



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

The

HomeLife

SUMMER 2018

Connection

Serving all of East County, Rio Vista and Tracy!

CAREGIVER PROFILE



Caregiver of the Season,
Shawntoya Gordon

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 exclusive to The Senior's Choice that results in them becoming Certified Companion Aides™. 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 2018 HomeLife Connection

Welcome to our Summer 2018 *HomeLife Connection*! We wish to congratulate our Caregiver of the Season, Shawntoya Gordon!

Shawntoya has been a caregiver with HomeLife Senior Care since August of 2014 and it has been such a pleasure to have her on our team! Shawntoya's empathetic and caring heart shows through the dedication and compassion she gives her clients. She is very loyal to her clients and commits to them 100%, never wavering, even during tough circumstances.

She has consistently worked 24-hour shifts with her current client, twice a week, for the last year and a half, as well as fills in when we're in a pinch. She is very dependable, rarely calling in sick or showing up late to her shifts. The office staff and her

clients know they can rely on her.

Shawntoya is also wonderful at communicating with the office and keeping us updated regarding any changes in her client's condition. Her client's family can relax knowing their loved one is in good hands.

Shawntoya puts her heart into caregiving. It is not just a job to her, it is who she is. We, at HomeLife, feel very fortunate to have Shawntoya as a part of our team! We look forward to many more years of service with her!

— Felicia Buack
Home Care Aide Director

Best wishes,
Angela DiNicola,
Founder



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FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES

Some of the Ways Wearables are Helping Seniors

Most of us think of wearables in terms of smartwatches and fitness trackers, gadgets that can help us be fitter and more efficient. But for some people, they're far more important than that—these wearables are the difference between dependency and freedom. Wearables for seniors are fast becoming an essential way to keep them safe and healthy. There is some impressive technologically available—or on the horizon—to improve the lives of those later in life, and they are easy enough for even the most averse of technophobes to use safely and happily.

1. Keeping them safe

One of the best-known uses for wearables for seniors safely connects them to relatives or emergency services in the event of an accident, even if they're unable to call for help themselves. UnaliWear's *KanegaWatch* can detect falls and long periods of non-movement and raise the alarm. Working through voice control, the watch notices if the wearer has been immobile for a while and asks if they're OK. If there's no response, the device can contact designated people or the emergency services. It also records some location information so it can guide the wearer home if they get lost. The wearable even offers medication reminders at appropriate times, reading out dosage instructions if the user asks for them. Similarly, the *CarePredict* wearable monitors sleep, personal care and daily patterns, alerting caregivers if something seems out of the ordinary: If the wearer used the bathroom more than usual last night, for instance, or got up later than they normally do. Lively's *Safety Watch* system goes a step further, using a home hub connected to a series of sensors around the home to check that medication's been taken, meals haven't been missed and the user is moving around as normal.

2. Keeping them nearby

To monitor seniors with conditions like dementia, a critical need can now be met

through technology. The upcoming *Proximity Button*, invented by the daughter of a dementia caregiver, is designed to be an effective and affordable way to keep loved ones safe without intrusive tracking. Connecting to the caregiver's phone with Bluetooth, the button simply sends an alert when the patient goes out of bounds. The *Proximity Button* will begin crowdfunding this summer through Indiegogo.

3. Saving them from falls

One of the biggest concerns for older people is the risk of falls. One of the more radical ways tech firms are addressing this is by developing wearable airbags that automatically deploy when a fall is detected. Products by companies like ActiveProtective and the Wolk Company are worn as belts, making them less intrusive and noticeable. Packed inside the ActiveProtective belt is a folded airbag, a fall-detection system and a gas inflation mechanism to quickly open the airbag when the wearer is falling.

4. Giving them freedom

Some of the health problems that can affect older people aren't so easy to talk about. The Japanese manufacturer Triple W opens their *Dfree* website with the memorable words: "Two years ago I got sudden diarrhea and pooped my pants on the street." While most of us would never speak of this again, in this case it led to the development of a device that claims to predict bowel movements, allowing users to plan ahead and get to a bathroom in time. Using an ultrasound wearable belted around your stomach, Dfree sends a notification to the accompanying app on your phone to let you know how much time you have. This could avoid the kind of incident that decimates older people's confidence and makes them less willing to leave the house.

This is just a sampling of the variety of tech solutions for senior care that are now coming available—and we should expect more innovations in the years to come.

<https://www.techradar.com/news/wearables/5-ways-wearables-will-transform-the-lives-of-the-elderly-1321898>



ROTATING TOPIC:

A Great Summer Activity: Aquatic Exercise for Seniors

Many seniors have found that working out in the water is an excellent way to improve their overall well-being, from providing a variety of physical benefits to offering social time and a trip out of the house. The unique properties of water provide seniors with the opportunity to get relief from painful physical conditions such as arthritis and circulatory problems while deriving the benefits of low-impact exercise in an environment that minimizes the risk of injury.

Why Water?

Cardiovascular exercise and weight loss are common benefits of any type of aerobic exercise, but exercising while submerged in water provides some distinct advantages that set aquatic exercise apart from land-based activity.

Age-related joint conditions like arthritis can be a painful impediment to a senior's capability (and enthusiasm) for exercising. But water-based exercise puts significantly less stress on joints, allowing them to enjoy these activities for longer periods of time, and can also provide some relief from these chronic conditions. Swimming can also be relaxing and meditative, which may offer some stress relief, adding to its cardiovascular benefits.

The Physical Benefits of Water Exercise

Cardio: It doesn't matter if a senior is water-jogging or swimming—using the water to get their heart rate up will increase aerobic capacity, burn fat, and decrease their risk for heart disease.

Balance: Reduced muscle tone and vision loss can affect senior coordination and increase their risk of falling. Aquatic exercise is a great way to help improve balance. Doing specific balance exercises in water helps build

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How to Safely Assist a Loved One After a Fall

Senior falls can be very frightening for both the senior and the caregiver. And once in this situation, caregivers are often unprepared for how to get an aging loved one safely back on their feet. How to proceed will depend upon whether the senior was injured in the fall. If there is any question, it is always wisest to call 911 for help. If you do not feel able to assist your loved one, first responders are experienced in getting patients on their feet safely, and can confirm that they don't need to go to the hospital. If you do wish to assist your loved one yourself, it is best to educate yourself on the steps necessary to safely get your loved one up after a fall, and avoid injuring yourself in the process.

Following are steps that can help you get a loved one upright, without hurting them or yourself in the process. Only attempt to help the person if you feel that both of you are able to safely work together. Otherwise, call for assistance. Again, these strategies should only be used when you are confident your loved one hasn't sustained an injury. Excess movement can cause further harm.

Steps for Assisting a Senior After a Fall

- Have your loved one lie still for a few moments. Stay calm yourself, and help your loved one to remain calm by encouraging them to take slow, deep breaths.
- While lying in place, have them perform a self-assessment to determine if they are injured. Ask them if they are experiencing any pain, where it is located and how severe it is. Examine them yourself for injuries like bruises, bleeding, possible sprains and broken bones.
- If they have a serious injury (like a broken bone), then don't move them. Call 911 and keep your loved one as warm, comfortable and as still as possible until help arrives.
- If they aren't hurt and they want to get up, proceed slowly. Stop and call for help if at any point they experience pain or become too fatigued to get all the way up.
- Note: Your responsibility in this process is to guide them through these steps and keep them steady, not lift their weight. Your loved one needs to be capable of doing the physical work required to get up. If they cannot do this, then call 911.
- Find two sturdy chairs. Place one near the senior's head and the other down by their feet. First, help your loved one roll over onto their side. Have them rest on their side for a

few moments to allow their body and blood pressure to adjust.

- Next, assist them in getting from their side onto their hands and knees. You may wish to place a towel beneath their knees to make this step more comfortable.
- Move the chair closest to their head directly in front of where they are so that they can place their hands evenly on the seat and assume a kneeling position.
- Ask your loved one to lean forward on the seat and help them bring their strongest leg forward, leading with the knee to place their foot flat on the floor. The senior should look like they are in a kneeling lunge at the end of this step.
- Move the second chair directly behind the senior, and have them use both their arms and legs to push themselves up and sit back into the second chair. You can help keep your loved one steady, but keep your back upright and make sure they are doing the physical work to lift themselves.
- Let the senior rest in a seated position until you are

confident they can stand and move around without falling again.

- It is important to notify their doctor that they have had a fall, and to monitor them for emerging pain or any signs of injury.

The following link provides a video that gives visual step-by-step instruction for a slightly modified procedure for getting the senior off the floor when a bed or sofa is close by:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10jR0zjl19Y>

Fall Prevention Strategies

Family members can work together to devise solutions to minimize the risk of falls in your loved one's home. Small modifications like eliminating trip hazards, installing grab bars and improving lighting can greatly reduce risk. We have resources available to assess a senior's risk for falls and provide strategies to avoid them. We invite you to call for more information about this topic.

*By Caren Parnes
For The Senior's Choice*



Aquatic Exercise for Seniors *(Continued from page 2)*

strength and coordination. Water provides the ideal environment for this type of exercise, safely allowing for a loss of balance, since their water-induced buoyancy will prevent them from falling.

Strength: Working with water "bar bells" or wrist bands can provide a great form of resistance-training which helps build muscle strength and endurance without injury.

Work Out and Get Out

Socializing is an overlooked added benefit of many types of senior group activities, and aquatic exercise is a prime opportunity to get out of the isolation of the home and into a social environment—and in the case of outdoor pools, enjoying some sun (with sun protection, of course).

Studies have shown that the opportunity to socialize is one of the key reasons elderly people will maintain a successful exercise program. Group exercise classes

provide an ideal opportunity for conversation.

Whether that be an exercise class, individual standing exercises, or swimmers using kickboards to kick side-by-side, there are many opportunities in the pool to socialize.

Getting Started

If you haven't been swimming in a while, start slowly. Try swimming laps for just five to ten minutes while coordinating your breathing, strokes, and kicking. A pair of well-fitting goggles is a must. A less strenuous option is just walking or running in water. Water aerobics classes are offered at a variety of levels, and often specifically for seniors. Check out your local senior center, community center, or YMCA for their Summer offerings for seniors.

*By Caren Parnes
For The Senior's Choice*



SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

Tips for Organizing Health Information

A trip to the emergency room made me realize why caregivers are advised to organize health information. When Mom broke her hip, I called an ambulance. When it arrived, I confidently recited Mom's Medicare number. When asked what medications she took, I pulled out our basket of pill bottles. At the hospital, the questions got more complicated. Still, I knew enough to fill out the forms. However, while I did not know it then, I would be joining Mom in the hospital the next day with an emergency of my own that kept me in the hospital for six weeks. As we both recovered, I looked for the best way to store her health information. I especially wanted an easy way to share it with others in case I am not around.

I now have a folder for paperwork that is portable and easy to maintain. It isn't just for emergencies. We take it to every doctor visit. Now anyone who has the folder can see when Mom had her last flu shot, what medications she takes and that she had a malignant mole removed in 1981. We can all see when all medical appointments are scheduled. Even my brother, who lives at a distance, could answer medical questions if he had to take Mom to the doctor while visiting.

Information to collect

You probably have most of this information readily available. If not, begin with what you have and add information as you can. Useful information to collect includes: A medical history; health insurance and Medicare cards; a list of medications including dosages, frequency, date started and reason; a list of emergency contacts, relationship, addresses and all phone numbers; any special logs such as blood pressure readings, blood sugar levels or symptoms; a copy of a health care proxy, advanced directives or living will; and a power-of-attorney, if one is used.

What should you keep in a medical history?

Names of all physicians; known allergies or reactions to medications; all medications, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbs; health conditions and date of diagnosis; dates of most recent exams, tests and immunizations; dates and reasons for hospitalizations; dates and details of surgeries; dates and length of major illnesses; history of smoking and use of alcohol; location of living will or medical directives; history of exposure to dangerous conditions or hazards; family history including illnesses or conditions of parents and siblings; cause of death of parents and siblings and their age at death.

Recording and storing the information

While the primary copy of the health information is more practical to keep in physical form due to various cards, forms and original documents that are part of the medical record, it is highly recommended that at least the medical history also be recorded digitally so that a "backup" copy is available in case of emergencies, disasters, or as the need arises to provide other family members or doctors with the information if needed remotely.

- For the primary copy, use a pocket folder or small three-ring binder that will hold several pages. We purchased a multi-page presentation folder with clear pockets from an office supply store.
- Use a bold color for the cover, such as red or yellow, so that it is easy to distinguish from other papers. Label the front clearly: EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION.
- Keep the folder in a handy location, such as a desk drawer near the entry. Make sure every potential caregiver knows where it is kept.
- Use top loading, clear sheet protectors to hold papers. These make it easy to remove

papers for photocopying or for handing to a healthcare worker.

- Pick up a business card from each healthcare provider you see. Cards usually contain the name, specialty, address, phone and fax number. There are vinyl business card holders available at office supply stores that are the most practical way to store business cards.
- Each time you have an appointment, take the reminder card or jot the appointment details on a 3X5 card. Slip these cards into a page protector just as you did the business cards to keep a record of the visit.
- When you add any information to a document, put the date at the top of the page to show how current the data is.

With a Medical History in hand, I will never again have to phone a doctor's office to relay information I didn't have with me at the appointment, and I'm confident that if I'm not around, someone else can tell the emergency room doctors what they need to know about my loved one.

by Kathy Porter

<https://caregiver.com/articles/organizing-medical-history/>