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Wednesday, February 12, 2020 » MEDIANEWS GROUP

SENIOR LIFE

Population ages, financial abuse rises

Seniors aren't just being targeted: they're the bull's-eye

By Conway Lynch
Media News Group

A suspicious email, a strange phone call from an unknown number, an overzealous financial adviser, a close family member: what's the connection between all these people and things?

It's financial elder abuse.

Financial elder abuse, as defined by The Older Americans Act of 2006, is "the fraudulent or otherwise illegal, unauthorized or improper act or process of an individual, including a caregiver or fiduciary, that uses the resources of an older individual for monetary or personal benefit, profit or gain, or that results in depriving an older individual of rightful access to, or use of, benefits, resources, belongings or assets."

While anyone can be the target of fraud, theft and scams, Consumers Digest estimates there are at least 5 million cases of financial elder abuse in the United States each year. Seniors aren't just being targeted: they're the bull's-eye.

According to Sean D. Curran, of Curran Estate Law, 222 N. Kenhorst Blvd., the reason seniors are such a good target for abuse is be-



Sean D. Curran of Curran Estate Law.

cause many older Americans live in isolation.

"A homebound senior may begin to welcome any opportunity for social interaction, including phone sales, door-to-door salesmen, unknown neighbors, marketing mailers and the internet," he said.

This craving for interaction amplifies the pressure from predators. Seniors are more likely to ignore warning signs, and ultimately more likely to hand over funds, control and power of

attorney.

Maybe you're wondering, what kind of person would hand over power of attorney to a stranger? Well, the truth is most of this abuse is committed by those closest to the senior. That means family members are more likely to prey on seniors than internet scammers are.

Abuse is real

Financial abuse certainly isn't something to write off, it's real and it happens all

the time. Investment adviser Dennis B. Pellegrini recalls an instance where an individual forged a check for \$25,000 and committed up to \$75,000 plus in fraud.

"She got away with it," Pellegrini said. According to Pellegrini, this person knew she could get away with it because she had done it time and time again.

The key to prevention, according to Paul Marrella, of Marrella Financial Group LLC, is to "Plan ahead." Se-

niors should keep things simple, consolidate their advisers and surround themselves with the best people. This isn't limited to advisers, because seniors should truly evaluate their family.

It's difficult to decide who to truly trust, especially when it comes to finances. In fact, Marrella recalled an instance when one of his clients called and asked why their friend's lawyer was on their bank statement. Marrella was suspicious, so he called an attorney, because it had to be reported.

After the Office of Aging got involved, the case went to court. It turned out this lawyer was putting his name on clients' accounts and giving himself right of survivorship, wherein if the client were to pass away, he would inherit all their money.

Thankfully, the lawyer in question was disbarred, but the case proves that even those closest to you — those that you trust most — can abuse you and your finances.

Adult Protective Services If you become suspicious that financial abuse is happening to you or a family member, investment adviser Dennis Pellegrini recommends contacting the closest Adult Protective Services office. "They will be able to advocate on behalf of the senior."

Furthermore, treat everything involving funds with scrutiny. Curran listed several serious "don'ts" in his 2018 Reading Eagle article on the topic: If you didn't

call for a repair or service, don't allow technicians into your home. Check references with the Better Business Bureau before signing any agreements. Never wire money without validating both ends of the transaction. Always shred bank statements before throwing them away. And, remember, never divulge sensitive information over the phone.

Marrella said: "Create an infrastructure of prevention."

Prevention is one thing, but the best course of action is to stop the problem all together, according to the professionals who recognize elder abuse, whether that means stopping it while it's happening, or changing legislation to make it so financial abuse can't occur in the first place.

Marrella said the first thing to do is approach a trust company. A trust company will take care of the senior's finances for them. That means managing bills, health care costs and other items.

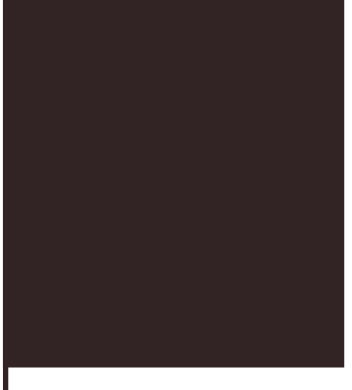
Marrella said: "It's highly unlikely that a trust company will rob you."

Marrella believes that the best way to stop the problem is legislative changes that impact the workings of power of attorney and fiduciary laws.

If you or a loved one suspects financial abuse, contact Pennsylvania's statewide Elder Abuse Hotline: 800-490-8505.



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Kathy Ardekani

SageLife Names Kathy Ardekani Executive Director of Echo Lake, Retirement Living Community at Atwater in Malvern

MALVERN, PA » SageLife, an operator of retirement living communities in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Massachusetts, has named Kathy Ardekani, MSW, NHA, AL administrator, and certified dementia practitioner Executive Director of Echo Lake in Malvern, Pa.

With more than 25 years of experience in the field, Ardekani has worked as a social worker, marketing director, executive director, nursing home administrator, personal care administrator and assisted living administrator. In her most recent role at Simpson Meadows, Ardekani was named 2019 Executive Director of the Year by the PA Health Care Association.

At the leading edge of the “aging well” movement, Echo Lake empowers residents to create a way of life as individual as they are, pursuing creativity, celebrating opportunity, advancing independence, and experiencing life on their terms. This philosophy fits perfectly with Ardekani’s

own: “My passion is to promote aging as a way to become an elder, not to become elderly,” she says.

Ardekani is also the vice president of VOICE (Voices of Inspired Change for Elders), a person-directed care advocacy and education group for the state of Pennsylvania that works with state regulatory bodies, senior living agencies and communities. She has been a member of VOICE and an advocate for senior lifestyles that promote active, healthy and resident directed services for more than 10 years.

Echo Lake offers residents the best of resort-style living, with amenities including a sports simulation lounge, fitness center and yoga studio, makers spaces, dining, rooftop pub and entertainment, and luxurious living spaces indoors and out, all on a 25-acre waterside campus.

“Kathy is a great fit for our brand, as she understands our mission to deliver a sophisticated senior

living experience,” said Kelly Andress, SageLife’s founder and president. “Culture starts at the top, and we are excited that Kathy will be leading our efforts to provide residents with customizable lifestyles to help them live life on their terms.”

About SageLife Living to the power of you.

SageLife is the new definition of senior living, rooted in a dedication to building communities that empower people to age successfully.

In addition to Echo Lake, SageLife operates active lifestyle and supportive senior living communities including Ovation at Riverwalk in Plainsboro, NJ; Daylesford Crossing in Paoli, PA; Kyffin Grove in North Wales, PA; Plush Mills in Wallingford, PA; and The Maples in Towson, MD. Also, two new communities are in development: Sage at Mattison in Ambler, PA and Artisan at Hudson in Hudson, MA.

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SENIOR LIFE

Make Your House Ready to Sell this Spring

By Marlene Stocks
Senior Transition Services

2020 has arrived! For many, the New Year was marked with resolutions that will inspire a healthier outlook and lifestyle. The New Year may also be one of great anticipation for a special event, like a graduation, wedding, birth of a baby or new home. If the latter is on your personal “to do” list in 2020, like any large undertaking, much planning is required for a seamless completion of a change of address, especially when it requires the sale of a house.

It’s a well-known fact that the “spring selling season” is the busiest period of real estate activity of the year and the earlier a house is listed for sale, the more quickly it is expected to be sold. In part, that’s because the inventory of houses for sale is low at the front end of the spring selling season. In order to benefit from this trend, now is the perfect time to prepare a house for sale and capture a competitive edge by having a decluttering and depersonalizing plan to maximize the house’s appeal.

Declutter

Declutter is a verb that means “remove unnecessary items from (an untidy or overcrowded place)”. Houses that have been stripped of obvious clutter allow a prospective buyer to quickly see the special features of each room. This is an example when “less is truly more”! More natural light can filter into the rooms if the windows aren’t covered with hanging plants and heavy window treatments. The floors will stand out more if extraneous items have been removed. Granite kitchen countertops can be noticed if they have been cleared of small appliances, dishes, and canisters. The size of rooms will appear larger



and more open if redundant furniture is removed or repositioned to allow for better traffic flow. A fireplace can be better showcased by minimizing the bric-a-brac on the mantel.

Once the clutter has been removed, determine what to do with the items. If the plan is to retain selected items and move them to the new residence, pack them away in a box marked “move” and conceal them in closet, attic or basement until moving day. Consider gifting heirlooms or special items to family but don’t be disappointed if the offer is rejected. If so, you

may have success selling the items using internet sites, like Craigslist or Facebook Marketplace, consigning with a consignment shop or auction house or dealing directly with an estate liquidator. Any slightly used items, like furniture, artwork, books, lamps, sports equipment, collectibles and decorations could be boxed and donated to a charity in return for a charitable donation receipt. Discard the obvious trash. Be mindful that paperwork with social security numbers and other personal, financial information be properly shredded.

Depersonalize

Depersonalize is also a verb meaning to “remove personal identity”. This task is often harder than decluttering because it usually entails the temporary removal of beloved family photos, large decorative collections and unique, exotic accessories. This task is not meant to be a judgement on the seller’s decorating style. The purpose is for prospective buyers to envision living there with their own furniture and decorative style. As with decluttering, items like the family photos that will be moved to the new residence, would

be packed up and eventually used to decorate the new home.

With an open and uncluttered look to the house, the amount of time it remains on the market will likely be reduced and the SOLD sign more quickly displayed.

Marlene Stocks is the owner of Senior Transition Services, a senior move management company based in Huntingdon Valley. As a certified senior move manager, Marlene and her team provide their clients and families “peace of mind” by managing

SENIOR LIFE

March Madness Aims at Seniors’ Concerns

If estate planning, Medicare and asset allocation, scams, downsizing, selling a house, veterans’ benefits, and community policing are topics of interest or concern, then March Madness for Seniors is for you.

As an outreach to the community, Resurrection Lutheran Church will present March Madness for Seniors, informal educational sessions, led by local experts, to offer tips and best practices on topics that have considerable impact on the lives and well being of seniors.

The sessions will take place on Thursday, March 5, 12, 19, and 26, 2020 from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm at 620 East Welsh Road, Horsham, PA 19044. Light refreshments will be served.

Become informed and aware!

For more information, please visit RLCHorsham.org, email rlcoffice@verizon.net or call 215-646-2597.

every detail of the client’s move, as well as their content removal needs. Senior Transition Services has proudly served 1,000 families in the 5 county area and South Jersey since 2008. www.Senior-Transition-Services.com. 215-947-5490.



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Mindfulness Practices for Stress Management

Guest Speaker: Michael Gawrysiak, Ph.D., Penn School of Medicine

The holiday season has come and gone, the kids are back in school, the days are short and snowy weather makes getting out of the house a chore. It’s this time of year when practicing mindfulness can be especially beneficial. Mike Gawrysiak, Ph.D., will teach you what mindfulness is and how to use mindfulness meditation practices as a form of stress management.

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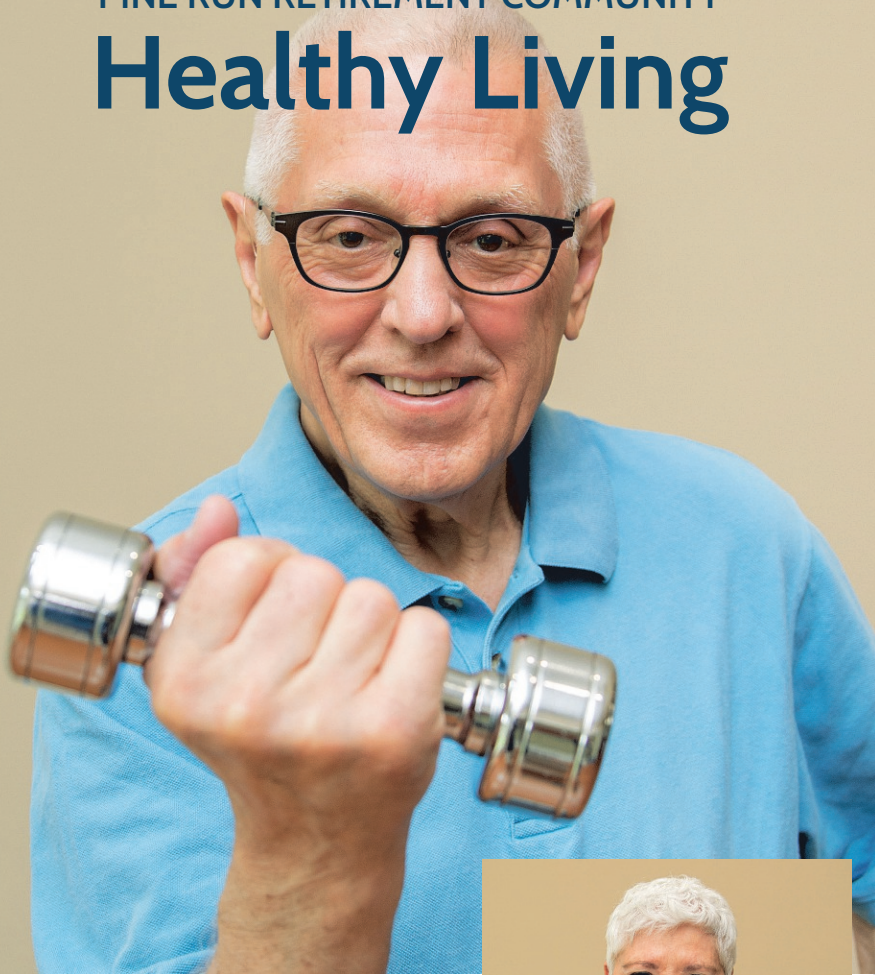
You don’t have to have a computer to enjoy being computer literate. Coffee shops, schools, libraries, and colleges offer the use of their computers to the general public. Today’s technology dictates the need for computer knowledge. Classes are available online as well as at local schools, colleges, and community centers. Since everyone learns at a different pace, classes tailored to senior citizens tend to move at a more relaxed speed. There is a lot of one-to-one teaching with step-by-step fundamentals provided by patient and organized teachers.

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With Faith Woodward, Director of Admissions and Marketing at Barclay Friends—to learn more, please call 610-696-5211 or visit our website, <http://bf.kendal.org/>.

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SENIOR LIFE

Dunwoody residents prepare Valentine cheer

Valentine's Day is an opportunity to send loving messages to special people in our lives, and residents at Dunwoody Village joined creative forces to do just that. Jerry Kinkead and Mary Kreek, committee members of Dunwoody Village Residents' Association, gathered together groups of individuals to create Valentines for residents in Dunwoody's Care Center.

As residents met over a four-day period in January, more than 160 cards were made that will be delivered to residents in personal care, skilled nursing, and short-term rehabilitation. Each card is unique, reflecting the creativity and personality of the designer.

"Last year, we made over 100 cards, and the Valentines were very well received," said Jerry Kinkead. "Not only will the cards bring cheer to the residents, but they also provided the independent residents with an opportunity to collaborate on a worthwhile project and, perhaps, even meet someone new."

Dunwoody Village is a continuing care retirement



Mary Kreek, left, works with Mary Tang as they design a Valentine's Day card to be delivered to a care center resident.

community located in Newtown Square, at the intersection with Bryn Mawr Avenue. For more

information, please visit Dunwoody's website at www.dunwoody.org.



Dunwoody residents taking part in the card-making project are, front row from left, Sandy Cox, Mary Tang, Jill TenBroeck, Eleanor Parsons' middle row, from left Evalyn Elias, Virginia Purinton, Patricia Turner' and back row, from left, Jerry Kinkead, Mary Kreek, Joan Staley, Linda Oberly, Bobbie Fischer, Gail Batchelder.

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SENIOR LIFE

What Causes Balance Disorder for Seniors?

By Hugh Bleemer
Community Relations Manager,
The Hickman

Balance disorders are among the most common reasons that older adults seek help from a doctor. One in three Americans over age 65 will fall every year according to parentgiving.com.

A balance disorder is a disturbance that causes you to feel unsteady, lightheaded or as if you or the room is spinning. "Balance disorders can be due to a disturbance in the inner ear, but they can also be caused by visual problems, skeletal problems or nerve problems", says Lawrence Meiteles, MD, medical director of The Balance Center of Northern Westchester Hospital in Mt. Kisco, NY.

The 5 most common balance problems are:

1) Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV) - According to The National Institute of Health (NIH), BPPV is one of the most common types of balance disorders. Few people have probably heard of it, but keep an eye out for it. Its primary symp-

tom is intense vertigo when moving your head.

2) Meniere's Disease - This is a condition in which the fluid inside the labyrinth (the part of the inner ear responsible for balance) increases. Meniere's Disease affects both balance and hearing. Symptoms include vertigo, hearing loss that comes and goes, a roaring sound and a sensation of fullness in the ears.

3) Labyrinthitis - When the inner ear becomes infected or inflamed, such as from a viral upper respiratory infection (e.g. flu), the result can be vertigo or loss of balance.

4) Other Health Conditions - Certain health issues can also result in balance problems. Some types of tumors can affect balance. In addition, long term medical conditions that impact the nervous system can affect balance. Some examples are Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, circulation problems, arthritis in the neck and Alzheimer's Disease.

5) Ramsey Hunt Syndrome - While rarer than the dis-

eases mentioned above, Ramsey Hunt Syndrome occurs when the shingles virus has attacked the vestibular nerve in the ear, one of the most important nerves related to balance.

Those who suffer from occasional issues with balance should not rush to diagnose themselves. Besides the above listed conditions, there are many other causes for balance issues such as, side effects from medications.

The ability to balance decreases with age, but losing your balance is not a normal part of aging. Most balance disorders can be treated, and many falls can be prevented. If you or someone you know is dealing with consistent balance disorder, contact a medical professional for assistance.

Promoting Senior Wellness is provided by The Hickman, a Quaker-affiliated licensed personal care home in West Chester. This column was written by Hugh Bleemer, Community Relations Manager.

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SENIOR LIFE

Maris Grove Celebrates Black History Month with Genealogy Exhibit

This February, Maris Grove is celebrating Black History Month by inviting residents and employees of the community to connect personally with the history of the United States at a special exhibit on campus. The exhibition titled "Thru Lucie's Eyes," shares resident DeWitte Shipley's family genealogy from slavery to the present as well as showcases African American history, inventions, music, art, and fashion. The mini-museum will be installed in a vacant apartment at the Erickson Living developed and managed senior living community located in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania.

DeWitte, a retired Abington High School social studies teacher, explains the family story is truly his father's gift to him. Thanks to his father's memories, meet-

ing and filming the oldest living member of the family in 1997, the exploration of his genealogy began with the help of his wife Melva, who spent ten years researching the family's history.

DeWitte and Melva hope the Maris Grove community takes away a wider and broader understanding of African American history and the fact that African American history needs to be included in American history because it is part of our history.

The exhibit will display documented information from 10 generations. The timeline starts with Lucie, who was brought against her will from Africa at 15 years old and sold as a slave in 1707. Lucie and her descendants were slaves of the family of Charles Carroll, who was a signer of

the Declaration of Independence. After five generations of slavery in Maryland, the family continued to live in the Baltimore area, where they worked and raised families. Other family items on display include DeWitte's artwork and the Howard University diploma of the first family member to graduate from college in 1887, William Troy. Troy was the first African American doctor to set up practice in Virginia.

In addition to the genealogy exhibit, the mini-museum highlights African American history with a display of video clips from key moments in history, newspaper articles, artifacts, art, sports memorabilia, and music from Motown, Count Basie, Nat King Cole, and more.

Special events during the month include a genealogy



Melva and DeWitte Shipley with college diploma of family member William Troy and other items from Maris Grove's Black History Month exhibit.

workshop and hot topic discussion groups. Also, employee lounges will have piped-in music and video clips from African American artists and have literature displays with information on Black American scientists, artists, inventors, and more. Additionally, selected African American themed movies will be shown on Maris Grove TV.

The Black History Month events are sponsored by the Maris Grove's Diversion and Inclusion Committee.

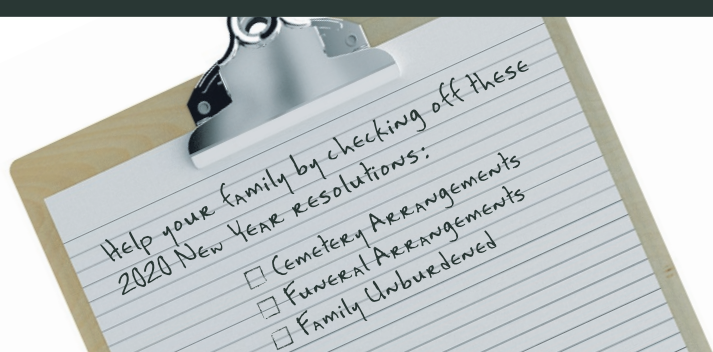
"Thank you to the Melva and DeWitte Shipley for all their hard work in putting together this fantastic exhibit and sharing their personal family story with the Maris Grove community," said Associate Executive Director Anne Anderson.

About Maris Grove

Maris Grove, one of 20 continuing care retirement communities developed and managed by Erickson Living®, is situated on a scenic 87-acre campus in

Glen Mills, Pennsylvania. The not-for-profit community of more than 1,600 residents and 740 employees is governed by its own board of directors, affiliated with National Senior Campuses, who provide independent financial and operational oversight of the community. Additional information about Maris Grove can be found at MarisGroveCommunity.com.

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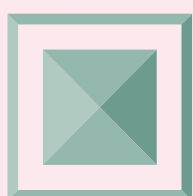
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SENIOR LIFE

Spot of T - 'To-Don't' Lists

By Terry Alburger
Life Engagement Coordinator,
Brittany Pointe Estates

The idea of a "to-do" list is not new to anyone, I'm sure. My life is full of lists, they keep me on track and on schedule. Heck, without lists, I would forget half of what I was supposed to do on any given day! They can truly be a life saver. No one is doubting the importance of such lists. But how about a "to-don't" list? Life can be full of moments in which we

feel we did not bring our A-game. It can be full of moments which we regret, which we wish we could change. These can be from the recent past and even go back to childhood or worse yet, the teen years! This kind of self-doubt can be very detrimental to your well-being. So, I came up with the "To-Don't List."

First, DON'T let hindsight bring you down. Hindsight is, as they say, 20/20. It is easy to see what you SHOULD have done after the fact.

Clearly, if you got lost while driving somewhere new, and made a left when you should have made a right, you have learned a valuable lesson. Okay, it made you a bit late, or ate up some gas, but you are wiser for it. Rather than beat yourself up over it, look at it, take away the valuable lesson, and let it go. Take advice from Elsa's words from the movie "Frozen..." It is timeless. "Let it go, let it go, can't hold it back anymore, let it go, let it go, turn away and slam the door..."

Next, DON'T stress over those things left undone in a given day. Some Saturdays, I plan on getting so many things done. It is my one free day in the week. It's the one day I can get those leaves raked or the trees trimmed, or vacuum the house, etc. When Saturday rolls around, I sleep in longer than I had planned. I savor my coffee, feet up, watching some inane & mindless TV. I read a book. I... dare I say it... relax. And yes, at the end of some days, I beat myself up for not having glanced at the all-important "to-do" list. But the question is, was my time well-spent? Some would argue yes, it is just what I needed. Everyone needs some downtime. The leaves will still be there. The trees too. But the serenity that comes from some peace and quiet, some respite, is well-worth it. And sometimes, in the quiet of the day, I get the best ideas and interesting plans.

Another great item for your To-Don't List: Don't let the past dictate who you are in the present or the future. Such a short statement with such a wide-ranging message. Memories come into play here - keep your fondest memories in your heart, but let the hardships and pain go. So easy to say. So hard to do. Remember - it's the present. You have the ability to make TODAY the best

Another great item for your To-Don't List: Don't let the past dictate who you are in the present or the future. Such a short statement with such a wide-ranging message. Memories come into play here - keep your fondest memories in your heart, but let the hardships and pain go.

it can be. And lastly, DON'T dwell on those things over which you have no control. The state of our country, the splintered nation, world events, natural disasters ... it can be overwhelming. News reports are nonstop, spewing bad news and desperation. Remember to only let in what you absolutely need to know. You are in control of what you watch, read and share. Keep your world positive. Keep your thoughts on things that make you happy. I'm not saying to bury your head in the sand, of course. But don't let the tsunami of sadness overtake you.

There are so many other "TO-DON'TS" that I could list but you get the picture. I truly believe that if you look for the good in things, in people, in situations, you will find it. It was Mr. Rogers that said, "Always look for the helpers." Sage advice. Because in searching out those who are helping, you will always find

a shred of hope and decency. And hopefully by keeping positive, you can make it "A beautiful Day in the Neighborhood."

About Brittany Pointe Estates

Brittany Pointe Estates is a gracious Lansdale retirement community that reflects the charm of the region of France for which it is named. Situated in northern Montgomery County, residents of Brittany Pointe Estates senior living community enjoy an abundance of shopping opportunities, cultural offerings, theaters, gourmet restaurants, and beautiful parks that are nearby. Many of the nation's top hospitals and health care providers are less than an hour away in Center City Philadelphia and the surrounding areas. It is located at 1001 S. Valley Forge Road, Lansdale, PA 19446 and you can call 267-657-3106 for information.

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SENIOR LIFE

Heritage of Green Hills Celebrates Groundhog's Day

The Heritage of Green Hills, a healthy life community in Shillington, Pa., celebrated Groundhog's Day a few days early with the help of its plush groundhog meteorological prognosticator, Heritage Hank. Members of the Plant Operations Team, led by Director Kerry Williard, helped interpret Hank's predictions for the assembled crowd of residents and announced that he did see his shadow — which means six more weeks of winter. This is Hank's 11th year of predictions.

Back inside, everyone enjoyed groundhog-shaped cookies (made by Punxsutawney native Barbara Willar, now a resident of The Heritage) and hot cocoa.

Right: Resident Barbara Willar & Director of The Heritage of Green Hills Plant Operations Team, Kerry Williard.



SENIOR LIFE

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our residents stay active and involved. We also offer wellness programs, stimulating activities and creative on-site physical and occupational therapy services.

Scheduled activities include outings to nearby museums, malls, casinos, and many other attractions. Residents also enjoy community life such as movie nights, board game competitions, group fitness classes, and more. There's truly something for everyone!

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SENIOR LIFE

RSVP Creates Special Bonds Through Mentoring

Would your life be different if, while you were growing up, you had no one to give you guidance and advice?

Some of the decisions we make in our lives have lasting impact and can put us on a course that may not always be in our best interest. Seeking advice from someone that has been down that path can be life changing.

Guidance can come from many sources - a friend, teacher, relative or mentor - and it's critical in our formative years to have a trusting relationship with a role model.

Hundreds of lives have been enhanced because of RSVP's youth mentor-

ing program. "Some of the matches made when the program started 23 years ago are still in touch with each other. That's how strong the connections are."

said Janet Murphy, RSVP's Youth Mentoring Program Coordinator. "We match a mentor with a student in elementary through middle school who has been identified by the school counselor or parent as a child who would benefit from consistent interaction with a mentor. The goal of the program and the match is to provide a champion for a child facing opportunity gaps."

"We feel that if the student sees that they matter to an adult - that the men-

tor shows up on a regular basis, they are better able to develop the skills that promote healthy development into adulthood."

A recent match was made in November 2019 with Penny, a mentor, and 13-year old Lexi. Her grandmother felt Lexi would benefit from a connection outside of the family that she could relate to. "My hope for Lexi's future is that she can recognize her strengths and the fact that she can do anything she sets her mind to. Lexi and Penny seem to enjoy their time together and I have seen Lexi's grades improve."

Penny attended an RSVP

RSVP » PAGE 11



Penny having a laugh with her mentee Lexi.

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SENIOR LIFE

Green Hills Manor to Host Caregiver Support Group Feb. 19

SHILLINGTON, PA. » Green Hills Manor at The Heritage, the personal and memory care community on the campus of The Heritage of Green Hills, will host monthly support groups for caregivers of individuals suffering from dementia, as well as other debilitating diseases.

The groups are held on the third Wednesday of each month. Upcoming dates include:

Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2020

Wednesday, March 18, 2020

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

"Any individual caring for a loved one with a debilitating disease is welcome to attend to find emotional support," said Melissa Oley, marketing and admissions liaison for Green Hills Manor. "Recently, we have had attendees caring for individuals with Parkinson's disease, and they found the group very helpful."

The caregiver support groups take place on the third Wednesday of each month from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Held in conjunction with the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, the sessions are free and open to the public.

"The support groups will provide a safe, confidential, supportive environment for participants to develop informal mutual support and social relationships," Oley continued. "The groups also educate participants about dementia and help them develop the skills and confidence to solve caregiving challenges."

The support groups will be conducted by trained Alzheimer's Association facilitators and held at Green Hills Manor, which is located at 10 Tranquility Lane, Shillington, Pa., just off Morgantown Road/Route 10 across from The Flying Hills Golf Course. Sessions are free and

open to the public. Caregivers of individuals with any debilitating disease are now welcome.

For more information, contact Melissa Oley at 484-755-3228 or moley@heritagegh.com.

About Green Hills Manor

Located on 78 acres of rolling hills in Berks County, Pennsylvania, on the campus of The Heritage of Green Hills, Green Hills Manor is a gracious, personal care community focused on helping residents reach their highest level of independence. Green Hills Manor provides a wealth of healthcare and support services to provide residents with a perfect blend of comfort, security and care. The community's Well by Design program provides customized wellness plans and an on-site health services.

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Sam and his mentee Nahib try out a new restaurant.

RSVP

FROM PAGE 10

Information Session to learn about volunteering. She was initially interested in the program that places volunteer readers in classrooms until she heard about the mentoring program. "I guess you could say I was blindsided. We are still in the early stages of our relationship. I would like to become someone Lexi can count on and trust. Thirteen is a rough age on a good day."

"I have seen changes in Lexi already. She was very soft spoken and she now shares more and more experiences with me and laughs a lot more. She is more focused on school work and I have added an incentive of a special outing if her grades improve during the next marking period. I look forward to watching her grow and helping her deal with all the issues teens deal with."

Kara Howell, Lexi's school counselor, reported, "Since Lexi has started meeting with Penny, we have seen her grades and academics improve. She looks forward to visits

from her mentor and will often check in with me to see when the next meeting will be. In my experience, a mentoring relationship can be a critical piece to help support our students academically, socially and emotionally."

Another recent match is between Sam and Nahib, a 7th grade student. "RSVP's Janet Murphy said the pair was matched at the end of last school year and have now moved beyond just meeting in school. Although Sam travels for work, he always finds time to be available for Nahib."

Sam said "I benefited in my life from several mentors which provided me with the passion to want to pay it forward. My former boss was a mentor and now we are very close friends."

When asked why it was important for youth to have a mentor Sam responded "We all need guidance and I have been blessed to have that guidance. I believe it is critical in every young person's life. Nahib was very shy when we first started meeting and now he calls me more often. He refers to me as his buddy. I see our relationship developing. We try new restaurants, we went to Bounce U and we

have deep conversations to really get to know each other."

Sam continued "Mentoring was the best decision I have made from a personal development perspective but I'm also rewarded by providing support for a young man such as Nahib."

Mentors play a formative role in the lives of young people by being a consistent and friendly presence, by being non-judgmental and by forming a trusting bond that bridges the generation gap.

RSVP is always seeking mentors for students who are waiting for their role model. Janet Murphy continued "We need mentors in Norristown, Blue Bell, Phoenixville, North Penn, Skippack and Perkiomen Valley. Mentors don't need to live in those areas but be willing to get there to visit with their student."

To learn more about RSVP's mentoring program visit www.rsvpmc.org, email volunteer123@rsvpmc.org or call 610-834-1040 x.123 or attend an upcoming Volunteer Information Session near you: <https://www.rsvpmc.org/volunteer-1>.

HEALTH

Recognizing heart disease symptoms could help save your life

Brandpoint

Recognizing the symptoms of heart disease - and taking time from your busy life to see a doctor - could help to save your life, just as it did for Zbigniew "Ziggy" Banach.

Banach is a 46-year-old husband and father of two teenage boys, living in Woodstock, Illinois.

Banach began feeling chest congestion and shortness of breath in November 2018. On Dec. 17, he finally visited the emergency room, where he learned he had suffered a heart attack. A heart attack occurs when blocked arteries cut off the supply of blood to the heart.

Banach had four stents placed in his arteries to restore blood flow. The heart attack had caused significant damage to Banach's heart. As a result, Dr. Hetal Gandhi of the Advocate Heart Institute in Crystal Lake, Illinois, was concerned that Banach was at risk of dying from sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

Some people confuse SCA with a heart attack, but they are very different. A heart attack victim is likely to feel severe chest pain or other symptoms, just like Banach did. They usually remain awake and can call for help. Unlike a heart attack, SCA has no warning signs, and is likely to leave the victim unconscious and unable to call for help.

SCA occurs when a failure of the heart's electrical system triggers a dangerously fast heartbeat, causing the heart to quiver or shake instead of pumping blood to the body and brain. The most effective treatment for SCA is an electrical shock (defibrilla-

SCA occurs when a failure of the heart's electrical system triggers a dangerously fast heartbeat, causing the heart to quiver or shake instead of pumping blood to the body and brain.

tion). Without treatment, death from SCA can occur within minutes.

For protection from SCA, Gandhi prescribed Banach with the LifeVest wearable defibrillator.

"Major heart attacks weaken heart muscles and put patients at a higher risk of sudden cardiac arrest," explained Gandhi. "Especially in the first 40 to 90 days of recovery, certain patients may need devices that can respond to and protect them from sudden cardiac arrest. This gives us time to determine a more permanent solution and allows the heart muscles to regain strength after a heart attack. Wearable defibrillators can provide protection and restore a normal heart beat even if a patient is alone or asleep."

LifeVest consists of a garment, an electrode belt and a monitor. It is designed to continuously monitor a patient's heart, detect life-threatening rapid heart rhythms, and automatically deliver a treatment shock to restore normal heart rhythm and save a patient's life. With only five days until Christmas, Banach left the hospital wearing it under his

clothes day and night, only taking it off for a short shower.

Just three days later, while asleep in his home, Banach suffered SCA. Within one minute, LifeVest delivered a treatment shock that saved his life. When he awoke the next morning, Banach saw Blue Gel deployed by the garment during treatment and realized what happened. His wife drove him to the hospital, where he received two more life-saving treatments from the vest. On Christmas Eve, Banach received an implantable defibrillator (ICD) for long-term protection.

His family visited him in the hospital to spend the holiday together. Banach tries not to imagine how different a Christmas it could have been.

"I don't know what would happen if I didn't have the LifeVest," said Banach. "I'm grateful I had it and happy to be alive."

Researchers suggest delays in seeking medical treatment may contribute to heightened risk of heart-related death around the holidays. A person experiencing the symptoms of a heart attack should seek medical treatment right away. According to the American Heart Association, heart attack symptoms can range from slow and mild to sudden and intense, including discomfort in the chest, arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach, shortness of breath, nausea and sweating.

If you or a loved one has experienced a recent heart attack, talk to your cardiologist about SCA and the treatment options available for those at risk.

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