

◆ THE DERBY CITY NSCIA NEWSLETTER ◆

JANUARY 2008

The Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association Network- Serving Kentuckiana.

Message From the President

Dear Members & Friends-

This month's meeting will be held at Frazier Rehab Institute at the address below. We will hopefully have a speaker, but if not, videos will be shown, and refreshments provided.

February's meeting is at Frazier Rehab Institute, 220 Abraham Flexner Way, Louisville, 10th floor dining room, at 6:30 p.m. Refreshments provided.

-David Allgood

BRRRRRRRRRR.....



BETTER.....



From New Mobility.com -ed

TEN TIPS FOR KEEPING A HAPPY PCA

Note from New Mobility editor: In writing this article, Roxanne Furlong interviewed Al DeGraff—author of Caregivers and Personal Assistants—who has employed hundreds of personal care assistants over the past 40 years. What follows is a hybrid mix of DeGraff's ideas and principles and Furlong's own advice from her personal experience with a PCA.

Of all US full-time workers, personal care assistants have the highest rate of depression, according to a recent report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Consider yourself lucky if you have a PCA who not only gives you the care you need and want, but who also is positive and cheerful.

Once we find a PCA who fits our needs and personalities, we can be proactive in keeping them satisfied and happy—and when they're happy, we're happy.

The top 10 tips on how to hire, manage and keep happy PCAs in order from 10-1 are:

- ◆ **Money Does More Than Talk.** You know the importance of a paycheck, so pay your PCA on a timely basis. If you've done the hiring, establish a weekly, bimonthly, or monthly pay schedule. If you've used a hiring service, ask them to send you the checks so you can hand your employee their pay. Doing this gives you the upper hand and a strong image of being in charge.

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Derby City Area Chapter
of the
National Spinal Cord Injury
Association

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Derby City Area Chapter of the N.S.C.I.A. is a membership organization for individuals with spinal cord injuries, their families, and health professionals. Founded in 1984 as a Charter Member of the N.S.C.I.A., it was incorporated under IRS Section 501 (c) 3 as a not for profit organization. The Board of Directors consists of the Officers, Past President and the Board Members At Large.

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**DERBY CITY CHAPTER
NEWSLETTER**

Editor- Barbara Davis

Contributor- David Allgood

Visit Our Website at

www.DerbyCitySpinalCord.org

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brought to you through the generous support of
Frazier Rehab Institute**

HAPPY PCAS, CONT'D

- ◆ **Don't gossip.** Don't gossip or speak unfavorably of one PCA to another, and don't reprimand one aid in the presence of another. Don't initiate, tolerate, or contribute to gossip, and don't allow your PCA to talk about their other consumers. Frankly and politely establish that this behavior is not wanted or acceptable. If the behavior continues, let them know that it can result in termination.
- ◆ **Be Organized and Safe.** An organized, well-supplied and maintained work area and stocked cabinets will save time and contribute to efficiency and be less stressful to you and your PCA. Keep an inventory of medical, cleaning, or cooking supplies where your PCA can checkmark them when supplies run low. On the next supply run, your PCA can take the list to stock up. DeGraff also suggests keeping all supplies where they are used—to save PCAs unnecessary steps and frustration. He urges keeping narcotic medications, cash, credit cards, and other valuables in a small safe to eliminate any chance of theft. DeGraff learned the hard way that no matter how much you trust your PCA, keeping valuables in a safe eliminates opportunity and suspicion. For errands, use only cash or sign checks with the store's name filled in—never use credit cards. Verify receipts immediately.
- ◆ **Nip Problems in the Bud.** Learn how to read your PCA's tone of voice and body language to identify the presence of a problem—work-related or otherwise. You don't need to hear all their personal problems or become a dumping ground, but you still can show compassion. If your usually jovial or upbeat PCA is suddenly quiet or moody, ask if something is wrong—using a positive, caring voice. For those PCAs who begin to complain about personal problems, simply and gently tell them to let your home be a safe and positive place where they can leave their troubles at the door.
- ◆ **Don't move the finish line.** Be comprehensive when listing daily needs so your PCA knows what to expect when he or she walks in the door. Keep a complete list of tasks. Note extra duties when your PCA arrives so they can mark them off and plan their workday. If you work from home and your routine is interrupted by constant phone calls, let your PCA know up front that during these times they can perform other general tasks.
- ◆ **Be Nice.** Even if you're having a bad day, be pleasant and you will avoid anger and stress for all involved. A morning workout routine or meditation will keep you fit and centered and help you vent anger or stress. Picture coming to work to encounter a boss who's angry or highly stressed," DeGraff says.

(Continued On Page Four)

Refrigerator Calendar

***2008**

JANUARY

- 7th - Elderly & Disabled Advisory Council Meeting.**
Mon 6:00 p.m.; TARC; 1000 W. Broadway; Board Room.
- 21st - Derby City Chapter annual Christmas Party; 6:30 p.m.**
Wed Highland Court Apartments; 1720 Richmond Drive, Louisville.
- 19th - Metro disAbility Coalition Meeting; 3:15 p.m.**
Sat Urban County Government Center; Barrett Avenue; Louisville

FEBRUARY

- 4th - Elderly & Disabled Advisory Council Meeting**
Mon 1:00; TARC; 1000 W. Broadway; Board Room.
- 18th - Derby City Chapter meeting; 6:30 p.m.; Frazier Rehab Institute**
Mon 220 Abraham Flexner Way; Louisville; 10th Floor dining room.
- 16th - Metro disAbility Coalition Meeting; 3:15 p.m.**
Sat Urban County Government Center; Barrett Avenue; Louisville

For More Information Call
David Allgood at 502-589-6620

HAPPY PCAs, CONTD

- ◆ “We’d probably take it occasionally, but would look for another job if it became routine.” If you can’t avoid stressing out your PCAs, get some help.
- ◆ **Mind Your Manners.** Treat your PCA as you want them to treat you. Provide clear and direct instructions to avoid mistakes, hurt feelings or frustrations. “Please” and “Thank you” go a long way. Be assertive but avoid certain behaviors, such as aggressiveness (“Why can’t you get anything done on time?”); passiveness (“It’d be nice if it got done some time”); and passive/aggressiveness (“Well, somebody isn’t going to get paid if they don’t hurry”). When a PCA mistakes a positive attitude for passiveness and begins to take advantage, lay down clear and concise ground rules to gain the upper hand. If you find any PCA to have an unsavory agenda, give them notice and act on termination, if needed.
- ◆ **Establish Respect: A Two-Way Street.** DeGraff says it’s essential to earn and establish mutual respect. By respecting a PCAs rights and showing that you genuinely care about them, you will get respect back. Stick to a routine, give them constant respect for their rights and allow them the right to refuse to do something that is against their values or morals.
- ◆ **Two are Better Than One.** If you need several hours of service every day, it is wise to have an alternative PCA to help you with your routine. Having more than one PCA allows you to have backup in the event of sickness, vacation time, resignation, or if a PCA is taking too much control or taking advantage of your good nature. DeGraff says having two or more aides helps in the new-hire process. One can train another and avoid job burnout.
- ◆ **Let Them Know You Appreciate Them.** And the most important tip for keeping PCAs happy? Express routine appreciation. Says DeGraff, “Aides deserve two types of pay—monetary and appreciation. The Red Cross has thousands of volunteers who show fierce loyalty after receiving routine appreciation.” Express appreciation only when you mean it and be sure it is clearly delivered and understood—and keep eye contact. Tell your PCA what you appreciate and why, and vary how often you express appreciation.

Follow these 10 tips and you will have PCAs who not only enjoy working for you but who will also take on any task you ask of them.

Below are DeGraff’s 8 hiring and screening tips:

- ◆ **Recruit from local campus papers, if possible.** DeGraff advertises for people to call and leave a voicemail to earn \$8.50 to \$10 an hour while learning about disability. Applicants do not need a medical background. You will train them.
- ◆ **Screen recorded messages and eliminate those that are questionable.** You can eliminate about half the callers by their message or because they forgot to leave a phone number.
- ◆ **During your initial callback, outline a comprehensive list of routine and needs.** One-third will screen themselves out.
- ◆ **Set up an interview for applicants so they can watch a routine with your current PCA.** You’ll screen out another one-third when they don’t show up.
- ◆ **For those who attend training, explain the entire routine and discuss working guidelines and shifts.** Allow for a Q&A session, and explain that your current aide will escort them out the door to answer any more questions they may have.
- ◆ **Ask them to call the next day if they want to be considered for the job.** If they don’t call, they’ve screened themselves out.
- ◆ **For those who do call, consider their attitude and body language during the routine training.** Did they watch eagerly and ask questions, or stand with their arms crossed away from the group? Stress that you are looking for a long-term employee, or give them a time limit.
- ◆ **Schedule them for an actual shift and have another PCA train them until they are comfortable on their own.**

From the Internet—ed.

MODIFY YOUR LAUNDRY ROOM FOR ACCESS

By Rosemarie Rosetti, Ph.D

It was months after my spinal cord injury before I did my first load of laundry. The reason why? I couldn’t get into my laundry room! Even though my laundry room is on the first floor, located off the attached garage, it is still a tight squeeze to navigate my manual wheelchair into the room. When I first got home from the hospital, my husband Mark had to remove the laundry room door to give me enough room to squeeze in. There are still black marks across the front of the washer and dryer, where my wheelchair footrest scraped up against them.

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ACCESSIBLE LAUNDRY ROOM, CONT'D

Unfortunately, I have a top-loading washing machine. I should have invested in a new or used front-loading machine years ago. For the past nine years, I've used a long-handled reacher to retrieve clothes from the washer and put them into the dryer. I also use the reacher to get clothes out of the back of the dryer. I'm sure that the investment in a front-loading washing machine would have given me more efficiency on laundry day.

For my new home, the Universal Design Living Laboratory (www.udil.com), I have selected a front loading washer and dryer, the Whirlpool (www.insideadvantage.com) Duet Spot with a 10" pedestal underneath. This pedestal will allow these appliances to be set at a higher level that will be more convenient for me to use from a seated position. When I went shopping for a new washer and dryer, I approached each machine and evaluated how easy it would be to reach all the control knobs, soap dispenser and lint filter. Not all front loading washers and dryers are created equal.

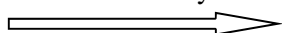
When you purchase a washer and dryer set, be aware of the door hinge locations. It is best when the appliance on the left side has the hinge on the left side of the door. It is also best when the appliance on the right side has the hinge on the right side of the door. This will allow you more efficiency when transferring clothes from the washer to the dryer.

On laundry day you need to have someplace to hang clothing that you remove from the dryer. There are many brackets on the market that you can attach to your walls at a convenient height for you to reach. Some of these products even fold down when you are not using them.

There are many laundry cleaning products that you will need access to on laundry day. Store them in low cabinets or on shelves that are within your reach. It may be necessary to transfer some of the products out of their original large containers and put them in more manageable containers.

I stack four empty laundry baskets on top of the washer and dryer and use them on laundry day. They are small enough to fit on my lap as I wheel them from our laundry room to our bedroom to put away the clean clothes. We have a have a 16" by 24" tall round plastic laundry basket for dirty clothes. I attached small gliders to the bottom so that I can push it across the carpet. I position this basket between my feet in front of the footrest of my wheelchair and bulldoze it to the laundry room.

As we planned the new house, it became apparent that I was dragging clothes around a lot on laundry day. In our new home, there will be a room next to the master bath that contains the washer, dryer, utility sink, ironing board, luggage, and storage space for all hanging and folded clothing. The wardrobe will definitely make laundry day more efficient.



FOR SALE ***

WC Lift; \$1,700; Invacare Storm TDX 3 Power WC; full reclining; less than 1 year old; \$1500; Call David 589-6620.

NC topper; used; 3 E&J Manual chairs; used; 1 Quicksilver Action manual chair; Monarch hand controls. 93,000 miles. Price negotiable. Call Ruth @ 239-9754 after 5 p.m.

***Shower Chair; 2 yrs old, negotiable; Invacare 900 Action Power Chair; 4 yrs. Old; \$600. Call 448-5296.**

***Cookbooks for Sale:** Recipes compiled by Chapter members; \$10:00. Call David @ 589-6620.

***Video tapes for sale.** Various topics related to spinal cord injuries. Call David Allgood or Buddy Lawson.

****If assistance is needed to pay for any of the above items, contact Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation at 1-800-327-5287 for information on loans at 5% interest to qualified individuals.*

DON'T FORGET ABOUT OUR SHIRTS!!

**S, M, L XL
\$10**



ACCESSIBLE LAUNDRY ROOM, CONT'D

The largest investment needed to make a laundry room more efficient is the purchase of a front loading washer. Doors to the room can be easily removed. Making a laundry room accessible can take hours of frustration away from wheelchair users who want to take back their lives and start doing laundry again.

Ed note: This is a combo washer/dryer in one unit from Panasonic. It found on the website disabledhands.com



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You are cordially invited to join us!

The Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association consists of people with spinal cord injuries and similar physical conditions, their family members, friends, and professionals or other interested parties.

We meet:

WHEN- Third Monday of every month from 6:30 to 9:00 PM

*WHERE- Frazier Rehab Institute, 10th floor Dining Room
220 Abraham Flexner Way, Louisville, KY 40202*

If you wish to be a member, donor, and/or be on the mailing list of the Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association please complete and mail the following form to the address below

National Spinal Cord Injury Association

Derby City Chapter

Membership & Organization Sponsorship Form

Name: Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. _____ Date _____
 Address: _____ Apt.# _____
 City/State/Zip: _____
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 Home Phone: () _____ Work Phone: () _____
 Date of Birth _____
 Para: _____ Quad _____ Hemiplegic: _____
 Level of Disability _____ Other Disability _____
 Able-Bodied(yes/no): _____
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 (only \$12): _____

Special Interests /Hobbies/Sports: _____

Membership is open to all individuals and sponsorship to all organizations interested in spinal cord injury.

Mark Type of TAX DEDUCTIBLE Individual Membership or Organization Donor Category Desired***

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
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| _____ Patron \$50 | _____ Gold Organization- \$500-999 |
| _____ Benefactor-\$100 | _____ Platinum Organization-\$1000-2499 |
| _____ Permanent- \$1000/lifetime** | _____ Diamond Organization-\$2500 Or Over. |

Please make checks payable to: **NSCIA Derby City Chapter**

David Allgood
6703 Triangle Drive
Louisville, KY. 40214