



The Elder Services Provider Council of Washington County would like to thank the following organizations for making this page possible: Easter Seals Adult Day Services, Somerford Assisted Living and Alzheimer's Care, Hospice of Washington County, Fahrney-Keedy Home and Village., and the Village at Robinwood. Please contact Mindy Propst, Chair, for more information on this page or the Elder Services Provider Council. 301-745-3828. mpropst@eseal.org

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Caregivers' Forums at Robinwood Medical Center held Second Thursday of each month, 11:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
February 14—How to Get Emotional support for the Caregiver
Speaker: Beth Layman, Hospice of Washington County
Cost: \$7.00. To register, call 301-791-6360.

On Making the Hard Decisions ...

—Submitted by: Sheri Evans, Family Services coordinator, Somerford Assisted Living & Alzheimer's Care

I received a call this morning from Mary, whose mother is 83 years old. Mary's dad passed away about 8 months ago and at that time, her Mom appeared okay. Mary returned home and had been speaking with her Mom over the phone and again things seemed fine. It was a neighbor that called Mary to say that her Mom was not doing well and that Mary needed to come home for a visit. Mary's response was ... "I was shocked when I walked into my mom's house. There were dishes piled up in the sink and on the counters, stacks of newspapers throughout the house and bills that have not been paid for months. The most shocking of all was when I found medications throughout the house hidden in the strangest places. My Mom had always told me that she wanted to stay in her home where she had lived for 40 years and never wanted to be placed in a nursing home. At this point I began questioning Mom's basic welfare and I am not sure her home is safe for her any longer."

Dementia or memory loss can be blamed for not eating or taking medications properly. An improper diet and/or the lack of socialization may also lead to negative effects in our senior population. What can Mary do to help her mother when home is not the answer and Independent Living Communities will not provide for her needs? The answer is ASSISTED LIVING.

people with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. built from the ground up specifically for people with memory loss conditions, Somerford Place offers an empowering environment that fosters independence and builds self-worth.

Assisted Living communities encourage individuals to continue to do those things that they are able to do for themselves while offering help with areas of life where they may not. Assisted Living can provide for ones basic needs such as meal preparation, medication management and housekeeping. A person's Activities of Daily Living (ADL's) such as grooming, bathing, dressing, ambulation and help with the bathroom can be met on a daily basis per the residents needs. Assisted Living communities work with physicians and dieticians to meet the nutritional needs of the residents. Assisted Living staff members have been trained to assist residents with their individual ADL needs throughout the day. Another very important aspect of Assisted Living is that they provide socialization for the resident. It provides them the opportunity to meet new friends, old acquaintances are discovered and new activities are enjoyed. An Assisted Living residence is a place you can call home. And, just as it is at your house, people who live here are surrounded by others who know them as individuals and care about them.

The people of Somerford are experts in dementia care, driven by their passion for caring and love for adults with memory loss. We strive to make every moment matter for the resident and their families. For information please Contact Sheri Evans, 301-797-9221.

Does this sound familiar to you? It may not be your own family member but it could be your neighbor or someone at your church. Our community is filled with people like Mary's Mom that cannot manage in their own homes. There are many factors that contribute to this deterioration.

The first is that some folks are isolated due to the fact that they can no longer drive a car and are no longer able to keep in contact with their support networks such as church, family, or friends.

I have heard Mary's story many times and I have witnessed the turn-around residents make after transitioning into an Assisted Living community. Family and friends also gain a peace of mind knowing that their friends and loved ones are safe, being cared for and enjoying life again. Assisted Livings are a wonderful resource for our loved ones and friends. Take the time to visit one and see how we are making a difference in our community.

caregiver's corner

Calming Tips

A calm heart may prevail ...

... when you remember your needs.

You need time to get away from your role as caregiver, to relax and get additional support. These needs may create feelings of conflict or guilt, but remember: You are taking care of the person who needs you by taking care of yourself.

... when you involve others.

Ask family members and friends for help. People usually are willing and pleased to be asked, they just may not volunteer. Consider a family meeting to brainstorm on how to share responsibilities.

... when you practice gratitude.

It lightens your load, softens your heart, and reminds you to let go of the outcome. Being grateful paves the way for a calming acceptance.

Look for the next article in our 6-part series on the Long-Term Care Continuum in the February 20th Herald-Mail edition of the Senior Life Page.

Catherine A. Drummond, PA
Attorney At Law

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