



NYSAAAA & Dignity Memorial® present

SmartNews



July/August 2002

EVENTS

August 7: Board Meeting
Greene County OFA

August 19-25: The
NYSAAAA Exhibit
Booth, sponsored by
Dignity Memorial,
on display at the
Washington County Fair

October 15-17
Leadership Institute
Woodcliff Lodge,
Rochester, NY
www.woodcliffodge.com

SmartNews is the publication
of the proud partnership be-
tween Dignity Memorial®
Funeral Providers and the
New York State Association
of Area Agencies on Aging.

Please contact us at:

Dignity Memorial®
www.dignitymemorial.com
www.smartandsafe.com

New York State Association
of Area Agencies on Aging
266 Hudson Ave.
Albany NY 12210
(518)449-7080
Fax (518)449-7055
Email: office@nysaaaa.org
Web site: www.nysaaaa.org

Aging Concerns Unite Us 2002: Aging Services in a New Society

On June 4-5, 2002, NY-SAAAA held its 7th Annual "Aging Concerns Unite Us" Conference at the Syracuse/Liverpool Holiday Inn. Once again, Dignity Memorial® was our Millennium Partner.

The acclaimed conference focused on two issues critical to professionals the field of aging services: providing support for caregiver and the future of long term care.

Distinguished presenters Joseph Ilardo, Ph. D., CSW and Carole Rothman, Ph. D kicked off the conference with their keynote address "Developing Collaborative Partnerships Between Professional and Family Caregivers." Dr. Ilardo, a licensed clinical social worker, and Dr. Rothman, a licensed clinical psychologist began their professional careers as college teachers, specializing in communication and psychology. As children of aging parents, they became aware, first hand, of the tremendous demands of caregiving and decided to focus their efforts on helping others cope more effectively. They have published numerous books on eldercare and general caregiving, focusing on the needs of the caregiver

as well as the person needing care, teaching the information and skills needed to provide respectful, sensitive eldercare. Their general presentation at the conference and their follow up workshops taught a systemic problem-solving approach to help caregivers clarify issues, recognize underlying dynamics and identify and select the most workable eldercare options.

"Long term care of the elderly will be one of the greatest challenges of the 21st Century"

The second day of the conference opened with a morning general session entitled, "The Changing Face of Long Term Care: Opportunities and Challenges. This panel presentation was headed by James Varpness, Director, Minnesota Board on Aging, and Donna McDowell, Director, Bureau of Aging and Long Term Care Resources, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, who encapsulated the innovations their respective states have made in rebalancing long term care. A reactor panel comprised of many facets of LTC- both state agencies and private associations- followed this presentation with commentary from several unique perspectives. The reactor panel was comprised of: Kathryn Kuhmerker, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Medi-

caid Management, NYS Department of Health, Neal Lane, Executive Deputy Director, NYS Office for the Aging, Larry Force, OMRDD Center for Aging, Carol Rodat, President, Home Care Association of NYS and Laura Leeds, Vice President of Continuing Care, Healthcare Association of NYS.

The 400+ attendees at this year's Conference included, for the first time, a senior day component. Special rates were extended to AARP members to attend a Consumer Day, where various workshops were geared toward senior interests.

Also debuting at the conference: at the Association meeting, Ardelle Kasdan unveiled a new Smart & Safe Seniors® "Out and About" module, geared to increase the awareness of seniors when they're out in the community. From what we've seen, it's a guaranteed hit!



Look for Smart & Safe Seniors® across NY

Spotlight on *Barbara Guarino Kruk*

How do you determine where to schedule a Smart and Safe Seniors® Program?

Once initial contact has been made within a community, I feel that the program spreads by word of mouth, which generally dictates where the next presentation will be held. It is essential to forge an alliance with Town/County Senior Advocates who will permit us to address their field locations. The value of the program, the fact that we are not selling anything and the format of the material are all self supporting.

What have been some of the audience responses to the Smart and Safe Seniors® program?

Luckily, we have always had a gracious response from our audiences. Some of these folks, just by their nature are more engaged in the day to day function of their lives and their environment than others. Singles, especially females, seem to be more interested in safety concerns than their male counterparts. However, when we present the "Cons & Scams" module, the males instinctively perk up, and often have some contributing remarks. It seems that everyone over the age of 65 either was a victim of a scam or knew some local "con artists".

It is quite interesting to find the defining element when in each presentation you know you have actually struck a chord with your audience.

Have you had any surprises during a

presentation?

I can recall one incident in particular that presented quite a challenge. During a presentation in Huntington's Senior Center, the fire alarm went off right in the middle of our program. Those seniors attending did not move.



Barbara, you're a star!

I started to get a little concerned when fire trucks and firemen pulled up to the building. When I asked why they weren't moving, one elderly man shouted, "Don't worry. This happened last week, and we didn't fry!" The fire marshal was none too pleased with the situation.

The director was beside herself, and frankly, I was somewhat concerned. A wiry little lady from the back said, "By the time I get up, roll my walker outside... if it was for real, I'd be dead already." Happily, it was a false alarm, but for a fleeting moment, I thought I was in the twilight zone.

What training requirements did you need to become a certified presenter?

In addition to the extensive training received directly from Bob Stuber, and more than thirty years in the funeral industry, the most important element is the desire to provide a simple and free safety program to our seniors.

I have taken many sociology, psychology and gerontology courses in college and often draw on that information when conducting any of our programs. A genuine ability to communicate with people on their level is an essential factor.

Please share with us one of your suc-

cess stories.

Every time we do a program and can reach out to someone, we have a success story. I often tell new presenters that even if there are only one or two people who show up for the program—if we even help one person, we will have accomplished our goal. Several months ago, shortly after the September 11th attack, we gave a presentation at a local senior center advising people to be careful about making monetary donations to those purporting to be soliciting for the WTC families. A woman called us to say that she was called to make a donation, but after doing a little investigating, she found out that the families would not directly benefit from her donation. She thanked us for having made her aware of this situation. That is only one of the many different reactions and success stories reported to us.

How would you describe a typical presentation?

There are no "typical" presentations. The audience changes with every location. Different levels of social engagement affect the interaction of the audience. Time of day, even time of year are all contributing factors. However, most seniors are delighted that someone has taken the time to address their needs, and we in turn do our best to not only impart some small measure of information, but entertain them as well.

Barbara Guarino Kruk is the Manager of the Roma Funeral Home in Shirley, New York. She can be reached at: (631) 281-0800

Abduction Cases Show Need for Escape School®

Bob Stuber, nationally recognized safety expert and originator of Escape School®, has been quoted extensively in the media in relation to the several high profile child abduction cases in the news. Mr. Stuber has appeared on CNN, and Fox News sharing his practical tips for keeping children safe from stranger abductions.

Escape School®, a program founded

by Mr. Stuber and sponsored by Dignity Memorial®, addresses practical prevention techniques in a manner that is neither frightening nor threatening, teaching children to identify strangers not by what they look like, but how they act.

Dignity Memorial® has recognized this growing need and is a proud partner in this effort to make our neighborhoods safer.

Leadership Institute

While we're all enjoying this beautiful summer weather, don't forget to make plans to attend the NYSAAA Annual Leadership Institute, this year held on **October 15-17** at the Lodge at Woodcliff in Rochester. Our traditional Special Event will be a tour of the Casa Larga winery followed by a sumptuous dinner in their unique surroundings. *See you there!*