

## A Safer Home: Room-by-Room Roadmap

New research from the Home Safety Council found that U.S. adults rank the kitchen, bathroom and stairway/hallway as the most dangerous rooms of the home. Although the majority of the adults surveyed recognize the presence of injury risks in these areas, nearly half (45 percent) admit they have not taken action to make any of the rooms in their home safer.

To help people take action and make the critical improvements needed to prevent home injuries, the Accessibility Connection is joining the Home Safety Council's Home Safety campaign and is encouraging families to tackle safety dangers in each area of the home. Follow the Council's simple steps below to protect your family from the leading causes of home injury.

### Kitchen Safety:

Always stay in the kitchen while cooking on the range, especially when frying food.

To reduce the risk of accidental poisonings, keep all dangerous products clearly marked and separated from food and drinks. Then lock them up after use. Be especially aware of products with fruit shown on the labels, which could be confused as being edible.

Protect little ones from burns by using tape to mark a three-foot safety margin around the stove. Keep children and pets away from the range and keep a close eye on them at all times. Use back burners with pot handles turned in.

### Bathroom Safety:

Pay close attention and stay within an arm's

length of children in and around water. This includes bathtubs, toilets, pools and spas – even buckets of water.

To reduce the risk of falls, use grab bars and a non-slip mat or strips in baths and showers.

To prevent hot water scald burns, keep your water heater set to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Install tub spouts and shower heads with anti-scald features.

### Bedroom Safety:

Have working smoke alarms on each floor of the home and hold family fire drills. If you build a new home, have a fire sprinkler system installed throughout your home.

To protect children from strangulation, clip the loops in window cords and place them up high where children can't get them. Or, replace them with new "cordless" blinds.

Move furniture away from windows to prevent children from climbing on furniture and falling out of windows. Install window guards or window stops on upper floors.

### Garage Safety:

Gasoline, anti-freeze, pesticides and fertilizer are poison. Make sure these items have child-resistant caps in place, are clearly labeled and are stored in a locked cabinet out of sight and reach of children.

To prevent falls, keep floors and steps clear of clutter and immediately clean up grease and other spills.

To prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poison-

ing, never run a barbecue grill, car or generator in the garage or any other room of your home.

### Backyard Safety:

To prevent drowning, make sure your children always swim with a grownup. No child or adult should swim alone.

Use a sturdy ladder when climbing and place it on level ground to lessen the risk of outdoor falls.

Prevent playground injuries by covering areas under and at least six feet around play equipment with 12 inches of soft materials, such as rubber mulch or hardwood chips.

### Stairway Safety:

Install bright lights and on/off switches at the tops and bottoms of each stairwell and over porches and entryways.

In homes with young children, use sturdy safety gates at the tops and bottoms of stairways.

Have handrails on both sides of stairs and steps and use them. Always keep the stairs and hallways clear.

For more information or a home assessment please call Charlie Ludeman, CAPS (Certified Aging in Place Specialist) at Accessibility Connection: 916-202-2863 or send an email to: CharlieL@AccessConn.com. I will be happy to answer any of your questions regarding home safety either personally or in future articles.

## Alzheimer's Aid Society Responds to Reader Inquiry

By Arlene Gorman, Regional Operations Manager, Alzheimer's Aid Society of Northern California

**Editor's Note: We wish to express our gratitude to Ms. Gorman for taking the time to share her expertise in replying to a list of questions and concerns from one of our readers.**

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to a question the Orangevale Country Journal received recently from a reader. The reader is seeking information about activities that would be appropriate for her mother, who lives with her several months of the year. Her mother has Alzheimer's disease. The reader wants to know about activities for her mother that are engaging, meaningful, and emotionally satisfying.

My first advice to the reader, and to anyone who has a loved one diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, is to seek information and guidance from an organization dedicated to helping people living with the disease. The sooner the better! Alzheimer's disease presents difficult

and unique challenges, to the persons afflicted with the disease and also to their families, friends, and caregivers. Educating yourself about the disease early on is essential to your ability to cope with it successfully.

Before going any further, I would like to introduce our organization. Alzheimer's Aid Society of Northern California was established in 1981 to help people with Alzheimer's disease and their families and caregivers. The Society is an independent, not-for-profit, volunteer-driven organization. Support services we provide, most at no cost, include counseling, support groups, educational workshops, and publications. We also offer referrals to other agencies and businesses that provide elder- and dementia-care services and programs. We have three offices, in Sacramento, Modesto, and Lodi. And we maintain a 24-hour help line, 800 540-3340. We invite people needing help to call or come by to talk with our trained, experienced staff and volunteers; they know how to listen and they are able to provide timely information,

emotional support, and practical assistance.

With regard to the reader's question, I applaud her initiative in seeking out activities that her mother can do and feel good doing. I hesitate to suggest particular activities without knowing more about the situation, including the living environment and her mother's daily routines, interests, and physical and cognitive abilities. However, I am glad to offer a few suggestions about how to proceed.

1. First (and at the risk of repeating myself!), consider discussing your specific situation in detail with a counselor at our organization or another organization that can guide you to elder- or dementia-care services and programs.

2. In particular, look into facilities that provide adult day care, which typically includes a variety of well-supervised activities for persons with Alzheimer's, and affords the additional benefit of social interaction.

3. As you introduce activities for your loved

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