

Editor's Viewpoint

Greetings! The days are getting considerably shorter, and the leaves are starting to turn colors. Fall is right around the corner... which means it is time for the next edition of Exceeding Expectations - the Hired Hands newsletter.

As always, the goal and focus of our newsletter is to provide interesting and informative articles that are of benefit to our clientele and employees. If you have any topics you would like us to bring attention to, please let us know!

This time of year seems busy for everyone. The seasons are changing quickly, and the Holidays will be right around the corner (eek!). October is an especially busy month for everyone at Hired Hands. Please take a look at the Upcoming Events of Interest column to the right. We'd love to see you at one of the upcoming events.

One event of special importance is the quickly approaching Memory Walk 2004. This wonderful community event benefits the Alzheimer's Association, and their effort to create a world without Alzheimer's disease and enhancing quality of life for those who live with it.

Alzheimer's is something that we are all aware of, but there are many significant details that we

thought might help clarify the full impact of this devastating disease. Coverage begins on page two.

With the falling of the leaves also comes the dreaded flu season. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of flu shots this year. Thus, you'll want to check out the article on page 3 to learn more about how you can keep the flu at bay. Unfortunately, even as you

avoid the flu, there's a good chance that you might catch the common cold. As such, we've included our favorite recipe for that medicinal comfort food - Chicken Noodle Soup!

There you have it. I hope you enjoy the latest issue of Exceeding Expectations.

Mark Winter, President
HIRED HANDS INC.

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Upcoming Events of Interest

- Following are a few fun FREE events of interest. Please stop by to see us - We'd love to have you join us! We also have a list of Health Education and Events for Seniors and Caregivers. Don't hesitate to contact us if you'd like more information!
- Oct. 16, 2004 - Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk - Spring Lake, Santa Rosa
- Oct. 20, 2004 - Marin Senior Information Fair - Marin Co. Civic Center, San Rafael (Flu shots available)
- Oct. 22, 2004 - Petaluma's Senior Expo - Petaluma Community Center
- Oct. 28, 2004 - Senior Health Services Fair & Flu Clinic - Margaret Todd Senior Center
- Nov. 02, 2004 - Election Day - Don't forget to vote!

Living with Alzheimer's Disease

"The emotional, social, & financial consequences are so devastating, it deserves special attention.

Research is the only hope."

Ronald Reagan
1983

Alzheimer's is defined as a brain disease that causes a steady decline in memory. This dementia results in loss of intellectual functions (thinking, reasoning, memory) severe enough to interfere with everyday life.

On any given day, our caregivers provide a wide variety of assistance to our clients and families dealing with this disease. The following list details several things that families can do while coping with Alzheimer's:

1. Get a thorough, multi-disciplinary diagnosis for your loved one. In the Bay Area, we are fortunate to have excellent Alzheimer's diagnostic centers. A thorough diagnostic evaluation insures identification of any reversible causes of dementia and will help the family plan effectively for the future.

2. Plan for the legal and

financial future of your loved one and yourself. As the disease progresses, your loved one will not be able to make competent legal and financial decisions for him/herself. It is important that you establish durable Powers of Attorney (one for health care decisions and one for financial/legal matters).

3. Educate yourself so that you can educate health and social service personnel. There are many myths about dementia. However, accurate information and resource materials are available. Please contact our office for useful materials and resources.

4. Develop a good working relationship with your patient's attending physician. Be willing to work to educate your doctor, but also be willing to change doctors if yours is not responsive.

5. Learn about and use community resources. In the Bay Area, we are fortunate to have many services that may help you. There are excellent diagnostic programs, day care centers, in-home services, overnight respite programs, support groups, and many other services that may support and assist you.

6. You don't have to do it alone - so don't! It will help you and your loved one if you develop partnerships with others. Look to your family, your friends and neighbors. Many of them would like to help; let them.

7. Take care of yourself. It is tempting to always put the patient's needs ahead of your own. Remember that your loved one needs you to be healthy-physically and emotionally. Keep doing things you enjoy and remember to laugh.

8. Make arrangements for

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Warning Signs!

The Alzheimer's Association gives ten warning signs that MAY indicate the onset of the disease.

1. Recent memory loss that affects job skills
2. Difficulty performing familiar tasks
3. Problems with language
4. Disorientation of time and place
5. Poor or decreased judgment
6. Problems with abstract thinking
7. Frequent misplacing of things
8. Changes in mood or behavior
9. Changes in personality
10. Loss of initiative

Interesting Facts...

- Alzheimer's disease progressively destroys the cerebral cortex and thus the ability to think, communicate and comprehend.
- Currently, there are 4.5 million Americans that are afflicted with this disease. By mid-century, that number will more than triple!
- Alzheimer's Disease costs our country \$1 Billion every year!
- Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia, affecting 10 percent of people 65 years old, and nearly 50 percent of those 85 or older!!!

Influenza 101

Influenza is a viral illness that comes on suddenly causing fever, coughing, shaking chills, body aches, headache, and fatigue. These symptoms usually last for 3 to 4 days, after which you may have a dry cough, runny nose, and sore throat for another week or so. The virus is spread from person to person:

- * Through small droplets that form when a person sneezes or coughs
- * By contact with objects such as handkerchiefs that have been used by an infected person
- * Direct contact such as shaking hands

The time of exposure to the flu virus until you develop symptoms is 1 to 4 days. People who have the flu are most likely to be contagious from 1 day before to 5

days after their symptoms develop. Hence you may pass the flu to someone else even before you know you have it.

You can prevent the flu by getting immunized with the flu vaccine each year, ideally in October or November. FluMist, a live virus vaccine in the form of a nasal spray, is an alternative to the flu shot. Furthermore, you may reduce the risk of getting the flu and other viral infections if you:

- * Wash your hands often
- * Keep your hands away from your nose, eyes, and mouth
- * Stop smoking
- * Eat a healthy and balanced diet
- * Get regular exercise

You cannot prevent or treat the flu by taking antibiotics or by ingesting large doses of vitamin C, zinc, or other vitamins and minerals.

Most healthy people do not need to see a doctor for the flu. Although you may feel quite sick, home treatment is usually all that is needed. Home treatment may include:

- * A simple pain reliever and fever reducer such as Tylenol, Advil, or Aspirin.
- * Decongestants and nasal sprays
- * Cough relief, such as drinking fluids or taking non-prescription cough medicine
- * Extra rest

However, you should see a doctor if your fever does not begin to go down after 3 to 5 days, or if your fever goes away and then returns, which would indicate a bacterial infection rather than viral. Also see a doctor if you have a severe headache or stiff neck and/or seem confused or hard to waken.

'Tis (almost) the Season.....

It's almost impossible to believe that 2004 is winding down and we're actually talking about "the Holidays".

In that spirit, however, we have decided to add a special "**Holiday Helper**" service. Should you need an extra pair of hands to help you with some of those seemingly endless little tasks— so that you might truly enjoy the spirit of the season— let our "*Holiday Angels*" be at your beck and call! They will assist with:

- * *Shopping and Errands* * *Christmas Cards* * *Baking* * *Decorating and Tree Trimming*
- * *Gift Wrapping* * *And, yes, they'll even help tuck it all away until next year!*

And, don't forget our Party and Event Services! Mabel can provide you with top drawer servers and bartenders, who will allow you to be a guest at your own holiday soiree. Whether it's a formal dinner or a gala cocktail party, our experienced staff can assure that your party is exactly the party you pictured.

Holiday Helpers and Party Staff are wonderful Gift Ideas!

Simply Delish! - Healthy, Nutritious, and EASY meals-

On a cold winter day or if you are feeling "under the weather" this hearty soup is almost therapeutic.

- 16 cups canned low-salt chicken broth
- 1 3 ½ pound chicken, cut into 8 pieces
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 carrots, peeled, thinly sliced
- 2 celery stalks, sliced
- 2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) butter
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 8 ounces dried wide egg noodles
- 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh parsley

Combine chicken broth and chicken in heavy large pot. Bring

to boil. Reduce heat; cover partially and simmer until chicken is cooked through, about 20 minutes. Using tongs, transfer chicken to large bowl. Cool chicken and broth slightly. Discard skin and bones from chicken. Cut chicken meat into bite-size pieces and reserve. Spoon fat off top of chicken broth.

Return broth to simmer. Add onion, carrots and celery. Simmer until vegetables soften, about 8 minutes. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover chicken meat and broth separately and refrigerate. Bring broth to boil before continuing.)

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and sauté until beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Stir in lemon juice. Add mushrooms to broth; stir in noodles, parsley and reserved chicken. Simmer until noodles are tender, about 5 minutes. Season soup to taste with salt and pepper. Serves 12.

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Living with Alzheimer's Disease

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Maintain brain-healthy life choices:

- Be heart smart
- Stay physically and mentally active.
- Remain socially involved.

regular time off (respite) for yourself.

If you are a family caregiver, it is essential that you get help! We can provide a caregiver for as little as 3 hours to much lengthier visits.

9. Attend family support groups.

You are not alone! It helps to talk to people in similar situations. They will understand your problems and may have useful suggestions. The Alzheimer's Association and other agencies sponsor many support groups in the Bay Area. Please call our office for information on these great programs.

10. Learn creative problem solving techniques. Your loved one will engage in be-

haviors that distress you at times (not bathing, wandering, not sleeping, etc.) Be patient with yourself and loved one, and be willing to experiment with possible solutions. Our caregivers have specific skills to deal with these issues.

Practicing even a few of these suggestions can greatly assist a family living with Alzheimer's. Hired Hands is very concerned about this disease, and will continue to support our clients and caregivers by providing information and resources. We would be happy to hear your feedback and opinions on how we may better support and assist those with this terrible

disease. We would also like to thank the Alzheimer's Association of Northern California. They were a great resource of information for this article, and they provide a vast wealth of resources for patients, families, and caregivers dealing with this disease. Please visit them online at www.alznorcal.org, or by phone. The San Rafael office can be reached at 415-472-4340, and the Santa Rosa office is at 707-573-1210.

Coming Soon:

We will be conducting caregiving workshops specifically designed for caregivers working with Alzheimer's patients. Please contact the office for more info.