



## CAREGIVER PROFILE

### PATTY REDMOND



Patty was born and raised in Petaluma and now resides here with her husband and son. She spent much of her childhood enjoying time with her Portuguese Grandmother and Great-grandmother. Her close friendships always included older people.

She graduated from Empire Business College and consequently held positions such as Office Manager & Human Resource Manager.

Looking for a more flexible schedule to spend time with her son several years ago, she accepted an offer to take care of her friend's ill parents and found a new career in the rewarding world of caregiving.

She has been working for *Sequoia Senior Solutions* for over a year now, utilizing her background to care and support each senior's individual needs.

Patty says, "I have found that being a caregiver has made me a more understanding and compassionate person. I have never been happier in my career than I am now in assisting others to live more a comfortable and complete life."

## PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Welcome to our Fall/Winter 2006 Newsletter. We hope you enjoy the topics in this issue. *Sequoia Senior Solutions* has grown considerably in the past months, as more and more seniors in our area have chosen to use our services. I would like to take this opportunity to relate some recent news from our company.

### *Sequoia Senior Solutions* has a new Administrative Assistant

Beverly Sciamanna has been covering the Administrative Assistant position with our company since last June. Previously, Beverly was an instructor at the Adult Day program of *Becoming Independent*. Beverly has also been working part-time as a caregiver for *Sequoia Senior Solutions* since 2004. She brings with her great caregiving experience, a warm heart, and a very friendly personality. While working in the office for the most part, Beverly is also available to fill in as a caregiver in emergency situations, as well as training new employees on caregiving skills.

### New look for *Sequoia Senior Solutions* caregivers

*Sequoia Senior Solutions* has recently adopted a new appearance policy, by providing all employees with a professional looking uniform. Our caregivers now distinguish themselves by wearing our signature purple polo shirt with the embroidered *Sequoia Senior Solutions*

logo, combined with black pants and black shoes. We feel that this tasteful combination contributes to our staff professional image. Our clients also have shown great appreciation.

### Giving back to the community

We at *Sequoia Senior Solutions* have been involved with senior services organizations in Sonoma County ever since our company started. Most notably, our Chief Financial Officer Stanton Lawson has been Treasurer of the Health Foundation of Greater Petaluma since 2004. Recently, I was appointed to the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council as a Service Representative. In that role, I will focus on legislative issues affecting seniors, as well as providing my input in preventing and detecting elder abuse.

In addition, many of our caregivers are involved in volunteer activities in their communities.

*Sequoia Senior Solutions* is the proud sponsor for the 2006-2007 Season of the Santa Rosa Concert Association ([www.srconcert.org](http://www.srconcert.org))

Best wishes,

Gabriella Ambrosi  
President & CEO  
*Sequoia Senior Solutions, Inc.*

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## FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES

### ONLINE SHOPPING

You're browsing the Web and find a great buy on a jacket: good price, in your size, and just the right color. But is it safe to buy online? What can you do to make sure your money and privacy are protected? The following simple steps can improve your online shopping experience.

#### Investigate the Seller

Anyone can sell things online, so check out the online seller before you make a purchase. Make sure the Web site gives the business' name, mailing address and telephone number.

Can you tell exactly what you're getting based on the site's description or pictures? Also, do you understand all costs, delivery time, warranty information, and the return policy?

#### Check the Site's Security

Only do business with companies that use secure server technology. This works with your Web browser to scramble your personal information— such as your credit card number—as it travels over the Internet. If the site is secure, the "http" in the address bar at the top of your screen will change to "https" or "shttp" at the

page where you are asked to type in payment information.

#### Read the Site's Privacy Policy

Understand how the seller will use your personal information. Many online stores will sell information about you to other companies. But, today, companies have to let you choose whether or not the company can share your information with others. A recent survey showed that 78 percent of people responding are "uncomfortable" to "extremely uncomfortable" with providing personal information to online merchants with no privacy policy or seal on their Web site.

#### Choose Your Password Carefully

If you use a password to log on to your computer, choose a different one to make a purchase. Also, use an unpredictable combination of numbers, letters and symbols. Do not give your password to anyone who contacts you, including people who claim to be employees of online services or stores.

#### Pay By Credit Card

Paying by credit card is the safest and quickest way to shop online. The federal Fair Credit Billing Act gives you the right

to dispute credit card charges for goods or services that you never received, never ordered or that were misrepresented to you. Also, if a thief has used your credit card, you are usually responsible for only the first \$50 in charges.

#### Keep a Record

Be sure to print and file a copy of your order and confirmation number in case you have a problem with your purchase. By law, online businesses must deliver merchandise within 30 days of purchase or notify you if there will be a delay.

#### Additional Resources

##### Internet Index:

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/menu-internet.htm>

The FCC has many articles on e-commerce, such as articles about online payments.

**Internet tips:** <http://www.fraud.org/internet/inttip/inttip.htm>

Get tips on credit card safety, online auctions, buyers clubs and online travel offers from the Internet Fraud Watch.

Excerpted from [http://www.aarp.org/money/wise\\_consumer/smartshopping/a2002-10-03/WiseConsumerCybershopping.html](http://www.aarp.org/money/wise_consumer/smartshopping/a2002-10-03/WiseConsumerCybershopping.html)



## ROTATING TOPIC

### EMERGENCY DOCUMENT TIPS

In an era where disaster preparedness is more necessary than ever before, we should all have emergency documents ready in case of a natural or man-made disaster. Here are a few tips:

- Ask several relatives or friends who live outside your immediate area (approximately 100 miles away) to act as a clearinghouse for information about you and your family after a disaster. It is often easier to place an out-of-state long distance call from a disaster area, than to call within the area. All family members should know to call the contact person to

report their location and condition. Once contact is made, have the contact person relay messages to your other friends and relatives outside the disaster area. This will help to reduce calling into and out of the affected area once the phones are working.

**Emergency Documents** (includes important information typically needed after a disaster). Copies of emergency documents should include:

- Specifications for adaptive equipment (in case it needs to be replaced)

- Proof of ownership or lease of your residence. (This is important when applying for disaster assistance).
- Social security numbers of family members.
- Vehicle, boats, etc., make, identification and license numbers.
- Charge and bank account numbers.
- Insurance policy numbers.
- Securities, deeds and loan numbers including company name, address and telephone numbers.



## SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

### GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP

#### Do you get enough sleep?

If you are like most people, the answer is probably “no.” Everyone’s sleep requirements vary between 6-9 hours for an average healthy adult. Most people need around 8 hours but get substantially less than that every night.

Sleep deprivation takes its toll in many ways. You’re more likely to lose your sense of humor and control of your emotions, be depressed and get sick. It can also be deadly. Driving while drowsy is responsible for more than 70,000 accidents a year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Sleep experts say Americans have not been adequately educated on the importance of healthy sleep. As a result, few Americans make sleep a priority. William Dement, M.D., founder and director of the Stanford University Sleep Disorders Center, considers the lack of awareness about sleep deprivation to be a national emergency: “The consequences of a sleep-deprived society include lost lives, lost income, disability, reduced productivity, accidents and decreased quality of family and social life.” He adds that sleep actually has more influence on longevity than diet, exercise and heredity.

#### Are you sleep deprived?

“If you are falling asleep at times when

you don’t plan to, that’s a sign you’re not getting enough sleep,” says Thomas Roth, director of the Sleep Disorders and Research Center at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan. Signs you’re sleep deprived include:

- Struggling to stay awake when inactive, such as when watching TV or reading
- Feeling tired when waking up
- Needing an alarm clock consistently to wake up
- Waking up often and having trouble going back to sleep
- Falling asleep after a heavy meal
- Having difficulty remembering or concentrating
- Needing a nap most days
- Sleeping longer on weekends

#### What you can do to get more sleep

Managing your sleep debt is not easy. Today’s 24-hours-a-day society makes our days longer and nights shorter. Roth suggests trying to get at least eight hours of sleep a night, catching up on missed sleep on weekends and napping when possible—and not treating sleep as a luxury. “There is a belief that productive people sleep less,” Roth says. “People like Winston Churchill hardly slept, so people view sleep as a waste of time. Nothing could be further from the truth.”

Sleep disorders such as insomnia and sleep apnea further increase the national sleep debt. Increase your chances of getting some quality shut-eye with these tips from the National Sleep Foundation:

- Consume less caffeine (or none at all)
- Avoid alcohol
- Drink fewer fluids before going to sleep
- Establish a regular bedtime and waking schedule
- Avoid nicotine
- Avoid heavy meals close to bedtime
- Exercise regularly, but do so at least three hours before bedtime
- Try a relaxing routine, like a hot bath, before going to bed

#### Additional sources for information on sleep deprivation

For additional information on sleep deprivation and other sleep problems, see the following Web sites:

National Sleep Foundation Home Page:  
<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/>

Stanford University Sleep Disorders Center:  
<http://www.stanford.edu/%7Edement/#swi>

Center on Sleep Disorders Research, part of the National Institutes of Health:  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncsdr/index.htm>

Reprinted from: [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

- Will/living trust; letter of instructions.
- Photos or video of all valuables for documentation of insurance claim. (This inventory should be backed up on disk if it is on computer. Consider documenting your inventory by going through your areas with a video or camera and capture all your possessions on film.)
- Important business documents.
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates).
- List style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers.

- Store these documents only in your home emergency supply kit.

#### Store Emergency Documents

- Store Emergency Contact List and Emergency Documents in a tightly sealed freezer bag in emergency supplies. Send a copy to an out of state contact and keep another copy in safety deposit box.
- Additional copies of Emergency Contact List and all Emergency Documents should be stored:
- In emergency supply kits

- In wallet
- Give to personal support network

#### Update Every Six Months (i.e. when you change the clocks)

- Emergency Health Information Card
- Emergency Contact List

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<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/otherdocs.html>



## SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

### CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Caregiving can be a lonely task. Just you and your loved one alone in the house, day after day. Aside from family, there are few others who are available to lend support, to pick up the pieces when you feel they are falling apart, and maybe no one around who truly understands what it is you are going through.

Caregiving can send your emotions on a roller coaster ride—in any 24-hour period you can experience fear, rage, hope, sadness, humor, grief, bravery, fatigue, dedication and be overwhelmed with love.

It may come as no surprise, therefore, to hear that caring can play havoc with the caregiver's own physical, emotional and psychological well-being. A recent study in the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association* discovered that people caring for elderly spouses are more likely to die early as a result of the toll taken on their own lives.

#### Have you reached caregiver burnout?

Caregiver stress and overwork can lead to what is known as “caregiver burnout,” when you are beyond exhaustion, drained of all physical, spiritual and emo-

tional reserves and you feel as though you just can't go on one minute longer. If you reach this stage, you are at risk of ending up with two people who need care: your loved one, who depends on you for daily basic needs, and yourself.

#### Support groups offer a safe space

So what steps can you take to ensure you don't reach caregiver burnout? Support groups are becoming more and more popular. They offer a safe place to share emotions and experiences, seek and give advice, and exchange practical information with others. Support groups can be found for like-minded people experiencing all sorts of situations, from those suffering from certain diseases to those for gamblers and over-eaters.

#### You're not alone. . .

Support groups help you see that your situation is not unique, that you are not alone in your feelings and experiences. Just as importantly, you can use support groups as a resource to find other people who have struggled with the same problems as you and have found answers. As a caregiver, you may begin to rely more on your informal networks and peer groups for support than healthcare professionals.

#### How to find a caregiver support group

Support groups can be found through a number of sources:

- Ask other caregivers you know if they go to any groups; word of mouth is often the easiest way.
- Check local chapters of disease-specific organizations, such as the Alzheimer's Association or the Multiple Sclerosis Society.
- Contact the American Self-Help Clearinghouse
- Ask your local religious service agencies.
- Contact your Area Agency on Aging
- Talk to the social service department of your hospital.
- The Well Spouse Foundation (800-838-0879) has a list of available support groups.
- Children of Aging Parents— National Self-Help Clearing House (212-354-8525) also keeps a current list of support groups for caregivers.

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