

Programs for People with Early Memory Loss

The Family Caregiver Support Program is looking for people with early memory loss to participate in support groups and Healthy Living and Guided Autobiography programs.

Recent focus on the needs of people with early memory loss indicates that these individuals often feel the need to talk and share, in confidence, with others who have similar problems. Many people with early memory loss find it difficult to express their feelings about their memory problems and report that friends and family can be uncomfortable with their changes in memory. They desire a place that is "safe" to talk openly about their memory loss. They are looking for a place where they can socialize, problem-solve together, share experiences and create friendships.

People with early memory loss are often independently functioning members of the community. Many are employed or volunteering and living in their own home. There are few programs available for them. We would like to develop a program where people with early memory loss can meet and interact with others who face similar issues. Participation in an early memory loss program can be vitally important to a person experiencing changes in memory. It can provide mental and physical stimulation, opportunities to stay involved in

Kinship Care Video

The Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) in Region G has identified the need for more resources for grandparents raising grandchildren and kinship caregivers. In response, the FCSP is developing and producing a Kinship Care Video. The video will provide kinship caregivers a tool for effective advocacy for expansion and additional services. The video will include educational and story-telling components through interviews with kinship caregivers, adults raised by kinship caregivers, Departments of Social Services, school systems, and legal professionals to identify the need, highlight benefits of caregiving, and identify options for advocacy. This video is expected to complete production in November 2010 to help celebrate National Caregiver Month.

To learn more, contact:

Julia Perdue • Piedmont Triad Council of Governments • 336-294-4950

Living Healthy

Whether you are a caregiver or a care recipient, positive self-management is not a groundbreaking or new age idea. Becoming a positive self-manager, however, could change your life forever! All of us, especially those of us with chronic or ongoing health conditions, have no choice but to be self-managers. Where we *do* have a choice is in deciding what *type* of self-manager we want to be. We can be *positive* self-managers who choose to be active and live lives full of life. Or, we can be *passive* self-managers, doing nothing and suffering in silence. One thing is for certain, living with a chronic condition does not have to be become the center of your existence. You can live a life with filled with enjoyment and pleasure. It's all about learning to use the "tools" in your self-management "toolbox."

Often, a person with a chronic health condition (or two, or three) will go to an appointment with his/her

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Note from the Chair

Our caregiver track at the recent NCAOA conference in Greensboro received good feedback in the evaluations returned by attendees. It was a nice opportunity to see some of our members face to face.

At our annual meeting held during the conference we had some valuable suggestions on how to make the Alliance more helpful and productive in supporting the staff in our state who work with caregivers. The first idea was to host a blog site for discussion of common issues we face in service caregivers. Ask and you shall receive. Our board member Rick Eldridge has created the blog for our use and you may access it at the

following address.

<http://ncaoa.org/caregiversblog>

I hope you each get a chance to look at the blog and create a log-in so that you may participate with us in discussing caregiver related topics.

Also, keep your eyes peeled for notice of our next conference call. We will need to handle the voting in of new officers!

Thanks for all you do in your service to families across our state. Keep up the good work!

-Minco Holloway

Kinship Care Program

The Kinship Care program for grandparents raising grandchildren celebrated 3 years of association with Mecklenburg DSS in July.

We began with one support group meeting which meets in the evening at DSS. We serve a light meal and 3 of our social workers provide supervision and activities for the grandchildren during the group meeting. A second group was started at the Shamrock Sr. Center last year, meeting during the day. Grandparents find support, encouragement, resources, and new friends. We are always trying to reach out to find more of the over 5,000 families headed by a grandparent in our county.

As a special event in May, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Aging Coalition chose as their project a "gala" to celebrate grandparents raising grandchildren. About 50 people came together on a Monday evening. The grandmothers were given a red rose before they walked down the red carpet (to the cheers of the paparazzi!!) They enjoyed a wonderful dinner and attractive table settings. A violinist serenaded all during the meal and a magician provided entertainment which was enjoyed by the children and adults. Each grandparent and each grandchild were awarded a ribbon which signified their various achievements. Many members of the coalition

provided door prizes so that everyone left with very special treats. It was an evening to be remembered!

This summer we have provided a day camp experience for the great granddaughter and the granddaughter of two of our participants. Several of our participants were able to take advantage of camperships offered by one of our business partners and numerous other referrals were made. The respite that these grandparents have helps them to have time to take care of themselves and to recharge their energy.

Our advisory council of grandparents is hard at work on our 4th annual celebration of grandparents' day (we will celebrate on September 18th) and the statewide event for caregivers sponsored by the Lifespan Respite Coalition.

It is an ongoing challenge, but mostly an ongoing joy to work with this population.

Marsha McElroy and Lavern Weathers

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxAyZnDU7vI>

Living Healthy

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physician and be told: “you need to start eating healthier” or “you need to do a better job of taking your medications” or “find a way to de-stress and deal with your fatigue.” What isn’t conveyed is *how* the person should go about doing all those things. These are all activities or issues that are based on personal behavior, and behavior is *not* an easy thing to change! So, where does one go to learn these skills or tools to make behavior changes and become the positive self-manager he/she longs and needs to be? The short, easy, and accessible answer is... the *Living Healthy* program (i.e. Chronic Disease Self-Management Program; CDSMP).

Living Healthy, developed at Stanford University, is an internationally renown program designed to empower participants to take control of their chronic conditions, rather than allowing their conditions to control them. It is a *skill*-building, not a *knowledge*-building workshop, so participants truly get to learn about and practice

the tools that will help them better manage their health and their lives.

While no one wants to have a chronic health problem, most of us will experience two or more of these conditions during our lives. This can include: arthritis, lung disease, chronic heartburn, fibromyalgia, heart failure, heart disease, diabetes, renal failure, stroke, high blood pressure, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, obesity and cancer.

If you have an ongoing health problem, this workshop will change your life! Over the course of six workshop sessions (once per week for 6 weeks), you will learn how to manage fatigue and pain, deal with difficult emotions, eat healthy, communicate effectively with your healthcare providers, incorporate appropriate exercise for optimal health, manage medications, set goals, problem solve, and, best of all, you will meet new friends.

The *Living Healthy* workshop works! Research has shown that *Living Healthy* participants show a

significant improvement in exercise, communication with physicians, self-reported general health, health distress, fatigue, social roles, reduced days in the hospital and fewer outpatient visits. In fact, it is estimated that for every dollar spent on the program, ten dollars are saved in healthcare cost.

Living Healthy is open to caregivers, care recipients, and anyone striving to put life back in their life. It provides participants with a toolbox full of tools and ideas for tackling the “big project” of self-management—from a little redecorating to a major renovation—it can be done!

To find a workshop near you, please visit:

www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/livinghealthy/livinghealthy.htm

Or contact Serena Weisner at 919-733-0440, ext. 246, serena.weisner@dhhs.nc.gov

5 Wishes

In Harnett County at Region M, we sponsored a five Wishes Workshop for Family Caregivers. Our training began at 10:00 am and concluded by 12:30 p.m. Our agency provided boxed lunches and beverages. The workbooks and materials were donated. Liberty Home Health and Hospice was the presenter and did a wonderful job helping our family caregivers learn more about personal wishes for end of life. The workshop was well attended and I have been asked to provide this in another part of our county at a later date.

LeeAnn Blackmon Harnett County

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NC Caregiver Support Alliance is
a program section of the NC
Association on Aging

The North Carolina Caregiver Support Alliance recognizes the critical role family caregivers play in providing long-term care and helping older adults maintain their quality of life. This group will share information, network and provide all caregiver professionals with local, regional and state resources to assist all family caregivers.

Membership

The NC Caregiver Support Alliance membership is open to any and all Family Caregiver Support Professionals in the state of North Carolina. (Only members who also belong to the NC Association on Aging will be permitted to vote on issues concerning Alliance business.) No dues beyond those paid to the NCAOA will be charged.

Benefits of membership include,

- Professional development through trainings offered at the NCAOA annual conference
- A channel to voice local concerns in serving caregivers to regional and state administrators
- Idea sharing with other local providers through regular communication
- Gain a statewide perspective on growth and variety of family caregiver services
- Participation with a group of professionals who share goals and challenges
- Opportunities to build working relationships with other local, regional and state partners

If you are not already a member of the NCAOA you may contact:

Ellen Whitlock

director@senior-resources-guilford.org

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