As we all know, caregivers play a vital role in our society. Without them, our system of healthcare – especially for the elderly – would fall apart.

More than 40 million family caregivers provided 37 billion hours of care for loved ones. The value of this care is estimated at $470 billion, in the last five years. That’s $470 billion that simply does not exist in the budgets of any healthcare-related agencies.

If you are one of those 40 million, you are, in all likelihood, caring for an elder parent. And you are doing it simply because that’s your responsibility as part of the family. For most family caregivers, the common refrain is, “My parents took care of me. Now it’s time for me to take care of them.”

You may be in the caregiver role for no other reason than geography. You may be one of a few adult children, but you may be the one who lives closest to aging parents or other family members in need of care.

However, none of that means you need to be doing this alone.

The biggest problem for family caregivers to overcome may be the inability to ask for help.

It is a common feeling among caregivers that they are in this by themselves, and it has to be that way. It’s often the case that the caregiver feels so overwhelmed that they don’t even have the time or ability to ask for help.

In some cases, the request for help may be seen by the caregiver as a sign of weakness. After all, in their minds this is their task – feeling responsible for those who cared for them.

They may also not be aware that help exists. However, if you are reading this article, we hope you understand that by looking through the rest of the pages in this newsletter, you will see that there is plenty of help right here in this community.

But asking for help is vital in your effort to successfully complete your responsibility as a caregiver. The simple reason for that is that without help, you will burn out.

Most caregivers believe they were not prepared to assume these responsibilities. And almost all caregivers find it to be stressful, if not overwhelming. But the concept of taking a break, or respite, is beyond their thinking, with about half saying it’s overwhelming.

Being a caregiver without respite is a formula doomed to fail. But about 85 percent of family caregivers in the U.S. do not receive any respite care. Because of that and feelings of isolation, anywhere from 20-40 percent experience depression. Many are in poor health themselves. If you are overwhelmed, depressed, or ill you cannot provide your best effort as a family caregiver.

So, let’s go back to asking for help. It’s not a self-serving act. Asking for help is not a selfish act. It is actually an act of love and compassion for yourself and the family member for whom you are caring. Studies show that even a small amount of respite can make the world of difference.

Here are the steps you should take to ask for help. First, determine what help would be the most useful. Is it someone to help pay the bills, shop, clean or just spend time with your loved one, so you can get some time off for yourself? Consider asking other
family members, even if they live far away, to come here for some time and give you the opportunity to get away. It may be finding and being able to talk to other caregivers going through the same challenges as you. Second, use this newsletter and other community resources to find out where to ask for help. Finally, make the ask. We know that’s hard but it’s better than continuing down the current path.

Remember, you don’t have to do this alone!

Gentle Motions for Seniors and Caregivers

Stress takes its toll on all of us, caregivers as well as those who are receiving care. The effect of stress can manifest as physical, emotional or mental illnesses. “Gentle Motions for Seniors,” a class held at the Senior Healthcare Center at Crown Pointe on Thursday mornings (Gainesville), focuses on reducing stress and providing tools to better manage it. The class involves a series of movements and practices that gently open the joints, massage the internal organs, improve circulation, strengthen the lower body and promote a sense of well-being. Much has been written recently about the many benefits of Tai Chi but little about Qigong (somewhat similar to Yoga), which provides the foundation for Tai Chi. This class emphasizes the many movements and exercises of Qigong, which develops mindfulness or awareness, greater flexibility, strength and a peaceful mind while reducing stress. This ongoing class is held at 10:00 AM on Thursdays and costs $7.00 per class. If you are interested and want more information, please contact Paul Gebhart at 352-379-6124.

Savvy Caregiver Training

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

For more information and class dates, go to the website (http://agingresources.org/savvy-caregiver-for-families) or Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/savvycaregivertraining). Contact Johnnie Jones at jonesj@agingresources.org or 352-692-5277 to register.
From the Desk of Sam W. Boone, Jr.:

By Sam W. Boone, Jr.

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 new year brings many things but unfortunately, among those new year’s gifts was an apparent rash of new efforts by scammers to victimize all of us – and especially our elderly population. This increased effort by scammers seems to manifest in two forms – phone calls and emails.

Sadly, this is big business. Estimated annual losses to scammers range from $2.9 billion to $36.5 billion annually, according to the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The wide range in the estimate is a result of under-reporting of these losses by the victims. And the people hit the hardest are seniors. Here’s a breakdown of annual losses:

- Age 70-79 – $45,300
- Age 80 and older – $39,200
- Age 60-69 – $22,700
- Age 50-59 – $13,400

There’s a wide range of possible scams but here are the 10 most common.

1. Medicare/health insurance scams: Many of these are phone calls from people saying they are Medicare consultants.
2. Counterfeit prescription drugs: These are usually found as sales on the Internet.
3. Funeral and cemetery scams: Scammers read obits and call to try to collect fake outstanding debts.
4. Phony anti-aging drugs: These are too-good-to-be-true solicitations to make seniors look young and beautiful.
5. Telemarketing/phone scams: Callers tell you they have a large sum of money for you, a family member has been in an accident or they are from a charity. Then they ask for access to your bank account.
6. Internet/Email scams: This may be in the form of a pop-up browser for bogus anti-virus software or a nearly perfectly replicated email from what appears to be a legitimate company, the IRS or the Social Security Administration.
7. Fraudulent investment schemes: These target seniors who are recently retired and looking to invest their savings.
8. Homeowner/reverse mortgage scams: Again, using nearly perfectly replicated emails, scammers offer (for a fee) a reassessment of property or a reverse mortgage.
9. Sweepstakes and lottery scams: You are told you won a lottery or sweepstakes and need to make a payment to get your prize.
10. The grandparent scam: A fake grandchild calls and asks you to send money.

How do you or your senior family member avoid falling victim to these efforts? Create a family plan that designates someone trustworthy to protect your senior family members. This includes having a power of attorney and all the appropriate health care legal documents. Stay connected with your senior family members through phone calls and visits. Get to know any private caregivers who help your senior family members. And do your best to make sure your senior family members do not sign documents or give their personal information to anyone you and they do not know.

And if you are victimized, you can seek out the services of Seniors vs Crime, a special project of the Florida Attorney General’s Office. Seniors vs Crime works with the various law enforcement agencies throughout the state, educating seniors on how not to become a victim of a scam or fraud. However, if it happens, Seniors vs Crime will help to try to resolve the problem.

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 and is accredited by the Veterans Administration. To learn more about elder-law issues, go online to www. http://boonelaw.com, or call (352) 374-8308.
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Caregiver Support Groups

Al’z Place
3rd Thursday of the month at 9am
Open to all caregivers
1610 NW 23rd Ave. Gainesville
Contact Nancy at 352-265-9200

Alzheimer’s Association
Caregiver Support Group
2nd Thursday of each month - 1:30 p.m.
Edward Jones conference room,
220 North Main Street, Suite 2, Chiefland
Contact Kathryn at 352-493-4949

Alzheimer’s Association
Caregiver Support Group
3rd Tuesday of each month - 7 p.m.
United Church of Gainesville Library
1624 NW 5th Ave
Contact Dar Mikula 352-359-4041

Cancer Center at NFRMC
Breast Cancer Support Group
2nd Tuesday of the month - 6pm - 7:30 pm
Call Susie at 352-333-5849

Caregiver Connection by
Senior Healthcare Center
3rd Tuesday of the month- 2:30-4:00pm
Senior Healthcare Center at Springhill
3720 NW 83rd Street, Gainesville, FL 32606
Contact Flory at 352-336-3050

Caregiver Connection by
Senior Healthcare Center
4th Tuesday of the month from 1-2:00pm
Trinity Episcopal Church
204 SR 26, Melrose, FL 32666
Call 352-475-3792

Lake Area Caregiver Support Group
4th Tuesday of the month from 1-2:00 pm
Trinity Episcopal Church
204 SR 26, Melrose, FL 32666
Call 352-475-3792

United Church of Gainesville
1624 NW 5th Ave, Gainesville
3rd Tuesday of the month from 7-8pm
Open to caregivers of persons with dementia
Call 800-272-3900 to RSVP

VITAS Healthcare
Grief Support Group- High Springs
Contact Joy at 386-201-1070

If you are aware of any changes or updates to this list, please notify us at david@greenbergcommunications.com
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(352) 367-4920  
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Useful Resources

Seniors vs. Crime: www.seniorsvscrime.com
Alzheimer’s Association – www.alz.org/cnfl
Doggie Styles: Mobile Pet Grooming – www.doggiestyles.org
Elder Affairs – www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php
Elder Helpline – Florida hotline 1-800-963-5337
Elder Helpline – Alachua County hotline 1-800-262-2243
Elder Options – Savvy Caregiver Classes – www.agingresources.org
Florida Silver Alert – www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/silver_alert.html
SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) – www.floridashine.org
Palm Aging Life Management (Ginesville and surrounding areas) – www.palmaging.com or 352-519-4648
Driving – www.ufhealth.org/uf-smartdrive-driver-rehabilitation
Medicare – www.medicare.org
National Institute on Aging (free publications) – https://order.nia.nih.gov
Aging Life Care Association – www.aginglifecare.org
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – www.va.gov
Sleep Issues – https://www.tuck.com/dementia/

If you are aware of any changes or updates to this list, please notify us at david@greenbergcommunications.com

30 YEARS AGO, ASSISTED LIVING WAS JUST AN IDEA. OURS.

The last thing on the minds of today's Legend Senior Living® residents was senior living, but that was three decades ago. And it was all we could think about: Giving seniors who needed personal care, but who wanted their independence, dignity and a quality of life that just couldn't be found in the options at the time. Even after 30 years as the Experts in Senior Living, Legend Senior Living is still family-owned and mission-driven to bring the comfort and freedom of home with expert care. But then, that was the whole idea.

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Bring your questions and join us for this educational event.

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Jocelyn Holt
Certified Life Care Planner

Estate Planning and Elder Law
Sam Boone
Estate Planning and Elder Law Attorney

Advance Care Planning
Marylin Bloom
Director of Community Resources, Haven

Seating is limited. Please RSVP to:
352-448-0360 or WINDSOROFGAINESVILLEEVENTS.COM

PANEL
SENIOR EXPERTS
TUESDAY, MARCH 24 • 10:00AM OR 5:30PM
3605 NW 83rd St
Gainesville, FL 32606
ALF# 13145
A Residence of Legend Senior Living®
LegendSeniorLiving.com

Fearless Caregiver Event
Virtual Dementia Tour
Dementia Resource Expo
MARCH 18TH 2020 | 10:00 TO 3:00
OCALA | COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Resources for Marion, Alachua, Citrus, Lake, Levy,
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College of Central Florida • Klein Center
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REGISTER FOR FREE ONSITE, ONLINE, OR BY PHONE
To register and keep up with this event visit:
• facebook.com/dementiaexpo
• eventbrite.com (search “Dementia Resource Expo”)
• savvy@agingresources.org
• (352) 692-5246

Walk to End Alzheimer’s Gainesville: Volunteer Kick Off
at Total Wine, Wed Mar 18, 2020
5:30pm - 7pm

There will be opportunities for volunteers to see what roles are available and how they can help plan this year’s walk.