

# CAREGIVER CHRONICLE

*Connections for Caregivers*

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## David Huckabee: A Journey of Personal Experience

By David Greenberg

“It’s very rare that I get surprised these days.”

Those words, from David Huckabee, job program coordinator of the Central and North Florida Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association, are based on the fact that he has lived with Alzheimer’s in his family. That personal knowledge, understanding and empathy makes him better at his job.

Huckabee’s contact with Alzheimer’s started when he was still in high school with his maternal grandmother.

“She lived with our family for five years during her journey with Alzheimer’s,” he said. “Back then, there were not a lot of resources. Al’z Place was a first-year pilot program. But we were grateful for that and other services that existed. Each new experience,



*David Huckabee and his mother at the opening ceremony of the 2013 Walk Against Alzheimer’s*

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## A Message From Cheryl Robinson

Here we are heading into another year. So, of course it’s time again for those well intentioned New Year’s resolutions, right? I just finished reading an article that stated that while the creation of yearly resolutions goes back for centuries, in reality, only eight percent of our New Year’s resolutions are actually kept. Surprising? Maybe not, considering that many of us have

a difficult time keeping a focus on our own self care.

We begin the year with good intentions for weight loss, relaxation, balance in our lives, perhaps more fun, but there is usually some road block sending us on that detour. Before we know it, we are traveling on a completely different highway.

Last year, I vowed to meet  
(continued on next page)

trial or issue we went through, we pretty much had to navigate on our own. It’s better now, but I really learned in the trenches.”

As a result, Huckabee decided to devote his professional life to this issue. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Florida in health administration and geriatric issues. He has worked for the Area Agency on Aging/ Elder Options before his current

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## **Huckabee** (continued from previous page)

position. And while he was getting a professional education and experience, the personal learning did not stop.

Some years after his maternal grandmother, his other grandmother was diagnosed. She was followed by a cousin, for whom Hucakbee and his mother were the primary caregivers. Now it is his mother who has been diagnosed with cognitive impairment.

“I have a lot of first-hand knowledge,” he said. “While that helps, every person going through the disease is an individual with individual issues. You try to be prepared but you’re never really ready.”

When Hucakbee talks to a caregiver about their role, he brings a unique perspective.

## **Cheryl** (continued from previous page)

with my girlfriend every week on Sunday afternoon, out on the back porch. It would be our time to chat, maybe vent and perhaps plan for the upcoming week. This ritual actually took hold, and lo and behold we did meet most Sunday afternoons. Little did we realize that this time and place would become our mini-support group, our sanctuary and most cherished respite time. I can say that out of all my intended resolutions, this one was probably the most significant one of all. There is much to be said for the opportunity to share in life’s struggles with others who get it.

Since we were so successful with our back porch project last year, we plan to continue to meet and spend some time sharing our gratitude and successes. We have also vowed to try to learn something new each month. We will be keeping journals. Lofty? Perhaps, but I am hopeful that we can continue to build upon the foundation we have established. So, for 2014, I hope you too are able to create a little haven – perhaps with a good friend to share your challenges and successes with during the year. I also hope that you are able to make connections with those around who can help you in some way. I do believe that the sharing makes a difference. And I continue to believe we are all on this journey together.

Cheryl Robinson, LCSW

“I can say, this is how I deal with the situation,” he said. “And now it is very different for me. There are a whole host of emotions I feel with my mother that are different – the biggest being the role reversal – along with the challenge of becoming the decision maker for someone else.”

He sees it as both a challenge and an opportunity.

“Because I am involved in dealing with issues relating to Alzheimer’s all day, I get to bring that to my mom. It helps us a great deal. She is still fully aware of what’s going on. She participated in opening ceremony for our Walk Against Alzheimer’s. It depends on the day but sometimes she is very grateful for my education – grateful that she has someone with some experience.”

Most caregivers have no clue of what’s coming next or how to deal with it, he said. The fact that his mother is open about what she is going through makes his professional life easier.

“It helps that I know what resources worked for me and the strategies that worked best,” he said. I can share that knowledge.”

That makes Huckabee a vital tool in this community when it comes to caring for loved ones with Alzheimer’s.

*Caregivers who are dealing with issues related to Alzheimer’s disease can contact David and the Alzheimer’s Association, Central and North Florida Chapter through its 24-hour helpline at (800) 272-3900.*

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**From the Desk of Sam W. Boone, Jr.:**

## **Managed Care: Florida's New Program**

*Editor's Note: This is part of a series of columns that will be presented in this newsletter by Sam W. Boone, Jr., a local attorney whose primary practice areas include elder law, estate planning, probate and trust administration. It is hoped that the information will be valuable for caregivers and family members dealing with issues related to elder law.*

The Florida Legislature in 2011 changed the landscape for people on Nursing Home Medicaid. Those changes are proving to be a headache for seniors and their caregivers around the state. And now with the "roll-out" date for most of the counties in North Central Florida coming on March 1, that headache has arrived to our area.

The Florida legislation essentially turned over control of Medicaid for elders needing assistance to for-profit managed-care companies. While many elder-law attorneys and other elder advocates argued for safeguards in the legislation, those safeguards were left out. The result is that elders and their caregivers have to be very careful about where they seek advice in this process.

Under the new law, most elderly people (or their decision maker), whether they live at home, in an assisted-living facility or a nursing-care facility, have to choose a managed-care provider.

It sounds simple enough, but it's not. Whether you currently receive Medicaid, live at home, or in a facility and whether you have filed an application for Medicaid are all factors in the process. That's important because the services you need or want impact your decision.

There are a number of questions to consider as you make this decision – and the only easy one is when – by March 1 for most of our area.

For most of our area, three plans have been approved by the state. These plans are offered by American Eldercare, Sunshine State Healthcare and United Healthcare of Florida. But these plans can be

different and depending on your circumstances, can offer differing services.

So the first question is how do you find out about the services in each program. Next, what do you do if the new plan of care changes the services you have been receiving? Then you need to consider that the facility you are in or your Medicaid home-health provider may not be contracted with the plan. In that case, you might have to move or change your home-healthcare provider.



Then there's the biggest problem of them all. If you don't choose, the state will choose for you.

By this time you should have already received information about the plans and are acting on it. The decisions

you make on this are critical in the continued care of your loved one. Do not rely solely on the choice counselors representing the plan providers. Elder law attorneys around the state, like me, can help with this process. In fact, three of my colleagues have created the Foundation for LTC Solutions. At the very least, examine their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FoundationforLTCsolutions>. This is a wonderful resource.

*Sam W. Boone, Jr. is a Gainesville-based attorney practicing elder law and estate planning. He is past-president of the Academy of Florida Elder Law Attorneys. To learn more about elder-law issues, go online to [www. http://boonelaw.com](http://boonelaw.com), or call (352)-374-8308.*

# Moonlight & Martinis



Feb. 1  
7 p.m.

Mercedes Benz  
of Gainesville  
4000 N. Main St,

For ticket information  
call (352) 339-1127

A fundraiser for  
Al'z Place

# Become a Savvy Caregiver

Ocala: Tuesdays, 2 – 4 pm, beginning Feb. 4  
at Hospice of Marion County

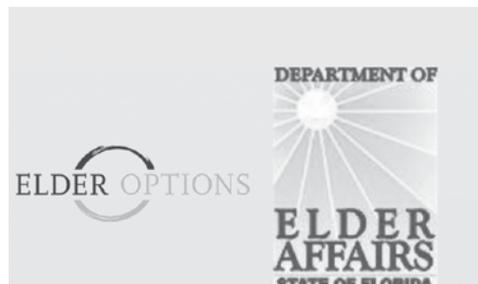
Starke: Tuesdays, 2 – 4 pm, beginning Feb 4  
at Starke Public Library

Gainesville: Wednesdays, 1 – 3 pm,  
beginning Feb. 5

at Alachua County Senior Center

Gainesville: Mondays, 6:30 – 8:30 pm,  
beginning March 3 at Elder Options

Contact Elder Options for details  
at 378-6649



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#### John Markham and Sally Dahlem

Owner/Operators with more than 30 years of combined experience in homecare, assisted living administration, skilled nursing facility admissions, case management and medical equipment sales.



## Living Healthy with Chronic Conditions

Learning that you or a loved one has a health condition that will never go away – such as diabetes or arthritis - can be scary. It can also be a positive wake-up call and an invitation to learn how to live a healthy life. Chronic diseases are lifelong health conditions that include diseases such as cancer, heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, fibromyalgia, arthritis and others. Individuals with lifelong health conditions can live a full and healthy life if they follow their doctor's recommendations and take care of their condition. *A Living Healthy with Chronic Conditions* workshop teaches participants to do just that.

Across Florida, and in Alachua County, people are learning how to manage their chronic health conditions by participating in the *Living Healthy Workshop* or a *Chronic Disease Self Management Program*. The workshop is delivered in a series of six 2 ½ hour sessions and taught by two certified leaders. Either one or both are non-professionals who have a chronic disease themselves and can speak from their own experience.

It's a proven program, developed at Stanford University, supported by Elder Options, the Mid-Florida Area Agency on Aging and funded by the Department of Elder Affairs. And it works. Participants have less pain, more energy and fewer hospitalizations. They are able to live the lives they want, and gain the ability and confidence to care for their condition. This is especially significant when we consider the magnitude of chronic disease. Nationally, 80 percent of older adults have at least one chronic condition, and 50 percent have at least two.

There is a significant need for support for people with chronic diseases, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls the most common, costly and preventable of all U.S. health problems. They are also the leading causes of death and disability, responsible for seven out of ten deaths each year. Much of this could be prevented or lessened by eating well, moving more, avoiding tobacco use and getting regular health screenings, and by creating communities that put those healthy options within reach for everyone.

In the meantime, for the many people who already have chronic diseases, and for those diseases we can't entirely prevent, it's critical that we help our residents live well with their conditions. Our county is fortunate to have funding to host Healthy Living workshops that teach people with chronic conditions to take the best care possible of themselves and, in many cases, lessen the impact of their symptoms or of the condition itself. For more information on "Living Healthy" Workshops, contact Betty Flagg @ (352) 692-5219 or [flaggb@agingresources.org](mailto:flaggb@agingresources.org)

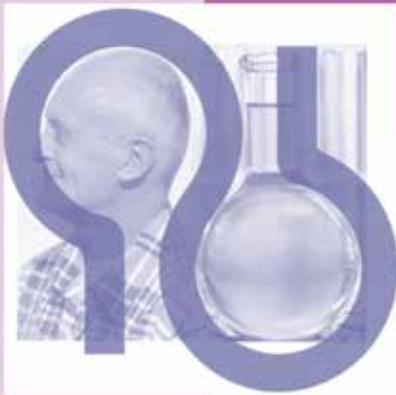
Living Healthy with Chronic Conditions  
Every Monday for 6 weeks Jan. 27,  
Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24, March 3  
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Elder Options  
100 SW 75th Street, Suite 301  
Gainesville, FL 32607

Living Healthy with Diabetes  
Jan. 27, Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24, March 3, 10  
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Tower Road Library  
3020 SW 75th Street  
Gainesville, FL 32608

For more information, go online to:

[http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/  
index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/index.htm)  
[http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-  
healthy-aging/index.html](http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging/index.html)

**See the Caregiver Chronicle online at  
[www.caregiverchronicle.com](http://www.caregiverchronicle.com)**



**Living with Alzheimer's  
for Caregivers—Early Stage**

**alzheimer's association**  
central & north florida chapter

A complimentary series of workshops to be held at the Gainesville office of the Alzheimer's Association for caregivers of persons with early stage Alzheimer's disease. **Registration is required!**

**Part 1: January 16th at 5:30 p.m.**

**Part 2: January 23rd at 5:30 p.m.**

**Part 3: January 30th at 5:30 p.m.**

**Call 1-800-272-3900 to register or for  
more information.**

[www.skipeveritt.com](http://www.skipeveritt.com)

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## Useful Resources

Alzheimer's Association – [www.alz.org/cnfl/index.asp](http://www.alz.org/cnfl/index.asp)

Elder Affairs – [www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php](http://www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php)

Comparing health plans, nursing homes, etc. – [www.floridahealthfinder.gov](http://www.floridahealthfinder.gov)

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) [www.floridashine.org](http://www.floridashine.org)

Medicare – [www.medicare.org](http://www.medicare.org)

State of Florida – [www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com)

National Institute on Aging (free publications) – [www.nig.nih.gov](http://www.nig.nih.gov)

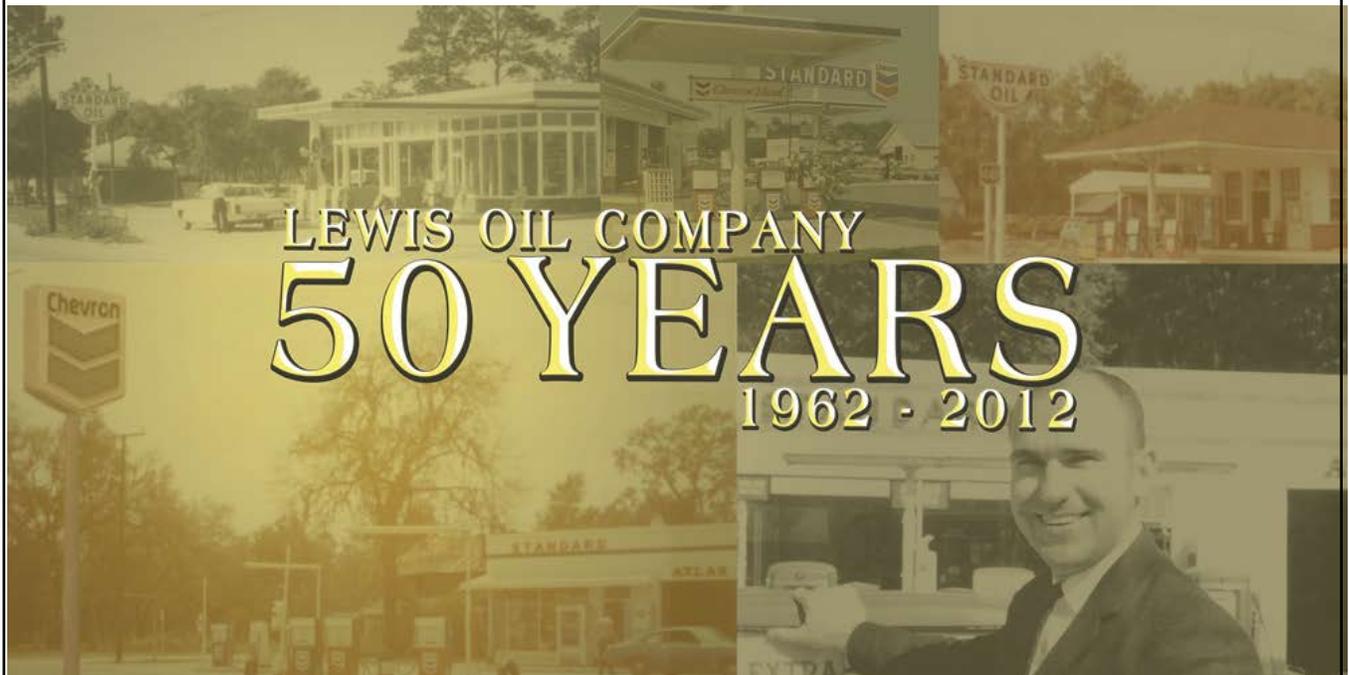
Caregiving – [www.parentgiving.com](http://www.parentgiving.com)

Respite locator – [www.respitelocator.org](http://www.respitelocator.org)

Caregiving – [www.rosalynncarter.org](http://www.rosalynncarter.org)

Driving – [www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/driversatrisk.htm](http://www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/driversatrisk.htm)

United Way – Alachua, Bradford & Putnam counties – [www.unitedwaycnfl.org](http://www.unitedwaycnfl.org)



## Caregiver Support Groups

Al'z Place/Harbor Chase  
3rd Thursday of the month at 9am  
Open to all caregivers  
Contact Robyn at 352-375-3000 for address

Alterra Clare Bridge  
3rd Thursday of the month- 6pm  
4607 NW 53rd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32653  
Contact Gail at 376-5151

Community Cancer Center  
Living With Cancer Supports  
www.cccnf.com for more information

Haven Hospice  
Bereavement Supports  
Call 378-1212 for more information

Hospice of the Nature Coast  
Wings Community Education Center  
Grief Support Group- High Springs  
Call 386-454-1338 for more information

Lake Area Caregiver Support Group  
4th Tuesday of the month from 1-2:00pm  
Melrose Senior Community Center  
307 SR 26, Melrose, FL 32666  
Call 352-475-5347 for more information

Park Meadows Health and Rehab Center  
3250 SW 41 Pl  
Call the Al'z Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 for more information

Senior Healthcare Center at Spring Hill  
3rd Tuesday of the month- 2:30-4:00pm  
3720 NW 83rd Street  
Contact Flory at 336-3050

United Church of Gainesville  
1624 NW 5th Ave.  
3rd Tuesday of the month from 7-8pm  
Open to all caregivers  
Contact Lynda at 352-219-3023

VA Caregiver Support  
Call 1-855-260-3274

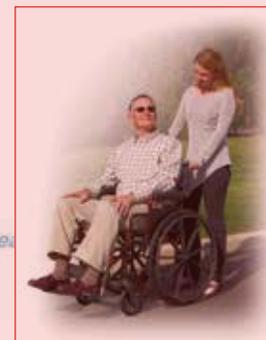
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