



July 2009

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www.polkcaregivers.org

Email:
info@polkcaregivers.org

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The Care Line

Officially operational, the Polk Family Caregivers' telephone Care Line is answered Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5pm. The Care Line connects caregivers to vital health information and resources in Polk County that provide help and guidance to those caring for a loved one.

If you have questions about adult day care, caregiving classes, support groups, disabilities, financial aid, financial planning, government services, guardianship, hiring home care help, hospice services, housing options, kinship care, low-income prescriptions, memory diagnosis centers, veterans aid pension or other related problems, give us a call.



The Care Line
863/603-9110

*...if you need
family
caregiver
information*

Project Mend - A Haven for People Handicapped by Pain

People with chronic pain are often divorced within two years. Their relationships fail because of increased fatigue, poor concentration, deep feelings of guilt and anger, reduced sexual interest, and the inability to continue many of the activities that used to be fun. The additional stress of dealing with doctors, lawyers, insurance companies, and hospital bills adds to the physical pain and multiplies the suffering. Life as it used to be vanishes overnight with degenerative disease or a terminal diagnosis. Anger, grief, and depression remain.

Project Mend, the new self-management support group began weekly meetings in June and is off to a rousing start. Led by husband and wife facilitators Bud Hollowell, Ph.D. and Sheila Hollowell of Polk Family Caregivers, it is free and confidential. The purpose of the group is to learn self-management and relaxation techniques that will reduce on-going pain. Weekly

topics address self-empowerment, physical pain or mental suffering, relaxing and staying centered, re-taking control, going from patient to person, family needs: love and sex, your basic rights, remembering to have fun, and learning to thrive—not survive!

Project Mend is for those in pain and the caregivers who help them. It follows the curriculum of the American Chronic Pain Association.

Just part of the expanding new services of Polk Family Caregivers. Project Mend meets Mondays, 10 AM at the First Methodist



CHANNLES
622 
20 
33 

Watch for Polk Family Caregivers on the Joan Davies hosted program, Polk Place

Coming Up, Caregiver Resource Help Line



Responding to the growing number of people caring for family members, Polk Family Caregivers is working to implement a new service that we think you will like. It is an automated voice information phone system called the Caregiver Resource Help Line.

This 24/7 phone line has practical “how to” information, professional guidance and its messages provide the emotional reassurance needed to help plan and manage the care of a family member.

Often unprepared to take on the role of caregiver, families find their greatest challenge is to know what resources are available, how to find them and what to do with them. The Caregiver’s Resource Help Line shortens the learning curve and equips them with effective guidance, advice and reliable resources to

help problem-solve the most challenging of caregiver situations.

The Caregiver Resource Help Line has 32 various topics that fall into the categories of: physical and mental health, living arrangements, legal and financial arrangements, self-care for family caregivers and dealing with change. Each category has several helpful messages, each providing about 2 minutes of recorded helpful information.

You have the choice of listening to the information, being connected to help at the Polk Family Caregiver office or being connected directly to the company that provides the resource described in the message.

The Help Line is a first for Polk County and is expected to be heavily used.



Karen Siegel Academy Family Day

Polk Family Caregivers participated in the Fourth Annual Family Fun Day at Karen Siegel Academy in Lake Alfred, an event that brings together families of the students with the staff who teach at the county school for children with disabilities.

The kids spent the day having some fun and fellowship, while playing pinball, basketball and even wheel chair bowling. Free hotdogs were furnished by the Winter Haven Lions Club. Parents got an opportunity to gather information on services and support for the children for whom they are caring.

Agencies represented included the Social Security Administration, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, The Family Care Council, Children’s Medical Services, Circle of Friends, Goodwill Industries, Polk Training Center, and Emry’s Acres Therapeutic Riding Center as well as many others.

Special needs children

create high stress and cause pressure on everyone in the family. Sibling caregivers, who often are needed to help out, face emotional troubles of their own, such as:

- *Feeling invisible, left out, overlooked and ignored.*
- *Being afraid they also will catch the disability.*
- *Suffering embarrassment from inappropriate acting out behavior of their brother or sister.*
- *Having to curtail their own social life, such as inviting other children over or having birthday parties.*
- *Having their sleep disturbed and being constantly tired at school.*

The Write Way

All caregivers need to ventilate and sometimes that is especially difficult to do because the person you usually talk to may just be the ill person for whom you are caring. So, it becomes extremely important to find effective ways to combat caregiver stress and anxiety. Expressive writing is one such recognized way.

While writing isn't for everyone, for those who are wordsmiths by nature, it is a great way to recover emotional balance. Polk Family Caregivers' six week course, The Write Way, helps to recover peace of mind



Caregivers Jo Fenety, Jody Andrews and Joan Skinner take a breather during the final session of the recent 6 week expressive journaling and writing group for stress reduction.

by turning feelings and thoughts into words, not just leaving unformed rumblings inside.

"It's really about how you get your own life back," says one recent participant. "Go!" says another. "You won't be sorry! What we shared with each other was priceless and I loved interacting with each person."

The summer Write Way session begins in August. As one caregiver said, "It gave me a chance to put into words the experiences I'm living through."



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Hurricane Season—That time of year again

Hurricane season is here once again. As a family caregiver, you have the extra responsibility of attending to additional emergency preparations because your loved one depends on you.

Emergency DMV Contacts. Two emergency contacts can be attached to a driver's license record. If an accident occurs, relatives can be quickly contacted. Go to www.hsmv.state.fl.us. Click on emergency contacts. Enter in the driver's license number. List the name, address and phone number of 2 people selected as contacts. Save and you're done!

Emergency Cards. Print personal information cards with contacts, emergency services and medical information, for purse or wallet. Go to www.Redcross.org/contactcard or www.fema.gov/

[pdf/areyouready/appendix.cpdf](#). Besides the American Red Cross and FEMA, disaster preparation information specific to seniors and the disabled can be found on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security site, www.ready.gov. From the home page, click Ready American. Click on Special Needs Items.

Pet Friendly. Check with the county to find out which hurricane shelters are pet friendly in times of evacuation or emergencies. Call 863 534-5606 .

National Organization on Disability provides online pamphlets aimed at people with mobility disabilities, sensory disabilities and development or cognitive disabilities. Go to www.NOD.org. Click on Emergency Preparedness. Scroll down. Click on the link appropriate to your needs.

Tips For Traveling



Summer time is travel time and traveling with a disabled loved one is an extra challenge. Try these tips to make your vacation time easier:

- ✓ Take a list of all medical conditions.
- ✓ Take more medications than needed.
- ✓ Enroll in Medic Alert. Wear the bracelet.
- ✓ Read how "emergency" is defined in your insurance policy.
- ✓ While traveling, get copies of all bills to support insurance reimbursement claims.
- ✓ Check into use of a health plan provider in the area you will visit.
- ✓ If you know you'll need medical care, call ahead to make doctor's appointments in the new location.
- ✓ Consider buying traveler's insurance. Study the policy terms for pre-existing conditions. READ THE FINE PRINT.
- ✓ Check that medical equipment is insured for loss or theft.
- ✓ Consider taking a portable grab bar on the trip.
- ✓ Communicate with your airline in advance and get any necessary paperwork the doctor must sign.
- ✓ Have extra oxygen prescriptions.
- ✓ If there will be a layover, arrange for oxygen to be available.
- ✓ Take the person's health insurance card and the HMO's toll free number for travelers.
- ✓ Take copies of the pages in the insurance benefits booklet dealing with emergency access.
- ✓ Carry a card listing phone numbers of next-of-kin in case of illness during the trip.
- ✓ Write the primary care doctor's number and beeper number on the health insurance card.
- ✓ Make sure your airline carries a defibrillator.
- ✓ Tell the travel agent or airline that you require a wheelchair and have it noted on the ticket.
- ✓ If a flight is delayed for more than four hours, an airline has a duty to provide a meal that is comparable to the meal offered on the flight -- if requested.

Emergency Flashing Beacons

Finding the right mobile home in any of the Polk County parks can be a daunting task. But when the hunt is by an ambulance in route on a 9-1-1 emergency response, time can literally mean life or death.

To help in an emergency, Polk Family Caregivers has for sale emergency flashing porch light beacons. The device turns an ordinary porch light into a warning light that blinks. The porch light adapters screw into a regular light socket.

To buy one for \$15.00, contact Polk Family Caregivers. Supplies are limited — first come, first served.

Barbara Herrington, M.A.
Gerontologist

863-557-7604
Fax 863-291-3968

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We Need Volunteers !



Many hands make light work, so the saying goes. And right now, we sure need many more hands to handle the expanding work load.

Phone Tree — We need volunteers to make phone calls on special occasions such as important, last-minute announcements and schedule changes. To volunteer for this occasional task, phone 603-9110.

Hospitality — We need volunteers to help with set-up of the meeting room in Lakeland at Community Southern Bank on the last Wednesday of each month. If you have a few extra minutes before this noon-time meeting to help out, please phone 603-9110.

Brochure distribution — We need volunteers who can help in the distribution of brochures, cards, and flyers about Polk Family Caregivers' many services. Have a club house? Going to the doctor's office? Use a community bulletin board? Going to church? Help us get the word out by taking our program literature with you. Please phone 603-9110.

Newsletter — We need volunteers to help write and edit newsletter articles. If you have desktop publishing experience or would like to see your name in print, please phone 603-9110.

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Spotlight On Support



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Hope Hospice

1525 Lakeland Hills Blvd., Lakeland.

Contact: Fran Gabaldon, 863-370-3225



Caring for a loved one through a chronic or terminal illness is an act of loyalty, love, and devotion. It can also be one of the most challenging tasks you will ever face. The brave battle the loved one faces is no doubt matched by that of the caregiver.

It is not necessary to be a Hope Hospice patient or family member to participate in the support and educational programs. They are available to the entire community at minimal or no cost.



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On The Web www.va.gov



At the most recent general membership meeting family caregivers heard from John Hopkins of the Veteran's Administration in Polk County who explained the much talked about special Aid and Attendance Caregiver Benefit for qualified Veterans.

This benefit pays for in-home care or facility care for veterans and their spouses who require help with activities such as eating, bathing, dressing, undressing, toileting, and walking. It is not for housekeeping, respite or occasional care. This special pension benefit is not dependent upon a military service-related injury. You are free to choose your own home care company or senior living facility.

The Aid and Attendance Benefit provides as much as \$1,949 per month for a Veteran and spouse. Qualified surviving spouses of veterans that were still married at the time of the Veterans passing may qualify for up to \$1,056 per month and a single qualified Veteran may receive up to \$1,644 per month for in-home or senior living facility care.

There are, however, certain income eligibility guidelines based on categories including income, assets, health cost and health needs. It usually takes several months to be approved, but payments are then retroactive.

Many local home care companies and live-in facilities can also give you accurate information and help in applying for this benefit.

Call the Veterans Administration at 1-800 825-1000 or the Polk County Veterans Affairs office at 534-5220 or click on www.va.gov for online information about the requirements and application process.

WARNING: Be cautious of companies who charge to help you apply for V.A. benefits, or automatically sign you up with their company as your care provider.



Welcome to These Members

New Commercial Member

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Renewing Commercial Members

Hawthorne Inn of Lakeland,
6150 Lakeland Highlands Road, Lakeland
863 644-6414

An assisted living facility with memory care

Caring For Seniors, 1225 Havendale Blvd. Winter Haven,
863 401-2511

Offering non-medical homecare and companions.

Spring Haven Retirement Community, 1225 Havendale
Blvd, NW, Winter Haven
863 293 0072

Assisted living facility with memory care
www.springhavenretirement.com

A HUGE thanks is in order for all the family caregivers who have joined and/or renewed their membership this quarter.

Caregivers Market Place

www.caregiversmarketplace.com

This site offers savings discounts and cash back on products needed in caregiving. We don't know of anyone who has participated in this program yet, but we encourage you to try it and let us know your experience



I haven't reported my missing credit card to the police because whoever stole it is spending less than my wife.

If Fed Ex and UPS were to merge, would they call it Fed UP?

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Polk Family Caregiver Membership Application and Renewal

Yes! I want to join/renew my membership to Polk Family Caregivers and support the effort to make life better for myself and other family caregivers.

Enclosed is my cash check payment in the amount of:

- \$15 — 1 year Individual or Family
 \$65 — 1 year Business or Corporation

Please cut out this portion and return with your check, payable to:

Polk Family Caregivers

1232 E. Magnolia St.
Lakeland, FL 33801-2126

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail

Signature

Date

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info@polkcaregivers.org

E-mail:

Phone: 863-603-9110

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