


Dad needs a nursing home

Q. I need to go to look at nursing homes for my father. I really don't know where to begin. How do I start to choose one?

A. There are probably three important things to consider when selecting a nursing facility.

ON AGING



RENEE MAHLER

The first thing you should do is try to figure out what your dad's needs are. Secondly, finances should be investigated. You have to know what your father can afford. Thirdly, location is important. You do want to have your father in a place that is so far away that it becomes a chore for anyone to go to visit him.

Start with a list of nursing homes, and before you go running around to look at any of them call the homes. Ask about the services they offer. Ask about the daily costs and if there are any additional-care charges over and above the daily fees. After you narrow down your list, then you should visit the individual homes.

It is often said that you should pay a surprise visit to a nursing home and not make an appointment with the admissions officer for a tour. The reason for the surprise being that when they

know you are coming to see their facility they clean up their act.

The drawback of arriving unannounced is that you may have to wait some time for your tour or the admissions people may not be available at all. You might have to make a return trip.

People also say that you should visit the home at mealtime. Then you can see what the meals look like, how they are served and how the residents are helped with meals. My concern with this plan is that if I were a resident in a nursing home I would not like to have strangers walking into my dining room and looking over my shoulder.

Some nursing homes do not allow visitors in the dining room while the residents are having their meals and some do not let strangers just walk into residents' rooms to see what the rooms look like. I totally agree with these homes and applaud them for respecting their residents' privacy.

Q. I am 62 years old and have always wanted to get a college degree. All my friends are telling me that I will never be able to keep up with the younger students. I really want to do this but I guess I'm afraid of looking foolish. What do you think?

A. I think you should ignore what your well-meaning friends are saying to you. Learning ability does not decline with age. It may take you a little longer to learn new subjects but you are certainly capable of doing so and it sounds as if you are very determined. I say go for it. Invite your friends to your graduation.

Q. I am going to buy long-term-care insurance. I heard that I can get a tax deduction if I buy the policy.

A. You can get a tax break if you buy a long-term-care insurance policy, providing your policy is tax-qualified. All policies are tax qualified if purchased in 1997. Policies bought prior to 1997 are also tax qualified if they meet state long-term-care policy regulations

A part of the premium you pay may be deductible, as a medical expense, on your tax return. I would suggest you consult with your insurance agent and your accountant or lawyer.

On Aging columnist Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and a former member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging.

To leave a message for Mahler, from a touch-tone phone, call (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1869.

Senior women to hear talk by Esther Shapiro



Esther Shapiro

"Concerns of the Consumer Today" will be Esther Shapiro's topic when she presents her second talk to The Community House Senior Women's Club, on Tuesday, April 14.

The luncheon meeting begins at 10:30 a.m. at The Community House in Birmingham. Reservations are required for the event, open to members only. Club membership is for women age 55 and over who live in the Detroit area.

In July 1974, Detroit's then-Mayor Coleman Young appointed Shapiro to organize the newly created post of director of the Consumer Affairs Department. In December 1993, mayor-elect Dennis Archer reappointed him to the position. The department is mandated by the city charter to provide consumer education and information and to investigate consumer complaints.

Shapiro previously spent eight years as a consumer specialist for the Michigan Credit Union League, a statewide organization representing 1.5 million members. She is past-president of

1. *What is the name of the person who is the author of the book "The Great Gatsby"?*

Joycelyn Elders talks to Planned Parenthood

Dr. M. Joycelyn Elders, former U.S. Surgeon General under President Clinton, will address attendees at Planned Parenthood of Southeast Michigan's fourth annual Fund-raising Luncheon Thursday, May 7, at St. John's Armenian Church in Southfield.

The luncheon program, which is expected to attract more than 600 guests, will feature a presentation by PFSM's Teen Theatre group, as well as Elders' keynote address. A private reception with Elders will be held after the fund-raising event for corporate and patron event sponsors. Individual ticket prices are \$55.

Elders is a pediatric endocrinologist and a professor at the University of Arkansas School of Medicine. She was the first African American woman to serve as U.S. surgeon general. She has received numerous national awards, including the American Medical Association's Dr. Nathan Davis Award, and has been listed in "Distinguished Women in America."

PPSM is celebrating its 76th anniversary in providing health care and educational services.

metropolitan Detroit. PFSM's six local clinics provide a variety of services for women and men including family planning, HIV/AIDS testing, counseling, treatment of sexually transmitted infections, mid-life services and prenatal care.

PSSM's education department offers programs through Teen Theatre (stage performances given by teens for their peers), Baby Think It Over (which utilizes computerized baby dolls to allow teenagers to experience some of the responsibilities of parenthood); the Sexuality Resource Center (which offers pamphlets, journals, articles, books and videos); and a Speakers Bureau.

This is the fourth year PPSM has hosted an annual fund-raising luncheon. In 1995, keynote speaker was AIDS activist Mary Fisher, daughter of financier Max Fisher of Franklin.

Guest speaker in 1996 was Anna Quindlen, former New York Times op/ed columnist. Last year's speaker was Jane Fonda, award-winning actress, activist and Planned Parenthood of America advocate.

Fashion show to assist Alzheimer's Association

More than 65,000 victims and their families coping with Alzheimer's disease in metropolitan Detroit will benefit from the Spring Fashion Benefit hosted by Lynn Portnoy at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 21, at the new Southfield store at 2926 Franklin Road (in the Claymore Apartment Building.).

Portney became involved with the Alzheimer's Association several years ago when her mother was diagnosed with the disease. Supporters of the Alzheimer's Association will model the newest American and European spring fashions, particularly suits and knits from Italy. Before the informal fashion show, guests will snack on antipasto, provided by the new Post Ristorante.

Money raised from the event

will be used to continue services and programs for people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. The Alzheimer's Association Detroit Area Chapter is a non-profit voluntary health agency that serves Oakland, Wayne, Macomb and St. Clair counties. It provides a wide variety of services to Alzheimer's patients and their families including group respite (adult day care), family support groups, counseling, care management, in-home respite, Safe Return Wandering program and community education.

Reservations are required. Guests should send their check for \$25, made payable to the Alzheimer's Association, to the attention of Lynn Portnoy by April 15. The zip code is Southfield 48034.

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