

Safety program provided for Alzheimer's patients

The Alvin A. Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center is offering a Safety Program for Alzheimer's caregivers in Lee County. Created to provide caregivers with tools to implement an emergency plan to prevent crises, each Safety Program packet includes two components: an emergency plan kit and an identification bracelet for the memory-impaired person.

The emergency plan kit is intended to help eliminate the possibility of a crisis situation if the caregiver of a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder requires emergency care. The emergency workers who come to rescue the caregiver may not know a memory-impaired adult resides in the home, and therefore may leave the person with Alzheimer's alone when they take the caregiver to the hospital.

The Safety Program Universal Symbol, included with the emergency plan kit, is designed to alert emergency workers that a memory-impaired person resides in the home. The symbol hangs on the front of the home's refrigerator. The corresponding packet of forms, which contain important emergency contacts and care instructions provided by the caregiver, are located inside the refrigerator. Once a trained emergency worker sees the symbol, he or she will automatically know to search for an Alzheimer's client in the house and, using the information in the refrigerator, take appropriate measures to see that care for this person is provided.

The Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center caring staff works closely with local law enforcement and emergency workers throughout Lee County to help train them on how the safety program can assist them when they respond to an emergency involving the caregiver of an individual with memory loss.

The safety program packet is provided

at no charge, through grants from the Southwest Florida Community Foundation, Gulf Harbour Memorial Foundation, Lee County Medical Society Alliance, and the Cape Coral Community Foundation, to caregivers caring for a loved one with memory loss in their homes in Lee County. Each packet contains all the items necessary to participate in the safety program. Instructions to put the emergency plan in place are included with each packet and assistance is available from the Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center.

The safety program also stresses the importance of having an identification bracelet for individuals with memory loss to wear at all times. Identification bracelets help local law enforcement identify individuals who are separated from their caregivers and are unable to find their way home or even tell someone where they live due to memory impairment. Each bracelet (or necklace) is engraved with the person's first name or nickname, a code number which matches their application number, the words "memory-impaired" and the phone number for the Lee County Sheriff's Office. Both the Dubin Center and the sheriff's office maintain records of enrolled persons' application numbers and identifying information. Being able to look at a bracelet, make a phone call, and escort the lost person to his/her home reduces the time memory-impaired persons are away from their homes and saves police departments valuable effort. A brochure with an application to obtain a bracelet is included in each safety program packet. Bracelets are provided at no charge by Walgreens.

The Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center's office is located at 10051 McGregor Blvd., Ste. 101, in Fort Myers. For more information, call 437-3007. ■

Support group held for adult children of Alzheimer's persons

A support group for adults who have a parent with Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder meets at the Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center, 10051 McGregor Blvd., Ste. 101, Fort Myers. Interested caregivers can attend on Tuesday, July 7, or Thursday, July 9, at 6:15 p.m.

Meetings are held each month on the first Tuesday or second Thursday at 6:15 p.m. The meetings are sponsored by the Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center.

The meetings focus on the issues, con-

cerns and questions adult children face as they provide care to a parent with memory loss or strive to learn more about Alzheimer's disease. The group is open to all interested individuals at no charge.

The Alvin A. Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center, a United Way agency, provides informational, educational and supportive assistance to individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders and their caregivers in Lee County. For more information, call 437-3007. ■



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