

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

### STATEWIDE

#### **Some gifts you can give that seniors won't ask for**

Black Friday, Cyber Monday and packed malls are all clear signs of the rush to get just the right gift for loved ones during the holidays. But for older relatives, the best gifts often don't call for frantic shopping and involve spending little more than a few hours out of the day.

In many cases, as Home Instead Senior Care owner Andrea Sussman notes, "Seniors are seeking the gift of time."

Sussman's in-home care agency based in Omaha, Neb., has plenty of experience with older Americans and their emotions during the season.

"The aging process can cause changes in vision, hearing and mobility, and often sidelines a senior during the holidays," she said, "limiting their ability to enjoy so many traditions that are important to that generation."

She offers suggestions on how families can make the holidays happier for older relatives with simple, special gifts.

Keep food traditions alive: If an older adult can no longer cook the

holiday meal or a special dish, offer to learn family recipes and carry on the family tradition.

Reminisce: The opportunity to look at old pictures, watch videos and talk about good times is often unavailable to seniors who live alone. Sharing stories and memories not only brightens the holidays for older relatives, but also help keep alive oral histories and genealogy information.

Help with holiday greetings: The handwritten holiday card was a popular tradition of the current generation of seniors. An afternoon spent helping an older relative to write and

address greeting cards to old friends and family costs nothing more than cards and stamps but could be priceless to a senior.

Stay connected: As families grow, physical distances among relatives become greater and it becomes more and more difficult for seniors to keep in touch. Helping an older adult connect with family using devices they are usually unfamiliar with, such as Skype and smart phones, could make the holidays truly memorable.

Other simple suggestions include a family singalong, helping a senior do some online shopping if they can no longer get out to stores or a simple

evening drive to see neighborhood decorations. Even a few hours spent decorating an older relative's home for them could bring a great deal of joy.

These and other ideas often do more for seniors' spirits than any present at any price.

"The goal should always be to bring a little love and joy of the season into their lives," said Sussman.

—Greg Hatala

To submit news for the Senior Spotlight column, please call (973) 392-5950 or e-mail [essex@starledger.com](mailto:essex@starledger.com).

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### NEWARK

#### **Longtime UMDNJ nurse honored for impact**

Raymond Scarpa Jr., a nurse at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey for more than 30 years, was recognized with the Institute for Nursing's "Diva and Don" Award.

Scarpa, a supervisory advanced practice nurse in the Department of Otolaryngology at UMDNJ-University Hospital, was one of 19 New Jersey nurses to receive the honor.

The institute, which serves as the foundation of the New Jersey State Nurses Association, presents the award to nurses who have made an "extraordinary impact on the nursing profession and the health community."

In 2008, Scarpa graduated from the first Doctor of Nursing Practice



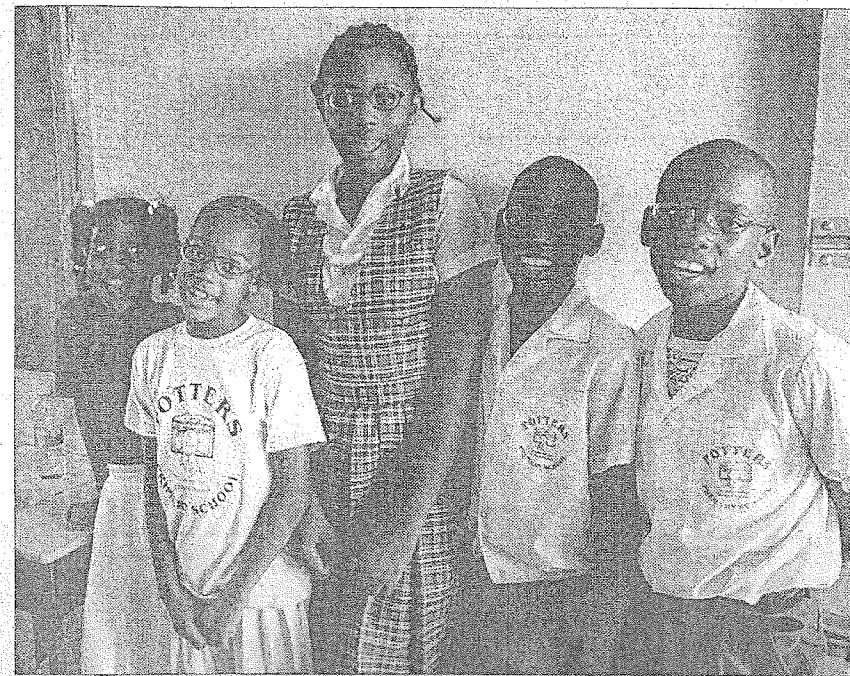
RAYMOND SCARPA JR.

doctorate degree program in New Jersey, which was offered by UMDNJ-School of Nursing. Scarpa, who lives in Flemington, was the first nurse at UMDNJ-University

Hospital to earn this degree.

His interests include performance assessment for advanced nursing practice, surgical treatment of head and neck disorders and otolaryngology as a specialty for advanced nursing practice.

To submit news for the Essex County Achievements column, send an e-mail to [essex@starledger.com](mailto:essex@starledger.com).



### MAPLEWOOD

#### **NEW GLASSES BRING SIGHT AND SMILES**

Sidewalk University provided free ophthalmic examinations and corrective glasses to primary school children in Antigua and Barbuda last month through their Gift of Sight program. Sidewalk University, with an office in Maplewood, is a nonprofit organization that uses educational and cultural programs to help people become leaders in their communities. The group hopes to make Gift of Sight an ongoing program. For more information, visit [www.sidewalkuniversity.org](http://www.sidewalkuniversity.org).