Personal Care Attendant Program gives control to adults living with disabilities

“I’d be here anyway,” says Lenora’s sister, Liza, “but with the Personal Care Attendant Program and Rachel’s help, I don’t have to worry about missing work, or making ends meet. This is my job.” Lenora, who at 54 years old, has been struggling with the impact that diabetes has had on her life, agrees, “Family is important to me. I wouldn’t want a stranger helping me with all the things I need help with. When it’s a close relative, you’re used to them. They understand more about you.”

Springwell Care Advisor Rachel Fried works with a number of adults, like Lenora, who are living with long-term disabilities and are enrolled in the Personal Care Attendant Program (PCA). PCA is a MassHealth program that helps adults over the age of 18 with long-term disabilities live independently at home, by providing them with the funds to hire and manage their own personal care attendant to help with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, eating, and exercising.

Lenora was managing the decline in her health with the help of her close-knit family until she was hospitalized in February of 2013. Acute respiratory failure that resulted in a coma led to a long stay in both the hospital and a rehabilitation facility. The impact on her health left her unable to work, and the amount of daily care she needed was beyond the capabilities of her family. Her social worker suggested she call Springwell to see if she was eligible for the Personal Care Attendant Program, and that’s when Lenora met Rachel. After an initial assessment and application meeting, as well as a nursing screening to determine the level of service that would be covered, Lenora was enrolled.

“Rachel makes the program easy. I can focus on my health and getting better.”

For more information about the Personal Care Attendant Program, visit the Springwell website at www.springwell.com.
Springwell Awarded New Supportive Housing Site in Brookline

In August, Springwell received word from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs that our application to extend our long-standing partnership with the Brookline Housing Authority by bringing our CareConnections program to the Colonel Floyd, Kickham and Morse Apartments in Brookline had been chosen for funding. The program is designed in the style of a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC), in which housing entities unite with health and social service providers to promote and support healthy and integrated aging-in-place.

Springwell and the Brookline Housing Authority have worked together for many years to bring vital services to seniors and people with disabilities in Brookline. In addition to collaborations including the Brookline Hoarding Task Force and the Domestic Violence Roundtable, for more than twelve years Springwell has operated our CareConnections Program at two Brookline Housing Authority sites (see Sussman House Profile article on back page).

“Accessible and coordinated on-site supportive services are essential to the health of our public housing residents.”

Beginning this fall, the 198 residents of the three newly-funded Brookline housing sites, will benefit from 24/7 access to Springwell staff, including a Springwell Care Coordinator who will be available at each site to work closely with residents to coordinate services. They will also receive preferred access to a variety of in-home services offered at reduced rates by one of Springwell’s highly qualified service providers; 24/7 support coverage by home care professionals; social activities organized and coordinated by the Care Coordinator; and an on-site congregate dining site run by the Springwell Nutrition Department.

Brookline Housing Authority Executive Director, Patrick Dober, was thrilled to get the news, “The Brookline Housing Authority believes that accessible and coordinated on-site supportive services are essential to the health of our public housing residents. It has been our long-time goal to bring the integrated service model we’ve experienced with Springwell’s Care Connections Program to additional housing sites. We couldn’t be happier that this new program enables us to meet that goal, and that Springwell will continue to be our partner in meeting the needs of our senior residents.”

BHA Executive Director, Patrick Dober (l), Springwell CEO, Ruth Beckerman-Rodau (c), and BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas (r)
Meeting the Legal Needs of Seniors

This fall, Springwell and MetroWest Legal Services have joined together to promote and protect the rights of seniors. Springwell has provided MetroWest Legal Services with a one-year grant through our Community Grants Program to run an Elder Law Clinic that provides information, advice and referrals to seniors, and conduct free community seminars on legal issues relevant to older adults. MetroWest Legal Services (MWLS) has been a respected elder law service provider our communities for more than 30 years, and we welcome their experience in helping seniors in our area.

Starting October 1st, through its Senior Citizen’s Legal Project, MWLS advocates will provide legal representation for elders including information, advice, brief service and full representation in court or other administrative hearings for seniors in Belmont, Brookline, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, Wellesley and Weston on the following issues:

- Housing matters, especially evictions and foreclosures
- Durable Powers of Attorney, Health Care Proxies, and Defense of Guardianships and Conservatorships
- Nursing Home Issues
- Public Benefits, including Social Security, SSI, Unemployment, MassHealth, SNAP, etc.
- Domestic Relations, including restraining orders and divorces for seniors who cannot afford private counsel
- Bankruptcies and consumer rights issues

MetroWest Legal Services will also provide Community Legal Education through a partnership with local Councils on Aging to senior groups on legal topics of particular interest to elders.

“At MetroWest Legal Services, we believe that access to justice should not just be for those who can afford it, but must be available for everyone. We are thrilled to be partnering with Springwell to protect individual rights and improve the lives of seniors in our communities,” says Betsy Soule, Executive Director of MWLS.

DID YOU KNOW?

Springwell currently offers our supportive housing services in eleven public and privately managed housing sites. In the past year, our CareConnections Care Coordinators provided or arranged for the following support to 840 residents:

- 914 one-on-one consultations, totaling more than 1,370 hours of care advice.
- 1,200 hours of social activities, including exercise classes, weekly coffee hours, and barbecues.
- 709 home visits for residents receiving coordinated personal care & homemaking services.
- 5,400 meals served in our on-site community dining programs.
- 134 hours of nursing support including blood-pressure monitoring and medication pre-filling.

Springwell’s CareConnections program brings support to people right where they live, in surroundings that are familiar.

A: How many people are helped each year by Springwell’s CareConnections Care Coordinators?

Springwell Awarded New Supportive Housing Site in Brookline

Accessible and coordinated on-site supportive services are essential to the health of our public housing residents.”
Sussman House –
Teamwork helps meet needs, create community

If it’s a Thursday morning at 10:00, Neil Dinkin, the Springwell Care Connections Care Coordinator at Sussman House in Brookline, is putting out coffee, bagels, cream cheese, and a special low-sugar jam that some residents prefer. People filter in the sunny community room for a weekly coffee gathering where residents catch up on news and happenings. Neil, who organizes the weekly tradition, helps to ensure that everyone has what they need, and that newcomers feel welcome.

Neil’s office on the first floor of Sussman House is a busy place with a steady stream of residents in and out for either a short check-in or a lengthier meeting. They come for help completing benefits forms, or asking about services they either have or might need. Some simply want the kind attention of a compassionate listener.

In 2005, the Brookline Housing Authority and Springwell began the CareConnections partnership that ensures that the 103 residents of Sussman House receive the ongoing support that they need. Neil works closely with Brookline Housing Authority Property Manager, Kelley Chambliss, and together they’ve created a strong community in which residents look out for each other, enjoy one another’s company, and, most importantly, know where to turn when they need help or support. Says resident Valencia Sparrow, “Springwell is just a soft place to land. I see Neil helping residents who come to him with government forms they don’t understand, and he is so gentle and such a great resource.”

Sussman House is just one of the ten housing sites (soon to be eleven – see Springwell Awarded New Supportive Housing Site article in this issue) where Springwell Housing staff offer services and build community. The dedicated Springwell Housing Program team, led by Springwell Associate Director of Consumer Services, Jessica Colangelo, extends Springwell’s reach out into the community and brings an invaluable service to the housing sites.

Solutions for Seniors, Individuals With Disabilities & Those Who Provide Care

Springwell is the federally designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and the state-designated Aging Services Access Point (ASAP) for the communities of Belmont, Brookline, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, Wellesley and Weston. Services are made possible in part by contracts with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and MassHealth. Additional services are made possible through contracts with insurance and health care providers as well as through the generosity of individuals, corporations, foundations and communities of faith that provide critical dollars.