

Elder Abuse is a Crying Shame



A NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY RESTORING ELDER SAFETY TODAY

Fall 2013

WORLD ELDER ABUSE RALLY 2013

BC-REST kicked off its fourth annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day rally and seminar at the Towson Library on June 14, 2013. Over 100 people attended the event, which was presented by the Baltimore County Restoring Elder Safety Today (BC-REST), the elder abuse prevention coalition. The rally marks World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a day devoted to educating the public about the problem of elder abuse and what individuals can do to help. Recent studies indicate that one in eleven seniors in the U.S. are victimized by these crimes. Most cases of elder abuse are not reported because elders are frightened or ashamed, because concerned loved ones don't know what to do, or because the victim depends on the perpetrator for assistance. It is estimated that only one in five cases is reported.

The Sweet Adelines entertained the group of coalition members, public officials, senior advocates and members of the public, and set the tone for the day.

The Mistress of Ceremonies, Lauren Cook from WMAR-TV, Channel 2 shared her own personal story about her aging father, a former Baltimore County Police officer.

Then Joanne Williams, the Director, Baltimore County Department of Aging, welcomed the attendees and thanked the AARP for their sponsorship of the event and recognized the other event sponsors. She said that importance of awareness of this cause cannot be overstated. BC-REST should be highly praised for their efforts to educate the public about elder abuse.

Larry Simmons, Executive Special Assistant to Kevin Kamantz, said that elder adults should be aware of scams and frauds. Elder abuse needs to be reported immediately to appropriate authorities. Elder adults should be treated with respect and dignity. The well

being of seniors is the highest of priorities. Mr. Simmons read a proclamation from the County Executive, proclaiming June 14 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Baltimore County.

Ms. Williams then introduced Bernice Hutchinson, Assistant to Secretary Gloria Lawlah from the Maryland Department of Aging, who brought greetings from Secretary Lawlah. Ms. Hutchinson said that elder abuse is an incredibly important social problem, and we all must work together to lift the lid on the issue. Awareness is the first step to take to become better educated. We must become better sentinels to identify abuse and it is our responsibility to report it. She presented a proclamation on behalf of Governor O'Malley.

Ms. Cook then introduced Hank Greenberg, State Director of AARP, who has been a major supporter of elder abuse prevention in Maryland. Older Americans have problems of identity theft, medical history theft and theft of VA benefits. Frequently family members are involved in taking advantage of their older relatives. We are looking forward to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act which should have a very positive impact of older adults.

Ms. Cook then introduced Col. Peter Evans, from the Baltimore County Police Department who said we must recommit the efforts of the Police Department to fight elder abuse.

The next speaker was Gregory Branch, MD, Health Officer and Director, Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services. He said the health of the community is measured by the care given to children and seniors. To be healthy we need to give care. We need to step in when we see people being abused. He challenged us to "spread the love," educate others, and make a difference today.

Continued on Page 2

SAVE – THE – DATE

October 9th & 10th 2013

TIMONIUM, MD FAIRGROUNDS

BABY BOOMER **EX**
50+ **SENIOR** **PO**
Baltimore County Department of Aging

Danielle Singley, from the Department of Aging's Home Team program, spoke about volunteerism and the many ways there are to reach out to help people. She spoke about the Home Team Program, which makes friendly visits to older adults, providing social support to improve the quality of life for vulnerable seniors.

Keynote speaker Frank Schlisser of the Postal Inspector's Office informed and educated the attendees about postal fraud and especially Foreign Lottery Fraud. He brought with him Norman Breidenbaugh, a fraud victim. They both spoke very eloquently about crimes using the mail. Mr. Schlisser explained how widespread this type of scam is, especially preying on older adults. Mr. Breidenbaugh explained how he and his wife are now penniless after giving all their money and mortgaging their home as a result of this scam. He said when someone asks for money over the phone, you should just hang up on them. This was a very sad story but one we all should learn from.

Director Williams thanked all the speakers and gave us a call to action to volunteer to help a vulnerable older adult, share the information we have learned, and look out for our elderly neighbors.

Following the rally, Nancy Aiken, PhD, director of CHANA, Counseling Helpline and Aid Network for Abused Women, and Ellyn Loy, LCSW-C, Clinical Director of the House of Ruth, presented a seminar entitled, "Understanding the Trauma of Elder Abuse and Helping Victims Heal."

The rally and seminar inspired everyone with important information on the effort to bring awareness of elder abuse to the community, along with a variety of actions that we can take to keep seniors safe.

Submitted by Alan Spiegel



The mission of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) is to make markets for consumer financial products and services work for Americans — whether they are applying for a mortgage, choosing among credit cards, or using any number of other consumer financial products.

The organization works to give consumers the information they need to understand the terms of their agreements with financial companies. They aim to work to make regulations and guidance as clear and streamlined as possible so providers of consumer financial products and services can follow the rules on their own.

Congress established the CFPB to protect consumers by carrying out federal consumer financial laws. To name a few, CFPB works to:

- Restrict unfair, deceptive, or abusive acts or practices
- Take consumer complaints
- Promote financial education
- Research consumer behavior
- Monitor financial markets for new risks to consumers
- Enforce laws that outlaw discrimination and other unfair treatment in consumer finance

CFPB has FREE Consumer Financial Protection Bureau publications. Publication topics include: Credit, Money Management, and Mortgages to Special Populations. Materials in Spanish are also available.

CFPB has recognized that Older Americans face many financial challenges as they age. Often scam artists or bad advice victimize this population. The Office of Financial Protection for Older Americans is designed to give seniors information and tools to navigate safely through financial challenges.

Learn how to prevent elder financial exploitation using the Money Smart for Older Adults – Prevent Financial Exploitation curriculum. Additional resources may be found on their website at:
www.consumerfinance.gov .

Submitted by Lynn McCamie



BC-REST is a coalition working to educate and empower the community to identify and prevent elder abuse, neglect and exploitation in Baltimore County, through strategic alliances, advocacy and resource development. Our accomplishments include:

(1) Working with a task force to re-introduce **Project Safe**, a program to educate financial institutions and the public about financial exploitation.

(2) Hosting a “**shred-a-thon**,” giving seniors an opportunity to safely dispose of old documents that contain personal and financial information, thus preventing identity theft.

(3) Celebrating **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** with a rally and seminar to energize public officials and concerned citizens to fight elder abuse.

(4) Making **presentations** at groups including senior centers, community associations and neighborhood fairs.

How Can I Get Involved?

* **Call** 410-887-4200 to get on our mailing list. You will receive our newsletter and alerts about upcoming events.

* **Inquire** about having your organization become a member of BC-REST, by calling 410-887-4200.

* **Schedule** a presentation on elder abuse for your group by calling our office.

* **Check out** our website, www.bcpl.info/stopelderabuse

* “**Like**” us on

AARP Corner

2013 Legislative Priorities for AARP Maryland

AARP's Mission:

Enhance the quality of life for all as we age—champion positive social change and deliver value through advocacy, information and service.

Over 850,000 Marylanders 50+ are AARP members, making AARP the largest social change organization in the “Old Line” state. AARP works to help individuals 50+ live the lives they want to live. In 2013, AARP Maryland staff and volunteers will focus their efforts on improving healthcare access and financial security, and adapting communities for all older adults. Additionally, members look to AARP to help save them money, by fighting to keep home energy costs low or providing discounts on insurance. No matter where our members turn, they’ll find AARP working to make life better. AARP fights on issues that matter to you and your family.

Healthcare Access and Affordability

In 2013, making changes to the healthcare system will be the common theme as payers look to control rising healthcare costs, which are growing at rates faster than overall inflation. Beneficiaries will be pressured to assume larger shares of these costs.

AARP MD will continue to involve our members as advocates to strengthen the healthcare system, including Medicare and Medicaid, while including affordable healthcare for those not yet age eligible for these two programs.

As the trusted resource and champion for caregiving, AARP will bring awareness to the roles of family caregivers, increasing support for them from employers, clinicians, faith-based organizations, and community agencies.

We will advocate to ensure the state continues with the health care exchange—Maryland Health Connection. We will connect individuals to insurance offered by private insurers and partner with the state to educate Marylanders on Maryland Health Connection.

Article submitted by: Tammy Bresnahan, AARP MD Assoc. State Dir. for Communications



Who is mandated to report of Elder Abuse in the state of Maryland?

Maryland law requires that law enforcement agents, human service professionals and health care practitioners report any suspected cases of elder abuse.

Can I Report Elder Abuse?

Anyone who witnesses or suspects any case of elder abuse should report it immediately.

How Do I Report Elder Abuse?

Contact 911 or the local sheriff. To report suspected abuse in the community or an assisted living facility call: Baltimore County Department of Social Services – Adult Protective Services - 410-853-3000 – *make a language selection, then press #2 for adult services.*

To report suspected abuse in a nursing home call: Baltimore County Long Term Care Ombudsman - 410-887-4200

For information about elder abuse call:

Baltimore County Department of Aging - 410-887-2594. *You may reach any of these offices with Maryland Relay 711.*

Types of Elder Abuse

Physical Abuse – Use of force to threaten or physically injure a vulnerable elder.

Emotional Abuse – Verbal attacks, threats, rejection, isolation, or belittling acts that cause mental anguish, pain, or distress to a senior.

Sexual Abuse – Sexual contact that is forced, tricked, threatened, or otherwise coerced upon a vulnerable elder, including anyone who is unable to grant consent.

Exploitation – Theft, fraud, misuse or neglect of authority, and use of undue influence as a lever to gain control over an older person’s money or property.

Neglect – A caregiver’s failure or refusal to provide for a vulnerable elder’s safety, physical, or emotional needs.

Abandonment – Desertion of a frail or vulnerable elder by anyone with a duty of care.

Self Neglect – An inability to understand the consequences of one’s own actions or inaction, which leads to, or may lead to, harm or endangerment.

Remember: You do not need to prove that abuse is occurring; it is up to the professionals to investigate the suspicions.

Source: www.ncea.aoa.gov

BC-REST Newsletter Committee:

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