

Caregiver's Corner Column (July 2012)

Games: To play or not to play? That is the question!

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Senior Neighbors

This summer the 2012 Senior Olympic Games are being held on the east side of our state. Older adults will be competing with each other in activities such as pickle ball, swimming, golf, racquetball, power lifting, kayaking, archery, softball and more. These games are a great opportunity to showcase the talents of older adults! Look at what we can do with hard work, determination, skill, and time, right? These athletes are talented, no doubt, but why do you think they desire to compete? There are a myriad of reasons, but I tend to think that they wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't fun! Simply said, most people like to have fun. July is considered to be "National Recreation Month." You don't have to be a Senior Olympian and compete at the Senior Games.

As caregivers, it is sometimes difficult to find the time to enjoy things leisure and recreation. But, it is important to take time for you in order to stay healthy. Playing cards, board games, bowling, or tennis are examples of some games that people enjoy. The message this month is to try to take the time to enjoy recreation, even as you provide care to others. Perhaps it will take some time to figure out, but maybe this article will inspire you to participate in an activity you can find fun and enjoyable. There are also ways you can incorporate games into the lives of those you are providing care for. Here are some special days being celebrated in July that may inspire you:

July 8 - Video Game Day - Have you tried Wii bowling yet? It has become very popular with many people. You can find local senior centers and other organizations offering this activity. Or, perhaps a visit to your family this month will provide you with an opportunity to learn how to use their video game system. Kids love it when Grandma and Grandpa want to learn to play!

July 15 - The first Boeing 707 took to the sky - Go fly a kite. Or take a drive with your loved one to the beach where you are sure to see others trying to lift off into the great wide open. Another idea is to take your loved one to the airport observation area and watch the planes land and take off.

July 20 - Chess Day - Find a partner! Or, if you are tech savvy, you can play online or on other personal electronics. If Chess isn't your game try a different board game or card game.

July 22 - Summer Leisure Day - How about a leisurely stroll through the park? Find a bench to rest and watch others. Sit outside and watch the birds, animals, traffic, or other surroundings.

These are merely suggestions to get you thinking about how you can find recreation and games to fit into your life. Perhaps you have some other ideas. Remember also, that while incorporating games into activities with your loved ones, you can adapt them to meet the abilities

of those playing. For example, a game of Uno may be too difficult for someone with dementia when you use the special “Reverse” or “Draw Two” cards. Just take those cards out before playing to make it less stressful and more enjoyable. No matter which form of games and recreation you choose just be sure to try one game this month. It can be a great way to offer some variety in your day and provide you and your loved one with some enjoyment!

Caregiver’s Corner is provided as a public service of the **Caregiver Resource Network**. The Caregiver Resource Network is a collaboration of West Michigan organizations dedicated to providing for the needs and welfare of family and professional caregivers within the community. Funded by the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan with Older American’s Act Title III-E, Family Caregiver Support funds. For more information consult our website at www.CaregiverResource.net or call toll free at 1-888-456-5664