



## Local Help for Space Coast Seniors



Dear Friends,

In August 2011, Helping Seniors of Brevard County was incorporated to educate seniors and caregivers while connecting them with available resources. We seek to complete rather than compete with existing non profits by making sure seniors get the care they need.

Having worked with elders for the past 25 years (and being elderly myself), I knew it would be challenging to start a new organization. We have persevered with our mission, though, for growing older without a support network is a daunting task. Already we have encountered senior needs that are not being met by current programs.

For example, many seniors need grab bars installed in their homes. There is a local non profit that will do this for little or no cost, but only if the requestor is a homeowner. Who will help the many frail elders who live in rental properties or in trailer homes, the ones who really need such a service? We also get calls when senior's homes are flea infested or when their roofs are leaking and no assistance is available.

Transportation is another big issue for the disadvantaged and disabled. Cab fare from Micco

to a doctor's off on Palm Bay Road is not a bargain at \$64, especially if you live on Social Security disability of \$700 a month. We do have Senior TranServe, Volunteers in Motion and Vets Driving Vets, but these trips may take several days to arrange. If you call Space Coast Center For Independent Living, you can get a Micco to Palm Bay Road trip starting at \$10. Plus, their vans are equipped with a lift for those who require wheelchairs and the driver will stay with you if you want.

In our short time serving elders in Brevard County, Helping Seniors has encountered a myriad of problems. Many of these problems can be solved with a little thought, careful listening, and research of available resources. What we hear most often is, "Please call me back." We do this through our Information Specialist, Kay Keyser, who can be reached at 321-473-7770 or at Kay@HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org. In our first four months of this year we helped 172 callers.

In addition to building a network of affordable and honest service providers, we are establishing a senior endowment and senior advocacy group. We do not want another government agency solving our problems. Rather, we

envision seniors working together to define their needs and provide for them through a local funding instrument for seniors. Why should 44.6% of a senior's tax bill go to children's causes when there is no line item in the county for senior programs? Look at your tax statement and check my math.

If Social Security will not tide you over in retirement, what will? Imagine if the 162,000 seniors who live in Brevard each contribute a small amount yearly to an endowment for seniors. Now consider taking a percentage of that fund's annual growth to install grab bars, build ramps, fix leaky roofs and other needs – minimizing the anxiety of seniors who cannot pay for such repairs. I assure you that the current availability of such assistance is almost nonexistent.

We do not have all the answers but we can help chart our own future. Call Kay at 321-473-7770 and be part of the solution, not the problem.

Joe Steckler  
President

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of Brevard*

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