



SUN-B *Connection*

Serving the Community since 2003

MESSAGE FROM Vicki Ellner

President & Chair Senior Umbrella Network of Brooklyn



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Yvette Clarke.. p 3**

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SAVE THE DATE!

SUN-B Annual Membership
Breakfast

Tuesday, February 23, 2010
featuring

Key Note Speaker
Emmy Award Winning
Journalist
Rita Cosby



In 2003, in a land called Brooklyn, a small group of dedicated professionals gathered to plan the launch of an organization that would strive to provide a forum for professionals to advocate, share ideas, collaborate, cultivate relationships, promote partnerships and most importantly make a difference in the community. Today, Senior Umbrella Network of Brooklyn (SUN-B) is a vibrant organization of professionals that provide programs, services and products to seniors and their families. We recently became recognized as a 501 (c) 3 Not For Profit Organization. This accomplishment furthered the vision of empowering SUN-B as a dynamic force into a reality.

This is the premier edition of the SUN-B Newsletter "**SUN -B Connection**" and marks an important goal that has been in the planning for some time. Thanks to the efforts of our member **Kathy Livingston**, Senior Vice President of Senior Helpers and SUN-B VP/Secretary, **Caryn Isaacs**, Patient Advocate, Resource Evaluation Leaders, Inc. this newsletter has become a reality.

Reality affects our members, community partners, professional endeavors and personal lives in many ways. Today with economic

struggles and involvement with our clients we seem to be doing more with less. I recently attended an Orion Resource Group meeting, Orion was founded by our member Henry Alter. The Orion Elder Planning meeting is competently facilitated by one of our other members, Jack Halpern. The speaker, Dan Schaefer, PhD. spoke to us about grieving. Grieving affects us all at some point of our lives. Whether it pertains to the loss of a loved one, loss of a relationship or friendship, loss of a job, loss of a home or the loss of dream,

Dr. Schaefer remarked that "Grieving is not an illness it is a process that is different for everyone.. Wherever someone is in this process is appropriate for them at that time" He advises us to be cognizant of our grief and be aware of errors, omissions, accidents and safety. Pertinent to our industry he reflected on the importance of grief training especially as it relates to caregivers and care giving.

I chose to reflect on the topic of grieving to underscore the unlimited resources that exists in SUN-B. Whether you represent home care, a hospital, hospice, assisted living, care management, elder law services, financial

services and any other related service to the population we are focused on – the reality of grieving affecting us exists whether it is our own or others. The positive factor is that SUN-B has enormous resources that we can tap into and benefit from by working together. Ensuring the SUN-B experience works for you is in your hands and we encourage you to take full advantage of the network we have worked diligently to create.

No stranger to grieving since the recent loss of my mother, I dedicate my work and passion for SUN-B to her. For a small snapshot of time she witnessed the reality of SUN-B and admired us all for what we do and the difference we make. We thank our contributors to this newsletter. Special thanks to Congresswoman Yvette Clark (NY 11) and her staff members Judith Kargbo, Press Secretary & Lystra Collis, Congressional Liaison for their cooperation in completing the interview highlighted in this edition of the **SUN-B Connection** while dealing with the harshest of realities as a result of the catastrophic events in Haiti. We look forward to the continued growth of SUN-B and with the support of our valued members we have no doubt that this will be a reality.

Report from the Board By Vice President/Secretary Caryn Isaacs

The Senior Umbrella Network of Brooklyn's (SUN-B) Board had many challenges and met most of its goals in 2009. To start with, we embarked on the journey to obtain our not for profit status. Sue Ferraro, VP/Treasurer devoted a whole year's work and by November we received confirmation that our designation as a 501(c)3 was approved. To comply with reporting requirements, we changed our membership terms to a calendar year starting in January. Roan Kane, Membership Chair reports that more than half the membership acknowledged the benefits of being a SUN-B member by renewing before 2009 ended. Most of the rest of the members have notified us of their intention to renew this month.

In 2009, SUN-B collaborated with the other SUN Chapters and published a joint Member Directory. The SUN Advocacy Committee published posters and pamphlets concerning Elder Abuse. Vicki and Angela addressed Grand Round at Coney Island Hospital on the issue of Successful Strategies for Caring for the Elderly". This opened the door for a discussion of adding a medical advisory Board to SUN-B in 2010.



Phoebe Layne and I produced monthly reports on Legislative Issues. They are planning a program for 2010 to update the membership on how to prosper in the era of health reform.

Vicki Ellner continues to plan the programs for our monthly meetings and effectively presides over our general meetings. Our members learned about Medicare funding from John Glaser, National Committee to Preserve Medicare and Social Security at Menorah Home. We had two great events at Sephardic Nursing Home, one featuring Dr. Michael DeFalco about Seniors and Stress and the showing of the film "Beautiful Hills of Brooklyn," including a discussion with the actress and writer. This year, we are incorporating more of the suggestions from our members as to what they want from the organization. Our first meeting of 2010 will demonstrate our new format as more time will be devoted to showcasing each members business.

Executive Vice President, Angela Villanella and Phoebe Layne chair the Member Breakfast committee. Last year, we acknowledged our Five Year Members. For 2010, Dr. Sal Cumella made the introduction that led to our securing Brooklyn born, Emmy award-winning journalist Rita Cosby as Key Note Speaker for the 2010 Annual Membership Breakfast which is scheduled for February 23, 2010.

Sue Ferraro pulled together the Annual Luncheon, SUN-B's gala event again with Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz participating by video to receive the "Power of One" Award. I held the interview in Marty's office, which gave us an inside look at the daily life of our Borough President. This year, Vicki, Sal and I reached out to

honor native Brooklynite and Pulitzer Prize Winner, Saul Friedman. Friedman founded his Gray Matters column, which was ahead of its time, as a survival guide for older people.

In 2010, you will see a new web site format. It will be easier to search our Member Directory and to highlight your events and notices. My effort to use social networking has brought SUN-B past the local market. Members Showcase and Members in the News are now highly ranked in Internet searches for senior services. We have even attracted new members through the site, which is why we will be introducing a "Refer a Member" program in 2010.

Natalia Selezneva and Mark Weissman offer their experience and support to help the SUN-B Board oversee and run the organization. We hold our trusted and valued board member, Renee Brennan, in our thoughts and prayers as she receives treatment for her illness.

In 2009, we welcomed the sponsorship of Ronald Fatoullah & Associates. Ron has generously offered to continue his participation through 2010.

The Members of the Board wish everyone a healthy and prosperous New Year. We look forward to more of your contributions to this newsletter.

Talking with United States Representative Yvette Clarke

United States Representative Yvette D. Clarke is a Brooklyn native whose roots are firmly planted in her Jamaican heritage. A product of the New York City Public School System, Rep. Clarke received a scholarship to Oberlin College and was a recipient of the prestigious APPAH/Sloan Fellowship in Public Policy and Policy Analysis.

Rep. Clarke was elected to Congress in November 2006 and represents the 11th Congressional District which includes Brownsville, Crown Heights, East Flatbush, Flatbush, Windsor Terrace, Borough Park, Sunset Park, Carroll Gardens, Kensington, Park Slope, Prospect Heights, Prospect-Lefferts Gardens and Prospect Park.

Prior to being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, she served on the New York City Council representing the 40th District in Brooklyn. She succeeded her pioneering mother, former City

Council Member Una S. T. Clarke, making them the first mother-daughter succession in the history of the Council.

Rep. Clarke sits on several committees including the House Education and Labor Committee, the House Homeland Security Committee and the House Small Business Committee.

A strong advocate of community-building, she has worked with community groups and appropriators in order to secure several million dollars in federal funding for the district. As a result, major institutions received funds, including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Brooklyn Public Library, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, the Prospect Park Alliance and the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT).

Rep. Clarke currently resides in the neighborhood where she grew up in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn.



SUN-B talks to Rep. Yvette Clarke

Q: SUN-B Our members are not only concerned about how Health Care Reform will impact their reimbursement rates, but how intrusive the Legislation will be in the way they provide services. Where are the opportunities for health providers?

A: Any new healthcare bill will provide ample opportunities for health care providers. As part of the reform, the House has addressed the reimbursement concerns of doctors by establishing a new reimbursement formula which will insure that doctors received fair compensation. Additionally, because everyone will be required to obtain health insurance, either through their employer, through the exchange or

Continued on page 5...

Home Care: Liability and Safety Measures

There are many options available when it comes to finding in home help for a client, patient or loved one. It is essential to explore the emotional, health and financial needs of the family before identifying the best options to recommend. In addition, it is important to address the liability and safety aspects of bringing a caregiver into the home. A thorough review in advance will best ensure the right fit when hiring a home health aide.

Kathy Livingston, Senior Vice President of Senior Helpers, recommends the following questions be reviewed with each potential agency and considered when weighing the option of hiring a caregiver privately. She explains that it is important to explore the services of each agency concerning measures taken to ensure the safety of the family assets.

- **Background Checks:** What is the hiring process? Are background checks conducted on state and national levels?
- **Reference Checks:** Are reference checks completed for each caregiver? How many? Are they personal and professional?
- **Insured and Bonded:** Are caregivers insured and bonded? Who is responsible if the caregiver is hurt while working?
- **Taxes and Social Security:** Who will be responsible for paying the caregiver? How are taxes and Social Security payments handled?

It is important to make certain the home care is not only the right-match regarding price and skill, consideration should also be given to liability issues, as well as safety measures to protect the property and possessions of the client.

© Kathy Livingston is Senior Vice President and Owner of Senior Helpers. Senior Helpers is a companion care agency proudly serving the New York City area with a wide range of services to assist seniors living independently in all five boroughs. Kathy can be reached at 646-214-2086 or klivingston@seniorhelpers.com.

Home Care Resources

The New York State Association of Health Care Providers, Inc. (HCP), a trade association representing over 500 offices of Licensed Home Care Service Agencies, Certified Home Health Agencies, Long Term Home Health Care Programs, Hospices and health related organizations (HROs) across New York State has information on their web site describing the various [Types of Home Care Agencies](#) (nyshcp.org). Roan Kane of MetroCare Givers, Inc, and Membership Chair for Senior Umbrella Network of Brooklyn, recommends associate membership to those companies

[Today's Caregiver](#) (caregiver.com) features an article by Rona S. Bartelstone, LCSW, BCD, CMC, "Hiring Private Duty Home Care Workers: Why Work through an Agency? The article has examples of situations in which home health aides are used in various situations.

Additionally, Here is an article about safety concerns for the home health worker.

By [Laura K. Brestovansky](http://www.ehow.com/facts_5718998_safety-issues-home-health-aides.html)

Food for Thought

The Perfect Partner

Here are some American health system partnership arrangements that have changed the way we receive and pay for care.

1960 The patient and the doctor are partners in health.

You feel sick, you call the doctor's home. His wife says he'll be right over. He leaves you some medicine and you give him a check. If you don't get well, it was just your time to go.

1970 The patient and the employer are partners in health.

You feel sick, you go down to medical. The staff gives you some medicine and tells you to go back to work and enroll in the company exercise class. If you don't get well, you can always go on disability or collect on your pension.

1980 The patient, the clinic and the insurance company are partners in health.

You feel sick, you stop at the clinic in the mall. They do some tests. The secretary gives you a prescription. You wait for your pills to come in the mail. It's all billed to your insurance plan. If you don't get well, you can pursue the options up to the maximum of your plan allowance. Then you can pay the bills from your pocket or claim bankruptcy.

1990 The patient, the provider and the payer are partners in health.

You feel sick, you call your primary care facility. A nurse practitioner discusses your symptoms. She says they will call in a prescription to your pharmacy plan. If the

medicine doesn't work, you can come in next week for an approval form to see a specialist. Your HMO pays the bill. If you don't get well, you can change HMO's or your heirs can sue for malpractice.

2000 The consumer, the health plan and the provider are partners in health.

You feel sick, you go on the Internet to upload your symptoms to the Provider Benefit Manager's web site. You wait for E-Mail competitive bids on alternative treatment options from Suppliers. Enter your card number to have the amount deducted from your health savings account. Print out a receipt and bring it to any Super Store for Self-Directed Healthcare. If you don't get well, go back to the Internet to get a second opinion.

2014 The National Health Board, the State Insurance Exchange, the clinician and you are partners in health.

You feel sick, you plug your digital health record into the National Health Board's data base, at any CVS or Wal-Mart to confirm that you meet the guidelines for coverage. As long as you haven't been smoking, using salt or missing your workouts, you can request approval from the health plan you purchased from the exchange for an approved clinician. After your health bank has deducted the appropriate amount from your account, you can set up your appointment for a few weeks later. The clinician will have received electronic orders from the plan as to what medication to sell you. If you don't get better, you will need to find a doctor on the black market because we all know that means you didn't follow your disease management protocols.

Talking with United States Representative Yvette Clarke *cont'd...*

through Medicare or Medicaid, many more doctors will be needed to provide services to the increased patient load. In terms of intrusiveness, the healthcare reform bill will not be intrusive. Seniors access to services and doctors will remain as they are today.

Q: SUN-B Many of our members serve the private pay sector of the senior community. The economy has hit not only the poorer of Brooklyn's seniors, but also those who had planned for a comfortable retirement. What funding will be available to help our seniors in the areas of home ownership, transportation, taxes, investments, etc.?
H.R.1848: To provide funding for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation for mortgage foreclosure mitigation activities.
H.R.1270: To reauthorize community development block grants, and for other purposes

A: On HR 1270: We are still working with the Housing Subcommittee on Financial Services Committee to explore a way to get this done. Community Development Block Grants is a great program that needs more funding and this policy if enacted would be tremendous help to communities in New York City and nationwide. In Congress we are hard at work finding ways to accelerate our economic recovery so that all Americans including our seniors can regain solid economic footing.

Q: SUN-B Small businesses in general are feeling the credit crunch. Will there be credit opportunities for other non traditional business opportunities. For example, a group of physicians are building a medical facility and cannot get a construction loan, even though they have been approved for such a loan, or a reverse mortgage broker cannot close on loans that are in all aspects good loans. H.R.3771: To amend the Small Business Act to establish mentorship and assistance programs designed to help minority, veteran-owned, and women-owned small businesses operate in the construction industry, and for other purposes.

A: Access to Capital: I am hard at work finding ways for families and small businesses to access capital. I favor expanding the ability of credit unions to lend to small businesses. I also favor expanding the Community Development Financial Institutions program which will increase lending capacity in underserved areas. I

also believe that large financial institutions should be solid corporate citizens and do their part to aid in our nation's recovery by increasing lending.

Small Business: HR 3771 would be a great opportunity for small businesses in the construction sector if enacted. We are working with our colleagues on improving the bill and moving it forward to passage. As a member of the small business committee I recently voted in favor of a bill that would create more access to capital opportunities and it passed the House. It is now in the Senate. In general I am always fighting for small businesses to ensure they have access to capital, contracting opportunities, and mentorship to grow their businesses. Small businesses will be at the forefront of the economic recovery and I am always searching for ways to improve outcomes for them.

Q: SUN-B Brooklyn is home to a diverse population, and many who serve our seniors are immigrants including our doctors and home health providers. We know that the health care entitlement issue for immigrants is a hot topic in the reform debate, but what other opportunities are available to help and protect people who are in this country to serve our senior population or who have worked here for years and are now elderly themselves.

A: The 11th congressional district is one of the most diverse districts in the nation with a large population of 1st and 2nd generation immigrants. As professionals, I know you work hard to serve these individuals especially our senior citizens. I know you hear the frustrations of those who long to fully use our services. Unfortunately at this moment, those seniors with some legal permanent status remain subject to the rights and restrictions of their visa designation. Additionally those undocumented senior citizens have not rights. In order to properly serve these individuals, young or young at heart, we must change our immigration system to streamline the many loopholes that continue to hold them back. That is why we must support legislative efforts to revamp our immigration system.

For this reason I am a proud supporter of H.R 4321 the "Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity" (CIR A.S.A.P.). Introduced by

my colleague Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) this piece of legislation consists of:

- The DREAM Act
- Smart and humane interior enforcement
- Provisions for an agreement between labor and agribusiness
- An employment eligibility verification system
- Protective measures for the labor rights of immigrants and non-immigrants
- Measures for the promotion of immigrant integration

As Congress drafts immigration legislation, advocacy groups, religious leaders, individual stakeholders, and all levels of government must come together and push for comprehensive immigration reform. We must make sure that President Obama sticks to his promise for action, we hold Secretary Napolitano accountable to her commitment, and that Congress does its part to move a comprehensive immigration reform legislative package. It must be done, for the sake of the individuals we serve.

Q: SUN-B What other issues do you hear about from your senior constituents related to services they need in Brooklyn.

A: Seniors in my district have expressed great concern about the potential shortfall that will begin in January 2010. For the first time in 35 years, Social Security recipients are not expected to get a cost-of-living adjustment in their benefits in 2010. As a result, Social Security recipients will receive less in their checks because of the higher Part B premiums that will be deducted.

Currently, Social Security withholds Part B premiums from the monthly checks of 77% of seniors nationwide. Many seniors choose to have the premium directly debited from their checks for convenience. Congress has heard our senior's concerns and has responded by passing H.R. 3631, The Medicare Fairness Premium Act. This bill freezes Part B premiums for enrollees who are currently scheduled for an increase in premiums next year. This will keep Part B premiums in 2010 at the 2009 level. Regardless if premiums are directly debited out of your Social Security check or if you pay your premiums through other means, this freeze applies to you.

Questions: Vicki Ellner, Caryn Isaacs & Phoebe Layne, SUN-B Legislative Committee

Special thanks to Judith Kargbo, Press Secretary & Lystra Collis, Congressional Liaison Congresswoman Yvette Clarke (NY -11)

Networking 101: Be More Than a Business Card By Kathy Livingston

Each SUN-B meeting provides an excellent opportunity to meet with other professionals serving our seniors in the Brooklyn community. Every member should always have a business card ready for a new contact; however it is important to go beyond the exchange of business cards to establish relationships with peers.

The following are tips to maximize networking with fellow SUN-B members. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

- **Be an Expert.** Make sure to stay on top of recent developments pertaining to the industry as a whole and how your services fit into the picture. Read relevant articles and blogs. Share them with your peers in SUN-B. In addition, be an expert on your products and/or services. Think about how to communicate the benefits to peers in a manner that is of interest to them and their clients.
- **Be Passionate.** Show professional compassion. Share success stories from your organization. Get to know fellow members and send notes, cards and greetings that are relevant to current events for them and their companies.
- **Share Connections.** Introduce members that may benefit from working together. Set a goal to introduce two people in your network at every meeting. Let them know why you feel they should be introduced and make the connection for them.
- **Don't Over Share Your Card.** Hand out your business card when asked for more information. You should not use it to explain your services for you. It is more important to collect a business card from another person of interest and to set up a manner by which you can follow up with them.

Elder & Adult Family Mediation to Face the Challenges of Aging

Adult aging is a time to be acknowledged and honored, as the elder's needs change and the family adjusts accordingly. Decisions must be made, siblings must work together to address their parents' and one another's circumstances, and plans need to be drawn up. But no matter how cohesive a family is, and regardless of how well they have handled decision-making in the past, the unique issues and pressures which accompany the aging process can often pose new challenges for the family unit. Mediation can be an invaluable tool, both in the planning process, as an aid to vital decision-making, to help manage crisis situations, and to facilitate the resolution of conflict which can arise throughout these processes.

Mediation Can Address a Wide Variety of Issues

While there is really no limit to the issues for which a trained and experienced mediator can provide assistance, some of the more common ones which arise in the

context of an aging family member include:

- Caring for the elder in an adult child's home
- Caregiver burnout
- Residence options
- Health care decisions
- Providing support for long-term health conditions
- Safety issues, especially related to driving
- Tension around estate issues
- Management of financial responsibilities
- Monitoring and addressing developing needs in the future
- Devising an effective system of communication among family members and other involved support stakeholders
- On-going decision-making

The mediator's goal is to help the family work as a team with the best interests of their parent at the core of the process. It is not unusual for siblings, whose own circumstances

may vary greatly one from the other, to hold different and sometimes contrary or even competitive views about how issues involving their parent should be addressed. Mediation helps each family member to articulate his or her own views, and assures that they hear and understand the views of their parents and siblings in turn. The mediator helps the family assimilate information and assess options, with the assistance of resource experts brought into the process as needed, and reach thoughtful decisions that everyone can live with, while simultaneously respecting the senior's desire for individual control and maintenance of personal dignity.

How Does It Work?

Typically, when issues among adult siblings become too confused, contentious or overwhelming, a family member will seek outside help. The mediator will explain the process to this "family champion",

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Using Elder & Adult Family Mediation to Face the Challenges of Aging *cont'd...*

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*Please keep articles to 300
words or less*
*Editors reserve the right to
screen and edit any material
submitted for publication*

and they will discuss the specific needs of the family, first and foremost who should be included in the mediation process. This can include siblings, spouses, grandchildren, concerned friends and support persons, caregivers, clergy – each case is unique and the process is flexible enough to meet the needs of that particular family. The key question of whether the elder is capable of, and interested in, participating, will be discussed as well. There may also be a need for resource persons, such as an elder care attorney, geriatric care manager, or other expert, and this can be explored at the outset.

The process moves through a couple of different phases, including private interviews with each of the participants before convening the mediation session with all present. At each step of the process, the goal is to encourage fruitful, open and honest conversation in a non-threatening environment. Conflict itself is utilized in a creative way, to foster new ideas and fresh approaches in planning and decision-making. The needs, wishes and autonomy of the elder are given as much support as possible throughout.

How Does It End?

As in all mediation, the outcome reflects the wishes of the parties involved. Mediators do not make decisions, nor do they tell the parties what to do. They do, however, allow a new type of communication to take place when the old, ingrained methods aren't working. The results depend on the family, but working with a mediator, they have given themselves the best possible chance of reaching loving and sound decisions and protecting their family relationships in the process.

Nancy Gardner, a long-time mediator and social worker, and Lisa Brogan, an attorney turned mediator, are working together to bring elder and adult family mediation to the greater New York area. Nancy can be reached at amcr1@optonline.net or 914 -232-4970, and Lisa can be reached at ldbrogan@aol.com, or 516-672-3851.

About Our Organization...

Established in 2003 to serve the needs of Brooklyn's aging population, the Senior Umbrella Network of Brooklyn (SUN-B) is an organization for professionals serving seniors in our community. This diverse organization of professionals is focused on improving the quality of services and care delivered to senior citizens in our region- across the spectrum.

Our vision is to serve as a cohesive and efficient referral and resource network for senior services across Brooklyn. By coming together as professionals, we can help ensure better integration of service for seniors and help them sort through their needs and options.

As a result, our clients will be better positioned to solve the health, social, financial and day-to-day practical issues that confront seniors. Your involvement and interest will make meaningful difference. Together, we

can achieve more than we can alone. We look forward to working with you. Our membership represents professionals from:

- Hospitals
- Nursing Homes
- Assisted Living
- Home Care
- Community based organizations
- Senior Centers
- Legal and Financial
- Government
- And other related professionals

SUN-B is based on the belief that when professionals collaborate, they position themselves to help achieve more for their clients, while also building important relationships with one another.

- Strengthen your capabilities
- Leverage your networking circles
- Extend your advocacy voice
- Continue your professional development
- Stay abreast of changing trends, social issues and legislation