

*Editorial***HELPING AN OLDER PERSON REMAIN INDEPENDENT**

Bette Ide, PhD, RN
Editorial Board Member

Barbara Dahlen, M.S., FNP, ABD has been assisting her sister, who her 91-year-old mother, Mrs. Marie Charbonneau, lives with, come up with strategies that will help their mother remain as independent as possible. They have made modifications to her living environment that help her deal with failing eyesight while remaining productive. She has difficulty seeing the edges of steps. They use the yellow and black tape that you can buy in hardware stores, placing strips along the edges of the steps. She can see the edges and does not trip. She loves to sew, making quilts, pot holders, etc. for family members and for sale. Modifications in her sewing environment have been made to accommodate her diminishing vision and difficulties in getting up from a sitting position. They have focused on increasing the amount of light, particularly natural light, available by placing her sewing machine under a window, using mini-blinds, and installing halogen lamps in the corners of the room. She has an L-shaped work space which she can maneuver around in using an office chair on wheels. Everything is easily accessible, and she does not have to stand up frequently. She has bright-colored totes in primary colors that are on wheels, available from K-Mart, in which to keep her sewing materials separated. She also has special needles so she doesn't have to thread a needle. Her sewing machine has been modified by adding a rectangular magnifying glass so she can see the settings. To avoid her having to use needles in putting a quilt together, she uses a plastic gun such as the ones used for stapling price tags on clothes and red staples that she can see easily. The plastic guns and staples are available at quilting centers. The dining room has a flat carpet and a round table with chairs with wheels. The flat carpet prevents the chairs from sliding out from under her. She is able to go around the table, tying quilts, and doesn't have to stand up. She is also in less danger of falling. They have encouraged the making of "crazy quilts" because she doesn't have to cut straight pieces. These modifications have kept her productive—she sews every day—and independent.

For questions or comments, e-mail me at Bette_ide@mail.und.nodak.edu.