

## Laugh Therapy

The annual Christmas gift shop sponsored by The Family Caregiver Support Program, has been a special activity for the grandchildren of the Kinship care support group for the past three years. The gift shop provided an opportunity for toddlers to teens to shop for a gift for their grandparent/ grandparents. This year we did something a little different. The children and their grandparents celebrated the evening with Kelly Gibson, a laughter therapist. By the time Kelly was finished everyone in the room was laughing and having a great time as Kelly led us in rounds of an exercise

she calls "ha, ha, ho, ho, he, he."

It was a great opportunity for the grandparents to sit back, relax and do something few of them rarely get a chance to do these days- that is, take time out for deep down, unrestrained, humungous belly laughs. Even when you don't think you have anything to laugh about you somehow find yourself laughing just hearing the laughter of others. It is contagious!

What could be better than the thunder and

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## NC Lifespan Respite Project Aims to Help Caregivers and Providers

"Family caregivers typically identify respite as one of their greatest unmet needs. The most effective respite programs promote flexibility and consumer control. Because it helps relieve caregivers' depression and stress over a long time, respite care is more effective when accompanied by other caregiver-focused services such as individualized counseling, education, and ongoing support."

- from DHHS publication, 2006

The North Carolina Division of

Aging and Adult Services was recently awarded a small three-year grant from the Administration on Aging to examine and further build the state's lifespan respite program infrastructure. Twelve states received funding, made possible by the Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2006, to enhance and expand the quality and availability of lifespan respite services. The North Carolina Lifespan Respite Care project involves collaboration with several groups inside and outside the NC

Department of Health and Human Services and multiple areas of respite provision for children and adults with special needs. Key project partners also include the NC Respite Care Coalition and the state's Community Resource Connections.

North Carolina's project objectives will focus on:

Improving statewide coordination of respite care services

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**Note from the Chair**

The NCAOA annual conference is on for April. The speakers under our caregiver track are all committed. You can plan to hear from Legal Aide NC, Division of Aging and Adult Services, Easter Seals UCP, AARP and local service providers. Topics covered will include volunteers respite programs, the lifespan respite grant, legal and fiscal recommendations for caregivers and caregiver training programs. Overall our track of the conference looks strong and should add to our knowledge base for helping caregivers. The rest of the conference looks very exciting as well with the paramount senior issues being addressed.

Please be cognizant of the fact that our annual meeting will be held at the conference. This was held last

year via phone conference and I dare say was not as effective. If you are a member of the Alliance, please plan to attend the meeting on the afternoon of the second day. We need to elect new officers and update advisory board membership. Nominations will take place before our meeting. Keep your eyes peeled for notice of the positions needing to be filled and participate in this process of selecting leadership for the Caregiver Support Alliance. This is long overdue and important to the viability of our group.

I look forward to seeing all of you in April!

-Mineko Holloway

**Laugh Therapy, continued**

excitement of a room filled with the sounds of grandparents and their grandchildren laughing and having fun together? Just for that moment, however brief, the cares and responsibilities of the caregiver seemed to take a back seat to it all- homework hassles, the sink full of dishes, getting the baths done, loads of laundry still to do, getting dinner on the table and all the other necessary tasks.

What a wonderful way to go into a new year and all the possibilities it brings with it! We look forward to other opportunities of let's just say, Ha, Ha, Ho, Ho, He, He, relief.

*Lavern Weathers, Social Worker  
Family Caregiver Support Program  
Mecklenburg Kinship Care*

**NC Lifespan Respite Project Aims to Help Caregivers and Providers, cont.**

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Building NC's capacity across service delivery systems	initiative The NC Lifespan Respite Project manager is Alicia Blater, Family Caregiver Support Program	specialist.  <i>Alicia Blater, M.S., APR</i>
Enhancing infrastructure through new relationships with faith and medical communities	Consultant with the Division of Aging and Adult Services. Linda Kendall Fields, an Asheville-based consultant with expertise in aging, disability, and respite services, will serve as a part-time project	<i>Family Caregiver Support Program Consultant, DAAS</i>
Developing a statewide respite education and public awareness		

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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.

**Save the Date:**

**NCAOA Training Conference  
Aging in NC—  
Great Challenges,  
Greater Opportunities**

**April 28-30, 2010  
Greensboro, NC**

### Membership

The NC Caregiver Support Alliance membership is open to Family Caregiver Support Professionals in the state of North Carolina who are members of the North Carolina Association on Aging. 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 Alliance you may contact

Ellen Whitlock 336-373-4816

to register as a member.

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