



LIFE KEEPING,  
NOT JUST BOOKKEEPING®

**A Resource for Seniors ... Pass it On.**

## **ACTIVITIES TO KEEP SENIORS CONNECTED**

Identify the activities a senior likes and create adaptive means to make them happen. Make sure aides are open to participating. While there may not be an instantaneous success with any one project, gently presenting one idea or another may create a spark of interest. A whole new desire to participate in life may unfold. It is exciting when that happens and it is a fun challenge to find just the right activity.

### **ADJUSTING THE ENVIRONMENT**

- For someone with diminished eyesight, order large-print newspapers or get a magnifying glass or electronic reader. E-books like Kindle or Nook work for some and the print can be increased substantially. Books on tape are good as long as the machine is easy to use or an aide can help.
- Get a large flat screen TV. There are amplifier devices that can be purchased so the sound is not too loud for others in the room.
- Be sure to involve the senior in conversations – even if you have to speak a little loudly. If a senior resists getting a hearing aid, suggest a small easily held amplifier with a microphone attached to headphones (there are lots of headphone varieties). This can make conversations much easier for both parties.
- If the computer has been a part of their life but getting harder to navigate, find a companion (aide, grandchild, neighbor, or someone for hire) who can help write memoirs, deal with e-mails, post photos, use Skype to communicate with distant family members. If eyesight is poor, get a larger monitor and set the font to a bigger size.

### **ANIMAL COMPANIONS**

- If the senior has sufficient assistance, consider adopting a small dog or cat from a shelter. If they have aides, make sure the aides share the love of animals. Have a back-up plan for the pet if the senior is no longer able to care for him or her.
- If having their own pet is not feasible, see if someone can visit with an animal, preferably the breed they like.

## Activities to Keep Seniors Connected (Continued)

### ARTS AND MUSIC

- Enroll in an art class or arrange for an art therapist to come into the home and give some drawing lessons or art appreciation classes.
- Purchase concert, opera, or theater tickets. Buy two or more tickets so that a friend and/or aide may go. Think about sitting up close if eyesight or hearing is a problem. Call ahead to arrange for storage of walker or wheelchair during the performance.
- Get a local music student to come to the home and play for the senior and friends.
- If there is a piano or other musical instrument in the home, get it repaired and tuned and find someone to sit and play with them. Pull out old records, tapes, or CDs. Talk about memories associated with the music – what era does it evoke?

### ENTERTAINMENT/OUTINGS

- Find ways to get out and get engaged – a walk to the park, a wheelchair ride to visit the local pet shop or dog run, clothes shopping (even if items cannot be tried on in the store).
- Locate a senior center or Y that has classes or activities for senior citizens. Make sure there is a good transportation system to get there.
- Find a vintage movie theater and go to see an old movie together. If their eyesight is diminished, try out mid-day visits when the theater is relatively empty, and sit down front. If that's not possible, make sure there is access to movie channels on TV.
- Make sure the senior gets to family gatherings. This may involve a car service for trips outside of town instead of previous modes of transportation.
- Look for special exhibits at museums that you could both go to. Almost all museums can be accessed with a wheelchair, if necessary. Don't forget the Botanical Garden, Zoo, and Aquarium.
- Go out to a local restaurant that is accessible. If the senior has an aide, this is a nice way to show appreciation to the aide as well, or a time to give the aide a chance to be alone.
- If in the past they enjoyed volunteer work, see if there is a way to continue to contribute time, perhaps along with the aide. Ask what they used to do and what they liked. See if they can do that activity again.
- Check on local car services and set up an account so that the senior has easy transportation around town and doesn't have to worry about having cash each time.

## Activities to Keep Seniors Connected (Continued)

### MAINTAINING THE HOUSEHOLD

- Involve the senior in the daily running of the household. Take him or her to the grocery store to pick out favorite food and supplies. Small trips with a grocery basket held on the lap while someone pushes the wheelchair works well.
- Cook together and adapt to the senior's circumstances. If in a wheelchair, let him or her sit at a table and do certain tasks. Encourage the senior to give cooking tips or share favorite recipes.

### MEMORIES

- Talk to the elderly person about life as a child growing up. It's amazing the first-hand knowledge of history he or she will have. It will be a time of exploration for both of you.
- Look at old photographs together. Reminisce and learn about family history and famous people and events of decades past. Even if you need to hire a companion to work on this, it can be a chance to get seniors engaged again.
- Identify important memories and find representative symbols (like a hat or sweater with a favorite school logo) that will bring ongoing pleasure.
- If they love to talk about the past, make a list of questions to help gently guide the conversation, and then record or videotape it. There are also organizations that collect oral history that can help with this project.

### PHYSICAL EXERCISE

- If they went to a gym regularly, they may enjoy doing so again. Make arrangements with the gym to allow an aide to help them around the facility.
- If the building has a rooftop garden, it could be a goal, an incentive, to walk up the flight of stairs for a rooftop picnic.
- If the senior has difficulty going out, arrange for a physical therapist, specializing in the elderly to come to the home each week.

### A Resource for Seniors

Eddy & Schein In-Home Administrators for Seniors® helps senior citizens (their caregivers and their professional advisors) manage personal, financial, legal, and health insurance matters to ensure they remain in their own homes for as long as possible. We have been working with seniors for over a decade. If you would like more information, we hope you will call us.