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## SENIOR SCOOP

Special Sections Editor  
Laurie Stuart

# He's a champion of long-term care

News Sections

Monday, July 19, 2004

## Author uses humor to fight misconceptions

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By LORRAINE AGNEW  
Courier-Post Staff

It is often said that perception is everything.

But author, singer and public relations specialist Anthony Cirillo, 47, wants to change some perceptions about long-term care facilities.

Columnists

For instance, said Cirillo, many have the idea that a long-term care facility for seniors is the place people go to die. The reality, he said, is that they are places where people go to live.

Weekly Sections

That's why the Philadelphia native wrote a light-hearted and often funny book titled *Who Moved My Dentures?* that deals with this and 12 other false perceptions.

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- **new** Volunteers
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- **new** South Jersey Living
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Long-term care, he said, including retirement communities, assisted-living facilities and nursing homes, is something everyone should learn about because people are living longer.

"People should be looking at these issues," he said.

Featured

Said Helen Weinstein, community sales manager for New Seasons, an assisted-living facility with communities in Voorhees, Cherry Hill and Washington Township, "There are so many people who have no idea what assisted-living is and we do."



Long-term care facilities are wonderful places for seniors to live, said Cara DeJoseph-Cohen, internal community sales manager at New Seasons in Voorhees, because "People blossom when they are with their peers."

"It is really important that people understand what long-term care is now compared to what it was 30 years ago," agreed Jackie Fox, activities director at Cadbury at Cherry Hill, another assisted-living community.

For example, she said, "This is a happy environment. We have eight to 10 entertainers a month plus the activities that my staff have."

Cirillo was entertaining at Cadbury on a recent Monday afternoon. He

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- Down the Shore

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The Wire (AP)

said he entertains at many of these facilities and assures people that he is performing to a "live" audience.

"These seniors are alive, very aware of what I am doing," he said, adding that most seniors he meets are intelligent and savvy about current affairs.

And to keep it interactive, said Fox, "He always has a theme with the show."

This time, it was songs made popular by people born in June like Barry Manilow, Judy Garland and Pat Boone and other June-related songs.

His audience often sang along with him, clapped their hands and tapped their feet. His other life

Cirillo said that in his "other life" he is a marketing consultant in the healthcare arena. He directed the marketing and public relations at Rancocas and Zurbrugg hospitals until 1997. He eventually started his own marketing consulting company, Fast Forward Strategic Planning and Marketing Consulting, LLC, in North Carolina.

He said he began his book in 2001, quite by accident.

"I started collecting these stories, and all of the little stories started telling the book story."

He said he began to realize that these seniors all had something in common and there was an overall message.

"Part of the reason I wrote the book is because I wanted to talk to people about long-term care to erase their fears. Raise awareness," he said.

Although he enjoyed writing the book, singing, he said, is his first love.

While his mother, Philomena Cirillo, attends many of his performances when he is in the South Jersey area, she admits that when he was a teenager practicing with his friends at home, "I had to leave the house."

But she added, "I have come to quite a few of them (his shows). I think he is wonderful."

Cirillo, who lives in North Carolina with his wife Kathy, said, "My long-term goal is to have, for every month of the year, a CD for that month."

Then he added, with a laugh, "MTV meets the seniors."

He also hopes to produce a DVD so he can reach the thousands of seniors in all types of facilities throughout the country, he said.

The father of three and grandfather of two said over the years he has developed a large client list and travels from Florida to the Carolinas to the South Jersey region several times a year.

"At first," he said, "it was just to keep my hand in entertaining. But I came to realize that I could make a difference in people's lives. I get a lot of fulfillment out of it. You get instant gratification and you walk away knowing that you accomplished something."

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