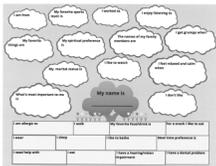


MY STORY for Caregivers: A Tool to Facilitate Person-Centered Care

(Susan Shelton, MA, RDN, LDN; Assisted Living/Housing Program Director at the Anne Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities)



Health care systems are currently testing new evidence-based interventions that will measurably improve the quality of care for older adults. The result will be an “Age-Friendly Health System” that identifies and documents specific health outcome goals and care

preferences for each older adult so that healthcare received respects those goals and preferences and includes family caregivers in the process of creating a person-centered plan of care. A new tool, **MY STORY for Caregivers**, was designed to share personalized information about your loved one in an easy-to-read form with professional caregivers and healthcare staff so that he or she can receive high quality, person-centered care.

The **MY STORY for Caregivers** tool is a personalized booklet composed of three parts and highlights important information that a person would need to provide care in the most comfortable setting for your loved one. The front page displays a current photo of your family member. The interior pages of the booklet contain information about what is most important to your loved one while they are

receiving care, their personal preferences and describes their ability to perform activities of daily living (such as bathing, dressing and eating). A caregiver or healthcare professional can use this information to provide customized care and maximize their comfort. For example, if being pain-free is most important to your loved one, healthcare staff can closely monitor your loved one’s response to pain medication. The **MY STORY for Caregivers** tool will also help identify any accommodations that your loved one may need such as closed captions on the television. If being able to walk frequently is most important to your loved one, healthcare staff can adjust your loved one’s daily schedule to include more walks during the day. Attention to these small, but important details can significantly affect your loved one’s experience in a healthcare facility and prevent healthcare facility-acquired functional decline, a serious condition that occurs when a person is on bed rest with limited activity. The back page of the booklet contains room to record the name of all currently prescribed medications including

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Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



Oftentimes, this column provides helpful information about resources available for grandparents and other kin raising grandchildren, nieces, nephews and other children. Sometimes it focuses on statistics to help you see that you are not alone on this

journey. In this edition, we wanted to focus on a success story so that those of you just beginning in this role, those of you in the throes of the teenage years, and those of you who have been parenting again for many years can see that happy outcomes can emerge out of the fears and frustrations.

The following story is an excerpt from an article by Margaret Beumier in February 2016 on the RaisingArizonaKids.com website.

“I wanted to thank you for raising me into the wonderful person I am and putting your name onto something so huge, it means more than you will ever know.”

That’s just one line of a letter Alicia Beumier wrote to her grandmother, Janice Allen, also of Mesa, last year. It is also a testament to what can happen with grandparents raising grandchildren.

Alicia was 10 when she and her brother Damien, then 8, went to live with their grandmother.

Allen is not alone in having her life dramatically changed by making the decision to step in and raise her grandchildren. In 2005, when Allen realized her daughter was in trouble with drugs, she took over the care of her grandchildren. She struggled on many levels. She had to sell her retirement home, find a new place to live, figure out how she was going to support herself and two children, raise them—and make sure her daughter was getting the help she needed.

Beumier attributes her mother’s eventual recovery—and her own

success—to Allen: “If Grandma didn’t raise us, my mom probably wouldn’t be where she is today. That’s how she got her life together, knowing we were in a safe place and she could see us anytime that she wanted.”

But the journey has been far from easy. Allen says it was a constant struggle at first: “In the beginning, I felt like I was drowning. I didn’t know where to turn or what to do. And I hurt for the kids too.”

Times had changed since she was a mother and she needed help. Finding that help came from a friend who referred her to Child Crisis Arizona, where she found a wide range of resources for grandparents in her same situation. From parenting classes and counseling to financial assistance referrals, healthcare and even food boxes, Allen found the help she needed.

On an emotional level, Allen thinks one of the hardest hurdles for a grandparent is the transition to becoming the parent. “I couldn’t be their grandma. I had to be their parent,” says Allen. “I felt hugely responsible, not only to them but to their parents, to the courts—and above all, to God.”

Allen says support groups helped because she was able to talk with other grandparents going through the same thing.

Allen took care of her grandchildren for four and a half years before they were able to return to live with their mother. Allen is proud to say that her daughter has recovered. Her grandson is still living with his mother and Beumier, a student at ASU, is studying early childhood education, works and lives on her own. Allen works part time at Child Crisis Arizona as a receptionist. She also speaks to grandparents just starting out on the road she traveled years ago.

Allen says she never regrets taking on the role of parent: “You know, you can lose a house or a savings account, but you can always rebuild that. I felt it was more important to take care of the grandchildren.”

My Story (continued)

information about the strength, dosage and route of administration for each. Completing this section in pencil makes it easier to update the medication list with any changes in the future. The booklet is intended to travel with your loved one if they require emergency medical services or enter a healthcare facility. The **MY STORY for Caregivers** booklet can be stored in a plastic protector and hung on the refrigerator with a magnet. The plastic protector can also be used to store important papers, containing emergency contact information, MOLST forms and insurance information. First responders will be trained to look for this information when entering a home to take with them to the healthcare facility.

Healthcare professionals have found that receiving information about the personal needs and preferences of a patient to be invaluable, especially if the person has a diagnosis of dementia. An unaccompanied person with dementia transported to a

healthcare facility may not be able to communicate verbally and may present as frightened, agitated and soon escalate to combative behavior. Having personalized information about the person allows healthcare staff to provide interventions that will help the person calm down and provide comfort during what can be a very stressful and frightening time. The **MY STORY for Caregivers** is a straightforward and easy-to-use tool, providing the personalized information that healthcare professionals need. By using the **MY STORY for Caregivers** tool, older adults will be able to share their personal goals and preferences so that they can receive truly person-centered care.

For more information, contact agshel01@aacounty.org. To download a copy of the **MY STORY** form, go to www.aacounty.org/aging. For a copy of the form, call 410-222-4339.

Gifts for the Senior Who Has Everything...or Doesn't Know What They Want!



Shopping for the up-coming holidays or for birthdays and other celebrations throughout the year? Then you know that it can be

difficult to find appropriate and appreciated gifts for our elderly relatives or friends, whether they are healthy and living at home or dealing with health issues and living in a long term care facility.

Here are some ideas that may help you start your shopping list.

- Photo albums or framed pictures, either of recent or past events
- A divided box filled with greeting cards for various occasions along with stamps.
- Tissues/decorative tissue holders.
- A special visit or outing, especially with the grandchildren. Large print books or books on tape.
- If they use a DVD player, purchase old movies or favorite shows to watch .
- Set up a Netflix, Hulu, Amazon or other account for on-demand watching.
- Grip products, including household tools like a jar/can opener
- Purchase companionship or extra help. If

someone no longer drives, hire someone to take them on outings or set up a taxi account and put money in it for rides.

- Favorite music on CD.
- Pads of paper and pens to write notes
- Large dial watch or alarm clock.
- No tie lacing system such as Hickies.
- The Staybowlizer kitchen aid helps those who still enjoy cooking and baking.
- Gardening tools designed for people with arthritis or hand weakness.
- Clothing that feature magnets or Velcro in place of zippers and buttons.
- For someone living with Restless Leg Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or general anxiety, a weighted blanket can have a calming effect.
- Give the gift of a home cooked meal and/or homemade treats.
- A sleep sound machine.
- A light therapy lamp.
- A massage pillow.
- Gift cards to the grocery store, gas station, restaurants, pharmacies and vets.
- Pay the cable bill for a year.
- Have someone clean the house or take care of the yard on a routine basis.

LifeAsACaregiver
#117

Sometimes it just helps to know you have a little cheering section out there for you.

AgingCare.com
Supporting Caregivers 

You have a cheering section at the Department of Aging & Disabilities!



Family Caregiver Support Groups

Jennifer Sapp, MSW, MSG facilitates monthly support groups at the following locations:

**Department of Aging & Disabilities
Annapolis Location**
2666 Riva Road, Suite 400, Annapolis.
1:00-2:30 pm

October 17th
November 21st
December 19th

**Department of Aging & Disabilities
North County Location**
7320 Ritchie Highway, Glen Burnie
1:00-2:30 pm

October 11th
November 8th
December 13th

The 2017 Support Group schedule is available on-line at <http://www.aacounty.org/services-and-programs/national-family-caregiver-support-program> or by calling 410-222-4375.

For information on additional caregiver support groups, as well as support groups specific to cancer, diabetes, cardiac, stroke, Parkinson's disease or other chronic diseases groups, call (410) 222-4375/4339 or email: caregiver_support@aacounty.org.

When Anne Arundel County schools are closed or close early due to inclement weather, support groups are cancelled



National Family Caregiver Support Program

7320 Ritchie Highway
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

Phone: 410-222-4339/4375
Email: caregiver_support@aacounty.org
Web: www.aacounty.org/aging

Anne Arundel County
County Executive
Steve Schuh
Arundel Center
44 Calvert Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Pamela Jordan
Department of Aging & Disabilities
A Maryland Access Point Program
Heritage Office Complex
2666 Riva Road, Suite 400
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone: 410-222-4257
Fax: 410-222-4360
www.aacounty.org/Aging

Family Caregiver Support
Program Staff
Mary Chaput, Program Director
Patricia Lortie, NFCSP Coordinator
Dee Scharff, RCRP Coordinator
7320 Ritchie Highway
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

- Information & Assistance (I&A)
- Adult Evaluation & Review Service (AERS)
- Adult Public Guardianship
- Americans with Disabilities Act Office (ADA)
- Assisted Living Facilities Program
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman/Resident Advocate
- National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP)
- Respite Care Referral Program (RCRP)
- Senior Activity Centers
- Senior Care
- Senior Nutrition Program
- State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)
 - Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)
- Telephone Reassurance Program
- Volunteer Programs

Anyone needing special accommodations to caregiver events must contact Mary Chaput at 410-222-4339 or by e-mail at agchap01@aacounty.org at least seven days in advance of the event. TTY users, please call via Maryland Relay 7-1-1.

To join the NFCSP mail list and receive information regarding up-coming workshops and conferences, or to receive the *Caregivers' Voice* by email, call 410-222-4339 or email us at: caregiver_support@aacounty.org
Back issues of the newsletter are available on the Family Caregivers' website at www.aacounty.org/aging.

For information on sponsoring an edition of the *Caregivers' Voice*, contact Mary Chaput at 410-222-4339 or email caregiver_support@aacounty.org.