** Connections for Independent Living**

May/June 2012 Newsletter

**AT Webinars**

The Gala of Wines was a Great Success!

Connections would love to take the opportunity to thank our sponsors from the 15th annual Gala of Wines! Our gracious sponsors included A Step Ahead Foot & Ankle Center, Ehrlich Toyota, Farmer's Bank, First Farm Bank, Growling Bear, LPL Financial, Kathy Schwartz, Kennedy Dental, Professional Finance, Rho Delta Phi Beta Community Fund, Tointon Family Foundation, and Union Colony Insurance.

![C:\Users\Connections' OIB\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\IRKYCLO9\MC900435574[1].wmf]()The Gala of Wines, which took place on March 16 at the Union Colony Civic Center in downtown Greeley, saw an influx of people enjoying a sampling from a number of Colorado distilleries, breweries, and wineries. Attendees also enjoyed appetizers, snacks, and desserts from local restaurants. While enjoying the food, beverages, and atmosphere, people felt great knowing they were supporting Connections for Independent Living and helping people in the community with disabilities. The turnout was incredible, and attendance was up from last year. Again, we express our deepest gratitude to our sponsors!  We hope to see you again, next year!

**Housing Waiting List Reopens**

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program waiting list will be open from May 15 to May 30. Applications are available at Connections front desk.

**Do you Have Concerns About Our Services to You?**

Do you have questions or concerns about Connections and its programs? Are you not sure who your independent living specialist is? Please call us, and we will do our best to get to the solution with you. (970) 352-8682.

**Legal Night Wednesday, May 30, 6 to 8 pm**

Our Lady of Peace Church, 1311 3rd St. Greeley, CO 80631

This event is an opportunity to speak with lawyers about the legal problem you are facing and to learn about resources that can help. The lawyers at Legal Night cannot represent you or take your case, but they will attempt to answer your questions. Many of the attorneys speak Spanish.

**Featured Activity and Brain Benefits: Game Hour**

Game Hour, first and third Friday of each month, from 10:00 to 11:00 am.

Game Hour provides an important opportunity to socialize, laugh, and exercise your brain. The medical community is not sure why mental activity benefits the brain, but one theory suggests mental challenges may keep brain cells healthy and less prone to disease or damage.

Another theory is that mentally-stimulating activities may help build up cognitive reserve, so there are more brain cells to replace any that are lost.  When you learn a new activity, electrical messengers travel down nerve axons to cells where they are routed to a group of dentrites. The dendrites release a chemical messenger to a new group of neurons next to it. New neural pathways are formed to acquire and store the new abilities used. These new pathways become stronger the more they are used, and they may become new long-term connections and memories.

 **Do you Know about the Therapy Pool?**

The largest warm water pool in Northern Colorado is right here in Greeley! The temperature is kept between 92-94 degrees Fahrenheit, and there is ramp entry with wheelchair accessibility, a therapy bench, and private changing rooms. The center lists the following benefits from warm water:

* The soothing warmth and buoyancy of warm water makes it a safe, ideal environment for relieving arthritis pain and stiffness.
* Water supports joints to encourage free movement and also acts as resistance to help build muscle strength, flexibility, and stamina no matter what your current level of fitness.
* The pressure of the water on the body’s surface helps to decrease swelling and improves joint position awareness.
* The warmth of the water assists in relaxing muscles and improving circulation.

Aquatic activities are open to people of all ages and degrees of fitness, and participating can be a great way to meet new people. Attend aqua fitness classes, or visit during open swim times for water walking, individual exercise, or warm-water relaxation. Adults, $5 drop in or $58 for 20-punch pass. Seniors (55 and older), $5 drop in or $48 for 20 punch pass.

For more information, call (970) 339-2433, or visit www.gciinc.org/pool.

**New Support Groups Coming**

Connections is planning two new groups, and we want to know who would like to attend! They include a Stroke and Chronic Conditions Support Group and a Caregiver Information and Support Group. Please call Katie Harper at (970) 352-8682 to let her know if you are interested in attending or have any questions.

**Jason’s Next Venture and Your Future with Computers**

Many of you had the opportunity to learn new computer skills with UNC intern Jason. Jason’s last day was April 26: He is moving on to graduate school to learn to teach blind children. Thank you for all your help Jason!

Free computer tutoring is still available every Wednesday afternoon from 4:00 to 5:00 with High Plains Library Staff. And don’t forget: You can also call the library (1-888-861-READ) and make a half-hour appointment with a tutor in Connections’ lab. The lab is open from 9:00 to 5:00 daily.

