

An Elder Friendly Community Part III: Connection

In part one of our three-part communities; we talked about the need for information, or the communication of helpful facts to elders and those who care for them.

In part two, we discussed the value of education, that is, ways to develop senior awareness of available resources to help them age safely. Now, in part three, we will talk about how to connect people with the services they need.

We live in a media age, so it makes sense to use media resources to connect seniors. In 2000, the "Elder Hour" radio show was launched as the third out of 11,000 shows nationally to address senior needs and programs. From 2007 to 2011, a newspaper column titled "Focus on Seniors" was published in Florida Today. Concurrently, a "Focus on Seniors" television show was produced at Brevard Community College, now Eastern Florida State College. Picking up on all this, Helping Seniors was formed in 2011 to promote the development of an information and education program that would simply expand on what was already in place. Today, we air the "Helping Seniors" radio show each Thursday at 1 PM on WMEL 1060 AM and produce "Helping Seniors" television shows that are broadcast 15 times a week on Bright House Networks channel 49 and Space Coast Government TV channel 499.

Building a new print program required more work. We began with a column in Hometown News, followed by a column in Senior Scene Magazine with a four-page centerfold newsletter that soon expanded to an eight-page insert. Shortly thereafter, we became associated with Spotlight Magazine, then Ebony News Today, and now Al Dia Today. With this print coverage we can reach out to all of Brevard County, providing information and education resources to help potential clients connect to needed resources in an elder friendly community.

The missing piece was the human link, a person or persons informed about available resources who could connect those needing assistance to the source of help. Helping Seniors does this through our information specialist, a person knowledgeable of the many excellent programs in Brevard County. This person can be contacted at (321)-473-7770. There are minimum wait times as all calls are logged and quickly returned by a live person who will discuss



your problem and offer potential solutions.

Brevard County is home to about 250,000 senior citizens. Many need information and certainly education about what is available to help them. The good news is that Brevard is already an elder friendly community. We just have to do a

better job of advertising and promoting the individual pieces.

This year, the Helping Seniors Advocacy Council, a community group of about 40 citizens, will work with the Brevard County Commissioners to transform Space Coast Government TV into a focal point for an elder friendly information system. This will assist in educating all about the resources available to help us age with dignity. Stay tuned. Joe Steckler is the President of Helping Seniors of Brevard, a non profit organization designed to advocate, educate, and fundraise on behalf of Brevard's senior citizens.

Feel free to contact us at: info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org or calling: 321-473-7770. **SS**

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