



Just a Phone Call Away!

Free Community Check-in Service Keeps Seniors Safe



Tom Battin, Telecare volunteer

Every Thursday morning, more than 100 seniors in the Bangor area look forward to speaking with Tom Battin. Tom is a trained volunteer for Telecare, and amongst juggling a consulting business and various projects, he manages the phones once a week to check in with local seniors to make sure they are well and doing okay.

Telecare, is a program of Rosscare, EMHS' senior health services organization. For more than thirty years, the Telecare program has been providing warm, friendly, daily check-in phone calls, free of charge, to seniors in Greater Bangor.

“After working in technology for so many years, I wanted to volunteer in a way I could be more connected to people,” explains Tom.

Telecare has been the perfect fit for Tom, and after more than two years of volunteering, Tom still looks forward to his weekly position manning the phones.

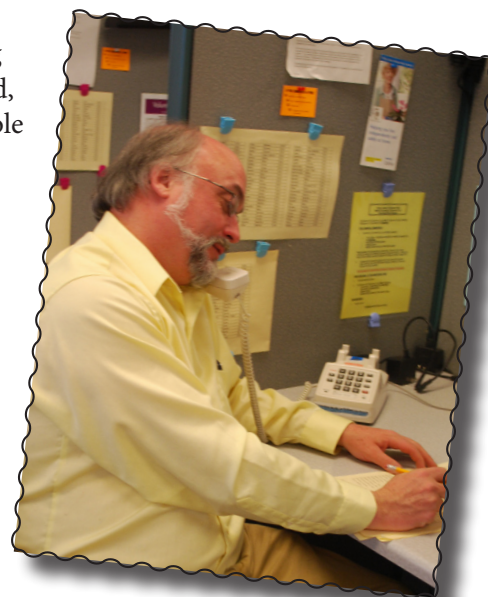
“It’s like a little community,” says Tom, “You start to develop a relationship with the people you talk to. We chat about the weather, what’s happening in their day, and current events. I really enjoy listening to their daily stories and many of the people I talk to have a different perspective on life and issues, which can be refreshing to hear.”

Cindy Smith, Telecare coordinator and communications manager for Rosscare, explains this program is not only beneficial for seniors, but for the whole family. “Life is busy and sometimes it can be difficult to provide our loved ones with all of the time, care, and resources they need. Through programs such as Telecare, Rosscare provides peace of mind and aims to provide resources that support the whole family.”

With Maine’s rapidly aging population, services such as Telecare are becoming increasingly important. Although most of the time Telecare calls go as planned, Tom can recount at least two instances where the participant was having trouble and if it weren’t for the Telecare check-in, public safety officials may not have been able to respond as quickly. For instance, Telecare has safety protocols in place where if the participant does not answer the check-in calls or the phone within a certain amount of time, someone that person has identified as a contact, or public safety officials are asked to follow up.

Tom says, “Something as simple as a phone call to those living alone can be very important. Participants I talk to seem so appreciative and thankful that they can depend on us to help keep them safe. For anyone living alone, a daily check-in can be a good thing to do. And I have met some amazing people.”

If you are interested in volunteering with Telecare or to learn more about Telecare and other senior services offered by Rosscare, call Cindy Smith at 207-973-7853 or visit www.rosscare.org.



TOGETHER We're Stronger