

SENIOR LIFESTYLES

Planning can help one 'weather' emergencies

By Lee Strong
Associate editor

During the snowstorms that virtually paralyzed Western and parts of Central New York March 4-7, Sandy Schencke observed a man whose car got stuck in the snow.

The man struggled for an hour to get his car free. Meanwhile, two men were nearby shoveling snow. The man never sought the shovelers' help — but when she approached them and asked if they would help the man, they readily did so.

"You just have to ask — take the initiative," Schencke said.

Asking for help is one of the key bits of advice Schencke recommends for seniors during such emergencies. The recent snowstorms essentially trapped many people — and not just seniors — in their homes for several days. The Rochester area received 43 inches of snow in three days, the city's greatest three-day amount by some accounts. A state disaster emergency was declared in 17 counties.

"People have to take the initiative to call a neighbor, not expect the neighbor to call them," observed Schencke, elder care specialist at Rochester's Eldersource. "That's why it's important to have a neighbor's telephone number. Always have a neighbor you can call or talk with."

Those neighbors may help not only by shoveling the senior's walk and driveway, but by picking up food or prescriptions for them. Seniors should also check to find out if their pharmacy will deliver needed medications.

Seniors should make sure they have emergency supplies on hand, Schencke added. Those supplies should include extra medication, and staple foods that can be prepared even if power goes out — such as milk (which, in the winter, can be kept



cool outside), cereal, bread, peanut butter and jelly. But she offered a caution.

"One of the downfalls is those people who store a lot of food, and it's expired," she said. "You should rotate the food that you've saved. The last thing you want is to eat something and end up going to the hospital because of food poisoning."

She also urged seniors who have electrically powered medical equipment at home to make sure that their local utility is aware so that in the event power goes out they will be made a priority.

Linda Tetor, director of the Steuben County Office for the Aging, noted that programs such as hers that home deliver meals for seniors generally at the begin-

ning of winter provide emergency kits. The kits contain a couple of days' worth of food for situations such as the snowstorms.

Tetor also advised seniors to keep on hand such items as candles, extra blankets,

emergency light and heating sources.

"One of the biggest (problems) is hypothermia," Tetor observed. Thus seniors need "to be careful of that by not turning your heat down too far."

If seniors are able to get out and drive their cars, she continued, they should make sure they have in their cars such items as tools, a flashlight, blankets, salt and a shovel in case they get stuck.

"One caution is not to go out in a storm with a nearly empty tank of gas, because if you get stuck, you're going to run out," Tetor said.

Schencke also warned about people who come to the door to offer help.

"(Seniors) should really be cautious about people who say they will shovel (the seniors) out and do other things for them, and they ask for a lot of money" promising they will come back, she said. In too many cases, she noted, they do not return, and the senior is out that money — and still stuck.

Ultimately, Schencke said, in situations such as the recent snowstorms, life will eventually return to normal and services will be restored. If they are not in any danger, seniors should simply keep up with the news on television or radio, keep in contact with neighbors and just wait it out.

"A lot of it is you have to be a little patient," she said.

SPECIAL PLACE CALLED HOME

- Fully furnished accommodations and comfortable common rooms
- Delicious & nutritious meals served to you each day
- Security • Transportation • Activities

Personal Care Assistance... a blend of concern, patience & skill monitoring medication, assisting with the activities of daily living including bathing and dressing, with a professional staff, always available, 24 hours a day.

Senior Quarters
Assisted Living Residence

AT GREECE RIDGE & PENFIELD

716-225-3010 716-381-0282

150 TOWNGATE ROAD 2006 FIVE MILE LINE ROAD
ROCHESTER, NY PENFIELD, NY

Formerly known as Town Gate Manor and Town Gate East

Call 1-800-986-5800 for information about Senior Quarters locations throughout the U.S.A.
Visit us on the internet at <http://www.seniorquarters.com>

A QUIET OASIS IN THE HEART OF GREECE

LONG POND APARTMENTS

Walking distance from the largest mall east of the Mississippi, plus churches, restaurants, a senior center, doctors, a hospital, supermarkets, and other amenities in the neighborhood make ours the best location. Larger - Than - Most apartments with expansive grounds & parking make ours the best value. Come see a helpful rental agent today.

Senior Discounts 225-3510 or 723-9714 Free Heat & Hot Water

The Shire at Culverton
ADULT HOME

- SUITES, PRIVATE AND SEMI PRIVATE ROOMS
- 24 HOUR MEDICAL SUPERVISION
- COMPLETE DIETETIC SERVICES
- TRANSPORTATION
- SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
- UNIQUE TEMPORARY STAY

"A TRADITION OF LOVE AND CARING"

467-4544

2515 Culver Rd.
(Just South of Keeler Expressway)

Haven't you suffered from hearing loss long enough?

Now a hearing aid that is so small and easy to use not even your closest friends will know you are wearing it.

- Easily inserted and out of sight
- Volume control automatically adjusts
- New sound processing allows you to hear speech better

with Starkeys

Sequel multi-channel digitally programmable hearing aid. Call today to schedule a complimentary hearing aid evaluation and demonstration of this new technology.

Park Ridge Hearing Center
227-9920

1561 Long Pond Road • Suite 115 at the Park Ridge Professional Bldg. 220 Alexander Street • Suite 508 at the Genesee Hospital Professional Bldg.