

ENSIGHT

Skills Center, Inc.

for visual rehabilitation



March/April 2010

Ask Mark DeGeorge About Life Challenges

If you have been in to visit us at Ensign or Curtis Strong in the past month or so, you might have noticed that Mark DeGeorge, our senior optometrist, has been out. He was recently diagnosed with a form of cancer called multiple myeloma and has been busy getting radiation, chemotherapy, and other treatments. He is likely to spend the month of June and much of July in Denver, in order to receive a bone marrow transplant. He is expecting to return to work on a regular basis at the end of the summer. Until he goes to Denver, he will be resuming a limited work schedule.

Mark and his wife Lynn are blogging about their experiences at www.carepages.com. If you would like to learn more details about his cancer and treatments, you can create a sign-in ID and password and view blogs at

Mark's page, which is called MAD (his initials and an appropriate expression of how he felt upon learning his diagnosis... he is much calmer now). Please keep Mark and his family in your prayers for a speedy recovery.

Ask Denny Bettenhausen About Life Pleasures

On a happier note, Ensign's co-founder and executive director, Denny Bettenhausen, has made it official. She and her long-time love Dan Moyer are getting married in May of this year. The wedding will take place on May 8th in Loveland, with a Mexican honeymoon to follow. Congratulations to the happy couple!

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"Vision Matters 2010" Coming to Loveland

The next "Vision Matters" low-vision seminar is coming to Loveland in May. Disabled Resource Services (DRS) and Ensign are co-sponsoring the event, which will be held on Wednesday, May 12th, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at the new Hillcrest Senior Living Center (535 North Douglas Avenue, Loveland).

This is a great opportunity to learn about low-vision resources, adaptive equipment, supportive services, and much more. Nancy McKelvey, a licensed counselor, and a panel of honored guests with low-vision/blindness, will speak and share coping mechanisms for dealing with vision loss.

The cost of the event is \$10 (which includes luncheon), and you do need to RSVP to attend, as seating is limited. For more information or to register, contact Penny Bowden at DRS (970-988-8363).

Speaking of Seminars...

Ensign and Disabled Resource Services are also initiating a new series of free, smaller-scale seminars that will be held every few months in 2010. The first of these is scheduled for Thursday, June 17th, at the Ensign office in Fort Collins.

Ron Demske from Eschenbach Optical will speak on and demonstrate the latest in magnification aids. Future seminar topics will include home interior design and assistive technology. More information will follow in future newsletter issues and will be posted on Ensign's website (www.ensightskills.org).

It's Daylight-Savings Time Again

This is just a reminder that Daylight-Savings Time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 14th. This means that you will need to set your clocks ahead by one hour at that time (just remember, "Spring ahead, Fall back").

If any of our readers need help getting their talking clocks or talking watches reset for the new time, please bring them in to any of our offices in Fort Collins, Greeley, or Denver, and our staff will help you get them reset properly.

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes!

(This article comes from the Discovery Eye Foundation's Spring 2010 newsletter). A recent study has found an additional link between smoking and age-related macular degeneration (AMD). The findings of the study, which were published in the January 2010 issue of the American Journal of Ophthalmology, reported that women who smoked had an 11% higher rate of AMD than women who did not smoke. They also found that women older than 80 who smoked were 5.5 times more likely to develop AMD than those who did not.

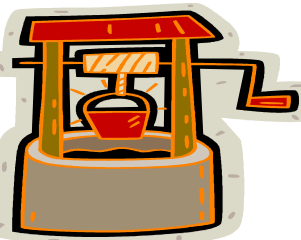
UCLA scientists found that smoking continues to raise a person's risk of developing AMD, even after the age of 80. "The magnitude of the greater-than-additive effect of smoking on the age-adjusted risk of AMD reinforces recommendations to quit smoking even for older individuals," the study concluded.

"We've known for many years that smoking worsens macular degeneration. Studies such as this are now revealing what a staggering impact cigarettes have on the level of risk," says Judi Delgado, executive director of the Macular Degeneration Partnership (MDP). "In fact, if you have a family member with AMD and you smoke, you have an 8-fold increase in your chance of developing AMD."

For more information about lifestyle changes to improve your vision and reduce the effects of AMD, read the article "Bad Habits I Can Live Without", which can be found at the website www.amd.org.

Our Wish List

We need several items to help run our office but have limited funds. Please consider helping us with these items from our current wish list. Thank you!



- * Batteries (especially the "C" and "AAA" sizes)
- * Kleenex tissues, paper towels, toilet tissue
- * Copy paper
- * Postage stamps
- * Dishwashing detergent

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Ensign -- Empowering Independent Living

Support Groups for March and April 2010

Greeley - March 22nd (Monday) 10-11 a.m. Curtis Strong Center. Topic will be "Yes I Can!"

Fort Collins - March 25th (Thursday) 10-11:30 a.m. Ensign Skills Center. Topic will be "Documents Review", focusing on powers of attorney and living wills.

Greeley - April 15th (Thursday) 10-11 a.m. Good Samaritan Center. Topic will be "What's New."

Fort Collins - April 22nd (Thursday) 10-11:30 a.m. Ensign Skills Center. Topic will be "Cooking and Nutrition."

Greeley - April 26th (Monday) 10-11 a.m. Curtis Strong Center. Topic will be "Outdoor Recreation for Low-Vision Seniors."