After 40 years of service, we’re still young at heart!

The year was 1972. Richard Nixon was president, gasoline sold for only 55 cents a gallon, and something special was beginning for Gwinnett County seniors. In response to a growing need for senior-based services, Gwinnett County Senior Services (GCSS) was founded that same year.

The program was originally intended to provide home food deliveries to seniors, a daily hot meal and fellowship at the Lawrenceville community center, and transportation assistance to seniors who needed to run simple errands. Despite a shoe-string budget and a limited staff, the program proved to be a resounding success. Today, GCSS operates three senior centers, provides a variety of special programs and services for seniors, and is well regarded as a leading provider of senior-based services in Georgia.

From humble beginnings, Gwinnett County Senior Services is now entering its fourth decade of service to Gwinnett seniors. Happy Anniversary – you have been there for seniors for 40 consecutive years. Enjoy these blast from the past photos!

GeorgiaCares – By Adrienne Noble, Information & Assistance Specialist

I receive many calls regarding Medicare benefits; especially from seniors who are new to Medicare. Finding your way through the maze of Medicare insurance and prescription coverage can be very confusing, but GeorgiaCares can help. GeorgiaCares is a free program of the Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services and Area Agencies on Aging. Trained counselors from GeorgiaCares can help demystify Medicare, Medicare summary notices, Medigap, Medicare Advantage plans, Medicare fraud, as well as long-term care insurance. They can also help you select a prescription plan, sort through medical bills, assist with filing Medicare claims and appeals, submit Medicare fraud reports, and analyze Medicare supplement and long-term care insurance policies. For additional information or assistance, please call 1.800.669.8387 or visit GeorgiaCares online at www.mygeorgiacares.org.
Making your home fall-proof – By Julie Lucas, Office Assistant to Health Services

Getting around your home safely can be a challenge if you have injuries or health problems that make it easy for you to fall. Your risk of falling and injuring yourself may increase due to side effects of medicines, weakness, or pain in the legs and feet.

Some common hazards in the home include:
- Clutter where you walk
- Furniture or other sharp-edged items in the normal pathways through your house
- Poor lighting
- Raised doorway thresholds
- Slippery floors
- Steps and stairways
- Throw rugs and electrical cords

To prevent falls around your home:
- Move objects out of walking paths
- Put rubber tips on walkers and canes. If you use crutches, clean the bottoms of them regularly with an abrasive pad, such as steel wool
- Use nonskid floor wax, and wipe up spills
- Keep your house well lit and use night-lights. Extra light switches or remote switches (such as clap-ons) will make it easier to turn on lights
- Put sturdy handrails on stairways

To prevent falls in the bathroom:
- Install grab handles and nonskid mats throughout the bathroom. Use shower chairs and bath benches
- Get into a tub or shower by putting the weaker leg in first. Get out with your strong side first
- Use a long-handled brush or mittens with straps to help with bathing

Vitamin D – the sunshine vitamin

Vitamin D plays an important role in bone health. Not only does vitamin D help the body absorb calcium and phosphorous, but it also deposits these minerals into bone and teeth to keep them strong.

Also known as the sunshine vitamin, our skin makes vitamin D when it is exposed to the sun’s ultraviolet light. However, as we age, our skin becomes less efficient at producing vitamin D. People age 70+ produce 75 percent less vitamin D from sunlight than people age 20. Thus, older adults must get their vitamin D from food and supplements.

Sources of vitamin D include fortified milk and cereals. It is also found in canned tuna and salmon. Despite its presence in food, less than 10 percent of older adults are able to meet the recommendation from food sources alone. Thus, taking a vitamin D supplement may be necessary. Vitamin D is found in multivitamins, some calcium supplements, and as a single vitamin. Since getting vitamin D from food sources is important, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends: 3 cups fortified milk, 1 cup fortified orange juice, and a 600 IU supplement. With a sunny disposition, and a little attention to food and supplement labels, vitamin D can help keep your bones and teeth strong for years to come.

Gwinnett County Senior Center Locations

 Buford  
2755 Sawnee Avenue  
Buford, GA 30518  
770.614.2527  

 Lawrenceville  
Rhodes Jordan Park  
225 Benson Street  
Lawrenceville, GA 30046  
678.277.0970  

 Norcross  
5030 Georgia Belle Court  
Norcross, GA 30093  
770.638.5683  

Adapted from ACM, June, 2007