



# Metropolitan Senior Network Quarterly

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Photo by Kurt Krueger

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## SEASONS

by Brenda Suteu, MSN President

**I**n the middle of my back yard grows a large silver maple. I remember the day my best friend and I planted it. It was just a skinny stick with a few little branches. She had bought it for me as a housewarming gift, because she knew that more than anything I love autumn when the leaves begin to turn colors. I kept asking her if she thought a silver maple might be a tree that would grow too large for my small backyard... maybe a smaller variety of maple would be a good idea? "Pshaw" was all she said, and I couldn't argue with that, so we kept digging the hole to plant it. I wondered all day who thought up the word "pshaw."

Four years later the skinny silver maple stick is a glorious full blown tree that threatens to out-grow the backyard and do damage to the house. I have no doubt that in another four years the branches will be taking out the upstairs windows, and who knows what the roots are doing to the plumbing—or whatever is under the ground that can cost thousands of dollars in repairs. The massive dropping of mega pounds of leaves all in one hour on the windiest day makes my neighbor crazy too—but I love this tree in spite of it all and can't bear the thought of uprooting it. Tonight in the glow of the back porch light, I can see the silver maple's leaves in hues of burgundy, pink, yellow, dark green and lime green. I think of all the seasons and changes that have passed since

the day it was first planted. And I know that it won't be long before all the beautiful leaves will fall, signaling the arrival of yet another season—and my neighbor asking when I'm going to rake those leaves.

A new season has come for the silver maple and in my life. It is as if a new cycle has begun to take the place of the old cycle that started four years ago with the planting of that tree. Four years ago I had just started working for Providence. I was a lot like the skinny silver maple stick, newly planted in a very good company and ready for growth and development. Four years ago Metropolitan Senior Network did not exist—it was just the seed of an idea that was resting in the fertile ground of the networking group called Eastside Senior Network.

Four years ago I didn't have to exercise quite so hard, nor so often, to keep all my parts in the right place. Four years ago I could read any size print without holding it out at arms length, and I could get my teenage daughter to behave by threatening to walk her to school in my pajamas. Now the teenage daughter is twenty years old and nothing threatens a twenty-year old, so don't even try it. My two other younger daughters are now teenage and pre-teen and they think going to school in pajamas is a fashion statement. A lot has changed in four years.

Through this cycle I learned a lot about the business world and I learned a lot about leadership. Now that particular cycle is ending. I recently resigned from Providence to accept a position as regional director of marketing for Life Care Centers of America, an excellent company that is dedicated to quality long term care for seniors, and I will soon step down from the presidency of MSN, the marketing association I helped to create. I feel ready to apply what I've learned to this new job and to new creative endeavors and to learn more. I am ready to pass the torch to a new leader for MSN. As Gerald May said in *The Awakened Heart*, "The great dance of creation implies a moving forward, not an arrival. It is a continual becoming, not a final accomplishment." MSN still has room to grow and so do I. It's that silver maple I'm not sure about—pshaw!



Brenda Suteu  
Photo by David Brunkow