# Contributions Needed to Support Services for Our Aging Population

Buncombe County is home to ever-increasing numbers of older adults. In fact, it has one of the three fastest growing populations of people over 60 in North Carolina. We are fortunate to have an array of organizations that serve older adults living here. The Council on Aging is at the center of this network, working to ensure that all seniors in need of help get the help they need. At the Council, we not only provide services we also make referrals and help coordinate available services in the community. Most of the people we serve live on limited, fixed incomes, and so far we have been able to keep up with increasing demand.

Costs for providing services are rising. At the same time, more and more adults need our help. This means that we must raise more funds from the community if we are going to continue to meet the needs of older adults living here.

Our goal this year is to raise $112,000 in charitable contributions by June 30, 2009. This is more than twice the amount raised in any previous year. Gift support will help older adults through our **Seniors Safe at Home Program**, which provides transportation, minor home repairs, and emergency response units. It will also support counseling about Medicare benefits, in-home aide services, friendly visitors, and caregiver support groups.

Over the years, the Council has been very successful in obtaining grants from private foundations and local, state and federal agencies. We also receive United Way funding, though this represents a very small percentage of our total budget. To continue to offer services in this challenging financial time, it is clear that we must increase community support and decrease reliance on grants.

To engage the community more deeply in the work of COA, a group of Council Members and staff are planning special events and public awareness activities to help make us better known. Another group of Council members is working on our annual Holiday appeal, which will be sent out in early November. We hope that, when you receive this appeal, you will respond with a generous donation before the end of the calendar year.

As we all know, the cost of care for an older adult in a skilled nursing facility is expensive. For many people, the cost is prohibitive. A much better and less costly option is to help an older adult remain at home by providing support services. That is what we do – and seniors tell us that being able to stay in their own home is a priceless gift.

Aging is in everyone's future. If we stop to contemplate the future, each of us, no doubt, will want to be is at home for as long as possible. In Buncombe County, older adults depend on the Council on Aging to be safe at home. So when you are deciding where to give charitable donations this season, please remember us.