



The Family Caregiver

Caregivers Enjoyed A Dose of Laughter at the "Island in the Sun" Luncheon



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Special points of interest:

- The Eighth Annual PCFC Appreciation Luncheon
- Plans for the Polk Health Plan Grant
- Taking Care of Yourself



On Tuesday, November 6th, 2007, Polk County Family Caregivers, Inc. (PCFC) hosted the Eighth Annual Family Caregiver Appreciation Luncheon at the Nora Mayo Hall in Winter Haven. There were nearly 300 family caregivers and interested parties at this event, which was held for the purpose of honoring the estimated 25,000 family caregivers that provide unpaid personal care and service to their disabled loved ones.

The theme, "Island in the Sun," was chosen so these caregivers, who often do not get a "break" from their daily routine, could have the opportunity to enjoy themselves in a "tropical island paradise," not far from their own homes.



*Attendees at the Eighth Annual Family Caregiver Appreciation Luncheon
Photos by Al Dotson*

Upon entering the hall, caregivers and their loved ones were greeted, adorned with Hawaiian leis, and given a blended fruit drink from the charming Tiki bar. They were able to enjoy a catered lunch provided and

served by volunteers from various organizations.

Michelle Levine, a local dance instructor, led the audience in a revitalizing hula dance, and then Caregivers were treated to a "dose of laughter medicine," provided by Certified Laughter Yoga Leader, Valla Dana Fotiades. Many were able to learn and try the various laughter exercises she taught.

Lastly, all caregivers and their loved ones, were able to participate in the door prize drawing. Many also enjoyed a massage by volunteers from Triviss Career Center.

We thank all those who participated, both as sponsors, and volunteers, in showing appreciation for family caregivers.



Attendees bounced balloons in the air.

Thank you Luncheon Sponsors!



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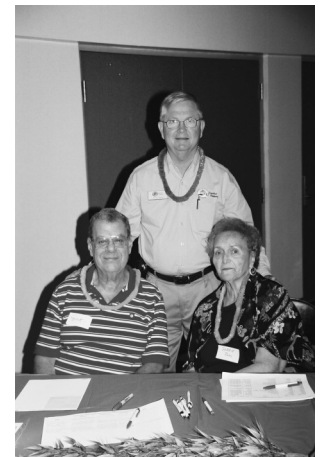
Michelle Levine

PCFC Board & Members

Spring Haven Retirement

Traviss Career Center

Volunteers and Servers





Polk Health Plan Grant to Target the Indigent Family Caregivers in Polk County

By Bill Andrew

On June 27, 2007, PCFC submitted a written Response to Request for Proposal issued by the Polk Healthcare Plan Community Outreach Grant Program -- administered by the Community Health and Social Services Division Polk County Board of County Commissioners. The Community Outreach Grant Selection Committee requested a personal presentation on August 13, 2007. The proposal addressed the health care needs of the indigent residents of Polk County who are family caregivers for loved

ones afflicted with Alzheimer's disease or related cognitive memory disorder. The proposal focused on enhancing existing services available to this target population which are not currently being met by existing programs.

On November 28, 2007, PCFC was informed that our proposal had been accepted via a Notice of Grant Award Contract. After subsequent contract negotiations, PCFC approved the contract on December 20, 2007, and submitted same for final approval and acceptance by the

Board of County Commissioners at their January 23, 2008 meeting.

Upon approval and acceptance by the Board of County Commissioners, PCFC will be responsible for delivering the Alzheimer's Education and Support for this target population. If you are interested in participating in this landmark program in Polk County, call Bill Andrew, Chairman, at 863/294-5513 or George Laws, Vice Chairman, at 863/287-9837.

How To Make Your Health a Priority in 2008

In the past, you may have made the same goal at the beginning of every year to have a healthier lifestyle in one way or another, but now that you are caring for a disabled loved one, you may find that your own health is being neglected.

Unfortunately, there are many family caregivers that do not take very good care of themselves, because they always put the health of their loved one first.

Research has proven that stress can effect the immune system, causing us to be more prone to illness. Stress is something that all caregivers suffer from time to time, some more than others.

Caregivers need to consider that if they get sick, who will take care of their loved one? Will they pass on the illness to their loved one, and what effect will that have on them? If you

are depressed or run down, will you be able to make rational decisions regarding your loved ones care? Will you be able to provide the quality care needed?

Caregiver burnout can be caused by lack of sleep and inadequate nutrition, and the body becomes less able to fight illness.

Creating a balance in caring for ourselves and our loved one is not an easy task. The National Family Caregivers Association, (NFCA), recommends that the first step in this process is truly believing that your health is important for not only your loved one, but yourself. This may not be an easy task, especially if you tend to let your guilt get in the way.

The NFCA has provided the following checklist for family caregivers to assist them in

maintaining their own health:

- Take a daily vitamin supplement
- Get exercise.
- Get regular check-ups, and do not ignore the possible symptoms of ill health.
- Take a break from caregiving-respite time is crucial
- Get a flu shot.
- Watch for signs of depression.
- Stay involved in hobbies.
- Laugh with a friend.

If you are a family caregiver and need recommendations for resources within Polk County to assist you in maintaining your health and well being, don't hesitate to call us at 863/603-9110 or e-mail us at pcfcaregivers@hotmail.com.



"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



MEMBER APPLICATION FORM

MEMBERSHIP FEE: \$10 Personal; \$50 Business
Mail to: Polk County Family Caregivers, Inc.
1232 E. Magnolia Street, Lakeland, FL 33801-2126

- Name: _____
- Address: _____
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ABBREVIATED MISSION STATEMENT OF THE POLK COUNTY FAMILY CAREGIVERS, INC.

DEFINITION: Polk County Family Caregivers, Inc., a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) Corporation is affiliated with National Family Caregivers Association. It was formed to be an advocate for all family caregivers in Polk County, encompassing all agencies that offer family caregiver aid and support. **MISSION:** • Provide a voice and "helpline" • Improve the family caregiver status • Improve the respite care availability • Educate family caregivers and the Polk County community about providing for the needs of the family caregiver

Phone: 863-603-9110 **Fax:** 863-603-9114 **E-Mail:** pcfcaregivers@hotmail.com **Mail:** 1232 East Magnolia Street, Lakeland, FL 33801-2126.

Polk County Family Caregivers, Inc.
1232 East Magnolia Street
Lakeland, FL 33801-2126

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