



**motion picture
pioneers
assistance
fund**

SOCIAL SERVICES CORNER

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COMPUTERS HELP SENIORS IMPROVE BRAIN FUNCTION

Question: I want to teach my elderly father to use email. His doctor is all for it, but Dad tells me he fears he has lost the ability to learn new things. Should I forget about teaching Dad to use email and continue with snail mail?

Answer: I'm glad you asked about teaching your father to use email. Many families are finding that email is an excellent way to maintain close relationships with older parents and to involve them in an activity that stimulates their minds and helps preserve their cognitive abilities. Studies conducted by the National Institute of Nursing and the University of California, Los Angeles clearly indicate that computer-based activities can improve an older adult's memory, reasoning, and response speed as well as counteract some expected cognitive decline. So please try to teach your dad about email.

Research has shown that aging is not a reason to avoid computers and the Internet, but your dad may have some age-related changes in vision, dexterity, or cognitive abilities, so he should consult with his doctor first. A variety of software applications and devices for arthritic fingers and failing eyesight can be purchased online to compensate for almost any challenge your dad might have. For example, Big Screen Live, www.bigscreenlive.com, provides software that simplifies the interface with Windows PC so the user

can easily access emails, pictures, and the Internet. When using Paw Paw Mail, www.pawpawmail.com, subscribers are directed to a Web site with simple graphics and large type through which they compose, send, and receive emails as well as save pictures. This system also provides a separate Web site to allow a caregiver/manager to set up the address book, manage emails, and upload photos. You Can Do It Computers, at www.youcandoitcomputers.com, has a computer with a big touch screen monitor and a keyboard with 1" keys. The computer easily connects to a high-speed Internet service to run its user-friendly software and email server.

I hope your dad will be using email soon and you enjoy the time you spend with him while he learns to use it. Just one more suggestion — when helping adults, I find it prudent to respect their wishes and acknowledge their lifetime of acquired knowledge and experience.

Sources: www.nia.nih.gov: "The Changing Brain in Healthy Aging, ACTIVE Study May Provide Clues to Help Older Adults Stay Mentally Sharp"; www.newsroom.ucla.edu: "UCLA Study Finds That Searching the Internet Increases Brain Function"; www.nytimes.com: "Helping Grandpa Get His Tech On, Easier Email for the Older Generation."

Go Green!

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Call (888) 994-3863, ext. 2370, or email info@wrmail.org.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

**The secret of staying young is to live honestly,
eat slowly, and lie about your age.**

— *Lucille Ball: The Mammoth Book of Zingers,
Quips, and One-Liners*

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories, and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.



The Motion Picture Pioneers Assistance Fund is a program of the Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation.



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Do you or someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free at (888) 994-3863 or visit www.wrpioneers.org to find out more about our assistance programs.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR EYES AS YOU AGE



More than 1.75 million Americans are affected by macular degeneration, a deterioration of the retina that can cause impaired vision and blindness. It's the leading cause of legal blindness in Americans over age 55.

The macula is located in the center of the retina, which is

the area in the back of the eye that converts light into electrical impulses for the brain to process. Macular degeneration, which generally strikes older people, has two specific forms.

Wet: Abnormal blood vessel growth behind the retina leads to leakage of blood and other fluids; this shifts and damages the macula, resulting in rapid vision loss if untreated.

Dry: The macula's light-sensitive cells break down slowly, causing blurred vision in the center of the affected eye and eventual vision loss in the center of the eye. While some vitamin supplements high in antioxidants may slow the progress of the disease, no treatment has been found to prevent loss of vision.

See a vision specialist regularly, especially if you're over 55, and be alert for these symptoms:

- Blurred vision
- Decreased central vision
- Blind spots
- Straight lines appearing crooked
- Objects appearing smaller, or with a different shape or color, in different eyes
- Drusen, or yellow deposits under the retina, which an eye doctor can test for during a comprehensive exam

Take care of your eyes, and see what the future holds.

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF'S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

National Private Duty Association: www.privatedutyhomecare.org, (317) 663-3637

This professional association provides leadership, representation, and education to the nonmedical private duty home care industry. Consumers can call the Association or visit its Web site to locate Association home care providers throughout the U.S. Helpful consumer tips are provided at its Web site.

Animal Care for Artists: www.animalcareforartists.org, (818) 588-8053

This new charitable organization has a pending nonprofit status. Its mission is to assist low-income individuals employed in the arts to pay for medical care for their animal companions. All aid is paid directly to the veterinarian.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“You don't climb out of anything as quick as you fall in.”

— Will Rogers

To view our entire National Resource Directory, please visit www.wrpioneers.org.