



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

Spotlight On Aging



VOLUME XXVI, ISSUE 9

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

September 2011



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By Dr. John M. Thompson

September is Emergency Preparedness Month, and here in D.C. and across the East Coast, we learned that information on emergency preparedness is important when dealing with the earthquake and Hurricane Irene. Overall, the District fared well and so did the nearly 100,000 residents of the District who are age 60 and older.

Going forward, I would like to make some changes to the Office on Aging plan so that we can enhance our efforts to assist our frail and vulnerable population. Technically, we are not one of the first responders as it relates to emergencies; we are a support agency.

The very first responders in event of any emergency are Fire and EMS, Police, Department of Transportation, Department of Public Works, Department of Human Services and the Department of Health. My role in emergencies, such as natural disasters, is to interface with the responders by advocating on behalf of our seniors to ensure their needs are met.

As hurricane season continues, let us make sure that we:

1. Make a plan.
2. Make an emergency kit.
3. Be informed.

As you read further, you will find tips on how to develop an emergency plan, an emergency kit and how to keep

abreast of important news in order to be safe when faced with emergency situations.

We want to hear from you

The Office on Aging is coming to the end of our needs assessment process. We are glad to be getting feedback from residents, caregivers and providers so that we may determine how we will plan our programs and services for the elderly and resources for the disabled and their caregivers. If you are interested in participating in this process, please call 202-778-3449.

Healthy Aging Month

September is also Healthy Aging Month. Think about new ways to become involved in activities. Begin participating in a wellness center to increase your physical activity. Begin eating healthier by attending a nutrition site and participating in the programs provided there.

Also, try volunteering with a volunteer group in your area, where you can share your experiences or expertise with others. Take positive steps toward healthy aging by participating more.

For more information, call our Information and Assistance Unit at 202-724-5626 to find out about our centers or more information about volunteer organizations you can join.

Poster Contest Winners

The Commission on Aging and the United Black Fund Annual Poster Contest announce this year's winners. The participants attended Dept. of Parks and Recreation Summer Camps. The complete list of winners is as follows:

Ages 5-7

- First Place:** Precious Onawole
Second Place: Jayln Russell

Third Place: Tyler Russell
Ages 8-10

- First Place:** Pernell Brown
Second Place: Alonia Davis
Third Place: Yohance Bishop

Ages 11-13

- First Place:** Chason Washington
Second Place: Riyaunie Proctor
Third Place: Daquan Dockery

District Provides Assistance to Frail Elderly During Storm Preparation

Office on Aging Executive Director John Thompson joined forces with the Dept. of Public Works Director Bill Howland and Assistant Chief Diane Groomes to assist seniors who requested assistance with sandbags before the expected arrival of Hurricane Irene.

Although sandbags were available to District residents for two days in preparation of Irene, frail and homebound seniors were unable to pick them up themselves and place them where needed at their homes.

"It is so awesome that District agencies can collaborate so well together in serving our frail and vulnerable seniors," Thompson said.

Seniors called into the mayor's City-Wide Call Center 311 and to the D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency seeking help

picking up sandbags. The Office on Aging also asked its service providers to call their clients, who are frail and elderly homeowners, to see if they needed assistance.

"We were able to deliver sandbags to 12 homebound seniors, and I want to publicly thank Chief Groomes and Director Howland for their assistance in helping to secure the homes of our frail elderly," added Thompson.

If seniors are in need of assistance for Hurricane Irene-related problems or for any other issues, they should call 311 to request services. The Office on Aging provides assistance for District residents age 60 and older and persons with a disability age 18 and older.

For more information on the Office on Aging's programs and services, visit www.dcoa.dc.gov or call 202-724-5626.

Emergency Preparedness Tips for Older Americans

Each person's needs and abilities are unique, but every individual can take important steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies and put plans in place. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan, you can be better prepared for any situation.

A commitment to planning today will help you prepare for any emergency situation. Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.

- Consider how a disaster might affect your individual needs.
- Plan to make it on your own, at least

for a period of time. It's possible that you will not have access to a medical facility or even a drugstore.

- Identify what kind of resources you use on a daily basis and what you might do if they are limited or not available.
- Prepare an emergency supply kit.
- If you must evacuate, take your pets with you, if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside.
- Plan in advance for shelter alterna-

tives that will work for both you and your pets; consider loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area who would be willing to host you and your pets in an emergency.

- Encourage electronic payments for federal benefit recipients. Keep in mind a disaster can disrupt mail service for days or even weeks. For those who depend on the mail for their Social Security benefits, a difficult situation can become worse if they are evacuated or lose their mail service — as 85,000 check recipients learned after

Hurricane Katrina.

Switching to electronic payments is one simple, significant way people can protect themselves financially before disaster strikes. It also eliminates the risk of stolen checks.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury recommends two safer ways to get federal benefits:

Direct deposit to a checking or savings account is the best option for people with

See **EMERGENCY TIPS**, page 38



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

VINCENT C. GRAY, MAYOR

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Community Calendar

September events

8th, 9th, 13th

The District of Columbia Office on Aging is conducting focus group sessions to receive input from seniors age 60 and older living in the District on service needs and barriers to care. Focus groups will be held on Sept. 8 and 13. Community partners are also requested to participate in a session on Sept. 9. Call 202-778-3449 to register, or email seniorneedsassessment@tcba.com. For more information on how you can participate, call 202-724-5622.

10th • 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Improve your health by attending the Resurrection Baptist Church Senior Health Fair. The church is lo-

cated at 3501 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave., S.E. For more information, call 202-562-4075.

10th • 2 to 6 p.m.

Model Cities Senior Wellness Center will host an open house. The center is located at 1901 Everts St., N.E. For more information, contact Stacie Thweatt at 202-635-1900.

17th • 2 to 5 p.m.

Attend the Damien Ministries HIV and Aging Awareness Day event at the Dorothy I. Height-Benning Neighborhood Library, 3935 Benning Rd., N.E. For more information, call Tanya Bender Henderson, Ph.D. at 202-526-3020, extension 14.

23rd • 11:30 a.m.

Ward 5 Senior Nutrition Centers will hold a Falls Prevention Day. For locations, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

26th • 10:30 a.m. to noon

A flu shot clinic will be held at Edgewood Terrace Senior Nutrition Center, 635 Edgewood St., N.E. For more information, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

Early October event

7th • 11:30 a.m.

Learn about breast cancer at pink ribbon celebrations at Ward 5 Senior Nutrition Centers. For locations, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

Emergency tips

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bank accounts. Federal benefit recipients can sign up by calling (800) 333-1795 or at www.GoDirect.org.

The Direct Express® prepaid debit card is designed as a safe and easy alternative to paper checks for people who don't have a bank account. Sign up is easy – call toll-free (877) 212-9991 or sign up online at www.USDirectExpress.com.

Signing up for direct deposit or the Direct Express® card is a simple but important step that can help protect your family's access to funds in case the unthinkable were to happen. If you or those close to you are still receiving Social Security or other federal benefits by check, please consider switching to one of these safer, easier options today.

Create a Support Network

If you anticipate needing assistance during a disaster, talk to family, friends and others who will be part of your personal support network.

- Write down and share each aspect of your emergency plan with everyone in your support network.
- Make sure everyone knows how you plan to evacuate your home or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster.
- Make sure that someone in your local network has an extra key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach those who will help you how to

use any lifesaving equipment and administer medicine in case of an emergency.

- Practice your plan with those who have agreed to be part of your network.

Additional Supplies and Documents

• **Medications and Medical Supplies.** If you take medicine or use a medical treatment on a daily basis, be sure you have what you need to make it on your own for at least a week, maybe longer.

- Make a list of prescription medicines including dosage, treatment and allergy information.

• Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you need to prepare.

• If you undergo routine treatments administered by a clinic or hospital or if you receive regular services such as home health care, treatment or transportation, talk to your service provider about their emergency plans. Work with them to identify back-up service providers and incorporate them into your personal support network.

• Consider other personal needs such as eyeglasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries, and oxygen.

• **Emergency Documents.** Include copies of important documents in your emergency supply kits such as family records, medical records, wills, deeds, Social Security number, charge card and bank account information and tax records.

- Have copies of your medical insurance and Medicare cards readily available.
- Keep a list of the style and serial number of medical devices or other life-sustaining devices. Include operating information

and instructions.

- Make sure that a friend or family member has copies of these documents.
- Include the names and contact information of your support network, as well as your medical providers.
- If you have a communication disability, make sure your emergency information notes the best way to communicate with you.
- Keep these documents in a water proof container for quick and easy access.

Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Water — one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food — at least a three-day supply of

non-perishable food

- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger

Program Provides Assistance in Wake of Damage from Hurricane Irene and August Earthquake

Mayor Vincent C. Gray and the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) would like to remind residents about the Single Family Residential Rehabilitation Program (SFFRP), which provides assistance to help households finance home repairs that will:

- Address building-code violations
- Repair roofs
- Remove threats to health and safety, including lead-based paint hazards
- Remove barriers to accessibility for persons with mobility or other physical impairments.

“The District is utilizing all available resources to help residents recover from damages sustained as a result of Hurricane Irene or the August 23, 2011 earthquake,” said Mayor Gray. “We encourage residents to take advantage of this program, which can help ensure that essential repairs are not ignored.”

Under the SFFRP Program, DHCD provides funding of loans and grants,

not to exceed a total of \$75,000, to affected households. The program provides financing through low or zero-percent amortized loans for up to 20 years and deferred loans (not payable until the home is sold, transferred or refinanced).

All applicants are currently subject to homeowner eligibility, which is based upon the homeowner's income. DHCD is planning to modify existing SFFRP guidelines so that funding can be used to assist with repairs associated with damage from Hurricane Irene.

DHCD also offers the Lead Safe Washington Program, which provides grants of up to \$17,500 per housing unit to eligible homeowners and investor-owners of pre-1978 housing with deteriorated lead-based paint to make those units lead safe.

For additional information, visit www.dhcd.dc.gov and click on “Residential and Community Services” under Services. You may also call 202-442-7294 for more information.

SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

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Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination which is prohibited by the Act. In addition, harassment based on any of the above protected categories is prohibited by the Act. Discrimination in violation of the Act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subjected to disciplinary action.

The Office on Aging is in partnership with the District of Columbia Recycling Program.