

Sharing the Health

NOKOMIS HEALTHY SENIORS

4553 - 34TH AVENUE SOUTH, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55406

Winter 2003

Volume 10, Number 1

Fall Prevention

By John Sanchez

As a Physical Therapist at Abbott-Northwestern Hospital, I am often asked to see patients who have fallen or have a history of falls. I wish I could present a list of easy steps to avoid falls, but there is no such list. Improving your strength, balance and cardio-vascular fitness is important, which will take 2-3 months of regular, sustained effort. (I wholly endorse such effort, but since it is patient specific, I cannot expand on that here.) There are, however, some easy changes you can begin making today which will decrease your chance of falling or being injured if you do fall.

Around your home:

- Bathroom equipment, such as toilet rails and bars in your tub/shower, will greatly reduce the risks of falls. If you have this equipment, please check it on a regular basis to ensure that it is secure.
- Use night lights in your bathroom and hallways. I suggest using night lights which turn on automatically when it gets dark.
- Keep the pathway between your bed and bathroom free of clutter or obstacles. Look for

'hidden' objects like furniture legs or items stored under your bed.

- Move items of frequent use to a level between your shoulders and your knees to avoid reaching, stooping, or having to use a step-stool. This is especially important in the kitchen.
- Do not rush around your home for the telephone or a doorbell. Whoever is there will wait for you.

Around your community:

- Slow down when walking and scan the surface in front of you for uneven areas. Tripping is the leading cause of falls when walking outside.
- If you have been told to use a cane or walker, please do so. I strongly recommend regular inspection of tips and brakes of your walking aides.
- Keep your hands

free when walking (except if you are using a walking aide). Do not carry bags or walk with

your hands in your pockets.

For yourself:

- Make sure your glasses and hearing aides are working properly and that you use them.
- Make sure you eat a balanced diet throughout the day.
- Make sure you drink plenty of water (unless you have been told by your doctor to limit your fluid intake.) If getting up at night to urinate is an issue, limit your fluid intake 3 hours before you go to sleep.
- Getting a good night of sleep is critical. Not sleeping well for a couple of nights will increase your risk of falls.
- Stay regular with your bowel and bladder.
- Wear proper fitting shoes. Shoes should be flat, broad soled, firm at the heel with sufficient room for your toes. I cannot emphasize enough the risk incurred when wearing poor fitting or poorly designed shoes.

I hope you find these suggestions helpful in reducing your fear and incidence of falling. Remember that the best way to limit your fall risk at home is to stay connected and active within your community.

Hennepin County statistics indicate that 30% of all seniors living independently fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of injury among seniors.

Profiles in Independence

Allan Swanson — Living to 100

“Let me tell you a story ... “

Allan Swanson has been involved with Nokomis Healthy Seniors since we began in 1994. He always has something to tell and teach to those who visit with him.

Allan is 93 years old. He was born in south Minneapolis and has lived all of his life here. Allan remembers walking along Cedar Avenue with his father to go fishing at Lake Nokomis. Lake Hiawatha was mostly a swamp. Before they would get to the Cedar Avenue bridge they would pass little strawberry and potato farms.

As a young man, Allan traveled to Chicago. He had a job with a company making chemical products and was in a building 20 feet away when there was a huge explosion in their building next door and four to five floors of concrete building came tumbling down.

He and a friend were three blocks away from the sight of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in Chicago. They climbed up to look in the windows and saw eight bodies lying on the floor. He went to St. Louis and saw Babe Ruth play. He was on scaffolding in St. Louis when the person with him fell and tried to grab Allan's foot as he fell to his death.

Allan came back to Minnesota and, in 1930, started to work for the Minnesota Highway Department. He talks of working on the Lowry Tunnel. They pumped chemicals 100 feet into the ground by the large churches to freeze the ground so the churches wouldn't slide.

Allan had surgery in 1995, leaving his lower extremities paralyzed. He continues to live independently, though. His daughter and son live in the Twin Cities area. His son buys his groceries and his daughter cleans house and drives him places. Allan receives nursing visits from Nokomis Healthy Seniors for physical assessment, medical care, and foot care. He works every day exercising, standing at a walker while making walking movements. Daily he also exercises his brain and plays at least a few games of solitaire. Allan knows the stock market and loves to teach others how to do better with their own money than a stock broker will. Politics, as a subject, can get emotional.

Allan wants to live to be 100. He has advice for those of us who would like to do the same:

- Moderation in everything...don't be addicted to anything.
- Learn to eat to live. Allan fixes his own meals and has a tablespoon of vinegar everyday. In the winter he adds molasses to his oatmeal.
- Scratch your head. He scratches his white haired head every day because a barber once told him that was the way to keep his hair strong and full (and it is).
- Take olive oil every day. Advice he followed as a child and has returned to as an adult (“the Italians and Greeks are healthy”).
- Education! Education! Education!

How Many Years?

Allan Swanson has lived in the Nokomis neighborhood for 93 years!

We think it would be fun to total all the years our seniors have lived in and supported this community.

Please call (612) 729-5499 and tell us your neighborhood and how many years you lived in the neighborhood.

Profiles in Independence

Bill Stanton — Transition Planning

Bill Stanton is another white haired gentleman living in the Nokomis neighborhood. His goal is to live in his home until he dies.

Bill was born on the south side of Chicago and went to parochial schools. He entered a Christian Brothers order at the age of 17 but that only lasted eight months. The Brothers awakened at 4:30 a.m. to pray and then were to be silent for most of the rest of the day. Bill likes people and talking too much for that schedule to work.

Bill came to Minnesota in 1944 with the Navy. He attended the University of Minnesota in the V-12 program. That degree was in mechanical engineering, but Bill went into sales for 48 years. He mostly sold products for construction and liked working with people. He went to the University of Minnesota for another degree in psychology, which he finished at the age of 64.

Bill has a lot of health problems. He has been a diabetic since he was 25 years old and has significant cardiac problems which also limit his activity. He has been a volunteer with Little Brothers, at a walk-in center for street people, and most recently with hospice. He recently has taken a leave from the hospice activities because of fatigue.

Bill usually gets out of the house for church and a weekly doctor's appointment. He takes Metro Mobility most of the time. He has someone who comes in every two weeks to clean his home and buy his groceries. A woman from the church he goes to has been helping him with the special meals he needs. A library volunteer brings books every three weeks for him to read and loves to stay for discussions. He also is in regular contact with a friend he made when he was leading a support group for older males.

Bill's wife died of breast cancer. He has six children who live from Michigan to Arkansas, Texas, and California. Two of his children live in the Twin Cities area. When asked what he is most proud of in life he quickly says "all of my kids...they are six individuals and they all get along together." He is also proud of his activities in the peace movement and getting that degree in psychology in 1984.

He read an article in the AARP magazine a few years ago about "Transition Planning," the transition from life to death. He explains that when we were a farming society generations of families were able to take care of each other, but now that can't happen as often. He thinks most Americans are in denial of dying but he has thought about it a lot and his aim is to live at home until he dies. He has put together a "transition team," 13 friends who have agreed to help in whatever way is necessary when the time comes that he cannot take care of himself. He is not sure when he will need them, or what will need to be done, but they all know his wishes and have agreed to help. All of his family knows about the team. Bill feels better feeling he has "his team" in place even though they may not be needed for a long time.

"It is fundamental that the hospital shall do nothing to harm the patient. My view is that the ultimate destination of nursing is the nursing of the sick in their own homes. I look at abolition of all hospitals and work infirmaries. But it is of no use to talk about the year 2000."

Florence Nightingale, 1860

Survey Success

By Becky Beeskow,
Service Coordinator

Last fall, we sent out surveys to our volunteers and now, we want to say thank you to all of you who have returned them. We are very pleased with the number of surveys that have been returned. It is not too late to return them.

The surveys are a tool to make our volunteer program more successful. Hopefully the surveys will be an annual event. Several surveys had questions or comments. We have responded to them either by phone or in writing. A few had questions but did not include a name on the form. If you have not heard from us, please call the office on Monday or Wednesday and ask for me. Please feel free to call me any time about any concern.

Thank You, Volunteers

Thank you, to all our volunteers, for your hard work. Without you we would not be able to function. In each of the newsletters during the coming year we will recognize our volunteers in their anniversary month. This newsletter has the list of volunteers for the months of January-April. In parentheses is the year the volunteer began. If we missed your name please call and let us know.

January

Irina Comardicea (2001)
Florence Fiskum (2002)

January, continued

Deb Ladwig (2002)
Bill Nilsson (1999)
Marion Nilsson (1999)
Bob Fries (1995)
Irene Sobotka (1998)
Marlys Wilson (1999)

February

Florence Judy (1996)
Jean Dineson (2000)
Susan Graham (2001)

March

Dawn Newbrough (2002)
Jeanette Olson (1995)
Lori O'Reilly (1999)
Jan Bagley (2000)
Maggie Easter (1996)
Elaine Brovold (1995)
Ruth Feste (1995)
Journey Gosselin (1999)
Alice Johanson (1995)
Eileen Stewart (2000)

April

Jaci Sauer (2002)
Sharon Lone (2001)
Marianne Gilbertson (2002)
Tom Grimes (2002)
Lorraine Anderson (1997)
Mary Lou Doll (1997)
Hazel Banasik (1995)

Writing Group

"In learning about those who came before we learn a little more about ourselves."

This volunteer-run group meets the first and third Thursday of the month from 10 a.m. to 12 Noon at the Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Parkway. No experience necessary, just an interest in people and writing. New members are always welcome. For more information call George Town at (612) 727-3961.

Staff News

Congratulations to Lynn Radecki on her 5-year anniversary as a nurse with Nokomis Healthy Seniors. "I enjoy working at Nokomis Healthy Seniors because of all the wonderful seniors I've met," says Lynn. "They are a joy and an inspiration to me."

Congratulations, also, to Elana Gravitz on her completion of the Institute for Executive Director Leadership at the University of St. Thomas. This year-long program addressed leadership challenges that are unique to the nonprofit sector. Elana has already applied many of her new learnings at Nokomis Healthy Seniors.

We are always looking for volunteers. We are currently in need of drivers, respite volunteers, and telephoners. If you are interested in the current needs, please feel free to call Becky Beeskow at 612-729-5499. If you are a senior in need of a volunteer, please call Becky Beeskow as well.

Volunteer Profile: Irene Olson

If you call the office on a Thursday morning or come in to have a pedicure you have met Irene and been the recipient of her warmth. She has been volunteering in the office on Thursday morning since last August. But her history with Nokomis Healthy Seniors goes back several years.

In 1994, Irene responded to a card from Nokomis Healthy Seniors inviting her to be part of the Medicare Demonstration Project. In 1999 she saw an ad in our newsletter looking for volunteers for the transportation program and, "I was looking for more worthwhile things to fill my time." Since that time she has been a regular driver, frequently offering to drive more than once a week. In addition to driving people to the doctor she also drives people to our monthly health programs.

Irene acts as an advocate for our seniors. In one instance she accompanied a woman to the doctor. The woman gave the staff at the office her check for a co-pay for the visit. Irene questioned whether the woman should have made the payment and asked the staff about that. It was an oversight and the money was returned to the senior. Irene did not hesitate to speak up.

Along with being an advocate for the seniors she is an adventuresome person. Last winter she was willing to assist

at the Macular Degeneration support group when the regular volunteer was on vacation. This was a new task for her but she said yes and came to

the office the day before for orientation. When asked if she would volunteer in the office on Thursday morning she responded in the same way, saying yes to a new opportunity.

Irene was born and raised in Duluth of parents who were both born in Finland. After finishing high school she attended a business college in Duluth, taking a course that prepared her to work as a secretary. Her first job was at a lumber company. In her later years she worked at a local

hotel serving for banquets. Irene has lived in the Nokomis area of Minneapolis for 51 years. She moved here from Duluth with her husband and children. She has 3 children and 7 grandchildren.

Irene's hobbies are varied and many. A deep love of camping was given to her by her parents who started camping before she was born. Their family camped along the streams between Duluth and Canada. It is an activity she continued with her own family, up until the time of her husband's death 15 years ago. She plays cribbage regularly along with going to the Y to swim and do aerobics three to four times a week. In earlier years she loved to sew and do handwork, crafts she learned from her mother.

We are fortunate to have Irene as a volunteer for our organization. She is a warm, caring, individual who is very willing to give of herself and her time.

Date Drop Cookies (Irene Olson's recipe, a favorite of her husband)

DOUGH:

1 CUP SHORTENING
2 CUPS BROWN SUGAR
3 EGGS
3 CUPS FLOUR
PINCH SALT
1 TSP. SODA
1 TSP. VANILLA

DATE FILLING:

2 CUPS DATES
3/4 CUP SUGAR
3/4 CUP WATER
COOK UNTIL WELL MIXED, STIR OFTEN

MIX DOUGH INGREDIENTS IN ORDER GIVEN. CHILL THE DOUGH BEFORE FORMING COOKIES. GREASE PANS WELL. DROP DOUGH ON COOKIE SHEET. PUT DATE FILLING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DOUGH. ADD ANOTHER SMALL DOT OF DOUGH ON TOP OF THE DATE FILLING. THE DOUGH SPREADS ON THE PAN, SO LEAVE LOTS OF SPACE. BAKE AT 350 DEGREES FOR 10-12 MINUTES.

News from Nokomis Healthy Seniors Board of Directors

By Maggie Easter, Board Chair

The Board of Directors is saying good-bye to some members and I want to acknowledge those people. Our retiring members are: Dana Larson, Vicki Swan, Jane McNaughton, and Herb Weyrauch, who resigned earlier this year. Dana has spent five active years in various capacities: Co-chair of the Board,

Board Secretary, Program Committee Chair, and organizing fundraising events at Mt.Olivet Nursing Home, Kowalski's, and Herberger's. We appreciate her continuing as a member of the Program Committee. Vicki has given four years and served as Chair of the Nursing Agency Search Committee. Jane during her

two years was in charge of the 2002 Annual Campaign mailing, on Program Committee and in charge of this year's Craft Sale in November. Herb served 2 ½ years, the last as Board Treasurer. Our many thanks to each of these for their committed and faithful service to Nokomis Healthy Seniors and may their years of dedication bring satisfaction to them in knowing that they have helped seniors continue living safely in their own homes.

Personal Note

From Dana Larson, Retiring Co-Chair

"I would like to thank the staff and Board of Directors of The Nokomis Healthy Seniors Program for allowing me to be a part of such a wonderful organization for the past five years. As I look back, we all can be proud of our many accomplishments.

"Our largest accomplishment was the transition from being a Medicare demonstration project to an independently operated non-profit organization — The Nokomis Healthy Seniors Program — the program we know today. From the many hours developing a mission statement and volunteer program to performing home safety checks and running prosperous fundraising events, The Nokomis Healthy Seniors Program has proved it can stand on its own. With this foundation, the future of The Nokomis Healthy Seniors Program can only be successful and bright.

"Whether you are a volunteer, staff member or Board member you should be extremely proud of your hard work and dedication in supporting an amazing organization and mission. Even though I am retiring from the Board of Directors, I will continue to be involved in other areas of Nokomis Healthy Seniors. The mission of Nokomis Healthy Seniors is to keep seniors healthy and in their homes and this will always be my mission too."

Meet John Sanchez

John Sanchez wrote our cover article. He is a physical therapist at Abbott Northwestern Hospital and a Nokomis Healthy Seniors supporter. John is starting his fourth year as a volunteer with us and is currently on our Board of directors. He has been willing to help with everything from cleaning up after our accident to presenting information to elected officials about what Healthy Seniors does.

John lives in the Nokomis neighborhood with his wife Noreen Schertler, an attorney, and their two sons Taylor, eight years and Kyle, three years and two cats Tiger and Louie.

John comes from San Diego, California and his wife is from east St. Paul. In addition to Nokomis Healthy Seniors and Abbott Northwestern, John enjoys swimming, running, and volleyball. He does many things with his family. His son, Taylor, says a favorite is weekly family night at the YMCA with dinner after. Each family member gets a turn to choose where to go.

A Poem

A friend is someone who knows
The song in your heart and
Plays back the words to you
When you forget how they go.

Author Unknown

Health Programs & Other Notes

Health Programs are monthly meetings designed to promote your health. Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month, at Faith Lutheran Church. Faith is located at 3430 East 51st Street. If you need a ride to any of these activities, call Margo at (612) 729-5499.

JANUARY

January 29, 1:30 p.m.
"Health Awareness"

A presentation by students at the College of Pharmacy at the University of Minnesota

FEBRUARY

February 26, 1:30 p.m.
"Fire and Injury Prevention"
John Dick, Fire and Life Safety Educator
City of Minneapolis

MARCH

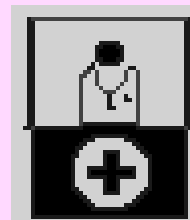
March 26, 1:30 p.m.
"Advance Directives - Planning for the Future"
(This is the first of a two-part series.)
Gaining knowledge about the concept and the advanced directive form.
Laurie Hanson, Legal Aid Society

APRIL

April 30, 1:30 p.m.
"Advance Directives - Completing the Form"
Laurie Hanson will provide assistance in filling out an advance directive form, and notaries will be present to verify your signature.
Laurie Hanson, Legal Aid Society

"Nurse Is In"

Every Thursday morning from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the NHS office.



Schedule a pedicure, or get your blood pressure checked. If nothing else, stop in to chat over a cup of coffee and Scandia Bakery coffee cake.

In the spirit of reducing waste, please remember to bring your own mug to the programs.

Blood Pressure Clinics

Standish Green Apartments

2210 East 40th Street
Fourth Tuesday of the month, 12 Noon
Open to all community members.

Congregate Dining

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
1720 East Minnehaha Parkway
First Thursday of every month, 12 Noon
If you would like to make a meal reservation, call Evelyn two days ahead, at 612-729-6668.
The cost of the meal is \$2.50.

Support Groups

Macular Degeneration Group

The second Thursday of each month at Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 41st and Cedar Avenue at 10 a.m. Julie Rindelaub from Vision Loss Resources facilitates.

Caregiver Support Group

The last Thursday of the month at Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 41st and Cedar Avenue at 1:00 p.m. This group is open to anyone serving as caregiver for a loved one.

**NOKOMIS HEALTHY SENIORS
4553 - 34TH AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55406**

**PHONE: 612/729-5499
FAX: 612/729-5417
WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.MTN.ORG/~NHS
EMAIL: NHS@MTN.ORG**

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Nokomis Healthy Seniors Staff:

Elana Gravitz, Executive Director
Becky Beeskow, Service Coordinator
Margo Casey, Service Coordinator
Mary Kay Stillson, RN, MPH, Nurse Case Manager
Lynn Radecki, RN, MS Nurse Case Manager
Judy Chen, Home Health Aide
Colleen Powers, Administrative Coordinator

Newsletter:

Editor: Margo Casey
Layout: Jim Stillson
Webmaster: Ricky Carlstedt

**Do You Want To Stop Receiving
Telemarketing Calls?**

The state of Minnesota has a "do not call" list which will reduce the number of telemarketing calls you now receive. You can call 1-800-921-4110 to register your phone number and be placed on the "do not call" list.

Once you register please be aware that there are scam artists calling people saying that they represent the state's "do not call" list. These scam artists may tell you there is a fee to sign up and then ask you for your bank account, credit card, or Social Security numbers. Please be aware there is no charge to register for this service and do not give out any personal information. For those of you with internet access you can register at <http://www.commerce.state.mn.us>.

**Kowalski's "Groceries for good
causes"**

Kowalski's grocery store at 5615 Chicago Avenue is sponsoring a program where they will make quarterly donations to Nokomis Healthy Seniors as part of their "groceries for good causes." When you shop at Kowalski's you can put your receipt in a box labeled Nokomis Healthy Seniors. The size of the donation is based on the number of receipts, not the amount you spent for groceries. This is an ongoing program and we encourage your participation.

We thank Allianz Life Insurance for their continuing support of this newsletter.