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THE CASS Connection

A CINCINNATI AREA SENIOR SERVICES NEWSLETTER

SPRING, 2009

From the Executive Director's Desk....

CASS Rises to New Challenges!



Tracey Collins,
CASS Executive
Director

Dear Friends of CASS,

What a whirlwind year we're celebrating! From confronting unprecedented emergencies to upgrading our efficiency with new quarters, CASS has never been so busy and productive. Here are highlights:

- Cincinnati's major **windstorm** brought the city to its knees in September. Ninety percent of the city had no power—in some areas, for as long as a week. Many seniors lost all refrigerated food, and the storm's timing left them with no monthly funds to replace it. During the days following the storm, CASS employees—many themselves with no power at home—came to work to help the stranded seniors, coordinating food distribution to more than 18 senior housing buildings and providing more than 3,600 meals.

Even once power was restored, food shortages remained. We worked with the Hamilton County Commissioners to purchase supplies, and with help from the United Way, the Council of Aging of Southwest Ohio and The Derringer Company, created 5,000 emergency boxes of shelf-stable food for the city's home-delivered meals clients.

- CASS can thank a relatively mild **winter** for few work interruptions this year. Severe weather forced only one day of closure plus a few days when icy streets prevented some deliveries. Fortunately we were able to substitute previously-delivered shelf-stable meals for those home-delivery clients—and we contacted every one of those high-risk clients to ensure their safety and adequate food supply. *Note: Each fall, we prepare shelf-stable meals for just such emergencies. Your help packing or making a financial contribution toward these bags is invaluable. Call (513) 721-4330 to learn about volunteering!*
- In January the CASS Board began a critical **strategic planning process** to identify opportunities for strengthening CASS over the next 3-5 years. Because local, state and federal funding has either remained flat or declined, we are looking to our generous donors to support our worthwhile mission of assisting seniors in need. We are also looking for individuals who are willing to give of their time and talents to join the CASS board. *If you are able to help us, or know of someone who is, please contact me for more information at 721-4330.*

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Congratulations

...to Tracey Collins, CASS Executive Director, as winner of the 38th COA President's Award for Outstanding Service to Seniors!

Tracey shares this year's award with Jack Maybury, The Derringer Company, and the Hamilton County Commissioners, Todd Portune and David Pepper for their superlative efforts in providing food to at-risk seniors during Cincinnati's September, 2008 windstorm.



National City Bank Provides the Keys To Better Senior Transportation



Tracey Collins and Jason Kiss, CASS board president (right), accept a key transportation donation from Scott Robinson, National City Bank (left).

The CASS service that keeps many at-risk seniors independent runs on wheels and gasoline—bus transportation to the grocery, activities at Senior Centers, and those all-important doctors' appointments. And thanks to National City Bank, this service will now run more reliably and efficiently for seniors, with less expense to CASS.

National City Bank provided the matching dollars required for us to secure a new bus from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). Moreover, National City's donation will put new, easier-to-read signage on our vehicles, promoting CASS services to seniors in need.

The new eight-person bus awarded us by ODOT will also allow CASS seniors to enjoy more recreational and social trips to locations they couldn't access on their own.

As a result of the National City Bank donation, we are finally retiring a very old bus that has required constant repair. Thank you, National City, for opening the door to better bus service and lower maintenance costs as well!

New Challenges (continued from cover)

- As of February, after 19 years in Queensgate, CASS has a **new administrative home in Walnut Hills!** Our Victory Parkway offices permit more efficient use of space—less square footage with a better fit and more opportunity for job sharing, all at reduced operating cost. Our staff loves the new offices, and we are back to business as usual.

For the past 12 years, CASS has held an annual golf outing in memory of our founder Lucile Costello. This year, in light of tough economic conditions affecting our sponsors and participants, the Executive Team and Board of Directors have suspended the annual outing until 2010. We plan to continue to honor her legacy, and we hope our annual golf supporters will consider making a donation in memory of Mrs. Costello.

Thanks for all you do,

Tracey Collins
Executive Director



Please Consider A GIFT In Lieu of GOLF This Year!

We invite golfers and other supporters of our yearly Costello Golf Outing to make a memorial gift to CASS instead of golf this year, to honor someone you've lost. Your donation will advance our work in important ways—a lasting tribute to your loved one!

Matching funds may double or triple the value of your gift through your employer. To find out if your company or organization has matching funds available, contact your human resources department or call our office at 513-721-4330. Retirees may qualify for matching funds too!

Spotlight on...

Drivers of Home-Delivered Meals Make a Daily Difference in Lives

Our hectic schedules may make the idea of home-delivered meals sound like a luxury. But for CASS seniors, this service is not just nice to have – it is vital in many ways that you might not expect.

Each home-delivered meals driver does more than just drop off a meal. He or she performs important safety checks with every run, ensuring that each senior has heat, emergency food, shelter from weather and is medically stable. And if perilous weather prevents a meal run, each senior gets a phone call to make sure they're okay.

To illustrate how important these drivers of our home-delivered meals are, here are two examples:



Clint arrived at a senior's home expecting to deliver a meal, and instead saved her life. This dedicated driver entered to find a home filled with smoke, the client sound asleep, and a meal still cooking on the stove. Though the situation was caught before an actual fire developed, Clint stayed with the senior to help her air out her house and make sure it was safe. The family continues to call with thanks that Clint took the time to care and "save my grandma's life," in the words of a grateful grand-daughter.



Another driver, Bob, noticed a strong smell of oil in the home of one senior in mid-December, and reported it to CASS staff member Kris Mirrieles.

Investigation revealed a faulty furnace that our client had not been able to afford to repair. Kris notified the client's Case Manager at The Council on Aging and together they were able to work with the client to get a new furnace for her home.

CASS drivers, our unsung heroes, check safety and security each time they deliver home-delivered meals.

Senior Wishes – Can You Help Make Them Come True?

Even in tough times, most of us take access to certain "necessities"—like toothpaste or canned goods or food for a beloved pet—for granted. But for many at-risk seniors, these are desperate needs. CASS keeps a supply of such staples for distribution through both our home-delivered meals program and our Senior Centers. If you or your company can contribute items to our pantry, you'll be improving lives—and spirits! Please contact Mary Jo Gamm (513-721-4330) if you can provide any of the following:

FOOD

- Canned soup, pasta, chili or any meal that can be heated
- Boxed pasta or macaroni and cheese
- Applesauce
- Spaghetti sauce
- Cans of juice, especially cranberry and apple
- Peanut butter
- Jelly (sugar free and regular)
- Any other items easy to prepare and heat

PERSONAL CARE

- Shampoo
- Soap
- Laundry detergent
- Bleach
- Lotion
- Toilet paper
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Razor
- Shaving cream

FOR PETS

- Dog or cat food
- Kitty litter

SENIOR CENTER NEEDS

- Wii game consoles—3 needed
- Flowers for planting at the 3 senior centers – company or group of individuals could volunteer to do the plantings

Our seniors thank you!