

Backpacks for Grandkids

In Rutherford County Michelle Templin, Family Caregiver Resource Specialist has started up something very special for children being raised by older relatives. The annual Backpacks for Grandkids Program is a great model for utilizing resources already in the community to offer much needed supportive services. Public and private sectors work together in the Backpack project to produce back-to-school supplies, saving grandparents and older relatives time and money. In it's fifth year running, the program generated backpacks stuffed with goodies for seventeen children!

Ongoing support is available through the Foothills Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group. Their monthly meetings are facilitated by Tracy Davis, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent at the Rutherford County Cooperative Extension Service. This provides an appropriate group of recipients of the supplies in addition to others seeking the support.

To obtain the materials for these backpacks, Michelle Templin reports that she mails letters to local businesses. When asked

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Children in Rutherford County being raised by Older Relatives receive back to school supplies donated by local businesses.

Meet Sampson County's Caregiver Specialist



Lesia Henderson is the Family Caregiver Specialist with Sampson County Department of Aging. She splits her work time with the Elderly Nutrition

Program. Lesia has been with the department for 3 ½ years and she is quick to tell you that she loves her job. Her innovative spirit and enthusiasm won her the title of Sampson County Employee of the Year for 2006. You can't be around Lesia for long without catching her excitement and passion

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Note from the Chair

An unexpected chain of events led to my acceptance of the role of Chairperson for the NC Caregiver Support Alliance last April. I was at a loss for knowing where to begin to meet the responsibilities that came with this title. Consultation with Judi Womack, our previous Chairperson and caregiver advocate extraordinaire set me at ease as she educated me on the short history and purpose for the Alliance.

Now I come to you with goals and vision for moving onward and upward with OUR Alliance. This first copy of the "Bulletin" is intended to take the next step towards establishing communication between those of us working at the local level to support family caregivers in North Carolina. It is my purpose in this

newsletter to be the singer of praise for all of you who act sincerely, selflessly and successfully to serve.

May you be gratified by the recognition, inspired by the dedication and creativity of your colleagues, and empowered to apply your gifts and new found knowledge of resources for the benefit of those we serve!

Sincerely,

Mineko Holloway

Family Caregiver Resource Specialist

Intertwining Lives, Intertwining Services

Family Caregivers have an updated resource in North Carolina. The Full Circle of Care Caregiver Website has been given a makeover. The site has a new look and a new layout.

Check us out to find information on prescription drugs, Medicare, Medicaid, long-term care, disability resources, independent living, safety as you age, long-distance caregiving, legal issues, end-of-life, paying for care and much more. We are a non-profit governmental agency providing you this resource in conjunction with the N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services.

Caregivers have an expanded Alzheimer's Section which takes a reader from noticing changes in behaviors to arranging for hospice care.

For those in a hurry, the new Need Help Section offers information presented in basic format with quick links to service and personalized assistance. We present typical questions caregivers ask, how to have those difficult decisions, what all those words and abbreviations mean, how to organize a group of

volunteers to help, and much more.

North Carolina family caregivers have a new section entirely devoted to helping them find services, resources, and assistance quickly and easily.

Thirty-four categories of information are linked to on the section homepage, from finding a local Area Agency on Aging to discovering what benefits are available for N.C. veterans.



We welcome you to visit for hands-on caregiver information – anywhere, anytime.

Linda Grimm

Webmaster & Web Strategist
Triangle J Area Agency on Aging

Meet Sampson County's Caregiver Specialist, continued

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for supporting family caregivers. She has definitely learned the art of working with limited resources and reaching out to the community. "Shaggin for Santa" was the brainchild of some Sampson County businessmen a few years ago. It is a dancing event/party held in November and originally designed to raise funds for a local crisis center. Someone whispered in another's ear that they should be helping the aging individuals in the community and Robert Stroud, of WCLN radio, called the Sampson County Department of Aging. Lesia happened to be the one that answered the phone and the end result is that ALL proceeds from the annual event now go to the

Department of Aging programs. The 2007 event raised \$10,500! Here's what Lesia did with her portion: summer of 2008 sent 10 grandchildren being raised by grandparents to a week long summer camp. Lesia also created the SNAP program (Seniors Need Assistance Pronto) about 2 years ago utilizing some of the Shaggin for Santa funds. SNAP is an extension of the family caregiver program designed to provide assistance to family caregivers that don't qualify for services under the department guidelines, have already used the maximum allowed by the department, or are requesting services not covered. SNAP has been able to provide medical and incontinent supplies to individuals not able to afford these

necessary items.

Lesia has gained a monthly spot on WCLN radio to highlight family caregiver events and Department of Aging programs and has obtained a great community advocate from Vester Nissan of Clinton. Vester Nissan provided free transportation for the 2007 & 2008 camp trip and have also provided oil changes and inspections for the grandparents.

Way to go Lesia! We're proud to have you as part of our team!

Sherri Dees

*Regional Family Caregiver
Resource Specialist*

*Mid-Carolina Area Agency on
Aging*

Backpacks for Grandkids, continued

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how she selected businesses to solicit Michelle responded, "I started by targeting the business that others didn't think of, like Post Offices, Insurance Offices, Banks (which didn't get great support), dental offices, really I went through the yellow pages and just picked." With this method participation was gained from various sources like EMS, post offices, financial advisors, ESC offices, medical offices, churches, home health agencies and others.

If the business agrees to participate employees handle the purchase of needed items and produce them to Michelle for delivery to the child. With so many causes to support it can be difficult to gain sponsors, but Michelle says "I think the reason it works is because I am not asking for a donation from the actual business, but from the employees." This is something co-workers can do together that is fun and a break from their usual business relationships. "I like the business or agencies that have five – ten employees because they want to do it again." says Michelle.

She shares that many of her donors are continued supporters from previous years.

With limited funding and time for expansion of services under the Family Caregiver Support Program it will become necessary to create models like the Backpacks for Grandkids program to meet the needs of caregivers. There are willing supporters of family caregivers in our communities. The challenge is to seek out these hidden treasures and recruit their energy, talent and contributions.

Good for Me, Good for You Respite Conference

An informative and successful conference was held by the North Carolina Respite Care Coalition at the Victory Junction Gang Camp in Randleman, North Carolina on September 25, 2008. An impressive line up of speakers was provided towards the coalition's mission of providing a network that promotes and supports a statewide quality respite care system. Those speakers included Linda Blackburn from Hertford County Office on Aging on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren; Jill Honeycutt from Volunteer Families; Deborah Meridith from Kopper Top; Bob Minotti from Joey's Gift; Dr. Daniel Potts Alzheimer's Disease advocate and author; and Dennis Streets of the DAAS . A fabulous presentation and video were provided by the host, Victory Junction Gang Camp,

showcasing the wonderful camps and family weekends they host for children with serious illnesses.

Perhaps some of the best highlights of the day were the responses of the caregivers who attended the Care for the Caregiver track of the program. These caregivers received massages and manicures, scrapbooked and generally relaxed in the spiritual center. They expressed great relief and satisfaction at having some time for themselves to relax, to be pampered and they left with a special gift.

A silent auction of donated items raised over \$600 to replenish the NCRCC respite fund. For more information on the NCRCC visit <http://www.northcarolinarespitecarecoalition.org>.



Photographs courtesy of Sallie Williamson of the Mid-East Commission

A Hospice Caregiver is a Caregiver Indeed / IN NEED

In July, the quarterly meeting of the regional Family Caregiver Support Program staff was coupled with a training called Respecting Choices. This program on facilitating the declaration of advance directives by individuals for personal and family benefit was delivered by Sheri Dees of the Mid-Carolina AAA and Dee Leahman of the Hospice and Palliative Care Center in Winston-Salem. Education and assistance with completion of advance directives is a preventative measure for undesirable treatment and an investment in quality care at the end of life. Furthermore the reassurance provided by advance directives does the caregiver's conscience good.

Caregivers of persons facing end of life stages have many needs beyond documentation of preference of medical care provided. Where do we go from there? The following question was posed to hospice and palliative care specialists in our state and their thoughts leave lots of room for creative service development on our end.

For more information on resources on this topic call your Regional Family Caregiver Specialist.

“What services are caregivers facing end of life care most in need of? Which services impact them the most?”

Extended hours for trusted respite care in the home for people without CAP, but can't afford private hire aides. Caregivers are desperate for some time off with a trusted aide that can provide needed care or assist with some personal care. They need compassionate, informed, emotional support. Hospice can provide informed, compassionate support and education, but our program does not provide an aide that could stay three or four hours and our volunteers who provide wonderful social support are not allowed to provide personal care.

Practically they need cooked meals, financial means to be off work and still keep their insurance, someone to mow their lawns and something that occasionally distracts them from the heavier burdens of feeling alone.

Caregivers often feel isolated, alone and overwhelmed with anticipatory grief and learning new medical skills to keep their loved one comfortable. Hospice provides counseling and support, but caregivers seldom feel they can take the time to talk about their needs.

Caregivers often need uninterrupted sleep and the reassurance that it is OK to have needs while their loved one is near the end of life.

CAP and MOW's are a wonderful help for those who qualify. Hospice provides a wonderful team of RN's, Social Workers, Nursing Assistants, Chaplains, and Volunteers that are comfortable with death and dying.

Virginia B. Peurifoy, BSW & Chaplain

Over five years of Hospice experience

The caregivers that I speak with often express a need for one of three major support sources:

1. Respite: They may need time to get away and relax, answer calls or pay bills, or engage in personal care they have been putting off.
2. Personal support: A program such as the Community Support Program at Hospice offers caregivers a call once or twice a month. During these calls, they can ask questions, get information about the disease process or local resources, and get general psychosocial support from an outside source. Caregivers often express that this time in their week or month is one they look forward to and find reassuring.
3. Advocacy: Caregivers of those with a terminal illness are suddenly faced with doctors they are unfamiliar with, terms they do not understand, insurance demands that use words and requests they cannot figure out, and compounding stress. They may not be able to advocate for themselves or a loved one simply because they do not know where to start. Having someone to guide them through, explain Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance benefits, encourage them to contact doctors with questions, and speak up with their concerns provides a comfort and a direction at a time when there may not be much of either.

Alexis Rejeski, MS, NCC
Community Support Coordinator
Hospice and Palliative Care
Winston Salem, NC

NC Association on Aging
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www.ncaoa.org

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.

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

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 Alliance you may contact

Mineko Holloway

(252) 638-3185 ext. 3011

mholloway@eccog.org

to register as a member. You may also join us at our next meeting on October 28, 2008 in Greenville to learn more. We look forward to working with you!

Next Meeting:

October 28, 2008
5:30-6:30 p.m.
Greenville, NC

**(during the North Carolina
Conference on Aging)**

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