

## GAS PRICES

	Current	Year ago
Louisville	\$2.24	\$1.80
Cleveland	\$2.24	\$1.83

Source: AAA of Kentucky

## IT COSTS HOW MUCH?

Cola, non-diet, 2 liters:	
1995: \$1.05	2004: \$1.13
2000: \$1.07	2005: \$1.13

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

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# Non-medical services come home to seniors



Photos by Lynn Hey/Associated Press

Melissa Hairston, of Home Instead Senior Care, prepared and served lunch recently to Catherine Lewis, 84, in Lewis' home in Greensboro, N.C. Lewis uses the service for help with daily tasks. "This way, I can still enjoy my home, my neighborhood, my friends," Lewis said.



# Help with daily life aids independence

By Eileen Alt Powell  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Like many seniors, Catherine Lewis wants to stay in her own home as long as possible. But a fall several years ago almost ended that.

"She wasn't responding to physical therapy. She was having trouble moving around," Cathy Seaver says of her 84-year-old mother. "I was very concerned."

The solution was to hire caregivers who visit Lewis' home in Greensboro, N.C., for several hours every day. They help her bathe, take a short walk, eat a hot lunch — even put together the snacks for her monthly bridge club gathering.

"If not for them, I would have ended up in assisted living," says Lewis. "This way, I can still enjoy my home, my neighborhood, my friends. I'm spoiled to death."

Lewis and Seaver are among a growing number of families who are turning to agencies that provide services such as light housecleaning, grocery shopping, meal preparation and companionship aimed at keeping seniors healthy — and independent.

The National Private Duty Association, [www.private-duty-homecare.org](http://www.private-duty-homecare.org), an alliance of for-profit and not-for-profit caregiving agencies based in Indianapolis, has grown to nearly 700 members from just 30 three years ago,



Lewis and daughter Cathy Seaver compiled a grocery list recently. Because of the in-home service, Lewis relies less on her daughter.

according to Sheila McMackin, the group's president. Nearly three-quarters of the members specialize in non-medical in-home care, she said.

"A lot of trends have converged," said McMackin, a social worker who runs the Wellspring Personal Care service in Chicago. "People are living longer, they're staying healthier ... and they're saying, 'I want to stay in my home.'"

Paul Hogan founded Home Instead Senior Care in Omaha, Neb., in the late 1990s after watching his family struggle to care for his grandmother.

"Our typical client is between the ages of 75 and 85," Hogan said. "Two-thirds are women, most of them living alone."

On average, caregivers spend about 15 hours a week with each senior at a cost of about \$1,000 a

month.

Hogan believes Home Instead services help the elderly thrive.

"If we didn't exist, there would be a lot of seniors that would do nothing," he said. "Based on what family members tell us, they're certain that because of our services their mother or father lived a lot longer — and had a much better quality of life."

Cheryl Denney, a supervisory staff attorney with the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, said Home Instead services greatly reduced the stress of dealing with her mother, Sue Denney, who is 86 and suffers from Alzheimer's disease.

"Mother was getting confused," Denney said. "She was calling me 25, maybe 30, times a day at work, at home. She didn't remember she had just called

me. Sometimes she didn't remember why she was calling."

Denney said her mother resisted hiring help, "because, I think, she felt it would reduce her independence."

Her mother relented, and now a Home Instead caregiver helps her mother dress, keeps track of medications and makes sure she eats her meals. They tidy up the house together, work in the garden and go for walks in the park.

"It's given her her life back, and me mine," Denney said.

Some seniors need help for a short time, to bridge a crisis, said Sherry W. Jerome, senior director of elder care services at the nonprofit Sheltering Arms Senior Services in Houston.

"Doctors are doing a lot of outpatient surgeries, as opposed to putting the senior in the hospital, and they often need help for a while after they're released," Jerome said.

Sheltering Arms provides in-home services for \$13 to \$18 an hour, and some state and local funding is available to subsidize the costs for low-income families.

Sheltering Arms and other agencies also provide long-term assistance, often for elderly couples.

"We often see an elder spouse struggling to take care of an ill spouse," said Lanette Gonzales, vice president for home care services at Sheltering Arms.

"Lifting a person out of bed, moving them to a chair, helping them into the tub, that can be just too much," she said.