

Ready



Hands Inc.

Home Companion and Personal Assistance Services

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News for Clients and Friends

To Our Clients and Friends...

This second issue of our newsletter is dedicated to family caregivers. As the article below relates, these wonderful individuals form the mainstay of long-term care in this country. However, they can encounter daunting challenges. On page two we list some coping and management strategies (“survival tips”) that can help.

Family caregivers don’t have to go it alone. There are numerous organizations that provide information and support. On page two we also describe some excellent examples, any one of which would be a good place to start.

Finally, we invite anyone involved in caring for a loved one to consider registering for the free seminar described at right, at which several important aspects of caregiving will be discussed.

Best wishes to all our friends, our clients and their caregivers!

Sue and Granger Benson

A FREE Educational Program: FAMILY CAREGIVING Dealing with the Challenges of Caring for a Loved One

This seminar and resource fair will be held on May 9, 2003, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. at McLean Bible Church, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. The event will be sponsored by SOLACE, AARP of Virginia, the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging and several other local organizations. Topics will include:

- ⇒ “Caring for You” Keynote, in which several caregivers share their experiences
- ⇒ Managing Your Care Team
- ⇒ Legal Issues for Caregivers
- ⇒ Maintaining Family Relationships
- ⇒ Hands-on Care Skills
- ⇒ Understanding the Financial Picture

A complimentary box lunch will be served. Please call **877-926-8300** to register.

Family Caregivers: The Backbone of Long-Term Care

In over 22,000,000 households Americans are performing a service of love whose economic value is about \$196 billion per year. They are family caregivers: people who help with the personal care, chores or household affairs for an elderly parent, spouse or relative.

Eighty percent of long-term care is provided by family members at home. Among seniors (the largest group of care recipients) fewer than 10% live in nursing homes or assisted living settings. The rest live either in their own homes, with family members or in residential alternatives.

Most family caregivers describe their experience in positive terms, such as citing the rewards of being helpful to a loved one. Still, the difficulties they face are very real. The term “caregiver burden” is sometimes used to describe the personal toll of providing care.

Caregiver burden may take the form of emotional stress, worry, depression or anxiety. It can also have significant physical manifestations, even increasing mortality risk. It may entail serious financial hardship, disrupted

job duties and strained family relationships.

Caregiver burden is highest among those who face the greatest demands, especially if responsible for loved ones with advanced dementia. But another key factor is associated with high caregiver burden: **the absence of active coping and management strategies.** Those who have adopted such strategies report significantly less negative impact on their personal well-being. See page two for some important examples.

Extracted from an article by Dr. Benson in the May issue of the Fairfax County Golden Gazette.



Tips for Minimizing Caregiver Burden:

- ⇒ Learn as much as possible about your family member's condition and its effects on him or her.
- ⇒ Protect personal time for activities that you enjoy or are important to you.
- ⇒ Protect your own health. Exercise, get adequate sleep and eat a balanced diet.
- ⇒ Watch out for symptoms of depression such as persistent sadness, lack of interest or pleasure, excessive fatigue or sleep difficulty. Contact your physician if you experience these.
- ⇒ Use your network of friends and family for support, or join a support group.
- ⇒ Get help! Don't be afraid to ask other family members, friends and neighbors to pitch in. When people offer to help, accept the offer!
- ⇒ Contact your Area Agency on Aging, your church or synagogue or one of the many excellent caregiver support organizations (see below).

Resources for Caregivers

Many organizations provide information and assistance to individuals responsible for the care of a loved one. Following are some excellent examples:

National Family Caregivers Association, 1-800-896-3650. Web: www.nfcares.org. Espouses a philosophy of self-advocacy. Provides support for caregivers and promotes public awareness.

American Association of Retired Persons, 1-800-424-3410. Web: www.aarp.org. Extensive online informational material under "Life Answers". Type in the search term "caregiving."

The Well Spouse Foundation, 1-800-838-0879. Web: www.wellspouse.org. A national non-profit organization that helps spouses and partners of the chronically ill or disabled. Operates local support groups.

National Alliance for Caregiving, 4720 Montgomery Lane, 5th Floor, Bethesda, MD 20814. Web: www.caregiving.org. A joint venture with 38 member organizations, established to support family caregivers of the elderly and the professionals who serve them.

Children of Aging Parents, 1-800-227-7294. Web: www.capsforcaregivers.org. Started in 1977 by a group of neighbors caring for their elderly parents, CAPS has grown into a national organization dedicated to the well-being of family caregivers.

Respite Care: The Gift of Time

Caregivers need a chance to "recharge" their batteries now and then. They also need time to enjoy personal pleasures and to attend to relationships with other people important in their lives.

"Respite" means "rest." Respite care in the home can take many forms: a few hours of extra help now and then, overnight assistance to permit a weekend break or temporary live-in service during a well-earned vacation. An alternative to home-based care is temporary placement in a nursing home or assisted living home.

Besides our usual regularly scheduled services to clients, Ready Hands also offers respite care as needed. Give us a call to find out how we can make it possible for you to give yourself the gift of time—while also keeping your peace of mind!



Need a Good Estate Planning Lawyer?

A good basic estate plan allows for the smooth management of one's affairs upon incompetency or death. Besides a will, other key documents include a durable general financial power of attorney, a medical power of attorney and a living will. A trust makes a good plan better. Examples are a living trust (to defeat probate) and a bypass trust (to minimize death taxes.)

Attorney **Bryan R. Bishop** can help individuals and families negotiate the often complicated terrain of estate planning. We have found him to be patient, ethical, devoted to his clients and an excellent communicator. Mr. Bishop offers a free seminar at his office on the second Tuesday evening of every month for people interested in learning more. Attendees receive discounted services for thirty days thereafter.

(As with any outside service or professional we feel can benefit our clients, Ready Hands has no business arrangements with Mr. Bishop.)

Attorney Bryan R. Bishop can be reached at: *Living Trust Attorney, Ltd., 8704 Lee Highway, Suite 201, Fairfax, VA 22031. Phone: (703) 641-0300.*