

Life after hearing loss
Understanding
the challenge

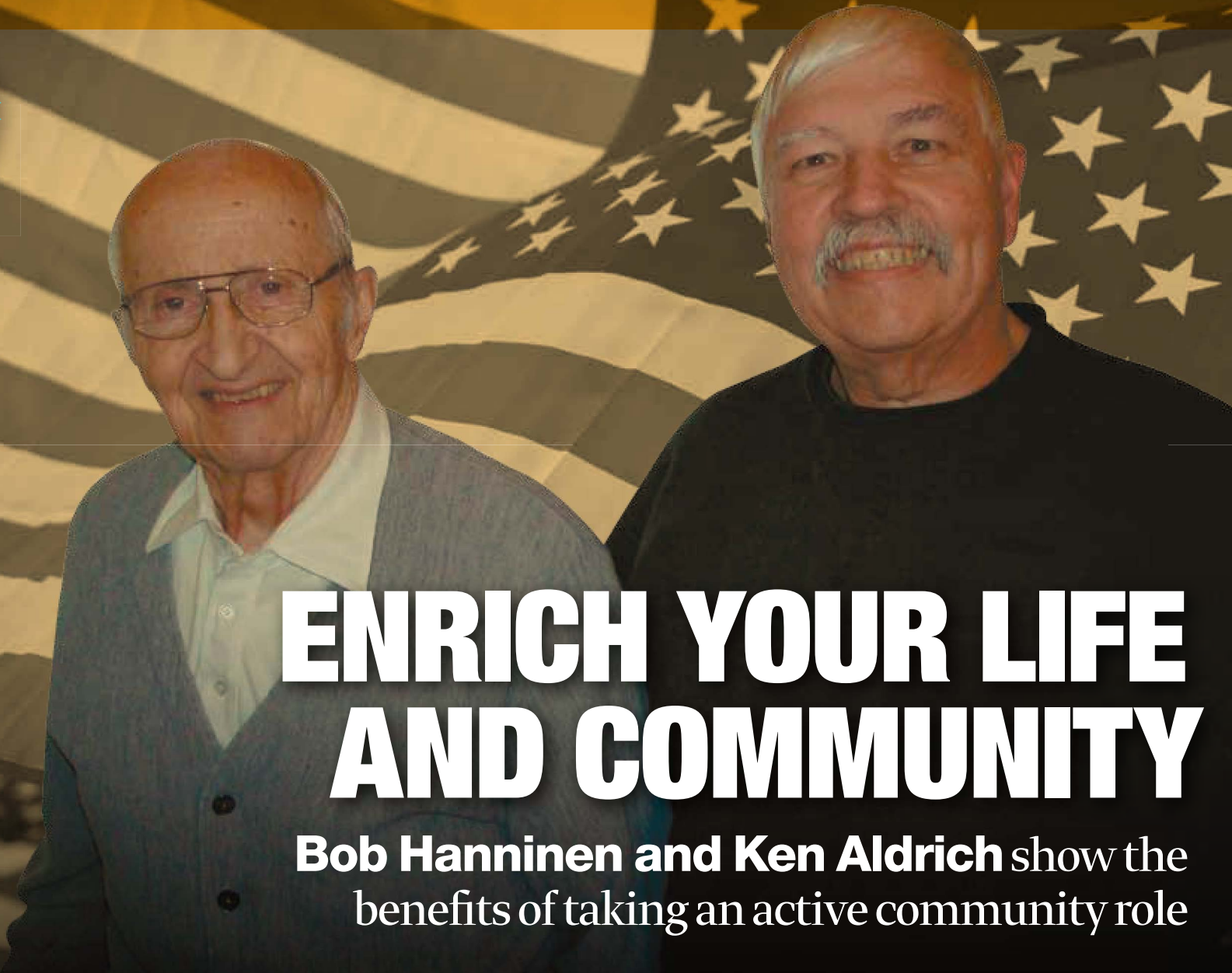
A hidden crisis
Seniors in need of
nutrition support

Weigh your options
What senior living
option is right for me?

MEDIA
PLANET

December 2011

THE GOLDEN YEARS



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CHALLENGES

There are challenges baby boomers face, but many **can be solved** through the latest innovations in healthcare, technology, and social support.

TIP

1

STAY WELL-
INFORMED

WE RECOMMEND



Dr. Rebecca Younk, Au.D., CCC-A, Director of Professional Development, Amplifon USA

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"Hearing loss is the third most common chronic condition in older Americans."

MEDIA PLANET

THE GOLDEN YEARS,
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Enhancing your quality of life

In the next twenty years Minnesota's senior population will double. By the year 2030, one out of every five Minnesotans will be over the age of 65. The number of retirees in the state will be higher than ever and the labor force will literally shrink.

Governments have spent years talking about the seismic change in population that is now upon us. This past year marked the arrival of the first wave of baby boomers to Medicare and in the decade of the 2010s more Minnesotans will turn 65 than in the last three decades combined.

New challenges

This trend will undoubtedly create new challenges, most notably in the area of healthcare. In the last 15 years the number of Minnesotans with diabetes has

doubled. Left unchecked this number will continue to multiply exponentially. Other issues such as disability, hearing loss and the realities of living on fixed incomes and having to afford food, heat and medication will all be challenges for a great percentage of state residents.

Without a doubt these are serious challenges, but it is not all doom and gloom. Thanks to technology and the internet there are more resources for seniors than ever before that will help them lead healthy and more prosperous lives.

Seniors today and beyond

AARP has been listening to our members for years in order to better understand that today and tomorrow's seniors want access to the tools to help themselves live a richer, fuller life. They are more independent,

"Thanks to technology and the internet there are more resources for seniors than ever before that will help them lead healthy and more prosperous lives."



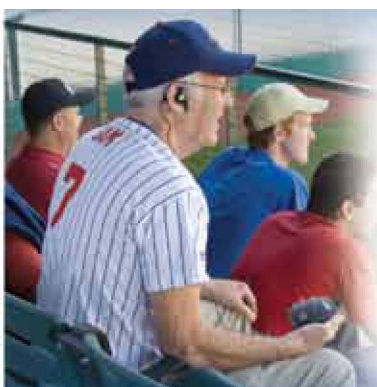
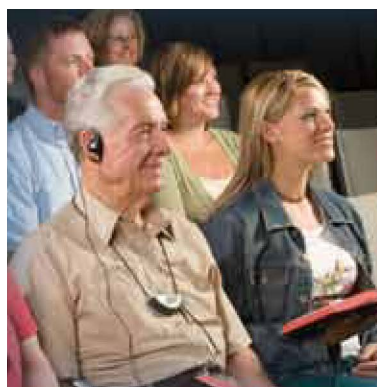
Michele Kimball,
AARP Minnesota, State Director

more tech savvy and less interested in looking toward the government for solutions. The seniors of today and beyond want to be in the driver's seat and AARP is committed to helping them access the information and tools they need to maintain control of their lives as they age.

This "Golden Years" Report will serve as a roadmap to success that highlights innovations in the fields of technology, healthcare and social activities that are available to older Americans.

Email aarpmn@aarp.org to find out how you can get involved right here in Minnesota.

MICHELE KIMBALL

editorial@mediaplanet.com


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When Hearing Aids Aren't Enough, Cochlear Implants Can Help

Straining to hear each day, even when using powerful advanced hearing aids? Feeling frustrated and sometimes even exhausted from listening?

Whether it happens suddenly or gradually over time, hearing loss can affect physical and emotional health. Being unable to hear impacts one's ability to socialize with friends, communicate with co-workers, and can force people to become more reliant on family members to constantly interpret for them.

By age 65, one out of three people will have a hearing loss, according to the Hearing Loss Association of America. Signs of hearing loss include:

- Difficulty understanding speech on the telephone
- Trouble following a conversation with two or more people talking at the same time
- Difficulty hearing in a noisy background
- Having to strain to understand conversation
- The need to ask people to repeat themselves
- Misunderstanding others and responding inappropriately

If you or someone you know is experiencing more than two of these signs, it could be beneficial to schedule an evaluation with a certified audiologist to learn if you/your loved one has a hearing loss. For people diagnosed with severe to profound hearing loss, who no longer benefit from hearing aids, there may be a solution. Unlike a hearing aid that amplifies sound, a cochlear implant is an implantable solution designed to mimic natural hearing using sophisticated software and state-of-the-art electronic components.

Ann Dexheimer, a former certified American Sign Language interpreter and teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program in Sonoma County, was diagnosed with hearing loss as a child. Starting at age 12, her progressive loss started to worsen.

Throughout her career, Dexheimer had taken professional courses and learned about cochlear implants, a technology that is often covered by

many private health insurance plans and Medicare, and may be covered by Medicaid. Because her own hearing had worsened, it dawned on her in a class one day that she should consider getting a cochlear implant herself. "For me it was a no-brainer. I'd seen the remarkable success of children with cochlear implants."

Having a cochlear implant has become more than a device to assist her in hearing. "It becomes who you are," Dexheimer says. "Some days you don't even realize or notice that you're hearing everything. Then all of sudden you'll have a CI (cochlear implant) moment. You'll hear a leaf hitting the ground and go, 'Wow I heard that!' It's amazing. I'm so fortunate."

To learn more about cochlear implants and request a free information kit, visit www.CochlearAmericas.com.

Editors Note:

Captioned videos and product information are available at www.CochlearAmericas.com



DENISE P. – Cochlear™ implant user enjoys dining out, talking on the phone, listening to music and meeting new people.

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You should talk to your physician about who is a candidate for cochlear implantation and the associated risks and benefits of the procedure. For additional information please refer to the Nucleus® Package Insert (available at www.CochlearAmericas.com/NucleusIndications). Cochlear and the elliptical logo are trademarks of Cochlear Limited. Nucleus is a registered trademark of Cochlear Limited. FUN1508 ISS1 DEC11

Hear now. And always



NEWS

Watching out for
senior hunger

■ Food insecurity among elderly Americans is a dire problem that is only projected to get worse. With baby boomers reaching retirement age within the next couple of decades, the number of food insecure seniors is expected to jump 75 percent—a figure that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later.

“Already, one out of six seniors don’t know where their next meal is coming from, or at least have concerns about their ability to secure that next meal,” says Patrick Rowan, Executive Director of Metro Meals on Wheels. “It’s almost on the verge of an epidemic.”

Protecting against food insecurity is more difficult for seniors than the general population due to factors like lack of transportation, loss of appetite, and insufficient income to eat healthily.

Though there are no simple solutions to the problem, small measures can be taken to improve it, such as giving to nonprofit senior food services, checking up on elderly relatives to make sure they’re eating well, and contacting a senior’s doctor to see if they have any unique nutritional needs.

STEVE ETHERIDGE
editorial@mediaplanet.com

REDISCOVER HOME AFTER RETIREMENT

■ **Question:** Does moving into a retirement community mean a decrease in quality of life?

■ **Answer:** With a new breed of senior housing options emerging, it can often mean the exact opposite.

No one wants their retirement to be a tumultuous time. Nearly 90 percent of people of retirement age want to remain living at home for as long as possible, and four out of five seniors believe they’ll live out the rest of their lives in their current home.

These figures communicate a clear message: that a home is a place of comfort, and the idea of moving somewhere other than home is daunting. But many seniors eventually find themselves in the difficult position of having to find a new place to live.

Accepting change

“The great majority of older adults have a strong desire to live in their own homes and communities,” says the AARP in a recent report on senior housing. “However, unsupportive community design, unaffordable and inaccessible housing, and a lack of access to needed services can thwart this desire.”

Unfortunately, too often the idea of moving into a retirement home or community evokes images of institutional settings, when many housing options exist that can facilitate happy, active, and independent lifestyles.

Innovative living

In Minnesota, progressive communities like Trillium Woods and Nokomis Square Cooperative can help make the transition into a

new home a painless—and perhaps even liberating—experience. They are just two stellar options among a growing breed of retirement communities that defy long-held notions of senior living in favor of empowering, stimulating lifestyles.

One of the most innovative concepts to emerge recently in senior living is called BOOM, which is a series of residential communities that present a reformulated approach to aging.

The BOOM communities invite residents to join early, even at 40

“Unfortunately, too often the idea of moving into a retirement home or community evokes images of institutional setting.”

years old, so that by the time one reaches retirement age the community already feels like home. Their focus on social involvement and cultural enrichment is designed to promote long-term happiness and health.

Live longer, happier

As more forward-thinking choices for senior housing emerge, it’s critical that people are discerning in their decisions on where to live. Research shows that longevity can be increased by up to 15 years through meaningful social interaction, sensible diet, informal exercise, and stimulating activities. Living in a community that facilitates that can make the golden years all the more special.

STEVE ETHERIDGE
editorial@mediaplanet.com



DISCOVER THE UNIQUE LIFESTYLE AT TRILLIUM WOODS

Located in Plymouth, Trillium Woods is a progressive new community for seniors age 62+, set on 46 acres, nestled along Cheshire Lane with hilly woodlands, wetlands and lake views. Trillium Woods will offer what many others cannot: **choice** – 14 floor plans, **flexibility** – dining plan with multiple venues and options, and **LifeCare™** – a plan that ensures you quality long-term health care, if needed, at significant cost savings.

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INSIGHT

Rebecca A. Young, Au.D., CCC-A

Position: Director of Professional Development, Amplifon USA



Know how to combat and manage your hearing loss

The author, A.A. Attanasio did not have hearing loss in mind when he said, "Silence is a text easy to misread."

However, his words give a vivid and accurate account of what happens to the more than 36 million people who suffer from hearing loss in the United States.

For most, hearing loss happens so gradually they do not realize they are increasingly misunderstanding conversation. Commonly, it is those closest to the person suffering from hearing loss who identify a problem first as they become the interpreter, often repeating words of punch lines or clarifying what was said during a discussion.

There are two things to know

about hearing loss. First, you are not alone! Hearing loss is the third most common chronic condition in older Americans. And, just as many, if not more people under the age of 65 suffer from hearing loss as those over the age of 65. So, if you are having a problem hearing, speak up! Chances are the person you are talking to is having difficulty as well.

Secondly, there is help! Although a Hearing Care Profes-

"There are two things to know about hearing loss. First, you are not alone! Hearing loss is the third most common chronic condition in older Americans."

sional cannot make you hear like you are 20 again, she can help you get back into the conversation. Did you know overall customer satisfaction for hearing instruments is in the top third of all products and services in the United States? When combined with appropriate counseling and rehabilitation, hearing instruments have been shown to improve the social and economical lives of users.

There is life after hearing loss. If you feel that you or your loved one may have a problem, see your community hearing care professional to begin actively monitoring and managing your hearing needs.

REBECCA A. YOUNG, AU.D., CCC-A
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QUESTIONNAIRE

Identify your hearing problem

1. What are the most common signs of hearing loss? What do I do if I think I have a problem?

■ The most common sign of hearing loss is difficulty understanding it. Often, however, the signs are hard to identify because they are inconsistent. Comprehension is more difficult in noisy places—restaurants, cars, or the annual family reunion—than in quiet places and more difficult with some voices—such as young kids with soft, high-frequency voices—than others. A hearing professional can help determine the nature and degree of the problem and get recommendations for remediation.



Jerry L. Yanz, Ph.D.
Director of Audiology, Hansaton Acoustics

2. What is the cost of hearing loss to quality of life?

■ The consequences of untreated progressive hearing loss can eventually take a serious toll on quality of life. As the loss progresses, people may become socially isolated because of the strain of trying to understand conversations and face considerable challenges in the workplace.

JERRY L. YANZ, PH.D.
editorial@mediaplanet.com

"A hearing professional can help determine the nature and degree of the problem and get recommendations for remediation."

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INSPIRATION

For **Bob Hanninen**, a Vietnam War Veteran, and **Ken Aldrich**, a WWII Veteran, their meeting was an unprecedented match. But through their involvement with volunteer and outreach programs, they've become lifelong friends.



Serving his country in his community

Service to country is the bond that unites Bob and Ken who get together weekly to tell stories, have coffee and enjoy each other's friendship.

Bob Hanninen, Menahga, became a Lutheran Social Service Senior Companion volunteer in 2008. Senior Companions are part of the National Senior Service Corps, along with the Foster Grandparent Program and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Senior Companion volunteers devote 15-20 hours each week seeing other seniors in their community who need assistance to stay at home and live independently. Senior Companions provide

friendly visiting, transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and those things that friends do for friends.

Benefits of volunteerism

Ken Aldrich benefits from Bob's commitment to service as he welcomes Bob to his home each week. Ken has Parkinson's Disease so his wife Donna stays close by Ken. When Bob arrives Donna leaves the two guys and then she can have some needed time to run errands or visit friends.

Bob served his country during the Vietnam War. Ken enlisted at age 17 to join the thousands of soldiers in WWII. The two former soldiers share stories of service when they get together.



"The two soldiers understand each other, value each other's service and celebrate their friendship."

Ken entered the Air Force as a cadet-in-training. Uncle Sam proclaimed "Men, at 17 you too can volunteer!" And volunteer he did. Stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi, during his tour of duty, Ken was the company typist, offering behind-the-scenes support to the men who participated in the on-base flight school. "Taking typing in high school saved my life," Ken reminisces. "The Air Force needed someone with my skills in the United States. Most of my group shipped out to the Japanese theater and not all of them returned."

Celebrating friendship

Bob enlisted in 1963, received SEALs training and left for Vietnam in 1964. Bob served as a Special Ops for most

of his service time; much of what he did remains top secret. Reflecting on his time in the Navy, Bob says, "I learned to become disciplined, to follow instructions, to work closely with others and to evaluate situations; these were good lessons for a young person."

When asked why he volunteers, Bob says, "People like Ken did their part for us long ago; so now I help them." Ken enjoys Bob and says, "We have a lot of fun." The two soldiers understand each other, value each other's service and celebrate their friendship.

IVA THIELGES

LSS CAREGIVER RESPITE AND
SUPPORT COORDINATOR
editorial@mediaplanet.com

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NEWS

Question: How can new technology improve the quality of life for millions of Americans living with partial or total hearing loss?

Answer: Assistive technology is becoming the standard in public areas, as well as in the home!

Technology to connect to your world

Under the mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act, thousands of public meeting areas have been and are being equipped with Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) allowing individuals to experience an enhanced auditory experience.

These installations are being designed to help people better understand speech, music, and other sounds during a movie, performance, lecture, meeting or worship service whether or not they are hard of hearing. People deserve to experience every word, every moment, and ALDs make that a reality. Like a hearing aid, an assistive listening device makes sounds louder. Typically a hearing aid makes all sounds in the environment

louder. An assistive listening device increases the loudness of a desired sound—a radio or television, a public speaker, an actor or actress—without increasing the loudness of the background noise.

A solution for phone use

When it comes to hearing loss and phone conversations, there is also innovative technology available for use. Captioned Telephone, CapTel for short, is a new telephone technology which allows people to receive word-for-word captions of their telephone conversations. The CapTel Phone looks and works like any traditional phone, with callers talking and listening to each other, but with one very significant difference: live captions are provided for every phone call. The captions are displayed on the

phone's built-in screen so the user can read the words while listening to the voice of the other party. If the CapTel phone user has difficulty hearing the caller, they can read the captions for clarification.

Staying connected

These assistive listening systems ensure that hearing loss will not prevent individuals from connecting with the world around them. Investing in this innovative technology allows for people to improve their quality of life through sustained communication with their loved ones and friends.

LISTEN TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION
AND ULTRATEC INC.
editorial@mediaplanet.com



DON'T MISS!

Resolve to save money on cell phone bills in 2012

■ It seems that almost everyone has a cell phone these days. For many seniors, the devices provide the comfort of knowing a phone is always nearby in case they need help. But cell phones and their service plans vary greatly, and picking the right plan can save hundreds of dollars each year.

Here are some questions you should ask yourself to find the best phone and plan for you:

1. What do I need the phone for? Make sure you're buying a phone that matches your needs, not just because it's inexpensive, popular or what a friend or family

member uses.

2. Should I consider prepaid? With prepaid, what you pay for is what you get ... period. There are no surprise bills at the end of the month with overage fees.

3. What if I can't I afford a cell phone? If you receive Social Security, Medicaid, other government assistance programs or your income falls below poverty levels, you may qualify for free cell phone service through a lifeline assistance program such as those offered by Assurance Wireless.

With the New Year ahead of us, this is a great time to consider the best cell phone and plan for your needs.

Source: Sprint's no contract brands Boost Mobile and Virgin Mobile USA

71%

■ Seven out of ten people are paying for applications or data they don't need or use, there is no question many consumers are simply throwing money away

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