

- ★■ ROBERT C. NOVY
- DOUGLAS J. HULL
- ▲■ JASON L. WYATT

- Member Nat'l Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
- ★ NJ Commissioner on Aging (1995-1997)
- Member NJ Bar
- ▲ L.L.M. Taxation



2915 Ridgeway Rd. (Rt. 571)
 Manchester, New Jersey 08759
 (732) 657-0600
 Fax (732) 657-7225
 Real Estate Fax (732) 657-0192
 www.novylaw.com

Monmouth County Office
 By Appointment Only
 2150 Highway 35
 Brook 35 Plaza
 Sea Girt, NJ 08750
 Phone: 732-359-0221

Help for the Homebound
Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey and Other Senior Services in Ocean County

Broadcast Date: June 25, 2011

Host:

Robert C. Novy, Esq., Managing Partner of Novy & Associates, specializing in Elder Law and Real Estate Law

Featured Guest:

Phyllis Stemmie, Project Director of Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, a division of Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey; Stemmie worked for the Ocean County Board of Social Services for 31 years and joined Caregivers in 2007.

Ocean County is a mecca for senior citizens. With beaches, golf courses, and plenty of shopping, culture, and dining close at hand—along with more than 90 adult communities to choose from—it's no wonder the area draws retirees from all over New Jersey and beyond.

One in three people here is 65 or older, and Ocean has more octogenarians over 85 than any other county in the state. Plus, per capita, New Jersey boasts the most 65+-year-olds than any other state in the union except Florida.

Because of its high concentration of senior citizens, the county offers an abundance of perks and services to this population. Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey (CVCJ) is one that has made a substantial and meaningful impact.

What is Caregivers?

Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey (originally called Caregivers of Toms River) is an interfaith, nonprofit organization established in 1992, which serves a wide swath of Ocean County—as far south as Lacey Township, north to Lakewood, and west to Jackson. The agency provide free supportive services to area seniors (age 60 or over), including:

- **Driving services to medical appointments** – volunteers pick up clients, take them to their doctor’s or test appointment, wait until the appointment is over, and drive clients back home again (two weeks lead time required for this service)
- **Grocery shopping** – after clients prepare a list of 15 to 20 grocery items and provide cash or check (made out to the store), volunteers pick up the list, shop for the items, and in some cases, even put the groceries away
- **Friendly visitation** – volunteers stop in on shut-in clients to provide companionship and conversation
- **Reassurance phone calls** – volunteers place daily calls to clients to make sure they had a good night and are doing well

In the years since its launch, Caregivers has continued to develop innovative programs to meet the needs of its client base. Among them are:

- **CaregiverKids Program** (*started 1998*) – children, recruited from area schools, participate in intergenerational events and parties, such as “senior” proms and singing concerts; they also assist with yard work in the fall and spring
- **Alzheimer’s Respite Care Program** (*started 2002*) – volunteers visit the homes of those with Alzheimer’s or other form of dementia (client must be somewhat self sufficient) and relieve the caregiver for a few hours so he or she can shop, meet a friend, or just take a much-needed break; the volunteer provides conversation and companionship (no medical care) to the Alzheimer’s client while the caregiver is out
- **Caregiver Canines Pet Therapy Program** (*started 2009*) – professional trainers bring therapy dogs to the homes of shut-ins or those with dementia every other week, where clients and pets interact for 45 minutes; the dogs provide tremendous comfort and unconditional love and are known to help relieve stress

How to Receive Services

To become a CVCJ client, interested parties must first register with the organization (main number: 732.505.2273; Alzheimer’s Respite Care Program number: 732.505.0031). The only eligibility requirements are that the person be age 60 or older and in need.

If applying for the Respite Care program, CVCJ will send a representative—usually Phyllis Stemmie—to the applicant’s home to get a more complete picture of the potential client and his or her needs. Those with advanced dementia or requiring medical or physical attention cannot be accepted, as CVCJ provides only companionship services. Stemmie will also bring literature on other local programs (adult daycare, for example)

that can supplement the Respite Care program, so caregivers can get the amount of relief they need.

Services are free, and while donations are graciously accepted, they are not mandated.

Who Are the Caregiver Volunteers?

CVCJ currently has about 1,000 volunteers hailing from every corner of Ocean County, most of them recruited through churches and synagogues. Background checks are performed on all interested volunteers. After going through a training program and choosing their preferred tasks (shopping, driving, visitation, etc.), they are partnered with the appropriate clients according to geography, mutual interests, personalities, and often gender (particularly in the Respite Care Program, men are generally paired with men and women with women).

What happens next is amazing: Volunteers find they get as much out of the experience as the clients do! Friendships frequently develop and bonds form. It is truly a two-way relationship, where both parties benefit and derive tremendous satisfaction. As one CVCJ said, "Try it for one day, and you'll feel like you're floating on a cloud!"

However, CVCJ is always in need of additional volunteers. "We never have enough volunteers," says Stemmie. "There is a bit of turnover, because some volunteers age out and others find they just need a break; the work can be intense." To become a volunteer, call Caregivers at 732.505.2273.

How is Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey Funded?

The agency survives mainly on donations from individuals and organizations. Several fundraising events are held throughout the year. In addition, the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program receives a small grant from the Ocean County Office of Senior Services. It's important to note that donations made to the Alzheimer's Association *do not* trickle down to CVCJ's Respite Care Program. They are two separate and distinct organizations.

What Other Services Are Available to Ocean County Senior Citizens?

The Ocean County Office of Senior Services, located at 1027 Hooper Avenue in Toms River, offers a goldmine of information and services (many of them free) to area seniors. Call 732.929.2091 for more information.

In addition, there are a number of excellent adult daycare facilities—both medical and social—that may be ideal for your loved one.

The state funds a program known as Jersey Assistance for Community Caregiving (JACC), which provides a broad array of in-home services, including respite care, homemaker services, transportation, and adult daycare. Call 609.292.7837 to learn more about services and eligibility requirements.

Robert Novy may be reached at 732.657.0600 or RNovy@NovyLaw.com. For more information about Novy & Associates, visit www.NovyLaw.com.

Phyllis Stemmie may be reached at Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey at 732.505.2273 or at the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, 732.505.0031. Go to www.CaregiverVolunteers.org for additional information.

"Inside the Law" is broadcast every other Saturday from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. on 1160 WOBN-AM. To view a schedule of upcoming programs, visit www.NovyLaw.com. To listen to this recording or previous broadcasts, go to <http://novylaw.com/archive.php>.

Directory of Resources Mentioned in This Article:

Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey

253 Chestnut Street, Toms River, NJ 08753

732-505-2273 (main #) | 732.505.0031 (Alzheimer's Respite Care Program #)

www.CaregiverVolunteers.org

JACC (Jersey Assistance for Community Caregiving)

Department of Health and Senior Services

P. O. Box 360, Trenton, NJ 08625-0360

609.292.7837 | 800.367.6543 (toll free in NJ)

www.nj.gov/health/senior/jacc.shtml

Ocean County Office of Senior Services

1027 Hooper Avenue in Toms River, NJ 08753

732.929.2091

www.ocean.nj.us/SeniorServicesMainPage.aspx