

1 9 9 8 HEALTH & FITNESS

MILESTONES

By
Susan Church



Pat and Jerry Ringler punched a time clock at IBM for 24 years. They dressed the part. They fought freeways. They put up with crime working in Washington, D.C., and took orders from Gen-X bosses.

Finally, they took the golden handshake. Jerry Ringler threw away his watch. Pat Ringler wears t-shirts and shorts to work. Now their alarm clock is the wind in the pines. Their workplace companion is a big yellow dog who lolls at their feet. They live in a campground they own hugging the outskirts of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. And though their work day often stretches to 10 p.m. and they've had only one day off in six years, they say they've never been happier.

"We get the warm fuzzies every day," Pat Ringler, 53, said. "People are always giving us positive feedback and we've made friends from all over the country. I easily work 105 hours a week now, but this place is ours, and nobody is telling us what to do."

More and more workers in their 50s and even 60s wish they could join them. Job coaches and career counselors say they're seeing plenty of middle-aged clients bitten by the entrepreneurial bug.

With good reason. The road to retirement is rough. Middle-aged workers are at the highest risk for downsizing, according to a new study by University of Connecticut economics professor Kenneth Couch. Proposed changes in the Social Security retirement age will force a growing number of people to find jobs that will carry them through the sixth decade of life and beyond. Many displaced workers seek refuge among the ranks of self-employed, only to find they have neither the stamina nor the savvy for elder entrepreneurship.

"The people who succeed in business for themselves are those who've always succeeded," said Knoxville job coach Marta Driesslein of Cambridge Career Services. "It's not for the squeamish or the faint of heart or those who blame others for a lack of success."

Thinking about jumping ship to launch your own company? Career coaches and those who've piloted those waters before offer the following advice:

—Be prepared to sell yourself. "People think clients will beat a path to their door all on their own," said Samuel Ray, vice chairman of The Transition Team, a national outplacement firm. "But they won't." If you've never made a cold call or a presentation in your life, now is not the time to start.

When Nancy Canestaro left her college teaching job at Michigan State University to launch an interior design consulting business in the art of feng shui, she had to figure out a way to introduce the Oriental design philosophy to clients in Knoxville, Tenn. Tapping into her college teaching experience, she designed introductory seminars she offers free to community groups. She gets 10 to 15 people at each lecture and garners a couple of paying customers from each talk.

"I found out that if I didn't push, I didn't get clients," Canestaro said. "I've learned to pull back and see this as a business and not just an art. I've really had to learn business skills like marketing to succeed."

—Practice self-discipline. People who are used to playing by somebody else's rules may be at a loss when running their own show. This is no time to slack off. Ray advises budding entrepreneurs to develop a business plan and get used to structuring their work hours on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Get up. Get dressed. Get into the office—even if it's a cubby in the kitchen. Self-discipline extends to expenses too. Canestaro, 51, made a strict budget, cutting out all but business-related restaurant meetings and forgoing home improvements. She spends time in the office every day. At this point, her salary is half of what she made in academia, but she's established the kinds of business habits that will pay off in the long-run.

—Do what you love. You'll need to if you want to last the long haul. Self-employed people often work more hours, not less. "The key is to explore what your instincts tell you to," Driesslein said. The Ringlers were experienced campers and had stayed in many campgrounds before deciding to open their own. Someone with a knack for yardwork may want to start a landscaping business. Those with design or home repair skills may consider work as a home inspector. "The money is where your heart is," Driesslein said. "Keep focused."

—Consider transitioning into self-employment. Don't wait for the pink slip. Start exploring your options now. Join trade associations. Teach a class at a community college. Gather advice from those who've soloed before. SCORE, the Service Corps of Retired Executives, offers free counseling for start-up businesses.

For those hard-workers willing to meet the demands of building a new career after 50, the rewards are great. Canestaro found age is an ally. She's respected for her experience and her education. And she loves creating a company that employs both her teaching and her design skills.

"I think I'm really in my prime," she said. Susan Church is a licensed psychological examiner. She welcomes your questions or comments by e-mail, smchurch@aol.com or P.O. Box 32452, Knoxville, TN 37930.

Parish Nurse Program Begins Work

A new program began August 3 to help those in the Kings Mountain area who have been unable to access medical services they may need.

The "Parish Nurse" program is designed to build a bridge between people who are in need of regular healthcare services but have not received services because they are homebound or uninsured or because they are not aware of available services.

Charlotte Craig, R.N., B.S.N. is directing the parish nurse program in Kings Mountain. She explains that she will receive information about people who may benefit primarily by referral from clergy and church members. "Parish nurse programs work to unify a person's medical and spiritual needs," she said, by adding a spiritual component to the delivery of healthcare services. Our purposes is to treat the whole person."

Craig is a 25-year career nursing professional. She has worked in a variety of settings including public health and hospital acute-care. She received her diploma in nursing from St. Mary's School of Nursing in Knoxville, Tennessee and a bachelor of science degree in nursing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

She will now work with congregations within Kings Mountain to identify those who may qualify for the parish nurse program. In fact, all members of local church communities are invited to contact the nurse parish program if they know of someone in need of the program's services.

When Craig begins work with a patient, the first step will be to identify the scope of services they may need. This is done through interviews and an initial

evaluation and may include a physical exam. If the individual is unable to reach Craig, transportation may be arranged or she will make a visit to the residence.

Once needed services are identified, Craig will connect the patient to those services or programs that are available in Cleveland County. These might include the Cleco network of primary care physicians, the Cleveland County Health Department, Kings Mountain Hospital, Crisis Assistance Ministry, Hospice of Cleveland County, Cleveland Home Health Agency or others.

If the particular services needed are not available in Cleveland County, the program will attempt to obtain them from sources outside the county.

Craig says she will be serving as a "health counselor" for clients of the parish nurse program and will be offering health education.

"Another role will be to coordinate and teach volunteers," she adds. "Volunteers can join the program form churches throughout Kings Mountain," she said. "They might agree to sit with a person in church who is participating in the program or they might assist with community outreach such as blood pressure screenings."

No fees will be charged for the services of the parish nurse program. However, if healthcare services are needed, insurance eligibility will be considered to assist with payment for the services.

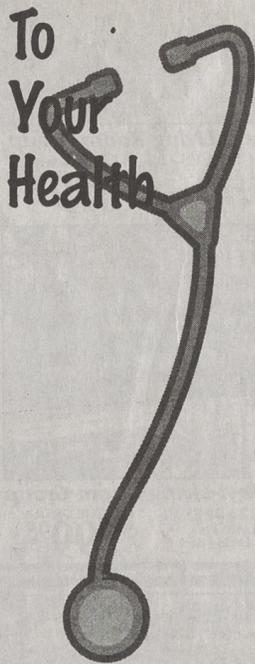
Parish Nurse is co-sponsored by Kings Mountain Hospital, the Kings Mountain Ministerial Association, Cleveland County Health Department and Cleco.



Charlotte Craig, R.N., B.S.N.

If you know of someone who might benefit from the parish nurse program or if you would like to volunteer, call Charlotte Craig. Her office is temporarily located in Kings Mountain Hospital and she can be reached at 739-3601.

Initiation of Parish Nurse is made possible by a grant from the Duke Endowment. Established in 1924, by North Carolina industrialist James B. Duke, the Duke Endowment is one of the nation's largest private foundations, with assets of more than \$1.98 billion. It supports health care and child welfare organizations in North Carolina and South Carolina; rural United Methodist churches in North Carolina; and Davidson College and Duke, Furman and Johnson C. Smith universities. In 1997, the Endowment awarded more than \$65 million in grants. Total grants since 1924 total more than 1.3 billion.



Here When You Need Us. Our Mission, Vision, & Values

Mission

The mission of Kings Mountain Hospital, as a community general hospital, is to provide care and treatment for persons suffering from illnesses, injuries or disabilities and to provide health information and health education to those who reside in Kings Mountain and the surrounding areas.

The mission of Kings Mountain Hospital, as a member of the Carolinas HealthCare System, is to support and actively participate in achieving the goals and objectives of the Carolinas HealthCare System: to create and operate a comprehensive system to provide healthcare and related services, including education and research opportunities for the benefits of the people it serves.

Vision

Kings Mountain Hospital strives to be the Hospital provider of choice in the areas of primary and secondary care and to excel in the areas of Health Education and Health Promotion in Kings Mountain and the surrounding areas.

Further, we strive to facilitate the coordination of the services of all Healthcare Agencies which serve our patients, so that our patients may experience a seamless continuum of care.

Values

Our patients and visitors will be treated with utmost compassion and concern, assuring the delivery of a personal touch despite the high tech, complex environment.

We will strive for excellence in any endeavor undertaken, placing service above self.

We will dedicate ourselves to maintaining, restoring, and improving the health of our community.

- 24 Hour Emergency Room
- One Day Surgery Outpatient Services
- Surgery •Physical Therapy
- EKG/EEG • Laboratory
- X-Ray Respiratory Therapy
- Ultra Sound •Endoscopy
- Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Respite Care
- Acute Dialysis
- Psychiatric Unit
- ECT
- CT Scanner
- Mammography Screening
- Skilled Nursing Care
- Intensive Care
- Emergency Helicopter Service

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