulty finding words. Please bear with me.

Within 5 years, she became a volunteer tour guide at the Grounds for Sculpture. She poured over the talking points, studying and memorizing important pieces to share with visitors. Again, she practiced her introduction, which she stated at the start of her tour: I am a brain injury survivor, and sometimes I have difficulty finding words. Please bear with me.

For the last 10 years, she and her husband volunteered as organizers of a monthly support group for survivors of brain injuries and strokes. She reached out to professionals who could speak to the group about various topics, sent invitations, wrote thank you notes. She greeted everyone with a smile and a hug, conveying love and strength in every word and gesture. They knew all too well how challenging daily life can be when living with a brain injury, and she showed them they were not alone, and their struggle was something to face with grace and pride - together. Simple interactions are herculean tasks: chit-chat at check-out; conversing with friends or family at a party; reading out loud to grandchildren; navigating technology; reading and composing emails, all take an extraordinary amount of energy and time. She did it all with determination and positivity. Her north star was her commitment to promote independence and lead fulfilling lives; an appreciation for beauty and nature; and a belief in the importance of fostering a cadre of excellent educators for our society’s youngest citizens. She was a role model not only for her children and grandchildren, but to dozens of others too. After my mom passed in December, I heard from several of the members of the group, and others as well, about how important she was in their continued journey to recovery. “She gave me the courage to go on.” “She gave me the drive to continue.” “She made me feel like I was special.” “Her hugs were so warm.”

We can all learn from Camille Lombard - the eternal teacher. She taught us the power of the human spirit and how love for others and the desire to connect can overcome all barriers, seen and unseen.

Camille’s family is collecting donations towards the creation of a permanent sculpture in her honor. If you are interested in contributing, please send checks to: Camille Lombard Memorial Fund, 26 Tasley Court, Robbinsville, NJ 08691
The Hunterdon County Division of Senior, Disabilities, and Veterans Services is actively seeking eligible participants for the Personal Assistance Services Program (PASP).

The PASP is a self-directed program that provides non-medical personal care assistance to adults with permanent disabilities between the ages of 18-70 who are living in the community, and are either employed, volunteering, or attending an educational/job training program. The goal of the program is to provide support so that individuals can remain active in their community.

If you are eligible, you will undergo a needs assessment to determine the number of hours you can receive, up to 40 hours per week. The determined hours are then converted to a monthly budget. A cash management plan is then developed with the help of the County Coordinator, which will outline how your monthly budget will be spent. A fiscal intermediary service organization then distributes the budget for you to purchase services. You can use your monthly budget to hire friends, family, or employees from private agencies to assist you with personal care, household management, and transportation. Your budget can also be used to purchase supplies and equipment to enhance your independence, if you choose.

Please note: if you are enrolled in NJ Family Care and are interested in PASP, you must first apply for the Personal Preference Program (PPP) through your Medicaid HMO, as both programs mirror each other.

To apply or obtain more information, please contact the Hunterdon County PASP Coordinator, Alycia Wolf at 908-788-1361.
As I look out on a cold, wet, winter’s day it seems an odd time to be writing about summer activities. Even though it seems like it will take forever for the summer to return, now is the time to start thinking about the Summer Campership Program!

The Campership Award is a financial stipend for young people with disabilities to attend summer activities. These activities can be traditional summer camps (as the name implies) but it is not limited to that by any means. The program has helped people take part in college courses, driving lessons, video game development classes, cooking lessons, sewing classes and a host of other enriching activities that can broaden horizons, prepare for the future, and build relationships and social skills.

The program is open to Mercer County residents ages 4 -25 who are living with a disability. The financial award is based on household income and can be as low as $85.00 to as high as $400.00. Anyone who applies within the application period, and with the proper documentation, will receive a stipend. The award can be paid as a reimbursement to the family, or directly to the activity provider (as long as the provider approves ahead of time). Every year we advocate for new providers to accept the funding and expand access to fun activities for those who qualify for the program.

If you have a loved one or a friend who could benefit from this program now is the time to sign up and receive an application this spring. Awards are given on a first come-first serve basis, so if you’re interested don’t wait. Please reach out to Reed Thomas at The Progressive Center for Independent Living by phone (609-581-4500) or email (reed.thomas@pcil.org) for details and to receive and application when they are mailed out this spring. Summer will be here before you know it so please contact us as soon as possible to take advantage of this program.
For people living with a variety of disabilities, the issue of finding transportation when you cannot drive yourself has been a barrier to working and accessing the community for many years now. Since the passing of the ADA and its amendments, there has been an increase in options, services like NJ Transit’s Access Link, Mercer County T.R.A.D.E., Hunterdon County’s The Link, and others. While these are an improvement, they lack the ability to decide to travel at a moment’s notice. For those without this problem, take a moment to consider how often you hop in the car on a whim.

“I feel like buying lunch today, gonna go to Wawa;”
“You know what, let’s go see a movie tonight;”
“I wasn’t going to go out, but my friends are meeting up, so I’ve changed my mind.”

These seem like commonplace phrases any of us might say on any given day, but only if we have a way to get where we want to go. Without that basic freedom, many people are prevented from doing a whole host of everyday things.

Thankfully, new programs are being created to address this issue and fill this major gap. The ridesharing services Uber and Lyft have had a major impact on how people travel and those options are becoming more available to people with disabilities. If you can operate a smartphone you can access these services the way everyone does. If not, there are go-between services that will assist. The services Ryde4Life by EZ Ride and GoGoGrandparent act as go-betweens with Lyft & Uber (depending on the service). You call them with your ride information and they do the technology side and set it up for you. Both have additional fees above the cost of the ride, and handle how you pay differently, but both are reasonable in their costs.

For those with budgets through NJ’s Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), there are now services that allow you to use your state funding for on-demand transportation. The organization Attain & Gain acts as a third-party go between allowing individuals to set aside a section of their budget to be used for rides with Uber. There are also taxi companies, like cornerstone Taxi and Easy Taxi Limo, which registered as a providers under DDD and offer on-demand ride options. Cornerstone Taxi is based in Hunterdon County and Easy Taxi Limo is based in Lake Hopatcong and serves several central and northern NJ counties. When utilizing these services through a DDD budget, an allotment of miles is determined for each week of the service plan. It is up to the individual (or their family/ supports) to keep track of how much they actually use. Unused miles do roll over into the following weeks until the end of the plan year. The best way to do this is to request the service detail report from your support
coordinator, which will list each week’s miles over the course of the support plan.

Unfortunately, none of the services mentioned in this article have wheelchair-accessible vehicles, but hopes are that will change in the future. Both Uber and Lyft have accessible options, just not in NJ yet. Uber’s WAV service and Lyft’s Access program are operating in larger cities like New York and Philadelphia. They allow a user to indicate that they need accessible transport and an appropriate vehicle is dispatched. Both require the drivers of these vehicles to undergo training about serving clients with disabilities. If you would like to see this option come to your area, the best thing to do is to contact Uber and Lyft directly so they can gather information about the area’s level of need and work with the state of NJ to implement a program here. This can be done by email, phone, or through both company’s social media websites.

Signing up to provide transportation is something that any business, or even individual, can do through DDD. If you’d like to be a provider, we at PCIL can help you register, just give us a call!

MEET LAUREN G

By Lauren Gosciniak

Hello! My name is Lauren Gosciniak and I joined the staff here at PCIL at the end of October. I am the new Transition Specialist/Gateways to Success Coordinator. I received my B.S.Ed. in Spanish Education from Temple University in 2014 and spent several years teaching middle and high school Spanish. I have spent many years working with students and youth with special needs. I enjoy helping others realize their potential and reach their goals. I look forward to working with the youth and guiding them through the journey to explore their options after graduation.

My husband and I have been married for 14 years and we have two daughters, ages 11 & 4. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, cross-stitch, arts & crafts, and karate. I recently earned my 1st degree black belt and am an assistant instructor as time permits.
The year 2020 is here! We ushered out a decade and welcome in a new one. With that comes hope that growing older in Mercer County, although it can present challenges, it more importantly continues to hold promise of productivity and purpose. As we welcome this new decade we need to continue our vigilance in highlighting activities that hold Older Americans in the spotlight. Let us commit to celebrating aging as a normal part of life and that we all count and we all matter.

This issue shares news from the Administration on Community Living that announced the theme for the May 2020 Older Americans Month – it is “Make Your Mark.” How have you made your mark?

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Also featured in this issue is news about the official 2020 Census – a count that allows our nation to gather vital information about our communities. It is imperative that you participate in this count. Read more ahead.

There is much in the media that focuses on loneliness and isolation of older adults, those living with disabilities and their caregivers. This issue offer insights about two Mercer County programs to help people stay healthy, active and able to remain safe in the community of their choice as they age in place. Read more about the County Nutrition Program and the Mount Carmel Guild Nursing Assistance program.

Here’s to you because you matter!

Every May, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads our nation’s observance of Older Americans Month. We are pleased to announce the 2020 theme: Make Your Mark.

ACL selected this theme to encourage and celebrate countless contributions that older adults make to our communities. Their time, experience, and talents benefit family, peers, and neighbors every day. Communities, organizations, and individuals of all ages are also making their marks. This year’s theme highlights the difference everyone can make – in the lives of older adults, in support of caregivers, and to strengthen communities.

We invite you to celebrate Older Americans Month and make your mark in May! Leading up to the observance, ACL will release artwork, activity suggestions, and other materials you can use online and at events. Announcements will be sent when new resources are posted to the official website, acl.gov/oam.
Make Your Mark!

Visit acl.gov/oam for more information.
The census counts every generation.

Every 10 years, the United States counts everyone who lives in the country, from newborn babies to the oldest among us. It is important for everyone to complete the 2020 Census so that communities like yours can be accurately funded and represented.

Responding is important.
The 2020 Census will influence community funding and congressional representation for the next decade. Information collected in the census will inform the allocation of more than $675 billion in federal funds for states and communities each year. That includes money for things like:

- First responders
- Medicare Part B
- Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program
- Libraries and community centers
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program

Responding is easy.
Beginning in mid-March 2020, you can respond to the census online, by phone, or by mail. Choose the option that is most comfortable for you. Large-print guides to the questionnaire are available upon request. From May – July 2020, census takers will visit households that have not yet responded. A census taker can assist if you need help completing your form.

Responding is safe.
Your personal information is kept confidential by law. Your responses can only be used to produce statistics. They cannot be shared with law enforcement agencies or used against you by any government agency or court in any way.

For more information, visit: 2020CENSUS.GOV
In 2000, 46 million Americans were over the age of 60. This year, that number will increase to more than 77 million. Although many will not even consider retirement upon turning 60, others will begin reducing the hours they work or even change careers to have more time to enjoy volunteering or help with grandkids. Because of this active lifestyle, older Americans may find themselves eating out a lot more. Unfortunately, fast food options are not always desirable. They can be nutritionally deficient or even dangerous.

People managing chronic health conditions have to pay attention to their daily intake of substances like salt, sugar and fat, while keeping an eye on the calories to make sure they get enough nutrition in their day. This can become a task if you are running from one activity to the next. Places that make heathier options are sometimes expensive and out of the way.

Thankfully, there is an excellent option available near you.

It is hard to believe, but nutrition for older adults has been an interest of our national policy makers for a long time. Ever since President Truman initiated the first National Conference on Aging in 1935, funds have been appropriated for social service programs for older persons. Under the Social Security

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Act, special Staff on Aging was established within the Office of the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, to coordinate responsibilities for aging. Later on President Eisenhower created the Federal Council on Aging and added funds for housing, transportation and nutrition programs. Finally, the Older Americans Act was signed into law on July 14 1965. It established the Administration on Aging and called for the creation of State Units on Aging.

The statutory purposes of the OAA Titles III-C nutrition program is to reduce hunger and food insecurity, promote socialization and promote health and well-being through providing a nutritious meal. These purposes are accomplished through the provision of not only a healthy meal, but also providing access to a range of services (nutrition screening, education, and counseling), opportunities for social engagement, and information on healthy aging.

In 1978, the Older Americans Act Amendments consolidated Title III Area Agency on Aging administration and social services, combining transportation and nutrition services for Americans over 60 years. That year, Mercer County established the first congregate meal Nutrition Program for older adults.

For Mercer County residents over the age of 60, this means there has been an alternative to fast food in nearly every town since 1978. The Program is managed by the county, in collaboration with local governments and it offers at least one daily, healthier and nutritionally balanced meal that provides a third of the daily recommended calories. You can find congregate meal sites in 12 locations across the county. The best part, it is free! (However, there is a suggested donation of $1.00 per meal to cover the increasing costs of meal preparation and delivery.)

The Mercer County Nutrition Program for Older Adults now offers nutritionally balanced meals Monday to Friday, for all adults 60 or over, their spouses and disabled children living with them. Caregivers and guests can also partake for a fee. Reservations are recommended as the meals are prepared each day with fresh ingredients.

Although most sites offer one main menu option, an increasing number of them are also adding a breakfast option. This year, the program is expanding the menus to include vegetarian options and a salad bar. The program is also expanding the use of technology to make it easier to sign up, see the menus and make reservations online or with a smartphone. Once you are registered, the barcoded ID card will allow you to make a reservation at any of the sites within the county, and because this is a federal program, you are also eligible to partake of any similar programs across the nation.

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Make Your MARK!

VISIT ACL.GOV/OAM FOR MORE INFORMATION.
Continued from pg 20.

So, if you are looking for a healthy, Nutritionist approved and complete lunch, look no further than the nearest senior center or community center in Mercer County. You can sign up for a membership at the senior center, if you like, but the Nutrition Program is completely separate. The congregate meal sites are nice places to have lunch with friends, get a quick meal in between your daily activities or just take a break from cooking.

Now, isn’t this a nice benefit of crossing the 60 mark?

As an American over 60, you have been here for seven decades. You have seen wars and difficulties; you have worked through economic rises and falls. After serving and contributing to this great nation, you deserve this program!

For information of the Mercer County Nutrition Program for Older adults, and other available programs within the Area Agency on Aging, please visit the Mercer County Website www.mercercounty.org and the Aging and Disability Resource Connection at: http://www.mercercounty.org/home/showdocument?id=10843 or call us at (609)989-6650
Mount Carmel Guild of Trenton’s Home Health Nursing Program is available to low income senior citizens in Mercer County who are on Medicare. All services are offered free of charge, and there is no third party billing. The program assists patients over 60 years of age who are homebound, have medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, dementia and cardiopulmonary diseases and need some help managing these diseases. The Registered Nurses may pre-fill syringes, pre-pour medications, and administer medically prescribed injections. Most patients are visited once every two weeks although those taking blood thinner medications are visited more frequently. The nurses coordinate changes with the doctor’s office and arrange transportation if needed to medical appointments, and also pick up medications at the pharmacy and assist in resolving any issues with medication with the pharmacy or mail in prescriptions. Patients receive general nutritional and special diet counseling and are connected to other social services providers, such as Meals on Wheels.

Are you thinking that this sounds wonderful but don’t want to invite a stranger into your home? We understand your reluctance but our nurses find that after a few visits patients begin to wonder how they managed before the Guild’s services started. In our program, the same nurse will visit you on a set scheduled day and time.

Mount Carmel Guild Home Health Nursing Program strives to help individuals to age in place.
Continued from previous page.

“Greg” is one of our newest patients, referred to the Guild by a local medical practice. Greg is 71 years old and suffered a stroke that left him unable to use an arm and hand. He has minimal family assistance and relies upon a neighbor for help with things like his laundry. During her initial visit to Greg’s home, our nurse found that he had been mixing up several of his medications and spent hours correcting his dosages. Before leaving, the nurse also set him up for future visits that included INRs as part of Coumadin monitoring. The very next day our nurse was surprised to receive a call from Greg’s doctor’s office. Greg had called them to describe how much help he had received from his Guild nurse and how grateful he felt. Within a month, care from this Guild nurse with medication management has helped Greg to achieve and maintain stable blood levels.

As with Greg, Mount Carmel Guild Home Health Nursing Program strives to help every patient to improve their well-being, continue to live in their home and age in place with respect and dignity. Participation in the program also reduces unplanned hospitalizations and long term institutionalization.

Mount Carmel Guild serves all religions, ethnicity, cultures and individuals. Our services are offered at no charge to patients. The program is accredited by the National Institute for Home Care Accreditation under private duty nursing standards. It does not provide home health aides, or assistance on a daily basis.

If you are medically needy and economically disadvantaged older individual interested in learning more about the Home Health Nursing Program, please contact Corinne Janoska at 609.392.5159 Ext. 113 or cjanoska@mtcarmelguild.org.

Check out our video at www.mtcarmelguild.org to hear testimonials from Mount Carmel Guild Home Health Nursing patients.
UPCOMING RECREATION EVENTS

PCIL invites you to join us in our upcoming recreation events. Please contact Reed. Thomas@pcil.org for more information on ticketing and pricing for each event.

- Game Night & Pizza
- Trenton Thunder Baseball Game
- Wildlife Presentations
- Disney On Ice