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Alzheimer Resource Center
1506 Lake Highland Drive
Orlando FL 32803
(407) 843-1910

www.AlzheimerResourceCenter.org

Meet Other Caregivers

The Center has several support group meetings available throughout the Central Florida Community. If one of these does not fit your schedule, please give us a call so that we can put you in touch with other support groups that can assist you.

**Caregiver Support Groups**

- **1st Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.*
  - Easter Seals Daybreak
  - Winter Park

- **1st Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.**
  - The Gables of Lake Mary
  - Lake Mary

- **1st Friday, 12:00 noon***
  - Osceola Council on Aging at the Senior Center
  - Kissimmee

- **2nd Thursday, 6:00 p.m.**
  - Arden Courts
  - Winter Springs

- **3rd Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.**
  - St. Richard’s Episcopal Church
  - Winter Park

- **4th Mondays, 6:30 p.m.**
  - Merrill Gardens at Lake Orienta
  - Altamonte Springs

- **4th Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.**
  - Golden Pond Communities
  - Ocoee

- **Last Thursday, 6:30 p.m.**
  - Summerville Assisted Living
  - Ocoee

* Respite Care Provided Upon Request.

**Home Caregiver Support Group**
(For caregivers and families caring for their loved one in the home.)
2nd Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.
Alzheimer Resource Center

**New Beginnings Support Group**
(For those who have lost a loved one to Alzheimer’s disease.)
4th Thursday, 10:30 a.m.
Alzheimer Resource Center

**Orlando Men’s Breakfast Club**
1st and 3rd Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Bakely’s Restaurant Winter Park
A n estimated 44 million Americans age 18 and older provide unpaid assistance and support to older people and adults with disabilities who live in the community. Evidence shows that most caregivers are ill-prepared for their role and provide care with little or no support. As the population ages, dementia caregivers will continue to become a larger percentage of this group. Caring for a loved one with dementia poses many unique challenges for families and caregivers. People with dementia have a progressive brain disorder that makes it more and more difficult for them to remember things, think clearly, communicate with others, or take care of themselves. In addition, dementia can cause mood swings and even change a person’s personality and behavior.

An increasingly substantial body of research shows that family members who provide care to individuals with chronic or disabling conditions including dementia are themselves at risk. Emotional, mental, and physical health problems have been found to arise from complex caregiving situations and the strains of caring for frail or disabled relatives.

The psychological health of the family caregiver is negatively affected by providing care. Higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health effects are common among family members who care for an older relative or friend. Studies consistently report high levels of depressive symptoms among caregivers. An estimated 40-70 percent of caregivers exhibit significant symptoms of depression. Many caregivers describe feeling frustrated, angry, drained, guilty, or helpless as a result of providing care. Caregivers also have higher levels of stress often resulting in the increase of harmful behaviors such as alcohol and drug consumption.

These high rates of depressive symptoms and mental health problems, compounded with the physical strain of caring for someone who cannot perform activities of daily living, such as bathing, grooming and other personal care activities, put many caregivers at serious risk for poor physical health. Indeed, the impact of providing care can actually lead to increased health care needs for the caregiver. According to the Center on Aging Society about one in ten caregivers report that caregiving has caused their own physical health to get worse. Caregivers seem to have an increased risk of heart disease, lower levels of self-care, and even an increased mortality rate for elderly spousal caregivers.

As families struggle to care for others, their own health is put in danger. This trend of failing mental and physical health of caregivers is becoming a growing health concern and should be considered a public health priority.

The good news for caregivers is that many of these effects can be prevented and reversed. Increasing appropriate mental health services and medical care for family caregivers are important steps toward addressing these issues. Research demonstrates the negative effects can be alleviated by support services and caregiver education programs such as those provided by the Alzheimer Resource Center. Support groups, respite services, and financial assistance can also help reduce some of the negative affects of caregiving.

Taking good care of yourself while in the role of caregiver is the key to minimizing the problems that can develop. And remember, keeping you healthy and well educated is our mission. Please call the Alzheimer Resource Center at 407-843-1910 for more information and suggestions to keep yourself healthy.
In a world where everything changes so rapidly, the Alzheimer Resource Center has been proud of its ability to provide services to the families of those with dementia for 23 years. There is something to be said for “staying power”!

Businesses of all types experience highs and lows – profitable times and difficult ones, yet ARC’s longevity has been due in great part to a legion of supporters who believe strongly in what we do. Many of these individuals, families and organizations are also able to provide us with the financial wherewithal so that our agency and its services can thrive.

It would take a publication substantially larger than this newsletter to recognize those who have supported our agency over the years. Some donors have expressed a desire for philanthropic anonymity so our appreciation for their generosity must be shared privately. Yet all donations, large and small, contribute to our success and have the profound gratitude of ARC’s board members and staff.

The Alzheimer Resource Center has been able to implement a number of strategic initiatives over the past year or so because of our donors and is also in the midst of a new and exciting project, as well. As part of our mission to educate and provide critical care giving “tools” to those caring for someone with dementia, ARC staff developed a Professional Caregiver Training program aimed at enhancing the skills of professional (paid) caregivers, providing them with valuable training in how to effectively address the needs of those in their care, while improving the patient’s overall quality of life.

Our Professional Caregiver Training program was funded in part by a grant from the Community Investment funds of the Community Foundation of Central Florida, Inc., made possible by many generous donors since 1994. Our thanks go to the Community Foundation of Central Florida for their support of this important initiative. The Community Foundation of Central Florida also provided ARC with the funding needed to update our agency brochure and website in order to include the Professional Caregiver Training program in our list of services.

Another exciting program we plan to implement within the next few months is Project Lifesaver. This is an international program endorsed by the National Sheriff’s Association, the Florida Sheriff’s Association, the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America, the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners and others, yet it is not currently available in the Central Florida area. Project Lifesaver protects wandering patients through an active system which combines mobile tracking equipment with specially trained law enforcement search and rescue teams.

Estimates are that up to 70 percent of dementia patients will wander away from home and nearly half will die or become injured if not located within 24 hours. Yet just five years after Project Lifesaver’s creation, the program is operating in over 40 states and has rescued more than 1322 individuals within an average of 22 minutes. There were no injuries or deaths, resulting in a 100 percent success rate! What peace of mind Project Lifesaver can offer caregivers! Our thanks for the funding of this program goes to the Joseph Markoly Foundation, the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America and the Home Instead Senior Care Foundation. In future newsletters we will provide you with more information about this critical initiative. Or feel free to call our office for further details.

It is through partners like these, as well as our many individual donors, that ARC continues the important work of serving the needs of Alzheimer’s caregivers in this community. We look to the future while building on our successes of the past in the hope that, until a cure for Alzheimer’s is found, our caregivers and their loved ones will have the best resources and services at their disposal. Many thanks to our dedicated partners for joining us in this important mission!

Fondly,

Nancy Squillacioti
Executive Director

Village Oaks
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One of the Alzheimer Resource Center’s main objectives is to lighten the burden of our caregivers and provide them with wellness activities that promote their health and well-being. One of the most effective ways we are able to fulfill this aspect of our mission is our Annual Caregiver Retreat. We realize that caring for a loved one with Alzheimer’s disease is a relentless and stressful job. There are no breaks for these caregivers since dementia patients often require twenty-four hour supervision. This event each year is a weekend getaway that allows us to care for the caregivers.

It is with pleasure that we announce that this year’s retreat will be hosted by the Alzheimer Resource Center at the Hilton Historic Bayfront in beautiful, downtown St. Augustine. The weekend will be packed with activities and special events along with plenty of time to relax and enjoy the city.

Here’s what our caregivers will enjoy:

- Round-trip transportation to St. Augustine from Orlando.
- Two night’s accommodations (double occupancy) at the Hilton Bayfront located in the heart of downtown St. Augustine. Each room includes cable TV, wireless internet access, phone, coffeemaker, alarm clock and access to the pool.
- All meals including Friday dinner, three meals on Saturday, and Sunday brunch.
- Sightseeing cruise aboard the Victory III.
- Hospitality Suite with games, snacks, and refreshments.
- Door prizes and giveaways.

We look forward to this exciting and relaxing weekend away with local caregivers. Thank you to all of our generous sponsors for making this event possible.

If you are a caregiver and missed out on this year’s retreat make sure to register early next year!

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**Brain Bank Program Presentation**

**Thursday, April 26, 2007 at 4:00 p.m.**

Arden Courts

1057 Willa Springs Drive, Winter Springs, FL 32708

Arden Courts & Towers Home Care would like to invite you to join them as guest speaker Martha Purdy, Brain Bank Program Specialist from the Alzheimer Resource Center, explains the State of Florida Brain Bank Program. Call 407-696-8400 to RSVP by Monday, April 23rd as space is limited. Respite is also available during this program, please call in advance to arrange.

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**Black Tie from the Waist High Charity Auction**

**Friday, May 18, 2007**

6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Captain and The Cowboy

604 East Main Street, Apopka, FL 32703

This annual fund-raising event is crucial to the agency’s existence and its ability to continue assisting caregivers in the Central Florida Community. The Alzheimer Resource Center's Silent and Live Charity Auction is always the most fun and exciting event of the year, as well as the most essential. Hosted by JoEllen Taylor from Society Benefits, the event includes music, food and beverages, and amazing items up for bid for a good cause.

Embrace this year’s theme and come dressed “Black Tie from The Waist High” and you could win a prize for your fashion sense. Remember all your donations are tax deductible and receipts will be provided. Come purchase something fun for yourself or your family, and help a good cause in the process! Tickets for this year’s event are $60 in advance and $65 at the door. For more information or to purchase tickets please call the Alzheimer Resource Center at 407-843-1910.

In additional to attending this year’s event, we also need a few good volunteers to help assist the agency to put together some of the auction items. This year’s event will focus on “Opportunities & Experiences” so start thinking about who you know, who they know, and what types of things you may have access to! If you are interested in joining this year’s CREATIVE TEAM please call Jennifer at ext 302 for more information.
1st Int’l Brain Conference Combines Clinical & Research Strengths

Academics who study the brain joined with clinicians who put the research into practice at the first annual International Brain Conference in Orlando in January. The merging of research and practice was a highlight for many of the 150 conference attendees, who traveled from around the globe to present the newest research trends and clinical approaches for treating neurological diseases.

Kiminobu Sugaya, a University of Central Florida (UCF) Professor of Neuroscience and Director of the Stem Cell Laboratory, organized the conference to bring the leading researchers and practitioners in the field to Orlando. UCF is establishing a College of Medicine at Lake Nona under direction of Dean German who gave closing remarks at the conference.

“Our goal was to attract some of the world’s most pre-eminent neuroscientists. It is important to work with the communities to build our new medical school,” Sugaya said.

Martha Purdy, LCSW, ACSW, of the State of Florida Brain Bank and the Alzheimer Resource Center was actively involved in the planning of this first annual conference and provided the attendees information not only on ARC but also on what everyone there was most interested in, the Brain Bank program. Purdy has received several calls that were generated from this exposure.

“I attended the 3-day conference and learned of much new research being done in the field of neurological diseases that have great potential,” said Purdy. “What was most exciting though, was to see and be a part of many brilliant researchers from all over the world enthusiastically communicating with each other and with international clinicians who are the top specialists in their field. The energy was very refreshing as was the anticipation for next year’s conference.”

The 2008 International Brain Conference will be held at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at UCF January 25 - 27, 2008. For additional information, visit the official conference web site at www.brainconference.org.

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Ground Rules for Handling Troubling Behavior

Some of the greatest challenges of caring for a loved one with dementia are the personality and behavioral changes that often occur. As this disease progresses, it can cause a person to act in different and unpredictable ways. Some individuals with Alzheimer’s become anxious or aggressive often misinterpreting what they see or hear. These types of reactions can lead to tension and frustration. As a caregiver, you can best meet the challenges of your loved one’s behavior by being creative, flexible, patient and compassionate. It also helps to not take things personally and to maintain your sense of humor.

To start, consider these ground rules:

We cannot change the person. The person you are caring for has a brain disorder that shapes who they have become. When you try to control or change their behavior, you’ll most likely be unsuccessful or be met with resistance. It’s important to:

- Try to accommodate the behavior, not control the behavior. For example, if the person insists on sleeping on the floor, place a mattress on the floor to make him more comfortable.
- Remember that we can change our behavior or the physical environment. Changing our own behavior will often result in a change in our loved one’s behavior.

Check with the doctor first. Behavioral problems may have an underlying medical reason: perhaps the person is in pain or experiencing an adverse side effect from medications. In some cases, like incontinence or hallucinations, there may be some medication or treatment that can assist in managing the problem.

Behavior has a purpose. People with dementia typically cannot tell us what they want or need. They might do something like take all their clothes out of the closet on a daily basis, and we wonder why. It is very likely that the person is fulfilling a need to be busy and productive. Always consider what need the person might be trying to meet with their behavior and, when possible, try to accommodate them.

Behavior is triggered. It is important to understand that all behavior is triggered—it doesn’t occur out of the blue. It might be something a person did or said that triggered a behavior or it could be a change in the physical environment. The root to changing behavior is disrupting the patterns that we create. Try a different approach, or try a different consequence.

What works today, may not work tomorrow. The multiple factors that influence troubling behaviors and the natural progression of the disease process means that solutions that are effective today may need to be modified tomorrow or may no longer work at all. The key to managing difficult behaviors is being creative and flexible in your strategies to address a given issue.

Get support from others. You are not alone. There are many others caring for someone with dementia. Call the Alzheimer Resource Center to find support groups and services in your area that can help you. Expect that, like the loved one you are caring for, you will have good days and bad days.

* Adapted from an article by the Family Caregiver Alliance. See their website for this and many other articles on caregiving at www.caregiver.org.
One of the dementia symptoms that a person with Alzheimer’s disease may experience is the loss of judgment. Two areas that loss of judgment can affect are the handling of financial matters and driving. Family members and caregivers need to make sure that their loved ones (especially those living on their own) are not having problems in these areas.

Problems with financial matters can be as simple as not paying bills to the loss of thousands of dollars. We have caregivers whose loved ones have moved investments that cannot be located, given money to anyone who asked for it or bought items that they did not need or could not afford. One Alzheimer’s patient charged over $6000 dollars on a psychic hot line.

Dealing with financial matters can be difficult, especially if their loved one denies that they are having problems or resents anyone handling their financial affairs. Having a family member gain control of the loved one’s finances through “power of attorney” or “guardianship” may be the answer, but it is advisable to consult an attorney who specializes in elder issues to determine what is best for your family’s situation.

Problems with driving may include getting lost and being directly or indirectly involved in auto accidents. How many times have you driven from point A to point B and did not remember anything in between? However, during that drive you made a lot of judgments. Was the light ahead about to turn red or green; did you check for other cars when changing lanes; did you watch for traffic flow changes so you could stop in time or move out of the way; did you check for walkers entering the intersection before making the right turn on red; etc; etc.

Dealing with driving issues can be one of the most difficult problems facing caregivers and family members. Resistance by the loved one to giving up driving can be very strong. Not being able to drive is often associated with a loss of independence. We recommend that family members ride with their loved one to see how they are doing and discuss the issue of driving with their loved one’s doctor.

Contact Jerry Hamilton at the Alzheimer Resource Center 407-843-1910 ext. 304 if you need a list of elder attorneys in Central Florida or other suggestions on dealing with driving issues.

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