



Communication Services
5334 South Prince Street
Littleton, Colorado 80166-0001
Phone: 303-795-4284
Fax: 303-738-7894
www.co.arapahoe.co.us

For release: Mar. 26, 2008

Contact:

VAL PURSER

Volunteer Coordinator

Community Resources

Direct: 303-738-7938

E-mail: vpurser@co.arapahoe.co.us

NICHOLE PARMELLY

Communication Services Specialist

Direct: 303-636-1945

Mobile: 303-710-7893

E-mail: nparmelly@co.arapahoe.co.us

New program promotes healthier living for seniors

Arapahoe County volunteers jumpstart program geared to healthier living for seniors

Littleton, Colo. --- Marjorie Hildebrandt, a senior with osteoarthritis, was searching for a way to deal with the physical and emotional problems that related to her disease.

In February, she signed up for a new pilot program, Healthier Living: Managing Your Ongoing Health Condition, at the Amity Housing Facility in Littleton, presented by Arapahoe County Senior Resources in partnership with Kaiser Permanente Foundation. This unique six week volunteer taught program provides one-on-one coaching to help people dealing with diabetes, cancer, heart disease, arthritis and other chronic conditions.

"I've learned a variety of ways to deal with all kinds of situations, including how to fight fatigue and frustration, deal with depression, control pain, manage stress and relax," said Hildebrandt. "I graduated from the program feeling positive and secure about how to deal with my problems."

The goal is to teach people a healthy way to live with chronic illness by overcoming the physical and emotional problems caused by the disease. Wellness leaders also teach seniors to solve problems, communicate better with their health care team, start a physical activity program and manage their medications.

"Many people, not just seniors, feel intimidated or afraid to talk freely with their healthcare providers," said Bev Head, volunteer wellness leader. "We teach seniors to use the Prepare, Ask, Repeat and Take action formula to make the most out of each visit."

The formula recommends that participants prepare an "agenda" before their schedule visit, determine the reasons for their visit and what they expect from their doctor. Attend the appointment with a list of questions, repeat the doctor's recommendations to confirm understanding and take the appropriate action.

"One of the added bonuses of this program is the social interaction," said Val Purser, Arapahoe County Volunteer Coordinator. "People are genuinely able to improve the management of their health care situation and take advantage of the support provided by the wellness leaders and their classmates."

Healthier Living: Managing Your Ongoing Health Condition was designed by the division of Family Community Medicine in the Department of Medicine at Stanford and in cooperation with Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program.

The ideal volunteer enjoys teaching, helping others, is comfortable speaking in public, and enjoys learning new things. Wellness leaders must commit to completing the four day training 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., which will be provided by the Consortium of Older Adult Wellness in Glenwood Springs. Wellness leaders are

required to teach at least two 6 week program courses and receive a stipend for their work thanks to a Kaiser Foundation grant.

The County's next series will take place in the City of Sheridan at Kings Point in April. Opportunities are limited; if you are interested in being a wellness leader, call Val Purser at 303-738-7938 by April 29, 2008.

To download a photo click on the following link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CA/>

Marjorie Hildebrandt and Bonnie Geier celebrate graduating from Arapahoe County's Healthier Living program with the skills they need to manage the physical and emotional strain of living with chronic health conditions.

* * *