

CAREGIVER CHRONICLE

Connections for Caregivers

Altrusa House's New Programming Engages Elderly

By Paige Thies

When Nancy Lewis first arrived at Altrusa House, the facility gave off an institutional impression. The walls were gray, and the program was flat. As the new director, Nancy knew she had to make deep changes. She and her husband painted the interior walls in soft

colors friendly to Alzheimer's patients and revamped the wheelchair accessible garden and gazebo. She then delved into program research, moving Altrusa House into more therapeutic and person-centered programming. Nancy proudly calls her hard work "Altrusa House 2.0."

The Altrusa House is a



day healthcare facility for adults, administered by Easter Seals, the leading provider of disability services in the country. Originally developed as a transitional place between home and hospital, the program now focuses on providing therapeutic, educational and social support and activities for those who would otherwise spend their days at home. It strives to serve both members and their families, as the program creates time for caregivers to work or rest. Altrusa House caters to the frail, elderly and disabled, including the intellectually disabled of all ages. They work with stroke victims, oxygen-dependent adults, dementia and Alzheimer's patients and more.

Most recently, Altrusa House partnered with the Alzheimer's Association to develop support groups for dementia patients and their caregivers. Held the first Thursday of every month at noon, the groups serve as a safe place for caregivers and those suffering from the

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A Message From Cheryl Robinson

March is Social Work Month! This year's theme is: Social workers pave the way for change. For me, the Caregiver Chronicle is a project used to pave the way for caregivers and in doing so hopefully makes the journey a bit easier.



The articles in the newsletter often reflect the ethics, values and goals of the social work profession. In particular, this issue addresses respect, consideration and empowerment for caregivers and those who receive care. Nancy Lewis with Altrusa House speaks of respectful and supportive programming at their center. Sam Boone speaks of protection and a respect for elder safety. Sally Dahlem focuses on empowerment shown through respect, security and acceptance and the Elder Options mission includes honoring elder wisdom, security

and dignity.

Please join me this month in recognizing all of the professional social workers providing care and support to caregivers and clients on this journey. Licensed Clinical Social Workers hold a master's degree from an accredited university, pass a licensing exam and have two years of clinical supervision. They are licensed under the state board of professional regulation. Social Workers provide therapy/counseling, case management and act as facilitators, brokers of resources and services, and coordinators of care. They work with individuals, families and groups. Social workers follow their code of ethics which focuses on treating all persons in a caring and respectful manner, respecting the inherent dignity and worth of the person and enhancing a client's capacity and opportunity to change. A big thank you to all of my colleagues. It is an honor to be on this journey with you.

Cheryl Robinson, LCSW

Altrusa House

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disease to share and vent. Additionally, Altrusa House is partnering with the Alzheimer's Association to facilitate the Making Memories Program, which also involves early-stage dementia patients and their caregivers. During the eight-week program, an artist taps into the participants' long-term memory by helping them create artwork across a range of topics. At the end of the program, a gala is planned to display the members' artwork.

Each day at Altrusa House consists of about five to eight activities, including exercise, watercolors, Wii, a book club and other exciting activities. Altrusa House welcomes musicians, such as New Beginnings flute trio, who engage members with instruments and music from the 1930s and 40s. Altrusa House holds events with the Harn Museum of Art, local homeschoolers and Gainesville Physical Therapy and Wellness. A well-traveled Altrusan, Nancy Holt, even hosts a travel program where she speaks about the different countries she's visited.

Nancy Lewis has also implemented an educational program at Altrusa House. "They still want to learn and be intrigued," she said. "It's another way to respect the aging population."

The Red Cross has presented on hurricane preparedness, the Gainesville Police Department spoke about crime prevention and financial safety and two representatives from the tax collector's office spoke to an engaged and curious audience for two hours about different taxes and forms.

With no waiting list, Altrusa House is incredibly affordable at \$61.50 a day and can offer scholarships based on need. Attendance at Altrusa House is flexible, with no contract or long-term commitment – just 24-hour notice prior to attendance once the application has been completed.

"I know I'm improving their quality of life while they're here and the quality of life that their caregivers have," Nancy said. "The older I've gotten, I realized I was made to serve other people."

Community Coalition for Older Adults
Second Friday of the month, Senior Recreation
Center, 5701 NW 34 St.
Contact Shirley Bloodworth at
sgblood@bellsouth.net for
information.

Altrusa House programming is engaging, respectful, informative and supportive. But, what really makes Altrusa House special is the dedicated staff and volunteers who give their all to the members each and every day.

Rafael Cott, MD, invites you to the 9th annual

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www.gccfla.org/rtr
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Like the page to get notices about events and activities
between our print issues.

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

Guardianship: A Vital Tool That Needs Help

By Sam Boone

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.

In the last several months there has been much media attention placed on an occasional problems in Florida and elsewhere with guardianship proceedings and the possible exploitation of incapacitated wards.

Under Florida law the court appoints a guardian when it has been determined that a person no longer has the capacity to manage their own affairs and/or property. The guardian is an individual or institution appointed by the court to care for the incapacitated person or her property under the supervision of the court. A guardian can be a family member, a professional guardian, a bank trust department or a nonprofit corporation. Ideally a family member who has the best interests of the incapacitated person at heart is the best choice but that is not always an option.

A series of articles originally published in the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* – parts or all of which were reprinted in several media outlets including *The Gainesville Sun* – pointed out the system can sometimes result in exploitation of our elderly population. These articles have suggested there may be conflicts of interest among judges, attorneys, guardians, health care providers and other business people who work closely together within the guardianship system. The worst of these examples of exploitation included failing to notify the next of kin of legal proceedings, financial exploitation, poor legal representation, poor guardian performance and misrepresentation of the facts.

What the articles fail to acknowledge is that guardianship is often the only appropriate mechanism available to protect an incapacitated person from abuse, exploitation and neglect be it by third person or family members. In the majority of the cases reported on in the articles, those complaining about the system were family members who were more concerned with their parents' money or with sibling rivalry.

Guardians are appointed by the courts after a background check and a review of a comprehensive application filed with the court. Guardians must post

a bond or hold a ward's funds in a bank account which can be accessed only by order of the court. The guardian must file annual reports, including a report from an examining physician, as well as annual accountings.

While a court may appoint any person who is fit and proper and qualified to act as guardian, family members have statutory priority to be appointed as guardians. The court must appoint any standby guardian or preneed guardian nominated by the incapacitated person unless the court determines that appointing such person is contrary to the best interests of the ward.



You may want to include a designation of pre-need guardian as a part of your estate planning. That way you can be sure that the court is aware of your preferences and must consider your preferences.

Under the Florida Guardianship law a guardian may not be appointed if the court finds there is an alternative to guardianship which will sufficiently address the problems of the incapacitated person. A Durable Power of Attorney, a Revocable or Irrevocable Trust Agreement, and a validly executed Health Care Advance Directive will generally be considered as least restrictive alternatives to a plenary guardian of the person and property.

There's no question that the best solution for the safety, care and financial security of our seniors is to be surrounded by a loving and responsible family for as long as possible. But when that alternative is not available, we have to look at our guardianship system. For the most part, this system works. However we have to remain vigilant and continue to do whatever is necessary to make sure that continues. Guardianship is a vital piece of the system we have in place to protect Florida's seniors.

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.

Elder Options: Offering Services and Programs for the Elderly and their Caregivers

By Damaris Lopez

The mission statement on Elder Options' website calls for communities where elders are respected for their wisdom, informed and supported in their choices and live with health, security and dignity. To that end, the agency offers a variety of programs and serves as a link to other agencies, organizations and programs that exist to achieve these goals.

In these pages we often promote one Elder Options program regularly, Savvy Caregiver – a training program to help caregivers improve levels of care for their family member or friend.

A number of health and wellness programs are offered through Elder Options. In addition to the Savvy Caregiver training, elders can reap the benefits of Tai Chi, diabetes self-management, chronic disease self-management and A Matter of Balance, which focuses on reducing fear of falling and setting realistic goals for activities.

Through the Care Transitions program, Elder Options also provides help for those who were just released from UF Health or North Florida Regional Medical Center. Care Transitions can provide help with, delivering meals and other needed services for up to 30 days after release. This program can often prevent admission to a nursing home or readmission into the hospital. It is available to those who are on Medicare A and B and are being discharged from UF Health or North Florida Regional Medical Center.

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) is another free program aimed at helping elders understand their rights and options when it comes to insurance so that they can make informed choices about Medicare. The Florida Department of Elder Affairs provides trained, unbiased counselors who volunteer their time to inform and counsel seniors about Medicare/Medicaid, long-term care insurance, supplemental insurance, prescription drug assistance and Medicare fraud.

Another critical program available to older adults, persons with disabilities, their caregivers, and family members is the Elder Helpline, a service of Florida's Aging and Disability Resource Center. Callers can also apply for in-home services by calling the Elder Helpline, (800) 96-Elder (963-5337) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. During off hours, you can leave a message that will be returned the next work day.

This is just the tip of the iceberg of programs and services at Elder Options. To learn more go to www.agingresources.org.

A New Web Learning Opportunity

By Tom Rinkoski

Elder Options is pleased to introduce a new web learning site specifically designed for caregivers. At this website you can choose from a variety of short courses on different topics related to caregiving. The site is free and open to all, but will be of specific interest to caregivers and health care professionals who work with persons with any form of progressive dementia (i.e. Alzheimer's, etc.).

This website offers interested persons a chance to learn at times that work best for them. Each lesson is about a half-hour in length. When you go to the web site at www.savvycaregiver.info, click on the subject you want. Some of the choices are presented on the carousel on the front page, but there are others. Clicking on a title will take you to a brief review of what to anticipate in the video. Some of the videos also provide downloadable worksheets and other resources. If books and materials are referenced in the video, you will find links to those as well. To watch the video you just click on the arrow, put on your headset and learn.

Subjects include: Taking Away The Car Keys, Improving Communication Skills, Dealing with Behavior Problems in Dementia, Hiring Caregiver Help and Assistance, How to Work With Doctors, Exploring Cognitive Losses in Dementia, Stress in Caregiving, Building Meaningful Activities for Persons With Dementia and more. There are currently 20 different options to choose from.

This project is offered by Elder Options with technical assistance from New Horizons Learning Center. It has been funded through a generous donation by Renstar Medical Research in Ocala. You are invited to check this out and let me know what you think. You can contact me at (352) 692-5226 or via e-mail at rinkoskit@agingresources.org.

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Upcoming Savvy Caregiver Trainings

Savvy Caregiver Training is a six-session training dedicated to people who care for family members and friends with dementias (like Alzheimer's). Our goal is to reduce your stress by offering you easy-to-understand information about progressive dementias, related medicines, and diagnostic tools. It is our goal to build skills on relating to persons of dementia when they behave in ways that baffle, embarrass or irritate you and others.

Choose whichever series works for your schedule and call Tom Rinkoski at (352) 378-6649, ext. 126 to register. Or e-mail him at rinkoskit@agingresources.org.

Tuesdays; 1 – 3 pm, begins April 7, 2015 at Alachua Library, Alachua
Thursdays; 1 – 3 pm, begins April 9, 2015 at Grace Episcopal Church, Ocala
Thursdays; 1 – 3 pm, begins June 4, 2015 at Alachua County Health Dept., Gainesville
Thursdays; 1 – 3 pm, begins June 4, 2015 at Hope Lutheran Church, The Villages
Wednesdays; 1 – 3 pm, begins June 10, 2015 at Haven Hospice, Palatka

More dates of upcoming Savvy Caregiver Trainings can be found at our Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/SavvyCaregiverNorthCentralFlorida>) or Web Page (www.agingresources.org).

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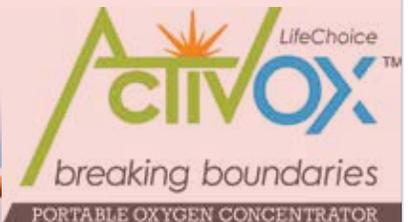
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Role Changes Among Older Parents and Children

By Sally Dahlem

As people age their caregiver role begins to decline, while younger relatives' caregiver role begins to increase. Most elderly people today have children, grandchildren and siblings who provide them with care and attention. This common role shift can be a difficult transition for those involved.

As an older adult begins to relinquish responsibilities, children begin to take authority over more than health and well being. The elderly may feel they are losing independence during this transition, so it's important to continue to act tactfully, involve them in decision-making where you can and think with their best interest in mind.

While this sensitive issue can cause self-esteem damage, it is also difficult for children to see their parent vulnerable and dependent and could arouse anxiety or embarrassment. Also, by the time children need to begin providing extra care for their parents, they usually have a career, family and social life of their own.

One of the most crucial elements during this role change is extra assistance for both the senior and the caregiver. It is important to not allow too much re-

sponsibility to fall on one person and to provide rest and flexibility for caregivers. A home-health agency can provide services such as meal preparation, housekeeping, showering and outing accompaniment just one day a week or multiple. Assistance from a home health agency allows family members to spend more quality time with their elderly parents without worrying about chores and tasks.

When transitioning roles with your parents, make decisions that support and preserve their well being, purpose and confidence. The key aspect that will continue to make them feel fulfilled is empowerment. Five values associated with empowerment are: respect, belonging, purpose, security and acceptance. Careful consideration rooted in these values, teamwork among younger relatives and decision inclusion are three strategies that can help make this difficult transition run more smoothly.

Sally Dahlem is a partner at Home by Choice, which provides private-duty homecare services. She and her business partner, John Markham, have more than 35 years of experience in home healthcare, assisted living, long-term care and the medical equipment industries.

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John Markham and Sally Dahlem

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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

The Cancer Center at NFRMC
Heart of Healing Support Group/Meditation
Tuesdays 12-12:30pm
Call Joanie at 386-853-0162

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

Community Cancer Center
Lake City Support Group
2nd Wednesday every month 11am - 1pm
4520 W.US Hwy. 90, Lake City, FL 32055 For more
information call 386-755-0601

Haven Hospice
Bereavement Supports
Call 692-5123 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
Trinity Episcopal Church
204 SR 26, Melrose, FL 32666
Call 352-475-3792 for more information
Park of the Palms
2nd Monday at 2pm in the Library
Contact: Gail Haynes RNC - 352-246-5601

Park Meadows Health and Rehab Center
3250 SW 41 Pl, GV
Call the Alz Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 for more
information

Senior Healthcare Center at Springhill
3rd Tuesday of the month- 2:30-4:00pm
3720 NW 83rd Street, Gainesville, FL 32606
Contact Flory at 336-3050

NF Mind Matters Stroke Support Group
4th Thursday of the month from 1-2 pm
South Tower, 4th floor Conference Room-NFRMC
Call 1-800-611-6913 for more information

The Village
(for Village residents only)
2nd Monday of the month from 1-2:30 pm
8000 NW 27th Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32606
Call 872-5332 for more information

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

Useful Resources

Seniors vs. Crime: www.seniorsvscrime.com

Alzheimer's Association – www.alz.org/cnfl/index.asp

Elder Affairs – www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) www.floridashine.org

Medicare – www.medicare.org

State of Florida – www.myflorida.com

National Institute on Aging (free publications) – www.nig.nih.gov

Caregiving – www.rosalynncarter.org

Driving – www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/driversatrisk.htm

United Way – Alachua, Bradford & Putnam counties – www.unitedwaycnfl.org

National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Management - www.caremanager.org