

## Secure@Home means just that to senior citizens

By Emily Laermer, Staff Writer

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Gail Ullman was meeting with friends, when she saw a presentation about [Secure@Home](#).

"It really appealed to me," the Maple Street resident said. "My husband has Parkinson's and there is an increase in the numbers of health issues he deals with."

The Jewish Family and Children's Services of Greater Mercer County has collaborated with the National Executive Service Corps to create [Secure@Home](#), a nonsectarian program designed for senior citizens who want to continue to feel safe and secure in their homes. The National Executive Service Corps helped the local agency with both business and marketing strategies.

"It's an innovative member-based program that enables seniors to stay at home as long as possible," [Secure@Home](#) director Jill Jaclin said. "We see it as a one-stop shopping center for seniors."

This "one-stop shopping center" includes health care assessments, a 24-hour emergency hotline and a chore corps, with volunteers who help the senior citizens with household duties, such as taking out the garbage and changing light bulbs.

"There are so many pieces that the seniors can take advantage of," Ms. Jaclin said. "We do everything, from have social workers on call to unclog stopped toilets."

Each of the members of the [Secure@Home](#) program are given health care assessments with physicians who note the members' insurance information and medical history.

"All of this is kept securely on file in case we have to be involved," Ms. Jaclin said.

Ms. Ullman was impressed with the initial assessment.

"We gave them our children's names, addresses, who to call if something happens to both of us simultaneously and where the extra keys are," she said. "They also looked around the house for obvious problems that we had not addressed yet. They looked at all the things that they would need to know if they had to step in suddenly."

The organization also hosts wellness lectures on topics including balance, the importance of health care and life transitions.

"I thought they were quite good," said Ms. Ullman, who has attended several of the lectures. "And it's not just because the person they had, but because the people in the audience asked sophisticated, bright questions."

Another service that the organization offers is a personalized monthly greeting.

"We like to touch base, just to make sure that everything is OK," Ms. Jaclin said. "But if they need us to call every day, we will."

Secure@Home also provides seniors with around-the-clock care.

"Most of the people who are a part of the program are people who thought they were fine, but then fell down and broke their wrist," Ms. Jaclin said. "We can help them coordinate things when they are in the hospital."

The program also sends volunteers to the hospitals with the seniors to help them fill out paperwork and ask important questions that they may not know to ask.

"When you're in the hospital, it is a very business-like place. It's all mysterious to you," Ms. Ullman said. "But they know the nurses, the



Jill Jaclin is the administrator of the [Secure@Home](#) program.

Staff photo by Mark Czajkowski

system, the social workers – they are there to just help you.”

In addition to providing services, [Secure@Home](#) also has referral programs for everything from doctors who accept the corresponding insurance plans to plumbers, Ms. Jaclin said.

Stout’s Charter Service also provides transportation for the members to doctor’s appointments and other local trips. “We just want to make sure that we are connected to them in case something happens,” Ms. Jaclin said. “We like to be fully prepared.”

Many of the seniors who use this program use it in lieu of living in a senior citizen community.

“My husband and I intend to stay in our home as long as possible,” Ms. Ullman said. “This is the kind of program that makes is possible for us to do that.”

The [Secure@Home](#) yearly cost is \$300 per individual and \$350 per couple. For more information, contact Ms. Jaclin at (609) 987-8121 or [jillj@jfcsonline.org](mailto:jillj@jfcsonline.org).

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