



Enjoying music and attending concerts is a pastime for educator Sharon Barnes. She and husband, Jimmy, are both huge music fans, and enjoy good live music from the old bands. Since her free time is limited, she is selective with her pastime choices.

Sharon has been employed with the Tennessee College of Applied Technology for almost nine years and previously worked 30 years as a human resource manager.

Sharon is the technology foundations instructor, providing students an opportunity to acquire or upgrade basic skills that will help them be successful in their program of study and in the workforce. She works with the students one-on-one as they complete a web-based learning program to reach required levels to complete their program.

The Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) was founded in 1966, and is a public technical college located at 241 Vo-Tech Drive. The phone number is 931-473-5587.

"My background has been in human resource, leadership and development," said Barnes. "I trained with various industries and I enjoy those roles and interaction, so TCAT is a good fit for me. I'm here because I have the opportunity to help students on the front end, as opposed to those already employed."

At the school she serves as the SkillsUSA advisor, a national organization in which all TCAT students are members. The group has various activities throughout the year, focusing on leadership,

fundraising, competitions and community service. One of her duties is assisting the students in planning and implementing projects. Their largest fundraiser is a dinner and live auction benefiting the SkillsUSA program held in April.

She spearheads other fundraisers throughout the year such as a pumpkin decorating contest around Halloween that brings a number of fascinating entries. TCAT also had a recent chili cookout with judges brought in from the community to determine the best tasting chili.

Sharon is on the Tennessee Board of Regents committee, a member of Tennessee Reconnect and assists with the Council on Occupational Education accreditation at TCAT. She is a Tennessee Promise mentor for local high school students, and a member of the Upper Cumberland Society of Human Resource Managers, National Business Education Association, as well as the Tennessee Business Education Association.

This active lady is a self-described early riser who tries to get a walk in every morning.

"That walks gets me going, and sets the tone for the day," said Barnes.

She enjoys traveling at every opportunity, with a goal of visiting all 50 states. With 40 already being marked off her list, she is hoping to get three more this spring. She and her husband help friends with the Rock Island State Park Ministry during the summer months.

"Even though I am 62 years old, I enjoy working and interacting with students," said Barnes. "I like to encourage them to be life-long learners, and I hope I am setting an example for them."



## Prepare for visiting elder guests

Homeowners may find themselves hosting senior guests several times throughout a typical year. These occasions can be wonderful opportunities for making memories, but homeowners may need to take certain precautions to ensure that guests are safe and comfortable. This may involve making some minor modifications around the home.

Mobility and comfort needs for seniors may differ those necessary to accommodate other guests. Meeting the needs of senior guests may involve any of the following.

- Make sure pathways leading to and from the home are level, cleared and easy to see.
- If possible, add a ramp over stairs that lead to the front door. Ensure handrails are sturdy.
- Remove clutter and excess furniture if a guest visiting will be using a walker or a manual/motorized wheelchair.
- Remove accent rugs from a home, and be sure that any mats are secured with nonslip material.
- Increase lighting in entryways, staircases and hallways, especially areas leading to kitchens or bathrooms.
- If guests will be staying overnight, arrange sleeping accommo-

dations on the first floor and/or in a room closest to the bathroom.

- Well-placed grab bars in the bathroom can be an asset. See if you can borrow a portable shower seat to make bathing or showering easier for overnight senior guests.
- For long-term guests, consider replacing round doorknobs and other pulls with lever-action ones that are easy to grab.
- Concessions may need to be made concerning interior temperature, noise levels and television viewing.

Several easy modifications can be made to make senior guests feel comfortable when visiting others.