

# CAREConnections

Information and Inspiration for Caregivers

A Publication of Boulder County Area Agency on Aging

Sept/Oct 2015

## INSIDE

1

Assistive Technology  
for Seniors:  
Today and Tomorrow

3

Helpful Tools for Families  
Living with Alzheimer's

4

Hearing Loss Technology:  
A Guide for Caregivers

7

Online Assistive  
Technology Database

8

Community Resources

10

Adapting to Vision Loss:  
Simple and  
Sophisticated Tools

### Dear Caregiver,

We all rely on a variety of tools in our daily lives for personal care, cooking and eating, communicating, working, and more. Caregiving also benefits from the use of appropriate tools, but many caregivers don't realize the variety or ingenuity of tools that are available to assist the loved ones in their care.

Tools that help someone live as safely and independently as possible are called assistive technology (AT). They range from something as simple as easy-to-grip eating utensils to highly sophisticated computer software. Along that range are thousands of products that can turn a task that's become difficult or impossible into one that's doable. They make life easier for older adults with functional limitations—and their caregivers.

This issue starts with an overview of assistive technology and continues with details on AT for persons with Alzheimer's/dementia, for persons with hearing loss, and for persons with vision impairment. There's lots to learn and all kinds of interesting tools to try.

*The Editors*



### Assistive Technology for Seniors: Today and Tomorrow

*by Julia Beems, MA*

In today's rapidly growing market there are more than 50,000 assistive technology devices available for seniors and persons with disabilities that improve not only their functional capabilities, but also their safety and independence. Assistive Technology ranges from homemade devices and low-cost modifications to high-tech, high-cost solutions.

Low-tech, low-cost solutions could involve placing a checklist on the bathroom mirror to ensure completion of the morning grooming routine, labeling drawers and cabinets as reminders of what is inside, and writing appointments in a notebook. These solutions could make a significant difference in an individual's level of independence. High-tech solutions might include a wheelchair, remote controls to operate the lights, TV, and stereo, or a communication device.

Other solutions might include organizers, which are devices that assist in organizing either daily activities or a single multi-step activity, such as following a recipe. They are available in a variety of formats, ranging



## CAREConnections

is published six times a year by Boulder County Area Agency on Aging (BCAAA). To subscribe or respond to articles, contact:

### Care Connections

Boulder County Area Agency

on Aging

P. O. Box 471

Boulder, CO 80306

303-678-6116 (ph)

303-678-6285 (fax)

InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org

Care Connections is offered free to residents of Boulder County, though donations are gratefully accepted. Agencies, businesses, and professionals are encouraged to donate to Care Connections in an effort to keep it available at no cost to caregivers. Subscriptions to addresses outside of Boulder County may be obtained by a one-time donation of \$10.00.

Care Connections is supported in large part by contributions from business sponsors. For more information on sponsorships, call 303-678-6116. Sponsorship, while appreciated, does not constitute endorsement by Boulder County Area Agency on Aging.

### Editorial Advisory Committee

Emily Cooper

Susan Damon

Claudia Helade

Lynn Malkinson

Mary Kathleen Rose

### Newsletter Design

StudioBlue West,

Newport, Oregon

Reproduction of Care Connections articles is permitted with credit to Boulder County Area Agency on Aging.

from reusable laminated checklists to smart phone apps and voice-operated electronic organizers.

Keeping track of different types of medications, their dosages, and when to take them is a major issue for many individuals, and many dispensing systems and alarm reminders are available to help. Dispensing systems include bubble-packaged medications from the local pharmacy, with just the right amount of medication in each bubble, and automated pill-dispensing devices. There are multiple devices and apps with alarms that beep or buzz when it is time to take medications, as well as talking alarms that indicate exactly which pill to take and when to take it.

For individuals who experience difficulties with reading and writing, picture cookbooks assist in following recipes and picture tutorials give directions for operating new devices. The *Franklin Language Master* and *Quictionary Reading Pen* are dictionaries that help with word definitions and spelling by “speaking” the information or providing it in print form. For computer users, special software can help organize thoughts (*Inspiration*) or aid with writing (*CoWriter*, *TextHelp*, *Spellswell*).

There also are many aids for daily living available for use by seniors. For personal care and grooming, a foam curler can be added to a toothbrush for easier gripping, or a denture brush can be attached to the counter with a suction cup for use with one hand. Choice of clothing becomes the most important factor when looking at dressing issues. For ease of manipulation, clothes should be roomy and stretchy with simple side or front closures, deep armholes, and elasticized waists. Velcro closures, snaps, or magnets instead of buttons, and cuff buttons sewn on with elastic thread, eliminate the need for maneuvering difficult buttons. Adding a small key ring to a zipper pull also assists with the manipulation of zippers. Cooking activities also can be easily adapted with the right equipment. Specialized cutting boards that suction to the counter and have prongs to secure different food types allow for use with one hand, and various jar openers and easy grip handles and knobs are available. There also are many reachers, writing aids, and book holders for general use around the house, along with amplified, large numbered, photo, hands-free telephones, or speakerphones and phone headsets.

For safety purposes, there are a variety of devices and smartphone apps that can alert individuals within or outside the home that assistance is needed or that there is an emergency. There also are

specialized visual and audio alerting systems for individuals who have lost their sight and/or hearing.

### **What does the future hold?**

New assistive devices are being developed every day, along with improving and updating those already in existence. There is an increase in the customization, flexibility, and portability of products to allow devices to be accessed by anyone, anywhere, regardless of their abilities. Examples include: e-book readers with text-to-speech (voice output) capabilities; GPS apps that can track someone who may have wandered off or provide verbal instructions to someone who is visually impaired; computer software that adjusts automatically to a person's individual requirements and environment rather than requiring the person to adjust to the device; and speech recognition that is becoming more mainstreamed and is increasingly incorporated into electronic products, providing a new way to integrate with technology.

Advances also are being made in touch, gesture, and optical tracking that will allow users to interact with computer products in the most accessible manner. Home appliances are being developed to operate through remote controls from computers, laptops, smart phones, or other mobile devices.

Progress also is being made in incorporating accessibility devices with mobile technology (GPS, radio frequency identification-RFID, text-to-speech, and Tag technology) that can be worn in clothing or in the ear, or can be attached to a mobility device (wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane). This technology will allow an individual to manipulate their environment (turn lights on and off, adjust the thermostat), will provide information about their environment, and will enable interaction by their method of choice regardless of their abilities.

*Julia Beems is Senior Instructor and Assistive Technology Program Outreach Coordinator and Emergency Preparedness Program Coordinator for Assistive Technology Partners, University of Colorado Denver Anschutz Medical Center. For more information about the devices discussed in this article, or how to fund them, contact her at 303-315-1284 or [julia.beems@ucdenver.edu](mailto:julia.beems@ucdenver.edu), or visit [www.assistivetechnologypartners.org](http://www.assistivetechtechnologypartners.org).*



### **Helpful Tools for Families Living with Alzheimer's** *by Tina Wells, MA*

**M**ary was just diagnosed with early stage Alzheimer's disease and is starting to have difficulties with some tasks around the house. Jan, her partner of 42 years, wants to find ways to help Mary without insulting her dignity or preventing her from being as independent as possible. Jan had read that people in the first and second stage of the disease generally benefit the most from assistive technology. She decided to ask caregivers in the support group she attends for their advice about helpful tools.

"I couldn't live without the kitchen safety kit," said one man. "My mom started having problems in the kitchen like leaving the stove on, getting confused about organizing her medications, and burning her hands under the hot water faucet." At The Alzheimer's Store, the caregiver found a stove safety shutoff, an anti-scalding device, and an automatic pill dispenser that helped keep his Mom safe.

Another caregiver added, "The most helpful thing we found is Comfort Zone, because it allows Jerry to still take his morning walk and alerts me if he leaves his usual route." Many of the caregivers agreed about the need for alerts and door alarms. There are many products avail-



able including MedicAlert + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return, as well as motion alarms, that can be found at The Alzheimer's Store.

Someone else contributed, "My aunt lives out of town and we used to enjoy our weekly phone conversations. When she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's she didn't seem to understand how to use the phone anymore. I found an adaptive phone that has pictures instead of numbers. Now my aunt can just pick up the phone and touch my picture to talk to me."

"Loretta does not like taking baths," one caregiver shared, "so I use a modesty cape, rinse-free shampoo, and a bath buddy to make her feel more comfortable." All of these items can be found at The Alzheimer's Store (and the Caregiver Center includes helpful tips on bathing).

The last piece of advice Jan received from the support group was to surround herself with a good network of friends and family who will be there when she needs support. She learned about Lotsa Helping Hands, a free, online calendar that can organize tasks like meals, rides to medical appointments, or visitors so she can get a break. This also is a great way to answer friends who offer, "Let me know what I can do to help." Caregivers have found that this calendar not only is a way to identify needs but also makes it easier to accept help.

The support group shared helpful information with Jan about safety in and outside the home. The members emphasized that these devices can enhance the skills that Mary still has, and also can compensate for some of the skills she is losing. Assistive technology is a valuable support that may allow a person with Alzheimer's disease to stay at home in their familiar surroundings for a longer period of time.

To learn more about helpful tools, call the Alzheimer's Association's 24-hour Helpline, at 1-800-272-3900, or go to the sites below:

- The Alzheimer's Store: <http://www.alzstore.com/default.asp>
- Comfort Zone: <http://www.alz.org/comfortzone/>
- MedicAlert + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return: <http://www.alz.org/care/dementia-medic-alert-safe-return.asp>
- Adaptive Phones: <http://www.alzstore.com/SearchResults.asp?Search=phone&Submit=GO>
- Leisure Devices: [http://www.atdementia.org.uk/productCategory.asp?cat\\_id=22](http://www.atdementia.org.uk/productCategory.asp?cat_id=22)
- The Caregiver Center – Bathing: <http://www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-bathing.asp>
- Lotsa Helping Hands: <http://lotsahelpinghands.com/>

---

*Tina Wells is Director of Education and Outreach for the Alzheimer's Association of Colorado.*

### **Hearing Loss Technology: A Guide for Caregivers**

*by Rebecca Herr, MA*



**H**earing loss is an invisible disability that affects nearly 20% of the population—more than 62,000 people in Boulder County. By age 70, two thirds of adults have lost some hearing, and by 85, four fifths are affected. Untreated, hearing loss is linked to anxiety, depression, and dementia; it also can lead to medical misunderstandings. Straining to hear wears people out, but with the right devices, they don't have to work so hard. Using assistive technology can promote independence and self-esteem, allowing people to participate in their communities and enjoy activities with others.

Caregivers can help loved ones find their way back from isolation and dependence, and compassion and technology play important roles in that journey. Sometimes caregivers may help too much, acting as "human hearing aids" by taking phone calls, or managing conversations and

social situations. If you are serving as your loved one's ears, you may be enabling denial and delaying their adjustment and recovery. It's much more empowering to explore adaptation strategies together, finding helpful resources and deciding what tools to use.

Fortunately, the 21st century offers lots of helpful tools for use when hearing fades. Some are specialized for hard of hearing people, and others are mainstream devices with accessibility options. The Internet offers a wealth of information on adaptations, so you can search for **terms in bold** in this article to learn more on your own.

### Hearing Aids and Implants

Everyone knows about **hearing aids**, but only 20-25% of those who could benefit actually use them. Reasons for avoidance are well known: denial, stigma, cost, adjustment problems. Hearing aids work remarkably well for one-on-one conversations, but they don't restore hearing the way glasses restore vision. Here's my perspective: they've helped me to converse, work, play, and learn for almost 40 years. I'm almost deaf now, and they still help. They can be reprogrammed as hearing ability changes, and features now are much better than ten years ago. With **telecoils**, aids work with assistive devices. Consider them!

**Cochlear implants** help people with severe hearing loss. The device is implanted surgically, and follow-up treatment is needed for interpreting sounds. An external processor collects sound and transmits it to electrodes that bypass damaged ear parts and stimulate the audio nerve. Most implants have telecoils and options for connecting to other devices.

### Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

ALDs work with hearing aids and implants (using telecoil or Bluetooth connections) or on their own. Ask about ALDs when you get hearing aids. If you don't have hearing aids, **personal listening devices** help a lot. Choices

include the PocketTalker, Mini Personal Amplifier, Maxi Amplifier, or Comfort Audio Duett, with sound delivered via headphones, earbuds, or neckloops. Cost: \$100 - \$300.

**Personal FM systems** send sound from a talker (wireless transmitter) to listeners (receivers) using earphones, earbuds, or hearing aids. These are great for lectures or meetings, and also at home. Cost: \$600 - \$1000. All Boulder County senior centers have FM devices for any program there, so be sure to ask for them.

For watching TV or listening to music, try **infrared devices** like TV Ears. These individual headsets receive signals from TVs or stereo, and have volume controls so the person with hearing loss can crank it up without blasting others out of the room. Caregivers can use **TV listening systems** too, to watch silently without disturbing others. Cost: \$60 - \$200.

### Induction Loops

**Induction loop systems** are used in homes or public spaces, and can replace headphones. A loop of wire goes around the listening area and connects to an amplifier, which transmits sound to hearing aids or listening devices. At home, you can loop a room, a seat, or desk area. A **personal neckloop** can bring sound from a cell phone, music player, TV, or computer to your hearing aid. You need a **telecoil-equipped** hearing aid or implant. The versatility and sound quality of loop systems make them a worthwhile choice.

A June 27th *Boulder Daily Camera* article listed locations with hearing loops: Chautauqua Community House, Boulder Dinner Theater, Balfour Senior Living, Frasier Meadows Retirement Community, Boulder County Commissioners hearing room, Boulder County Training Room, Community United Church of Christ, Nelson Road Baptist Church, St. John's Episcopal Church, First Congregational Church, and many classrooms at CU - Boulder. See [www.assist2hear.com](http://www.assist2hear.com) to learn about loops.



## Alarm and Alert Systems

Can you hear your smoke alarm or carbon monoxide detector? Many people with hearing loss can't. Standard alarms use a high frequency beep, and most age-related and noise-induced hearing loss is in those frequencies. Adaptive **alert devices** emit low frequency sounds, or use strobe lights or vibrations. A **weather alert radio** gives you voice, tones, or captions about hazards and emergencies. Integrated **home alert systems** notify residents about sounds like ringing phones, doorbells, and environmental sounds. If you can't hear an alarm clock, try one with a strobe light or **bed shaker** alarm. For caregivers with hearing loss, there are visual alarms for doors or windows opening or a person getting out of bed.

## Learn About Hearing Loss ... Together

**Association of Late Deafened Adults** ([www.alda.org](http://www.alda.org)) is for people who lost their hearing after acquiring spoken language. Locally, ALDA - Boulder has hearing loss adjustment and sign language classes, and Peer Mentors offer free consultations. Use the Contact page on the website to get information.

**Hearing Loss Association of America** ([www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)) has great resources. See "Hearing Help" for two captioned video series: "Hearing Loss Basics" and "Technology." Or read about devices and advocacy issues. Members receive the very good *Hearing Loss* magazine. The Boulder and Denver chapters have monthly meetings, events, and newsletters.

## Telephone Alternatives

Telephones become more difficult as we lose hearing. With age-related loss, we miss parts of the sound spectrum needed to understand speech. Luckily, we have alternatives: amplified phones, captioned phones, text devices, and email. Most mainstream phones now have volume controls. **Amplified phones** offer more features: tone controls to adjust frequencies, flashing call alerts, louder ringers, and larger displays.

Many cell phones have **texting programs** included, so give them a try. **Tablet and smart-phone apps** help too. On my iPad, I use relay services (captioned calls and video relay), texting, sign language apps, and a decibel meter to measure noise levels. My free Dragon Dictation app makes impromptu captions: speak a phrase, and it becomes written text on the screen that is more or less accurate.

**Captioned phones** have visual displays for text, volume and tone controls, and most use a phone line, power outlet, and internet connection. You speak as usual into the handset, and listen to the other person's words and read the captions seconds later. Phone prices vary from \$75 - \$100.

Sprint Relay Colorado offers free telephone Relay Services in Colorado; see [www.relaycolorado.com](http://www.relaycolorado.com) for descriptions. They offer four models of CapTel captioned phones for \$75 ([www.weitbrecht.com/captel-colorado.html](http://www.weitbrecht.com/captel-colorado.html)). Other captioned phones: Hamilton CapTel (\$75 at [www.hamiltoncaptel.com](http://www.hamiltoncaptel.com)), CaptionCall (free with certification, [www.captioncall.com](http://www.captioncall.com)), ClearCaptions Ensemble phone (\$75) and free mobile app ([www.clearcaptions.com](http://www.clearcaptions.com)), and the free InnoCaption app for Apple & Android smartphones ([www.innocaption.com](http://www.innocaption.com)).

Colorado residents who meet low-income guidelines can qualify for free **assistive telephone equipment**. You must provide proof of residency, income, and hearing loss (form from a physician or audiologist). Equipment options: amplified phones, captioned phones, low-vision options, TTYs, phone ring signalers. Read about the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program at [www.ccdhh.com/tedp/tedp.aspx](http://www.ccdhh.com/tedp/tedp.aspx).

## Accessible Entertainment Options

At home, technology helps people with hearing loss enjoy television, online shows, and music.

(continued on page 7)



# Our Sponsors



**The Road to Recovery...**

Begins at Broomfield Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center. Our mission is to create an environment that promotes trust between us and our guest, the residents, their family and friends and the community. We believe that quality life is the single most important component of a person's stay at our facility. We also believe that in order to provide the highest quality of care, we need the support and input of residents, their families and their friends.

Please call us for a tour or with questions at 303.785.5800 or visit our website at [www.broomfieldnursingcenter.com](http://www.broomfieldnursingcenter.com)

**Broomfield**  
Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center  
12975 Sheridan Blvd • Broomfield, CO 80020

**Features:**

- Restore Unit with Private Suites furnished with Refrigerators, Flat Screen TV's and Telephones.
- Long Term Care Suites
- Free Wifi
- Private Bathrooms with Barrier Free Showers
- In-House Physician Coverage
- State of the Art Therapy Gym
- Theatre Room & Bistro On Site
- Individualized Care Plans

*Your Goals become Our Goals.  
Working together to attain your highest potential and return to your community.*

**"We Care About the People You Care About"**

**Mesa Vista**  
of Boulder  
303-442-4037  
Proudly Serving Boulder for 79 years



Mesa Vista of Boulder has an established tradition of providing rehabilitation and long-term care in the Boulder community. Nestled in a residential area, our facility offers hilltop panoramic views of the foothills and city of Boulder.

- Medicare rehab stays - PT, OT, ST
- Secured Alzheimer's/Dementia unit
- Multi-generational setting with programs for older and younger adults
- Family-centered environment
- Programs for persons with behavioral problems and Huntington's disease
- Entertainment and community outings
- Long-term care, respite and hospice stays

**2121 Mesa Drive • Boulder, CO 80304**

**Let our family care for yours. Homewatch CareGivers®**

*Affordable Care Solutions:*

- Bonded & Insured
- Nurse Trained & Supervised
- Meals, Meds, Light Housekeeping
- Errands, Companionship
- Respite Care, Alzheimer's, Disabled

Serving Boulder, Longmont, Louisville & Lafayette Since 1994

**303-444-1133**  
[homewatchcaregivers.com/boulder](http://homewatchcaregivers.com/boulder)



Class A/B Licensed Locally Owned Since 2000

**BBB** ACCREDITED BUSINESS



**Windhorse**  
ELDER CARE

Holistic In-home Care • Free Assessment • Medical Advocacy  
Family Support and Education • End-of-Life and Respite Care  
Full Range Psychological Services • Senior and Family Counseling

**303.786.9313 • [www.windhorsecare.com](http://www.windhorsecare.com)**

**GOLDEN WEST**  
Senior Living in Boulder



*Celebrating 50 Years*

Serving Boulder seniors, their families and the community.

Affordable independent and assisted living apartments in midtown Boulder. See for yourself why so many adults 62+ choose Golden West as their home.

**gwboulder.org | 303-444-3967**  
1055 Adams Circle, Boulder, CO 80303

Golden West is a local nonprofit organization that provides quality housing and services to persons aged 62+ in an environment that is supportive of senior residents and the community.

**CAREGIVING SUPPORT FOR SENIORS AND FAMILIES**



- Expertly Trained Caregivers
- Licensed, Bonded and Insured
- Hourly to Complete 24-hour Care
- Post-hospitalization Care
- Alzheimer's Care Specialists

**720-204-6083** **HomeCare of the Rockies**

**HomeCare of the Rockies.com**



- Medicaid Planning
- Guardianships & Conservatorships
- Wills & Trusts / Special Needs
- Probate Administration & Litigation



**Brandon Fields P.C.**

Elder Law, Estate & Special Needs Planning

**303-449-5602**

brandon@elderlawboulder.com

1510 28th St., Suite 205, Boulder, CO 80303

[www.elderlawboulder.com](http://www.elderlawboulder.com)



## Care Patrol

We Help Families Find Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care & In Home Care Options.

**We Are A FREE Community Service!**

You Don't Need To Look On Your Own.

**Speak With A Senior Advisor Today!**

**Call Michael 720-660-1024**

[www.CarePatrol.com](http://www.CarePatrol.com)



## Care Link, Inc.

### Adult Day Services

- Free Assessment & Trial Visit
- Meals & Snacks
- Fun Structured Activities
- Medication Assistance
- Transportation Available
- Daily Exercise
- Daytime Care



3434 47<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Boulder, CO 80301

**(303) 532 - 2477**

When you need expert care at home



**Boulder Community Health**  
HOMECARE

- Skilled Nurses and Therapists
- Home Health Aides
- Medicare Certified

**CALL 303-441-0444**

A service of Boulder Community Health. JCAHO Accredited.

## Volunteer-powered services:

- Escorted medical transportation
- Grocery shopping/delivery
- Minor home repairs
- Snow removal (city of Boulder only)
- Yard cleanup

Boulder County CareConnect

**(303)443-1933**

**BCCC**  
[www.careconnectbc.org](http://www.careconnectbc.org)

## THE KAPSAK LAW FIRM, LLC

**DANIEL P. KAPSAK**  
**MICHELLE M. STOLL**  
Attorneys and Counselors at Law

ph: 303-651-9330

fax: 303-485-3714

[info@kapsaklaw.com](mailto:info@kapsaklaw.com)

1610 Hover Road, Suite 203, Longmont, CO 80501



## Plan B

Home Care Services, Inc.

**720-652-9078**

**Helping Make Life at Home a Safe, Enjoyable & Productive one!**

- |                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Overnight Care       | Respite Care   |
| Weekend Care         | Companionship  |
| Cooking              | Laundry        |
| Running Errands      | Transportation |
| Medication Reminders | Personal Care  |
| Shower assistance    | Housecleaning  |

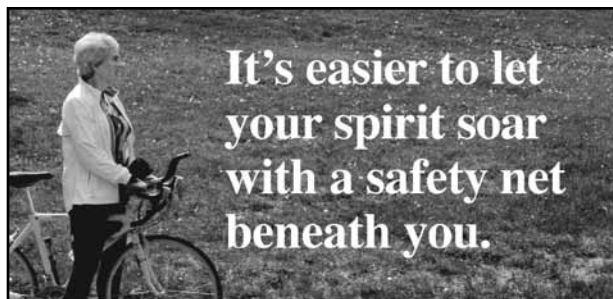
We supplement Hospice Care  
Help with all activities for daily living.

**CALL FOR A FREE ASSESSMENT**

[planbhomecare1630@msn.com](mailto:planbhomecare1630@msn.com)

[WWW.PLANBHOME CARE.COM](http://WWW.PLANBHOME CARE.COM)





It's easier to let  
your spirit soar  
with a safety net  
beneath you.

Learn more about our exceptional levels of care  
at [frasiermeadows.org](http://frasiermeadows.org), or call **303-499-4888**.



  
FRASIER

**Providing Skilled Care For:  
Boulder, Weld & Larimer County**



- Skilled Nursing
  - Physical Therapy
  - Speech Therapy
  - IV Infusion
  - Medicare
  - Humana Medicare
  - Tele-Health Monitoring
  - Home Health Aide
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Medical Social Work
  - Wound Care
  - United Health Care
  - Anthem BCBS
- IN CHRIST'S LOVE,  
EVERYONE IS SOMEONE!**
- Ph: (303) 702-0410  
Fax: (877) 425-0232  
[www.good-sam.com](http://www.good-sam.com)

**Vincent, Romeo & Rodriquez, LLC**

- \* Wills, Trusts & Probate
- \* Medicaid Planning
- \* Elder Law
- \* Guardianships
- \* Care Coordination
- \* Probate Litigation
- \* Disabled Child Plans
- \* Conservatorships

**Denver Metro**  
(303) 770-0673

**Boulder County**  
(303) 604-6030

Visit our website at: [www.Elderlawcolorado.com](http://www.Elderlawcolorado.com)



Promoting the health and well-being  
of older adults and caregiving families



[www.agingfoundation.org](http://www.agingfoundation.org)

Now Open—Honored to Serve



Thanks to my therapist,  
no fish is safe.

short-term and outpatient rehabilitation

*the*  
**SUMMIT**  
REHAB CENTER AT LIFE CARE CENTER OF LONGMONT

303-776-5000 • [LCCA.com](http://LCCA.com)  
2451 Pratt St.; Longmont, CO 80501  
Joint Commission accredited





Honoring the *spirit within*

**AltaVita**  
ASSISTED LIVING MEMORY CARE CENTRE  
*Carefully Designed Memory Care*

800 S. Fordham Street  
Longmont, CO 80503

**303-300-3700**  
Secured Assisted Living Community

[www.AltaVitaLiving.com](http://www.AltaVitaLiving.com)



**INDIVIDUALS  
STRUGGLING WITH  
MEMORY IMPAIRMENT...**

ARE IN LOVING, HIGHLY TRAINED HANDS  
WITH OUR WELLSRING MEMORY CARE  
PROGRAM.

We offer:

- A specialized, secured purpose built community with outside garden areas
- Therapeutic, innovative interventions and programs designed to enhance the resident's strengths and abilities
- Our In Touch specialized staff training program developed by a nationally known dementia expert
- Monthly family support and educational programs

**JUNIPER  
VILLAGE**

*Nurturing the spirit of life™*

1078 South 88th Street, Louisville, CO 80027  
303.665.3722  
www.junipercommunities.com

**Helping Hands. Compassionate Care.**  
*Find support in our four Boulder County communities.*

Take comfort that help is within reach at Brookdale. Dedicated to supporting family caregivers, we're here to make life easier through our exceptional blend of hospitality, service and care. Call a community near you to learn more.

<p><b>Brookdale Longmont</b> Formerly Sterling House® Longmont Assisted Living (303) 682-1066</p>	<p><b>Brookdale North Boulder</b> Formerly The Villas at The Atrium Independent Living (303) 444-0200</p>
<p><b>Brookdale Boulder Creek</b> Formerly Wynnwood® Ridge Point Assisted Living (303) 473-0333</p>	<p><b>The Meridian Boulder</b> Independent Living (303) 494-3900</p>

 **BROOKDALE**  
— SENIOR LIVING SOLUTIONS —

For more information, stop by a local community. [brookdale.com](http://brookdale.com)

BROOKDALE® is a trademark of Brookdale Senior Living Inc., Nashville, TN, USA. 

**Cabrera Consulting and Occupational Therapy, LLC**  
 **Solutions for Independent Living 303-550-6686**

Let our skilled occupational therapists find the best solutions to help you live at home for a lifetime.

Our services can help you:

- Adapt and remodel the home to meet your specific needs
- Find medical and home equipment solutions
- Learn strategies to stay independent and active as you age

**All services are provided in the comfort of your own home**  
We gladly accept insurance including Medicare

**Become a CAREGiver<sup>SM</sup>**  
**The job that changes lives in your community.**

- No experience or medical skills necessary
- Flexible scheduling
- Training provided
- Very rewarding

Call today to find out more about this rewarding opportunity  
**720.890.0184**

  
*To us, it's personal.*

[HomeInstead.com/397](http://HomeInstead.com/397)

Each Home Instead Senior Care® franchise office is independently owned and operated. ©2014 Home Instead, Inc.



**HOVER  
COMMUNITY INC.**  
*Est. 1979*

**SENIOR INDEPENDENT & ASSISTED LIVING**

Hover Manor 1401 Elmhurst Drive Longmont, CO 80503	Beatrice Hover Assisted Living 1380 Charles Drive Longmont, CO 80503
--	--

[www.hovercommunity.org](http://www.hovercommunity.org)  
(303) 772-9292

**CUSTOMIZED  
HEARING SOLUTIONS**

to match your lifestyle and budget.

**CALL FOR YOUR FREE  
HEARING CONSULTATION  
303.485.9720**

**303.485.9720**  
2318 17th Ave, Unit H

Dr. Jamie Gilgren, Board-Certified Audiologist  
Kathy Harvey, Patient Care Coordinator

**FINANCING AVAILABLE**  
Subject to credit approval



**OUR SERVICES**

- Honest, realistic answers to your hearing concerns, with many great options
- Precise and comprehensive hearing evaluations
- Wide selection from the simplest to the most advanced digital instruments
- Hearing aid repair and service, no matter where you got them
- Tinnitus management
- 75-day trial



[www.HearingRehabCenter.com](http://www.HearingRehabCenter.com)  

We greatly appreciate the support of our generous sponsors.  
For information on sponsorship,  
call 303-678-6116 or email [InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org](mailto:InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org).

## Hearing Loss Technology

(continued from page 6)

Most network TV and some cable programs have **closed captioning**, and most TVs can display captions. Caption quality varies: the news is worst, movies and TV shows are better.

**Online services** allow you to watch TV shows, movies, and other programs whenever you want, using an internet-linked computer, tablet, or enabled TV. Many shows have captions. These services operate by monthly subscription or per-view charges. Three popular choices are Netflix ([www.netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com)), Hulu ([www.hulu.com](http://www.hulu.com)), and Amazon Instant Video ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)). I like watching captioned shows in bed using my iPad and earbuds.

At local theaters, movies are more accessible than ever. Theaters offer free **volume-control headphones** and **caption systems** you can use for any movie, any showing. In Boulder, Century Theaters at 29th Street Center have CaptiView caption screens. In Louisville, Regal Cinebarre uses Sony Access Glasses. Check the Captionfish website ([www.captionfish.com](http://www.captionfish.com)) to locate **captioned movies** by theater, find show times, read about access devices—you can even watch captioned previews! Boulder Public Library has lots of **captioned DVDs** to rent: new releases, classics, PBS series, documentaries. Free with your library card; up to ten at a time, for one week.

For public events like lectures, meetings, and classes, you can request **CART captioning**, an instant voice-to-text service. The captioner uses a steno machine and laptop computer to display captions on a screen. CART requests must be made in advance of an event (so plan ahead!), and the costs are usually paid for by the program presenter. You can also request CART for private events (such as family gatherings or weddings), and pay for it yourself. Colorado providers are Visible Voices ([www.visiblevoices.com](http://www.visiblevoices.com)) and Caption First ([www.captionfirst.com](http://www.captionfirst.com)); see their websites to learn more.

*com*) and Caption First ([www.captionfirst.com](http://www.captionfirst.com)); see their websites to learn more.

## Service Animals

**Hearing dogs** may be the most user-friendly “technology” available. They help by alerting people to household sounds (doorbell, alarm clock, telephone, smoke alarm) and movement. As service animals, they’re allowed in public places, just as guide dogs for the blind. Most dogs come from shelters, get special training, and are given free to people with hearing loss. Contact: Canine Companions for Independence in Colorado Springs and International Hearing Dogs in Henderson.

## Products for living with hearing loss:

ADCO Hearing Products ([www.adcohearing.com](http://www.adcohearing.com)) Request a catalog or order from website (303-794-3928 or 800-726-0851)

Harris Communications ([www.harriscomm.com](http://www.harriscomm.com)) Request a catalog or order from website (800-825-6758)

Check out other resources for persons with hearing loss on the service directory at [www.BoulderCountyHelp.org](http://www.BoulderCountyHelp.org).

---

*Rebecca Herr, MA, is president of ALDA – Boulder and develops programs and teaches Social Sign Language and hearing loss adaptation (Transitions) classes.*



## Online Assistive Technology Database

**O**ne of the helpful features of the Aging and Disability Resources for Colorado (ADRC) website, a service of Boulder County Area Agency on Aging, is a database of more than 21,000 currently available assistive technology products from over 8,000 companies. The database also offers information on non-commercial prototypes, customized and one-of-a-kind products, and do-it-yourself designs.

(continued on page 10)



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

*This column provides information about events and classes, services, and other resources that may be of interest to family caregivers in Boulder County. Please remember that it is each person's right and responsibility to research a service provider or event before taking action. See "Information and Assistance in Boulder County" on the back page for ways to learn more about these and other resources. (To share information about a resource for family caregivers, email [InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org](mailto:InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org) or call 303-678-6116. The deadline for the November/December 2015 issue is September 25.)*

Alzheimer's Association of Colorado sponsors numerous classes for dementia caregivers: **Research Update**, on Tuesday, September 1, 2 – 3 p.m.; and **El Arte de Cuidar (The Art of Caregiving)**, in Spanish, on Tuesdays, September 15 and September 22, 3 – 5 p.m.; at Longmont Senior Center, 910 Longs Peak Avenue, Longmont; **Know the 10 Signs: Early Detection Matters**, on Wednesday, September 2, 1 – 2 p.m., at Louisville Senior Center, 900 W. Via Appia, Louisville; and on Wednesday, September 9, 1 – 3 p.m. (in English) and Tuesday, October 6, 1 – 3 p.m. (in Spanish), at West Boulder Senior Center, 909 Arapahoe, Boulder; **The Basics: Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's**, on Wednesday, September 16, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., at Kaiser Baseline Clinic, 580 Mohawk Drive, Boulder; on Thursday, September 24, 6 – 8 p.m., at Mamie Doud Eisenhower Public Library, 3 Community Park Road, Broomfield; and on Sunday, October 25, 12:45 – 2:45 p.m., at Faith Community Lutheran Church, 9775 Ute Highway, Longmont; and **Legal and Financial Planning for Alzheimer's Disease**, on Sunday, October 18, 2 – 5 p.m., at Boulder Public Library, 1001 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder. Registration is required. For more information or to register, call 1-800-272-

3900, visit [www.alz.org/co](http://www.alz.org/co) (Classes and Workshops), or email [kmoravek@alz.org](mailto:kmoravek@alz.org).

**The Savvy Caregiver**, a course for family caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's/dementia is on Wednesdays, September 9 – October 14, 6 – 8 p.m., at Longmont Senior Center, 910 Longs Peak Avenue, Longmont. This training program provides caregivers with a better understanding of dementia, increases their caregiving skills, and helps them learn how to manage and care for themselves day to day. It is taught by Jessica O'Leary, MA, CVW, a gerontologist and specialist in dementia. Attendance at all classes is required (barring emergencies); class size is limited. A donation of \$10 is requested. Registration is required, at 303-651-8411.

**Caring for Your Aging Parent**, a new drop-in support group for adult children caring for aging parents, regularly meets on the second Thursday of each month, 5:30 – 7 p.m., at East Boulder Senior Center, 5660 Sioux Drive, Boulder. However, because the Senior Center will be closed the second week of September, the meeting on September 10 will be held at Jewish Family Service, 3800 Kalmia Avenue, Boulder, at the usual time. The group is facilitated by Andrew Bunin, LPC, and Jodi Ansell, MSW, and is free and open to Boulder County residents. For more information, contact Jodi at 303-415-1025 or [jansell@jewishfamilyservice.org](mailto:jansell@jewishfamilyservice.org). This group is co-sponsored by Boulder County Area Agency on Aging, City of Boulder Human Services, and Jewish Family Service.

AgeWell, a service of Longmont United Hospital, offers **Advance Directives workshops**, about considering and clarifying one's wishes for medical treatment in the event of incapacitation, with Program Coordinator Peggy Arnold, MA, on



Thursdays, September 10 or October 8, 9:30 – 11 a.m., at Longmont Senior Center, 910 Longs Peak Avenue, Longmont. Pre-registration is required; call 303-651-8411. There is a \$5 fee for Longmont residents, \$6 for non-residents.

Boulder County Area Agency on Aging offers the **National Caregiver Training Program**, a 21-hour course (meets once a week for 3 hours), taught by a registered nurse, that helps family caregivers acquire skills needed to provide safe, confident home care for frail older loved ones, on Thursdays, September 17 – October 29, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m., in Boulder; and **Powerful Tools for Caregivers**, a 15-hour course (meets once a week for 2 ½ hours) that gives family caregivers the “tools” to help ensure they take care of themselves while caring for older loved ones, on Wednesdays, September 23 – October 28, 1:30 – 4 p.m., in Boulder. There is no charge for either course, but donations are appreciated. Financial assistance for respite care (substitute elder care during class sessions) is available. For more information or to register, call 303-678-6116 or email [InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org](mailto:InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org).

Medicare Counselors with Boulder County Area Agency on Aging hold **Medicare Basics Classes** for anyone wanting to learn more about enrollment, benefits, costs, and choices under Medicare, on Thursdays, September 17 or October 1, 2 – 4 p.m., at East Boulder Senior Center, 5660 Sioux Drive, Boulder (call 303-441-1546 to register); Mondays, September 21 or October 20, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., at Longmont Senior Center, 910 Longs Peak Avenue, Longmont (call 303-651-8411 to register); and Wednesday, September 16, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m., at Louisville Senior Center, 900 W. Via Appia, Louisville (call 303-666-7400 to register). There is no charge, but donations are appreciated. **Medicare Open Enrollment Period**, the time to review and make changes to your Medicare Part D (prescription drug) or Medicare Advantage/Health Plan, is October 15 – December 7. Call your local

Senior Center to schedule an appointment with a BCAA Medicare Counselor for an individual review of your plan. For more information, call 303-441-1546.

The Wellness Program of Boulder County Area Agency on Aging offers **A Matter of Balance**, an 8-week class designed to help older adults reduce their risk of falling and increase their activity levels, on Thursdays, October 1 – November 19, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m., in Boulder. This particular course is for persons in the early stages of memory loss, and their caregivers are encouraged to attend as well. Registration is required; contact Melissa Pruitt at 303-441-3599 or [mpruitt@bouldercounty.org](mailto:mpruitt@bouldercounty.org). During **Fall Prevention Week**, September 21–27, free programs about reducing the risk of falling will be offered throughout the county. A full schedule will be available in September at senior centers and at [www.BoulderCountyFallsPrevention.org](http://www.BoulderCountyFallsPrevention.org), or call 303-441-3599 for more information.

Alzheimer’s Association of Colorado offers programs and services for early stage Alzheimer’s. **AccessArt: Tours for Individuals with Alzheimer’s or Dementia**, designed to make art exhibitions accessible for visitors with early stage dementia and their caregivers, is on Thursday, October 15, 2:30 p.m., at Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, 1750 13th Street, Boulder. Free, but registration is required; contact Kera Magarill at 303-813-1669 or [kmagarill@alz.org](mailto:kmagarill@alz.org). **Early Stage Dementia Support Group**, an 8-week series for persons in the early stages of diagnosed Alzheimer’s or other dementia and their care partners, meets on Mondays, September 21 – November 9, 10 – 11:30 a.m., at Louisville Senior Center, 900 W. Via Appia, Louisville. Pre-registration is required (participants must start at first session); contact Heather Kanapackis, 303-813-1669 or [hkanapackis@alz.org](mailto:hkanapackis@alz.org).



## Online Assistive Technology Database

(continued from page 7)

To find the database, go to *www.BoulderCountyHelp.org* and select Seniors and People with Disabilities, then Assistive Devices (at top). Then search by category, by maker/seller, or by keyword (such as a product's name). Each category contains hundreds or thousands of product listings, and each listing includes a photo and description of the product, and information on who makes it and who sells it.



### Adapting to Vision Loss: Simple and Sophisticated Tools

by Mary Kathleen Rose

**S**teve DePlato was two days short of his sixteenth birthday in 1977 when he suddenly lost his vision due to a condition called pseudotumor cerebri. Increased intracranial pressure damaged his optic nerve, leading to irreversible blindness. And so he began his journey of learning to live without sight. Dealing with the initial shock, disbelief, and grief of this loss, he went from being an A student to one who needed the help of teachers who were untrained in working with a blind student. With their help and perseverance, he graduated from high school.

As Steve shared his story with me, he talked about many of the ways that simple tools and complex technologies have assisted him to live life fully as a person without sight. Whether vision loss is sudden or gradual, the individual faces many daily challenges, and caregivers and loved ones may wonder how they can be of help. Knowing what is available and who to contact can alleviate the burden of facing the challenges of vision loss alone.

College was overwhelming for Steve. As a youth in the 1970s, he didn't know how to advocate for himself. The Americans for Disabilities

Act was still years away from becoming the law of the land in 1990. Assistive technologies were limited to books on tape, and Braille was difficult to learn. He dropped out of college and languished in his personal life over the next few years. He moved to Colorado from New York in 1987, where he was able to find a variety of jobs. But it was in 1995 that an adaptive computer technology called JAWS for Windows (Job Access With Speech) opened up a whole new world of possibilities for him and thousands of visually impaired people all over the globe. Steve was an early adopter of this screen reading software program that reads computer text and turns it to speech.

With the use of the JAWS program, Steve was able to sustain steady employment as a dispatcher for a towing company for many years. Currently, he is a dispatcher for a heating and air conditioning company in Longmont. While JAWS is a very sophisticated product to assist the blind in the quest for independence and equality, Steve spoke to me of other simpler adaptive tools that make it possible to be independent and live life to the fullest.

In contrast to JAWS at the high end of technology, Steve spoke of the most basic tool of the blind: "With my \$35 white cane I can navigate around my home, and get out to wherever I want to go." He also sings the praises of Via Mobility Services, a private, non-profit organization based in Boulder, that provides customers with transportation and mobility options that enable them to live a more self-sufficient and independent life.

Paulette Foss is the Area Resource Coordinator for A3 (formerly known as American Council of the Blind of Colorado) in Boulder County. She loves to help people who are challenged by vision loss. Legally blind herself, she leads low vision support groups and counsels individuals about how to successfully adapt to low vision and blindness. She demonstrates the use of simple low tech tools that can make life easier in the home, and provides information on mobility

services and adaptive technologies for work and everyday living. Her personal business is called Hints for the Hard of Seeing (303-443-1665 or [Paulette.Foss@A3Colorado.org](mailto:Paulette.Foss@A3Colorado.org)).

### **Assistive Technologies for the Visually Impaired**

Both Steve DePlato and Paulette Foss shared with me some of the tools they use personally, as well as ones they recommend to others. On the simpler side, they agree that a red-tipped white cane, which is universally known as a symbol for blindness, is a valuable tool. Other tools include handheld magnifiers for reading if someone has some usable vision; talking watches, clocks, and thermometers; measuring cups with tactile gradations; adhesive raised dots to identify objects like pill bottles, cooking items, or buttons on appliances and electronic devices; and rubber bands to identify spice or condiment jars.

Braille labeling devices can be used to make labels to identify objects, files, CDs/DVDs, or to locate light switches or cupboards, etc. CTTVs (closed circuit televisions), along with other portable devices, magnify print from books and other written materials. Zoom Text is a magnification and screen reading software for the visually impaired, available for both PC and Mac platforms, that enlarges, enhances, and reads everything on your computer screen. It is useful for people with some usable vision.

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped provides a free library program of braille and audio materials in the U.S. by postage-free mail. It has evolved to digital options for all print materials: fiction, non-fiction, and news. BookSense is a compact and lightweight portable DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) player with built-in text to speech capabilities. With it the user can record memos or listen to music or audio books.

The Audio Information Network of Colorado (<http://aincolorado.org>) is a volunteer service

that provides audio news, information, and entertainment to the blind and visually impaired of Colorado. Another free service is the Colorado Talking Book Library (<http://www2.cde.state.co.us/ctbl>). The iPhone5 by Apple is widely praised for its accessible technology for the blind. The phone contains a screen reader called Voiceover and includes other functions, including GPS, that can be useful tools to increase one's quality of life.

From simple to sophisticated, assistive technologies continue to evolve for the blind and visually impaired. For you caregivers, take heart in this knowledge. You may be pleasantly surprised that these tools can make life easier and more enjoyable for you as well, as you learn along with those in your care.

### **Additional Resources**

A3 is a non-profit organization dedicated to personalized education, training, and support for individuals significantly impacted by vision loss to help them adapt, adjust, and achieve maximum independence. Contact A3 at 303-831-0117 or visit [www.a3colorado.org](http://www.a3colorado.org).

The Ensign Skills Center is a non-profit organization that provides professional visual rehabilitation offered by low vision physicians and occupational therapists. Based in Fort Collins, they provide comprehensive low vision services in Colorado. Contact 970-407-9999 or visit <http://ensightskills.org>.

---

*Mary Kathleen Rose (www.comforttouch.com) is a licensed massage therapist, author of the textbook Comfort Touch: Massage for the Elderly and the Ill (LWW 2009) and DVD of the same title, and member of the Care Connections Editorial Advisory Committee. Her latest book is Comfort Touch of the Hands and Feet: A Guide for Family Caregivers (Wild Rose, 2015).*



**CARE Connections**  
**Boulder County Area Agency on Aging**  
**P. O. Box 471**  
**Boulder, CO 80306**



## INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE IN BOULDER COUNTY

Within Boulder County, there are several ways to access information and assistance about resources and services for older adults and their family caregivers:

- Check out **Network of Care for Seniors and People with Disabilities**, a comprehensive online service directory, at [www.BoulderCountyHelp.org](http://www.BoulderCountyHelp.org)
- Call the **ADRC Help Line**, at 303-441-1617, and Boulder County Area Agency on Aging staff will respond to your message.
- Call the **resource specialist** in your community (numbers below). Services vary by community but include identifying needs, exploring options, finding solutions, and providing in-depth assistance.

<b>Allenspark area</b>	303-747-2592
<b>City of Boulder</b>	303-441-4388 (bilingüe: 303-441-3918)
<b>City of Lafayette</b>	303-665-9052, ext. 2
<b>City of Longmont</b>	303-651-8716 (bilingüe), 303-774-4372
<b>City of Louisville</b>	303-335-4919
<b>Erie</b>	303-926-2795
<b>Lyons area</b>	303-823-9016
<b>Nederland area</b>	303-258-3068
<b>Niwot area</b>	303-652-3850
<b>Superior</b>	303-441-1617

