



(910) 457-5300

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# Coastal Companion Care Communicator

5101-4 Southport/Supply Road SE, Southport, NC 28461  
www.CoastalCompanionCare.com



Caregivers Lorraine Harrington (left) and Cyrena McNally (right) share happy birthday wishes with Clare Molinari of South Harbor.

## Caregivers Offer Love; Make a Difference

Coastal Companion Care employs caregivers who bring diverse attributes, skills and knowledge to their work. Cyrena McNally, Susan Mylod and Andrea Thevierge all put heart and soul into their caregiving.

**Cyrena McNally** left Canada 12 years ago with master's degrees in theology and clinical Christian counseling under her belt and a Bible under her arm. Although pastoral work brought her to the U.S., a fork in the road found her caring for her mother who died at age 86 of Alzheimer's disease. The pastor in Cyrena shines forth in caregiving: "Caregiving is not a job. It's a heart thing."

Cyrena finds reward in doing the little things that make a difference. She believes that loneliness is the biggest issue for older people. Fears of running out of money and fears that their families won't come to see them also top the list of worries.

If Cyrena could do one thing to make life easier for older adults it would be to make sure they are never alone. Her time with her people is rich and she believes that "the secret as a caregiver is to find what they take comfort in, and provide it." She works to help her people keep their dignity for as long as possible.

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## Be Informed About Private Duty Care

*"Caregiver available to sit with the elderly all hours. Experience, references. \$10/hr. Call 801-622-2222."*

Such an ad is tempting.

Certainly this is less expensive than working with a home care agency. Does it sound too good to be true? That's because it may be.

### Employment Implications

When you hire private duty care, you are responsible for payroll, benefits, taxes, Social Security, worker's compensation and all related insurance needs. If you pay on a cash basis without any withholdings, the government may pursue you for back taxes, including penalties and interest. If you develop an adversarial relationship with the caregiver, you are financially vulnerable, and government employment regulations will favor the caregiver.

### Who Is In Your House?

Even if you check references, how do you know the person has the skill and training to care for your loved one? No one has done a background check or verified qualifications, insurances, and immunizations. How will you know the person is trustworthy?

### Monitoring

Have you implemented a system to document care and check quality of care? Do you know what to check for? Do you have time to oversee services?

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## SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

## Protect Your Feet !

By age 50, most of us have walked 75,000 miles -- a lot of action for two narrow islands of 26 bones and more than 30 joints. Feet play an important role, but most ignore them.

Orthopedic disorders, including foot problems, are a leading cause of inactivity and disability in the U.S. Feet degenerate like tires on cars; they spread out, muscles weaken and skin thins.

With age comes loss of flexibility and elasticity. Our shock absorbers don't work as well as they used to. Our feet change size from fluid retention, loosening ligaments and the flattening effects of gravity and weight.

Years of wearing the wrong shoes also take their toll: bunions (an enlargement of the bone and tissue around the joint of the big toe), hammertoes (a buckling, or contraction, of the toes) or neuromas (an irritated nerve between toes).

### Add Arthritis to the Mix

Almost half in their 60s and 70s have arthritis affecting the foot or ankle.

As the condition progresses, bony spurs form around joints and limit movement. A painful foot can result from wearing high heels or running too much. Inflammation creates an arthritic foot, not just a painful one.

Pain changes the way one

walks and turns ankles, knees, hips and spine. A limp puts more weight and stress on one leg. Tilting the foot to the inside degenerates cartilage in ankles, causing more tilt on the foot and further wearing out the cartilage, stressing the knee joint, and forcing the knee to turn in to create non-alignment of the knee. This can degenerate the outside of the knee joint. When the foot isn't aligned, it affects everything and puts stress on the knee, hip, pelvis or lower back. If stress is abnormal, it leads to problems in those joints.

### Prevention Tips

- Have your feet checked by a rheumatologist, an orthopedic surgeon or a podiatrist experienced with arthritis.
- Exercise. Stretching out the Achilles tendon (the cord at the back of the heel) and the tendons in the balls of your feet and toes can minimize stiffness and pain.
- For sore feet, try self-massage, kneading the ball of your foot and your toes top to bottom. For pain, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, heat and ultrasound may help.
- The most important thing you can do for your feet is to wear shoes that fit, feel comfortable and have good arch support.

### Tips for buying shoes

- Buy shoes shaped like your foot
- Look for shoes squared or rounded at the toe so your toes have room to move.
- Shop for support. That means no mules or slip-ins.
- Get shoes with good arch support that have a supportive layer on the top

of the shoe – such as an athletic shoe.

- Go for the rubber sole to give you more cushion.
- Make sure the shoe is flexible at the ball of your foot, where you push off, not in the middle of the shoe.
- Leave a finger's width of room between your heel and the back of the shoe.
- Skip the high heels.

(Written by Dorothy Foltz-Gray and excerpted from Arthritis Today, 2012)

### Sit with Me and Listen

Sit with me  
and listen  
I still have  
something  
to say  
my skin is wrinkled  
my voice is weak  
I still have something  
to say  
sit with me  
and listen  
it is called wisdom way  
my mind may wonder  
I may not even recognize  
your face  
but there is still  
something to me  
sit with me  
and listen

(Poem reprinted from "Thoughts Over Water ...raw material" by Shirley B. Klee who worked at Coastal Companion Care for several years as a caregiver)



Mike Ramsey

### **Musings from Mike**

"Today God woke me up, and I realized I get to help somebody today," was part of my morning prayer one day this week. Each work day we start with prayers for our clients, clients' families, caregivers and their families, and our office staff.

Caring for a loved one can be a special part of your life, but there are times when even caregivers need help. Coastal Companion Care is a good place to start to learn about care provider needs, cost of care and suggested care plans. As a provider in home care issues, CCC has been helping families and individuals with their care needs for over eight years.

We can assess your situation and answer questions. We can help you create a plan with suggested steps; conduct a face-to-face in-home assessment and evaluation for your loved one; set up an online schedule plan for your loved one that you can access anywhere WIFI is available. Our RN staff is on call 24/7 to answer any of your questions or needs. We have 24/7 on-call scheduling staff for needs that may arise for extra help with your family member. Start exploring options today that are available to you.

## **FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES**



### **Be Informed About Private Duty Care**

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#### **Insurance**

If your private duty caregiver is injured while assisting your loved one, does your insurance protect you? How would you cover medical expenses or disability claims from your injured employee?

#### **"Live-in" Private Duty Care**

Terminating employment can be tricky.

In some states, the private duty caregiver may be deemed a tenant and have tenant rights, requiring a formal eviction process that can be lengthy.

#### **Payment**

Medicare, Medicaid, and health insurance do not pay for long-term or non-medical care. In-home care is either paid privately by the individual or her family or through long term care insurance. Remaining at home with caregiver services can be costly. Can you or your loved one afford care at home?

#### **Plan Ahead**

Evaluate all care options. This decision will determine the quality of life for the whole family. *(Information from The Eldercare Channel, 2011, [www.eldercarechannel.com](http://www.eldercarechannel.com)).*

### **Fraud is Common**

Senior citizens are most likely to have a "nest egg," to own their home, and/or to have excellent credit—all of which make them attractive to con artists.

People who grew up in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s were generally raised to be polite and

trusting. Con artists exploit these traits.

Older Americans are less likely to report a fraud because they don't know whom to report it to, are too ashamed at having been scammed, or don't know they have been scammed.

When elderly victims do report crimes, they often make poor witnesses. Con artists know the effects of age on memory, and they are counting on elderly victims not being able to supply enough detailed information to investigators.

Senior citizens are more interested in and susceptible to products promising increased cognitive function, virility, physical conditioning, and anti-cancer properties.

Some of the most common scams are telemarketing offers, health care or health insurance fraud, counterfeit prescription drugs, funeral and cemetery fraud, fraudulent anti-aging products, investment schemes, internet fraud and reverse mortgage deals.

The FBI maintains a Common Fraud Schemes webpage that provides tips on how to protect older adults and their families from fraud: [www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud](http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud)



### Caregivers Offer Love; Make a Difference

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"It's inevitable for all of us," states **Susan Mylod** in reference to getting old and less able to manage one's life. In her work as a companion over the last five years, Susan has become acutely aware of the resistance to a stranger coming into the home. But she is masterful at calming, reassuring, winning people over and delivering services with love.

Susan makes it her business to make days go faster, to listen, and to put smiles on faces. She is reputed to provide the best foot massages in the county. Her amiable style is underscored by her agreeable manner and her ability to let insignificant things go.

Prior to moving from Long Island, NY, 15 years ago, Susan worked in a teaching

hospital making arrangements for patients at discharge – physical therapy, in-home equipment and supplies, anything to make the return home feasible. As one of eight children and mother of five, Susan knows the importance of family, of sharing the load, and of adjusting to changing conditions. It's no surprise that she excels in working with teams and steps forward as a leader who unifies and keeps everyone informed.

Susan sees the big picture: "It's difficult for families; they have to readjust as conditions change. Some give so unselfishly of themselves."

**Andrea Thevierge** needed a summer job, responded to an ad and has been with Coastal since its doors opened. Her varied work roles (nanny; teacher for elementary school children, including those with special needs; foster mother; public policy advocate; home décor designer) allow Andrea to be effective in

almost any situation. She admits, "I like a challenge" and tells the story of one woman who would not leave her apartment. With Andrea on the scene, providing special care five days a week, this woman was out dining within a month.

Andrea – known as the cooker, the housekeeper, the handywoman, the all-around fixer-upper – digs in the minute she arrives at a home and doesn't let up until she's out the door at the end of her shift. She knows to listen, to do what has to be done, to keep peace, to intervene in times of transition, and to take time to "smell the roses."

"I try to make the best of every day and to make a difference every day," states Andrea, noting the lessons she learns from those she serves. Reflecting her care of a Holocaust survivor, Andrea states, "They teach you survival."



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