

PROTECTING NURSING
HOME RESIDENTS

MAY 2004

Arkansas Advocates for Nursing Home Residents



NEXT MEETING

May 10, 2004

MEETING PLACE:

First Assembly of God
Church
4501 Burrow Road
North Little Rock
Directions to church
on page 8

10 a.m.

Meeting for Members,
Family and Friends of
Residents
Dr. Paul White

11 a.m.

Public Meeting:
Dee Brazil, Executive
Director, Arkansas
Hospice Foundation

12 noon

Bring a sack lunch.

AANHR's Mission:

**"To protect and
improve the quality
of care and life for
residents in
Arkansas nursing
homes"**

We're on the web!

www.AANHR.org

Conway (501) 327-3152 • Fairfield Bay (501) 884-6728
Little Rock (501) 225-4082

Dee Brazil, Executive Director of Arkansas Hospice Foundation, to be AANHR's Speaker at 11:00 a.m. on May 10

When a nursing home resident enrolls in hospice, what responsibility does the hospice take for the care of the resident and what responsibility does the nursing home keep? Dee Brazil, Executive Director of Arkansas Hospice Foundation, will answer this and other questions about hospice when she speaks to AANHR at 11:00 a.m. on May 10.

In her role with Arkansas Hospice, Ms. Brazil directs fundraising and development activities, volunteer services and community outreach. She assumed her position in 1994 after serving about two years as Development Director for Hospice Home Care, Inc., in Little Rock. Ms. Brazil directed and was the primary fundraiser for an all-volunteer hospice in Idaho from 1986 to 1992 when she returned to Arkansas to assist elder family members. She will share a little bit about the interesting story of how she initially became involved with hospice.

Come to this meeting to learn the ABC's of hospice care.

Dr. Paul White will speak at the AANHR Business Meeting at 10:00 a.m. on May 10

Dr. Paul White will explain the new Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit and what it means for America's Seniors 65 years and older. Dr. White is a retired U.S. Public health service physician. He has been an active AANHR member for six years and was a board member for several years. He has been very active in Arkansas Hospice and also serves in AARP.



From the President's Desk

Nancy Allison

One of the consequences of aging can be failing vision. It can be brought on by simple lack of elasticity in the eye muscles, which happens as a normal aging process. Or it can be the result of macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts and diabetic retinopathy.

I have written in the past of the importance of maintaining the independence, the autonomy, of a resident in a nursing home. It has come to my attention that there are some things that can cause this independence to disappear without the resident and/or the family realizing what is happening. Blindness and low vision can lead to complete loss of independence. Blindness and low vision increase significantly with age. Annual comprehensive eye examinations can prevent or delay eye disease for those at risk for blindness

Macular degeneration is a progressive disorder that affects the central part of the retina causing gradual loss of vision. It can affect both eyes simultaneously or one after the other and is painless and common in the elderly. With early diagnosis it is sometimes possible to correct the problem, but in most cases, the disorder is untreatable.

Glaucoma is a condition in which the pressure of the fluid in the eye is so abnormally high that it causes nerve fiber destruction and partial or complete loss of vision. Glaucoma is one of the most common major eye disorders in people over 60, but early diagnosis and treatment are needed to prevent any impairment of vision.

Cataracts to some degree occur in almost everyone over the age of 65. Cataracts never cause complete blindness because even a densely opalescent lens will still transmit light. However, there results a gradually increasing loss of clarity and detail of an image. Today removing the cataract and implanting an artificial lens is one of the least complex and most successful operations in all surgery and the expectation of an excellent result is well over 90%.

Diabetic retinopathy is caused when fluid leakage from the capillaries hemorrhages into the retina. New fragile blood vessels grow on the surface of the retina and fibrous tissue can develop, all causing permanent loss of vision.

I have briefly explained the major causes of blindness in the elderly and hope that you will see that your family member has periodic eye exams. At a time in the life of a nursing home resident when they are faced with having their freedom diminished, do not allow failing vision to impair them more. If their activity is curtailed to where they can only look out a window or see the world within the walls of their room, let us at least let them see that! How much more pleasant to see smiling faces than frustrated anxious residents having difficulty coping with a life they are no longer a part of.

AANHR would like to thank the following people and companies for their continued support of our organization.

In Gratitude

Billie Bice – Mountain View, AR

Martha Blount – Searcy, AR

Melanie Grayson of Grayson and Grayson – North Little Rock, AR

Elma Holder – Yukon, OK

Caroline Stevenson – Little Rock, AR

Dennis Young – Texarkana, AR

In Memory

Donations were made to AANHR in memory of these loved ones:

Emma Gene Buzick - Bella Vista, AR – In memory of Demetra P. Berton

Virginia Cross – Little Rock, AR – In memory of Lon Sauer

Mary E. Dixon – Mena, AR – In memory of Lon Sauer

Donald and Mary Alice Skowbo – In memory of Elizabeth Skowbo

Special Thanks

David Couch of Grayson and Grayson, PA, for employing Brent Birch of One6media, LLC to do AANHR's new website design.

Clark Mason of Hare Wynn Newell & Newton for financial and promotional support over the years.

First Assembly of God Church in North Little Rock for providing a meeting room free of charge.

Brian Reddick and **Bob Edwards** of **Wilkes and McHugh** for its generous donation toward the publication costs of this newsletter.

Jack Wagner for keeping AANHR supplied with copies of the book, DANGER ZONE.



Family Council President Featured Speaker at AANHR Meeting

By Nancy Johnson

Susie Hood, President of the Family Council at Greenhurst Nursing Center, Charleston, AR, was the featured speaker at the April meeting. She gave a brief history of how the council came to be organized and their on-going activities.

Even in this facility, where the administrator and staff are cooperative and supportive, they find recruiting membership to be difficult. At present, they have a membership of 14 (as compared to 97

residents of the facility). They contact the family members of each new resident soon after they are admitted. They have tried doing this by telephone and by letter in addition to printed information in each new admission packet. They also try to talk one-on-one with new family members as they see them visiting in the facility. The Council meets monthly and all family members are notified of each meeting.

Ms. Hood pointed out that admission of a family member to a nursing home is a very traumatic time for family members and most have a tremendous feeling of guilt about it. She feels that one of the purposes of the Family Council is to address these feelings and provide an avenue for working through them. She continually emphasizes that the matters discussed in the Council meetings must remain confidential so that members can feel free to discuss their feelings and the problems they are encountering. Many residents do not have family members who can visit often. Council members make a point to visit with and oversee the care of all the residents, not just their own family members.

The Greenhurst Family Council works closely with the Activities Director. They provide gifts for each resident on their birthdays and at Christmas. In addition, they host parties for special events such as Halloween and Christmas. The whole town is invited to their 4th of July celebration and picnic, complete with fireworks.

Staff appreciation is not slighted either. On holidays the council invites staff persons to a luncheon and gives gift certificates. Longevity and outstanding work is recognized. Family Council members make a special effort to know all staff members - on all shifts - and to encourage them to feel free to report problems that they encounter. Once again confidentiality must be guaranteed.

(Continued on page 5)



Attendees at AANHR's April Meeting

"The Starfish"*

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a figure in the distance. As he got closer he realized the figure was that of a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?" The youth replied, "Throwing starfish in the ocean. The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they will die." "Son", the man said, "Don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach, and hundreds of starfish? " You can't possibly make a difference! After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the surf. Then smiling at the man he said, "I made a difference for THAT one!"

***The Greenhurst Family Council has adopted "The Starfish" to be their official inspiration. They try to keep uppermost in their minds, the last line: "I made a difference for that one."**

(Continued from page 4)

Ms. Hood recommends that all family members should seek out a Family Council when a loved one is admitted to a nursing home for the support they can supply each other, to obtain needed information about the facility, and to address problems as they arise. She ended her presentation with the story of The Boy and the Starfish, which is printed above. The Greenhurst Family Council has adopted the starfish as their symbol.

HELPFUL/IMPORTANT NUMBERS

The Office of Long Term Care (OLTC) has a toll-free number for information, assistance and complaints for residents and family members: 1-800-LTC-4887 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays. A social worker or nurse will be available to answer questions and address concerns. You may also write to: Office of Long Term Care (OLTC) P. O. Box 8059, Slot 400 Little Rock, AR 72203-8059
OLTC WEBSITE:

<http://www.medicaid.state.ar.us/general/units/oltc/index.htm>

You should also report complaints to the Attorney General's office! (OLTC no longer alerts that office to suspected criminal activity.)

The Arkansas Attorney General's office has a toll free number to investigate adult abuse and Medicaid fraud.

Please do not hesitate to call them.
TOLL FREE: **1-866-810-0016**
LITTLE ROCK LOCAL NUMBER:
682-7760

For additional assistance or a listening ear, call AANHR at (501) 327-3152 in Conway; (501) 884-6728 in Fairfield Bay; or (501) 224-4082 in Little Rock. For instructions on how to file a complaint, visit our website at **www.aanhr.org** or e-mail us at **info@aanhr.org**.

Your local **Ombudsman's** number should be posted in the nursing home. You may also call your local Area Agency on Aging to secure **the name and phone number** of the Ombudsman.

Find Resources Easily (Re-printed with permission from *Aging AR*)

AR-GetCare is a website for older adults, people with disabilities, their families and caregivers. It is designed to help them learn about and get services throughout Arkansas.

The site is located at www.argetcure.org will be continually updated and includes:

A searchable statewide directory of resources for older adults and people with disabilities and developmental disabilities. You can use AR-GetCare to find transportation, personal assistance, senior centers and much, much more.

"Learn About" pages that describe the types of services that exist, from in-home products and services to options for residential care.

An easy-to-use self-assessment tool that helps you identify needs and preferences.

Printable "Checklists" that make it easy to gather and compare information about different service providers.

AR-GetCare is accessible via any Internet connection and has special features that make it accessible to people with disabilities. The site is available in Spanish and English, and users can expand the text size. AR-GetCare is also compatible with screen readers that read site content aloud. If you don't have your own computer, many public libraries and senior centers have computers you may use. Call your local Area Agency on Aging.

Arkansas service providers log on to the AR-GetCare website, where they can describe their services and enter information about location and cost. The searchable directory is Arkansas' most comprehensive listing of services. It brings the Arkansas Department of Human Services closer to its goal of enhancing access to information about long-term care services, including home and community-based services. With AR-GetCare, consumers and long-term care professionals have a wealth of information at their fingertips. AR-GetCare is a great way for a service provider to let consumers, information and referral agents, case managers and hospital discharge planners know about the services they offer.

AR-GetCare is a project of the Department of Human Services and is jointly sponsored by the Divisions of Aging and Adult Services and Developmental Disabilities Services.

*National Nursing Assistants Week
June 10-17, 2004
Career Nursing Assistants' Day
June 10, 2004*



National Nursing Assistants Week and Career Nursing Assistants' Day is a good opportunity to show appreciation for Certified Nursing Assistants and recognize those who have been faithful workers.

Some suggestions are:

- *Write a letter of praise and ask that it be included in her/his file.*
- *Give a gift of flowers or food.*

**Just a simple gesture will be adequate.
Your appreciation is what counts!**

Heading and artwork of this Ad courtesy of Career Nurse Assistants' Program, Inc.,
3577 Easton Road; Norton, OH 44203-5661
www.cna-network.org

Strength in Numbers, AANHR needs you!!

Please take a moment to find out if you've renewed your AANHR membership. (Our fiscal year began on November 1, 2003. If you have not paid your dues since August 2003, then you are past due). We are so appreciative of people like you who support us because together we can make a difference.

- I wish to receive the AANHR newsletter
- \$15 per individual membership enclosed
- \$20 per family membership enclosed
- \$4 per student or CNA
- Waive dues because of financial hardship

Please make checks payable to:

AANHR P.O. Box 22421 Little Rock, AR 72221-2421

AANHR Officers and Board Members

President—Nancy Allison, Conway

Vice President—Nancy Johnson, Fairfield Bay

Secretary—Kelly O'Quinn, Little Rock

Treasurer—Ralph Erwin, Little Rock

Members of the Board of Directors: Marce Best, Maumelle; Betty Buckta, Fairfield Bay; Virginia Cross, Little Rock; Martha Deaver, Conway; Catherine Donovan, Little Rock; Fred Plant, Little Rock; Larry Wakefield, Fairfield Bay

AANHR Meeting Directions

(see map below)

First Assembly of God Church, 4501 Burrow Road, North Little Rock, Arkansas

From Little Rock, on Highway 67-167 take the west McCain Blvd. exit. Immediately after crossing the overpass, turn right (north) on Warden Road (the access road that parallels the divided highway and McCain Mall). Stay on Warden Road for three blocks.

Turn left on Commercial Street, the street with the Golden Corral restaurant on the corner. Commercial Street ends three blocks later at Burrow Road.

The church is at the end of Commercial Street and is easily recognized by three large crosses. Proceed ahead in the parking lot (do not turn right) past the crosses to the southwest corner of the building. Turn right on the narrow alley-like drive. Enter the door halfway down this side of the church. The meeting is in room 113 (immediately inside the entrance door).



Arkansas Advocates
For

Nursing Home Residents

P. O. Box 22421 Little Rock, AR 72221-2421

*PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF
NURSING HOME RESIDENTS FROM
FRAUD, ABUSE, AND NEGLECT*

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MAP TO MEETING