

Volume 19 Number 1
September 2009

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The Hidden Secret of Elder Abuse

Many elderly people rely entirely on family or other trusted individuals to help them. Whether it is for physical needs or emotional needs, as people grow older they tend to need more and more help from others. This dependence on caregivers or family members makes an older person more vulnerable for abuse.

It is estimated that 5-10% of elderly Americans are suffering abuse. According to the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, "Spiraling rates of elder mistreatment are reported by both practitioners and researchers. In a recent national study of Adult Protective Services (APS), there were 253,421 reports of abuse of adults age 60+. The National Elder Abuse Incidence Study (National Center on Elder Abuse, 1998) found that more than 500,000 persons aged 60 and older were victims of domestic abuse and that an estimated 84% of incidents are not reported to authorities, denying victims the protection and support they need."

There are a number of reasons why incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation are not reported to authorities. One of the most common reasons is the victim's fear of losing support. Many of the perpetrators are family members and the victim fears that reporting the crime will result in removal of the caregiver, as the perpetrator may face incarceration or may discontinue relations with the victim once accused, charged, or convicted. Many of these victims fear that by reporting abuse they will be left alone and expected to care for themselves or they will be forced to live in a nursing home.

All states have agencies that receive complaints of abuse. In some states failure to report abuse of the elderly is a crime. To contact an abuse complaint department, call your local area agency on aging. To find an area agency on aging in your area go to www.longtermcarelink.net/eldercare/ref_state_aging_services.htm.

Food for thought

Written By Regina Brett, 90 years old, of The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, Ohio
"To celebrate growing older, I once wrote the 45 lessons life taught me. It is the most-requested column I've ever written."

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.

Just the first 10. Continued in next newsletter.

Caregivers corner – A daughter cares for her father

Caregiving is a tough job. If you are a caregiver, know that you are very much appreciated, even if you never hear the words. The following is from an Alzheimer's Caregiver Blog, written by a woman caring for her father.

My name is Kathy Hatfield and I am 39 years old.

In 2004, my Mom passed away suddenly, and I quickly realized that something was not normal about Dad's memory problems.

I remember the night I went on Google and typed in the letters A-L-Z-H-E-I-M-E-R-S. All I knew before that night was that President Reagan had had Alzheimer's disease, and it was going to make my Dad forget me, how to eat and it would kill him.

When I read what the internet had to offer, I was devastated. I thought my life was over at 34. I thought my Dad would have to go to a nursing home.

As the days and weeks passed and Dad moved in with me I realized we would both be okay. Sure I had to repeat

myself a hundred times a day, but our closeness had allowed me to discover that I had inherited my sense of humor and zest for life from him. I never knew that.

I also learned that his reality brought on by Alzheimer's disease was as real to him as my reality is for me. The difference was I could join *him*. He was never coming back to *my* world.

We began a journey that made me want to adjust my behavior to make him feel happy, safe, loved and healthy. He still has no idea he has Alzheimer's. Seriously, *no idea*.

Instead of telling him that he could not safely live alone, I asked him to come and live with me since my boyfriend travels a lot and I was lonely.

His car sat in our driveway for two years before he finally stopped asking me to take him to get a new battery.

I stopped asking him what he wanted for dinner and just prepared a health meal and served him.

I've learned not to argue with him

about anything. He is absolutely correct in his mind, so I adapt to what *he* perceives is right. If he only gets his haircut on Tuesday because that was his routine for twenty years, and it needs to be cut on Saturday, I just put Tuesday's newspaper next to his morning cereal and *voila* — it's Tuesday. Haircut here we come!

One of the upsides to his not remembering much longer than one minute is that I get a lot of do-overs.

If I ask him to cut his fingernails, he may argue that they are not too long or he does not feel like doing it right now, which could cause some conflict. If I just hand him the clippers and say, "Here are the nail clippers you asked for," he feels that it was his idea and starts to clip. He feels in control and I get neatly groomed nails.

Caregiving is hard. No question about that. I feel that we can make it easier on our loved ones and ourselves if we just throw reality out the window and have as much fun as possible.

The Wright's Center offers social interaction

The Administration on Aging estimates that, out of roughly 106 million USA households existing in 2003, more than 22 million (or roughly one in five) were providing informal care to one or more elderly persons.

The Wright's Center provides a supervised program of activities designed to benefit older and/or disabled adults who, because of physical impairments or other ailments, should not be left alone during the day. Caring and licensed staff:

- Monitor and assist with health maintenance, illness prevention and medications;
- Prepare nutritious meals – breakfast, lunch and snacks;
- Provide transportation for your loved one to and from our facility, with an escort to assist upon arrival during scheduled hours; and
- Arrange family counseling and service referrals.

The Wright's Center is the *"Right Place with the Right Care for Serving Your Loved One."*



Wright's Center participants posing for the camera.

Correction

We had an error in our last newsletter regarding the elder population in the U.S. Please see below for corrected info.

The United States population aged 65 and over is expected to double in size within the next 25 years. By 2030, almost 1 out of every 5 Americans — some 72 million people — will be 65 years or older. The age group 85 and older is the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population.

Source: Older Americans 2008

The economic value of family caregiving

AARP recently released a comprehensive report on the economic value of caregiving. If you are caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease, it's important to know how your informal caregiving affects our currently fragile economy. Consider these facts:

- In 2007, approximately 34 million family members were providing informal caregiving at any given point.
- The estimated value of unpaid caregiving for 2007 was \$375 billion.
- This is an increase over the 2006 estimated value of unpaid caregiving, which was \$350 billion.
- \$375 billion is comparable to the total sales of Wal-Mart in the same year.
- Unpaid caregiving includes personal care and help with daily tasks as well as assistance with complex medical procedures and administering medication.
- The "typical" caregiver in the United States is a 46-year old woman working outside the home who provides more than 20 hours a week of eldercare to her mother.
- Those providing eldercare reported spending an average of \$5,531 out-of-pocket for caregiving expenses in 2007.



Wright's Center participant

The report points out that family caregivers are the "backbone" of the United States' long term care system. We at the Wright's Center couldn't agree more.

As a caregiver, when your loved one attends The Wright's Center, you too will reap the benefits. Our recognized program: (1) provides relief to the constant caregiver; (2) allows you the freedom to maintain employment without worrying about the care of your loved one; (3) prevents institutionalization, enabling your loved one to remain with your family for as long as possible.

Need more information? Call Doris Howington, executive director at The Wright's Center, at 252.442.8363.

\$1000
will provide 7 months of transportation for a participant from a rural area.

\$500
will provide two months of supplies and prizes for arts & crafts, games and activities.

\$100
will provide special music, educational programs or exercise therapy.

\$50
will provide a day at the Wright's Center including transportation and meals.

\$25
will provide one-half day of respite for a constant caregiver.

The Wright's Center, Inc. is the most cost-effective way to provide care and help delay or avoid institutionalization for chronically ill, disabled, or cognitively challenged adults while offering needed respite for caregivers.

☐ **YES**, I want to help The Wright's Center care for needy elders and disabled adults in our community.

☐ Enclosed find my tax deductible contribution of \$_____

☐ I pledge: ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$_____

To be paid: ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Semi-Annually ☐ Annually

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone No./Home _____ Work _____

Please make check payable and mail to:

The Wright's Center, Inc., 501 Raleigh Road, Rocky Mount NC 27803
Solicitation License # SL001948

YOU can make a difference!

There's always a need

The Wright's Center, Inc. is always in need of supplies to maintain ongoing activities for our elderly and disabled participants. Following find our Wish List.

- FINANCIAL SUPPORT
- Office furniture
- Lockable filing cabinets
- Computers for participants
- Supplies for Arts/Crafts activities
- Paper products (towels, napkins, tissues, cups, plates)
- Recliners for activity area
- Chairs for activity area
- Carpet for all carpeted areas
- Small trash bags
- Volunteers (Monday through Friday)

Thank you for all that you do!

Spotlight on Marsha Baker-Coles



Marsha Baker-Coles,
Wright's Center board
member.

Marsha Baker-Coles is one of the newest members on The Wright's Center Board of Directors.

A native of Princeville, NC, Marsha received her BA in Business Education from Bennett College in Greensboro, NC. She is a licensed professional counselor, school counselor, funeral director and insurance specialist and has obtained NC-Teach Certification.

Marsha has worked as a counselor for St. Augustine's College and the NC Department of Health and Human Services. She also served as director of staff development and training at UNC-Chapel Hill & the NC Division of Services for

the Blind.

Today, along with her husband, Dr. Clifford Coles, Marsha owns and operates her family business, Baker Funeral Home, located in Tarboro, NC.

Marsha states, *"I am pleased to have the opportunity to serve on The Wright's Center Board of Directors. The program for elderly and disabled adults is a much needed service and is tremendously valuable to our community. Many caregivers would be unable to work without the services we provide. I am moved by the positive impact our program has on so many lives in the community."*



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