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MEMBER



*Special needs require special lawyers.*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Oast & Hook Shred Day
- Respite Care
- Ask Allie
- Announcement
- Distribution of this Newsletter

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## OAST & HOOK'S SHRED DAY

One excellent way to help protect your personal information from falling into the wrong hands is to shred unneeded documents. Oast & Hook has partnered with Stealth Shredding to provide free document shredding from 9:00 a.m. to noon, Saturday, May 7th to all of Oast & Hook's clients and friends. The event will take place at Oast & Hook's Harbour View office, and all shredded paper will be recycled. Just show up with your old records, and Oast & Hook will gladly assist you. Come meet Oast & Hook's attorneys and staff, and enjoy free parking, hot coffee, and snacks.

Although this shredding service is free, Oast & Hook encourages donations to the 2011 Suffolk Rockin' Relay for Life that will take place on May 13th at the Bennett's Creek Park, 1000 Bennett's Creek Park Road, Suffolk, Virginia 23435. For more information or to make an online donation, please visit [www.relayforlife.org](http://www.relayforlife.org).



## RESPITE CARE BY NANCY ALLEN

Respite care is the provision of short-term, temporary relief to those who are caring for family members who might otherwise require permanent placement in a facility outside the home. It is essential for family caregivers to find ways to leave their caregiving responsibilities and stress behind. No one can continue to expend his or her energy, strength and time, giving to someone else, without replenishing personal reserves. Respite care provides

this relief, and allows caregivers to maintain their loved ones at home longer. Many caregivers consider taking a break to be the most important thing they can do for themselves in order to sustain their ability and desire to care for someone else.

Traditional respite care is usually provided on a sporadic basis, for several hours once or twice a week or a few times a month during daytime hours, allowing the family caregiver time to run errands, go to the doctor, have lunch out with a friend or just go for a walk. Respite care is not usually used to substitute for a family caregiver who is still working full time outside of the home.

Unfortunately, most caregivers don't realize they are in need of respite care until there is a crisis. Many family caregivers do not see themselves as being entitled to a break, or they are reluctant to let others know that they cannot manage the demands of caregiving without help. Without respite care, not only can families suffer economically and emotionally, but caregivers themselves may face serious health and social risks as a result of the stress associated with continuous caregiving. Respite care can help reduce the likelihood of verbal or physical abuse by decreasing caregivers' stress levels. When family caregivers take the time to refuel and refresh, they can lessen their frustration and possibly feel more patient with their care receivers as well. Respite care also improves the quality of life for the person needing care, by providing this person valuable interaction with a new caregiver and the opportunity to get used to someone beside the family caregiver.

Respite care can be used in conjunction with hospice care, and people often confuse respite care with hospice care. Hospice care is a Medicare benefit for those with a terminal prognosis of six months or less, and it focuses on comfort and quality of life rather than cure. Respite care can supplement hospice care so that the family caregiver can benefit from additional time off during an intense period of caregiving.

Virginia Beach Respite Care for the Elderly, a division of the Senior Adult Services Unit of the City of Virginia Beach Department of Human Services, provides in-home respite care to individuals in Virginia Beach who reside with their primary caregiver. A caring, kind and dependable adult sitter/trained respite caregiver can provide socialization and supervision to an individual 60 years or older for three hours or more at a time. While personal care is not provided (e.g., bathing and toileting), the respite caregiver does provide quality companionship and stimulation to the care receiver, assures safety, assists with meals, and supports the family caregiver.

Virginia Beach Respite Care for the Elderly is an in-home service with a sliding scale fee based on the care receiver's income (or care receiver and spouse, if married.) The hourly fee ranges from \$3.00 to \$8.00. This care can be used regularly or sporadically to meet the needs of the family.

Virginia Beach Respite Care for the Elderly also sponsors two monthly support groups for caregivers. The groups are open to everyone – you do not need to be using respite care services to attend. They are on-going and provide a comfortable setting in which caregivers can honestly share their frustrations

and fears, obtain helpful information about area resources, and, most importantly, find out that they are not alone. The groups meet at:

The Central Library, 4100 Virginia Beach Boulevard, Virginia Beach, Virginia, from 10:00 a.m. to noon the second Wednesday of every month. (Entrance to the library before formal opening time at 10:00 a.m. can be accessed through the back/side door).

The Virginia Beach Fire Administration Office, Building 21 Conference Room, Virginia Beach Municipal Center, from noon to 1:00 p.m. the third Friday of each month. This office is located near the intersection of North Landing Road and City Hall Avenue.

For more information about Virginia Beach Respite Care for the Elderly, including the support groups, please phone Nancy Allan at 757-385-4135.

If the family resides in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, or on the Peninsula, then Catholic Charities can provide respite care. Catholic Charities provides the same type of respite care program as Virginia Beach Respite Care at a comparable cost. Catholic Charities' services are available to anyone in these named localities, and you do not have to be Catholic in order to use them. For more information about respite care in these localities, please phone Jeanette Heiney at 757-456-5136.

*Ms. Allan is the Respite Care Coordinator for Virginia Beach Respite Care for the Elderly.*

The attorneys at Oast & Hook can assist clients with their estate, financial, insurance, long-term care, veterans' benefits and special needs planning issues.

### **Ask Allie**

O&H: Allie, we've heard that having pets can provide benefits to seniors. Please tell us about it.

Allie: Sure! An article in *Cat Fancy* magazine described the results of several studies regarding positive effects of pet companionship. One study of Medicare recipients revealed that seniors who had pets have shorter hospital stays and lower health care costs than those who did not have pets. Another study concluded that some elderly women who had pets had higher morale, less loneliness, less agitation, more optimism, and higher activity levels than elderly women who did not have pets. Pets can help seniors feel needed, and if a senior has a strong bond with a pet, then the pet can provide social support and companionship. One study compared elderly individuals who adopted cats with those who had not. Those with cats were less lonely, less anxious, and less depressed than those without cats. They also had lower blood pressure and less need for medication. Those who were the most attached to their cats had the greatest health benefits. That is really good news. I hope that more seniors are able to adopt pets – sounds like that would benefit both the senior and the pet! Time to find my mom and play. See you next week!

### Announcement

Oast & Hook will hold its quarterly Social Workers and Administrators Breakfast on Wednesday, May 4th, at the Virginia Beach Central Library, 4100 Virginia Beach Boulevard, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23452. The topic is "Powers of Attorney and Surrogate Decision Making." Registration begins at 9:00 a.m., and the presentation begins at 9:30 a.m. Questions will be answered from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The breakfast is designed to be an educational opportunity for area professionals who work with seniors, the disabled, and their families. Seats are limited, so please register early for this breakfast by phoning Jennie Dell at 757-967-9702 or e-mailing her at [dell@oasthook.com](mailto:dell@oasthook.com).

### Distribution of This Newsletter

Oast & Hook encourages you to share this newsletter with anyone who is interested in issues pertaining to the elderly, the disabled, and their advocates. The information in this newsletter may be copied and distributed, without charge and without permission, but with appropriate citation to Oast & Hook, P.C. If you are interested in a free subscription to the *Oast & Hook News*, then please e-mail us at [mail@oasthook.com](mailto:mail@oasthook.com), telephone us at 757-399-7506, or fax us at 757-397-1267.

Please visit us on the internet at:

**[www.oasthook.com](http://www.oasthook.com)**

Our website contains information about Oast & Hook and an archive of our newsletters and other estate planning, estate administration, and elder law articles in searchable format.

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