

Message from the President

It has been my pleasure to serve on the board of directors of the Seniors Foundation for nine years. I am honored to serve as the board's current President. Advocating for and providing resources to enhance quality of life for our aging population has been a goal of the foundation for nearly thirty years. But now we face some daunting challenges. With the 'baby boomers' coming of age, social security expects to enroll 10,000 individuals per day for the next 20 years.

In Lancaster County, we expect the number of residents age 65 through 85 to nearly double by 2020.

My vision is for the Seniors Foundation to **contribute meaningfully in support and expansion of services and resources** for our senior population. This support is never more critical than during the current economic crisis which strains both personal and governmental budgets.

Our goal is to help our aging population maintain both financial and personal independence; promoting healthy lifestyles and providing economical health care alternatives; offering low-cost transportation alternatives. Supporting these types of programs is more cost effective not only for our seniors, but for all of us.

With the recent addition of Diane Rolfsmeyer as our new Executive Director of the Foundation, we are well situated to move ahead over the next several years. Diane brings fresh perspective, high energy and a passion for aging issues, and has challenged the board to reach for the stars. We, as a board, are looking forward to working with Diane as we meet the challenges and celebrate the successes of the foundation this year and in the future.

Alice Skultety, *President, Board of Directors*



Alice Skultety

Seniors Foundation welcomes Diane Rolfsmeyer

The new Executive Director of the Seniors Foundation of Lincoln and Lancaster County, Diane Rolfsmeyer, brings a wealth of financial experience gained from serving as executive director of the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation; director of endowment at Madonna Foundation; and development officer for Epworth Village, a juvenile treatment center in York. Additionally, she has owned a private practice consulting and financial planning business; co-founded an occupational health consulting and educational firm; worked as an account representative for a brokerage firm; and written a textbook on

Diane Rolfsmeyer

financial planning for the UNL department of continuing studies.

Rolfsmeyer and her husband, Nick Partsch, have a combined family of seven adult children. In addition to raising her own children, Diane also provided guidance and care for foster children and today is savoring her role as a grandparent to nine beautiful grandchildren.

In 2001, Diane sold her financial planning practice so that she could care for her elderly father who had come to live with her and her husband.

She said it was a life changing experience for her. "When dad lived with us, it was very in-

(continued on page 2)

Technology can help seniors remain independent

Two recent studies indicate older Americans and their family caregivers are open to the idea of using technology to achieve their respective goals. Older Americans want to age in place, and their family caregivers want the peace of mind that their parents and loved ones are safe.

IS IT TOO COSTLY? At first glance, one may think it's costly to install and maintain "aging services" technologies—which include such things as electronic pill dispensers, systems that monitor vital signs and sensors that detect whether an older person has fallen in their home or failed to turn off their stove.

EXPERTS SAY NO. Two recent studies conclude that the benefits of such technology far outweigh the costs and, in some cases, are much less expensive than skilled nursing homes and the like. At this time, awareness of these technologies is slowly growing.

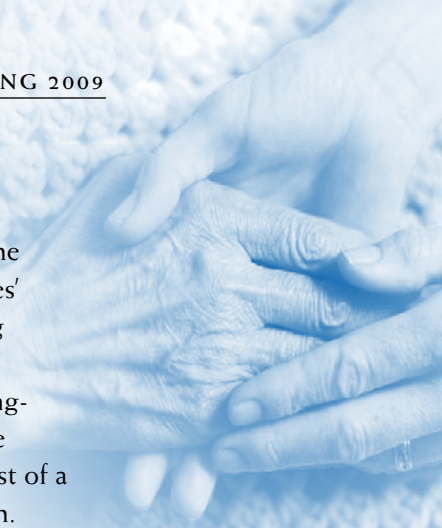
"The greatest gain is that these technologies can prevent or eliminate early institutionaliza-

tion," said Majd Alwan, co-author of the Center for Aging Services Technologies' (CAST) "State of Technology in Aging Services" study.

According to Alwan, the cost of aging-services technology might be a "couple hundred dollars" a month while the cost of a nursing home could be \$6,000 a month. "It's a great savings" when you examine it that way, he said.

And Linda Barrett, author of AARP's "Healthy @ Home" study, reports that once caregivers and the 65-plus generation learn about such things as telemedicine they are willing to try them. "These technologies can help older adults stay independent longer and it can give caregivers a greater sense of freedom," she said.

Learn more about aging services technologies and how they may apply to you, by visiting the AARP website: www.aarp.org or the CAST website: www.agingtech.org.



Leave a legacy by including the Seniors Foundation in your will and estate plans.

Please remember the Seniors Foundation with a generous bequest in your will or trust. Your gift will support engaging the community in the necessary work of meeting the needs of our growing older adult population.



To learn more, contact the Seniors Foundation at 402-441-6179 and say, "I want to prepare for tomorrow!"

The Seniors Foundation is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization

Diane Rolfsmeyer (continued)

tense. I was suddenly needing to find services and assistance to help me take care of him. I couldn't sleep well because I worried he'd fall in the middle of the night," Rolfsmeyer said, "But at the same time, I sat at the table and shared three meals a day with my dad. He would talk to me and, even though he was sometimes confused about who I was, we had great conversations. It was the most rewarding thing I had ever done in my life."

When she saw the opportunity with the Seniors Foundation, She jumped at it. "I had had a wonderful experience when I used the services of the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging," Diane said. "LAAA made a world of difference in helping me care for my dad. Because I got to know so many on staff during that time, coming to work at the Seniors Foundation feels like I'm coming home."

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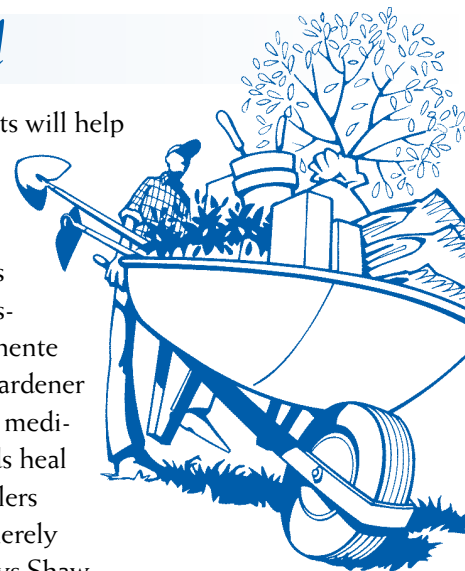
Heather Larson of *Caring Today* magazine, writes, "The power of working with flowers can be therapeutic for caregiver and loved one alike."

Larson tells us about the positive response gardening has had on an Alzheimer's patient living at Parc Provence, an assisted-living community for senior adults in St. Louis, Missouri.

"Gardening therapy can work equally as well for loved ones and caregivers who live at home as it does for those in an assisted-living setting," Larson adds. "Depending on the mobility of the one in your care, you can garden either indoors or outside. And no matter how small or easy

the project, working with living plants will help both of you "bloom."

According to Eva Shaw, PhD, author of *Shovel It: Nature's Health Plan*, gardening reduces stress, lowers blood pressure and helps fight depression. A study done by Kaiser Permanente showed the brainwave activity of a gardener mirrored that of someone praying or meditating. "Hospitalized patients' wounds heal faster and they require fewer pain killers and antidepressants when they are merely looking at a painting of a garden," says Shaw. "Imagine the effect a real garden can have."



IN THE COMING YEARS, information about new and emerging programs and services will be a vital tool for our aging population and their families. Please share our newsletter with your family members or simply provide us with their addresses and we will make sure they get a copy of our quarterly newsletter. Thank you for helping us help others. Please call our office at (402) 441-6179, e-mail us at info@seniorsfoundation.org, or mail your family member's contact information to Seniors Foundation, P.O. Box 81904, Lincoln, NE 68501-1904.