



"Our Family Helping Yours"
(925) 240-5770

The HomeLife Connection

SUMMER 2017

Serving all of East County, Tracy and Rio Vista

CAREGIVER PROFILE



Caregiver of the Season,
Shawnalee Hummell

Our caregivers are totally committed, highly qualified and carefully selected individuals who are personally and thoroughly screened, bonded and insured.

Most importantly our caregivers are dependable and extraordinarily caring of others. In addition to their previous experience, our caregivers receive continuous training that includes a specialized curriculum that results in them becoming a Personal Care Attendant. These highly qualified and trained caregivers are ready to help you and your loved ones with a variety of daily activities such as:

- Caring companionship
- Meal planning and preparation
- Incidental transportation
- Running errands
- Light housekeeping
- Medication reminders
- Assistance with bathing and grooming
- Assistance with bill paying
- Information and referral services

Our personalized and affordable services are available 7 days a week and can range from a few hours a day to 24 hour and live in care.

Welcome to the Summer 2017 HomeLife Connection

Welcome to our Summer 2017 HomeLife Connection! We wish to congratulate our Caregiver of the Season, Shawnalee Hummell!

What makes this Caregiver an exceptional choice for Caregiver of the Season?

Shawnalee Hummell has been a caregiver with HomeLife Senior Care since December 1st, 2015 and has been a terrific addition ever since joining the HomeLife team! Shawnalee has a compassionate heart for caregiving which she demonstrates through her commitment to her client. She has been one of the primary care providers for one of our 24/7 care clients for almost a year now. Shawnalee regularly works 24-hour shifts with this client. Long shifts of this nature require patience, adaptability and dedication. In addition, dependability is of utmost importance due to the difficulties involved with finding last minute care for a 24-hour shift when another caregiver calls in sick. Shawnalee is not only a very consistent and reliable caregiver, she has also

happily volunteered on numerous occasions to cover shifts for other caregivers.

Shawnalee is excellent at notifying the office anytime there is an update with her client's care, ensuring the care team she is part of is well informed. She also proactively pursues further education and training related to her client's condition, with special consideration to the safety of her client, as well as her own safety, while performing her caregiving duties.

The HomeLife staff is proud of Shawnalee's admirable example and her clients have only wonderful things to say about her! We are fortunate Shawnalee is part of our HomeLife family!

— Felicia Buack
Human Resources Administrator

Best wishes,
Angela DiNicola,
Founder
HomeLife Senior
Care



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FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES

Crime & the Elderly

Older people are often targets for robbery, purse snatching, pick-pocketing, car theft, or a number of scams. During a crime, an older person is more likely to be seriously hurt than someone who is younger. But, even though there are risks, don't let the fear of crime stop you from enjoying life. Be careful and be aware of your surroundings. Here are some "do's and don'ts" that can help you fight crime and stay safe.

Be Safe at Home

- Do try to make sure that your locks, doors, and windows are strong and cannot be broken easily. Consider a good alarm system. Make sure they are locked – both when you are in the house and when you're away.
- Do make a list of your expensive belongings. You might even take pictures of the most valuable items. Store these papers in a safe place.
- Don't open your door before you know who's there. Look through the peephole or a safe window first. Ask any stranger for proof of identity before opening the door. Remember, you don't have to open the door if you feel uneasy.
- Don't keep large amounts of money in the house.
- Do get to know your neighbors. Join a Neighborhood Watch Program if your community has one.

Be Street Smart

- Do try to stay alert. Walk with a friend. Stay away from unsafe places like dark parking lots or alleys.
- Do keep your car doors locked at all times and park in well-lit areas.
- Don't open your car door or roll down your window for strangers.
- Do carry your purse close to your body with the strap over your shoulder and across your chest.
- Don't resist a robber. Hand over your cash right away if confronted.

Be Safe with Your Money

- Do have your monthly pension or Social Security checks sent right to the bank for direct deposit.

- Don't carry a lot of cash. Put your wallet, money, or credit cards in an inside pocket.
- Don't keep your check book and credit cards together. A thief could use the card to forge your signature on checks.

Fight Fraud

Older people may be victims of frauds like con games and insurance, home repair, telephone, or internet scams. The following tips may help:

- Don't be afraid to hang up on telephone salespeople. You aren't being impolite. You are taking care of yourself! Remember, you can say no to any offer.
- Don't give any personal information, including your credit card number or bank account, over the phone unless you were the one who made the call.
- Don't be fooled by deals that seem too good to be true. They probably are. Beware of deals that ask for a lot of money up front and promise you more money later. Check with your local Better Business Bureau to get more information about the record of any company before doing business with them.

Avoid Identity Theft

How can someone steal your identity? Using your name, Social Security number, or credit card without your okay is called identity theft and it's a serious crime. Be sure to protect yourself:

- Do keep information about your checking account private. Put all new and cancelled checks in a safe place, report any stolen checks right away, and carefully look at your monthly bank account statement.
- Do shred everything that has personal information about you written on it.
- Do be very careful when buying things online. Websites without security may not protect your credit card or bank account information. Look for information saying that a website has a secure server before buying anything online (it will have <https://>, not <http://> in front of it).
- Do check with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to find out how to protect yourself from common online scams that can trick you into revealing your personal or financial information.

By National Institute on Aging, National Institute of Health

<https://www.agingcare.com/articles/crime-abuse-and-the-elderly-133188.htm>



ROTATING TOPIC:

Summer Activities for Seniors & Caregivers

Enjoying the warm summer temperatures doesn't have to be a distant memory for elders and caregivers. Finding an interesting activity that is suitable for a senior's abilities may take some creativity and planning, but it is well worth switching up the routine and getting out of the house.

The Benefits of Getting Outside. A main advantage of heading outdoors, even for a short period of time, is being able to soak up some sunlight. Sun exposure generates vitamin D, which is necessary for a healthy brain, bones and muscles. Getting out also enables elders to socialize with new people, and be stimulated by new experiences and environments.

Ideas for Outdoor Activities. When selecting activities to do with your loved one, focus on hobbies and interests that they used to enjoy. What is something they always wanted to try? Don't be afraid to ask what they miss doing or what they'd like to revisit. Have a couple of suggestions prepared to choose from and head outside to enjoy the day together.

Catch a sporting event. Attending a grandchild's soccer game or a professional baseball game can be an action-packed way for your loved one to reconnect with a favorite pastime.

Fish for fun. You can cast a rod from a dock, pier, or other location, even if someone has mobility problems or uses a wheelchair. Check your state's or province's tourism websites to see if they provide listings of accessible fishing locations.

Be a tourist. If you live in a city, take an open-air bus or trolley tour to see the local sights. Another option could be a boat tour, depending on what type of equipment an elder needs to take with them. A Sunday drive around town can also allow a senior to check out happenings in the community that interest them. This could be a neighborhood rummage sale, farmers market, community event or even just blooming flowers and trees.

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First Aid Kit for Seniors Living at Home

First aid is an important consideration when caring for an elderly person at home. It is important to know that seniors are more vulnerable to accidents and injuries since they often lack strength, flexibility and can have brittle bones. Also, their sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste may have declined, making them more vulnerable to accidents. It is very important that the elderly take care of their skin as well, because they are more susceptible to skin infections and disease due to natural changes in aging skin. These changes make the skin less elastic, thinner and dryer allowing more injuries while also being slow to heal.

What to Put in Your First Aid Kit

It is important to keep a well-stocked first aid kit on hand. You can purchase a kit or create one of your own. You can create one using a portable file box that can be found at any office supply store or large discount store. Be sure to keep your first aid kit someplace where it can be located quickly and be sure to give it a regular check up by replacing expired items and updating informational lists.

Creating a list of insurance information, medical contacts, and medications could prove to be a very helpful addition to your first aid kit. We often have trouble trying to remember things in the event of an emergency, which is why adding procedures for specific conditions would also be a great asset to your first aid kit.

In being prepared for emergencies let's take a look at what a first aid kit should have in it:

- Thermometer
- Antiseptic solution or wipes, such as hydrogen peroxide, povidone-iodine or chlorhexidine
- Antibiotic ointment
- Calamine lotion for stings or poison ivy
- Hydrocortisone cream or ointment
- Cotton balls and swabs
- Band-Aids in assorted sizes including knee and elbow sizes
- Latex gloves (these should be worn any time you may be at risk of contact with blood or body fluid of any type)
- Triangular bandages for wrapping injuries and making arm slings
- Thermal patches
- Instant cold pack
- Gauze tape, and Ace bandages

SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES



- Hand sanitizer or soap
- Tweezers, scissors, safety pins and needle
- Eye goggles and sterile eyewash such as a saline solution
- Pain and fever medicines, such as aspirin, acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Decongestants to treat nasal congestion
- Anti-nausea medicine to treat motion sickness and other types of nausea
- Anti-diarrhea medicine
- Antacid to treat upset stomach
- Laxative to treat constipation
- First aid manual
- The Senior's medication list with dosage and times taken
- Phone numbers for emergency contact, doctors, pharmacy, and insurance information.
- If needed: blood pressure monitor, oximeter, blood sugar meter and/or AED (Automated External Defibrillator)

- Medical forms such as living will, DNR, or advance directives

When traveling, take the kit with you. You may want to add a blanket, flashlight with extra batteries, medical consent forms, and a medical history form. For specific medical conditions, be sure to include any necessary equipment and instructional information. If you elect to keep a separate travel first aid kit, be sure to copy and include all medical information.

Purchasing a First Aid Kit

The American Red Cross and many drugstores sell first aid kits with many of these items. Remember, for the kit to be useful, you need to know how to use it. You may want to take a Red Cross first aid course or at least purchase a first aid manual to learn first aid basics.

– By Caren Parnes
Contributor for *The Senior's Choice*

Summer Activities for Seniors & Caregivers

(Continued from page 2)

Take a dip. If a senior is willing and able, spending some time in a pool is an excellent way for them to incorporate some physical activity into their routine that seems more like relaxing than a workout.

Stroll around. If a walk is possible, start slow and work up to longer outings. Either keep the first few walks short, or bring along a walker or wheelchair in case your loved one gets tired and needs to rest along the way or requires help getting back.

Be an animal lover. This could be as simple as encouraging a loved one to sit outside and enjoy the sights and sounds, or could mean an outing to the zoo or local dog park. There are plenty of options for seniors who enjoy animals to get outside and either interact with or observe nature.

Picnic outdoors. Picnics are another flexible activity that you can plan at a park, in your own backyard, or on the surrounding grounds of a long-term care facility. At the park, seniors can watch

children run around and enjoy the buzz of outdoor activity. Make sure to locate an area with comfortable seating and plenty of shade in advance, or remember to bring your own.

Go out for a treat. Most seniors have a favorite place to eat that picks their spirits right up. Instead of limiting this indulgence to special occasions or the post-doctor's appointment routine, make an outing out of it "just because." This could consist of a coffee and pastry from a favorite breakfast spot, or a lunch special from the diner around the corner. If the weather is nice, enjoy your goodies at a patio table.

Older bodies don't adjust to temperature changes or perceive thirst as well as younger ones. With each of these activities, be sure to watch your loved one for signs of fatigue, thirst, sunburn, and overheating that could signal it's time to leave, perhaps with a promise to return at another time.

– By Caren Parnes
Contributor for *The Senior's Choice*



SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

Create Your All-Star Care Team in 5 Steps

What family caregivers often need most is sound advice, regular respite and an extra set of hands.

Friends may scatter when one becomes the primary caregiver for a spouse or parent, and not everyone has siblings or other family members they can depend on to share the load. A carefully selected care team is a necessary complement to a loved one's detailed care plan.

Step 1: Draft a list of prospective team members

Write down the name of each family member, friend or neighbor with whom you regularly interact. Forego any initial judgements or doubts about their usefulness in your care plan—just let the ideas flow.

Step 2: Assess each individual's strengths

Assess the strong suit of each person on your list. Is your best friend financially savvy? Can your cousin listen to you vent for as long as you need to without interrupting or casting judgement? Does your neighbor offer to help keep an eye on Mom when she's tinkering outside in the garden? Each of these people have specific talents or capabilities that can help you execute your care plan. However, be sure to factor in each person's attitude before making them a part of your care team. Your sister may have plenty of free time to help drive Dad to and from doctor's appointments, but if she brings negativity or criticism to your regular routine, then the drawbacks may outweigh the benefits of her contribution.

Step 3: Create your all-star care team

Revise your remaining list to create a foolproof roster of people who will assist you with caregiving and day to day tasks. Do not include anyone who may make your duties more difficult or complicated. This is your go-to tool for getting outside help whether it is planned well in advance or needed last-minute due to an urgent situation. Include each person's contact information and, if possible, an outline of their weekly schedule. This will help you quickly reference when a team member is available to pitch in.

Step 4: Assign roles for each member

Now identify specific tasks in your care plan that would be a good fit for each team member. It is best for caregivers to be very specific about what kinds of assistance they would appreciate. For example, if your son lives nearby, ask if he can tend to yardwork or any home maintenance projects once or twice each month. If you struggle to prepare dinner on Wednesdays, (your busiest day of the week) see if Mom's friend from church can pick her up for a weekly dinner date. The goal of creating this team is to be able to meet your loved one's needs (as well as your own) without every single responsibility falling solely on your shoulders.

Step 5: Add some pros to your team

Relatives and friends aren't the only people a caregiver should have on their care team. There are a number of specialists who can help you make caregiving go as smoothly as possible. without running yourself into the ground.

A reputable financial planner can assist with complicated fiscal decisions, an elder law attorney can ensure that you and your loved one are legally prepared for the road ahead, and a geriatric care manager can coordinate and advocate for the care your loved one deserves.

Furthermore, any remaining gaps in your care plan can also be filled by paid caregivers and other services. If you decide to return to the workforce, but have no one to supervise your loved one during the day, opt for home care or adult day care services. If housekeeping rarely fits into your daily or weekly routine, then arrange to have these tasks added to your home care professional's responsibilities, or hire a cleaning service. Healthy meal delivery, pre-sorted prescription medications, and transportation services can all help to simplify your schedule.

A comprehensive care team not only assists a caregiver in executing their duties, it also helps to ensure that, should something happen to them, there is a safety net in place to continue providing care for their loved one. The more support a caregiver has, the less likely they are to experience burnout and the more sustainable their care plan will be.

By Ashley Huntsberry-Lett

<https://www.agingcare.com/articles/create-a-care-team-in-5-steps-195525.htm>