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MEMBER



Special needs require special lawyers.

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NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH AND NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

In its 2011 Alzheimer's Disease Facts & Figures Fact sheet, the Alzheimer's Association reports that 5.4 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. Most people survive an average of four to eight years after an Alzheimer's diagnosis, but some live as long as 20 years with the disease. In 2010, 14.9 million family members and friends provided 17 billion hours of unpaid care to those with Alzheimer's and other types of dementia.

In recognition of the unselfish work that caregivers provide to Alzheimer's patients and other loved ones every day, we want to provide you with important information from the Alzheimer's Association brochure, "How to Manage Stress: 10 Ways to be a Healthier Caregiver."

1) Understand what is happening as early as possible. Symptoms of Alzheimer's may appear gradually. It can be easy to explain away changing or unusual behavior when someone seems physically healthy. Instead, consult a doctor when you see changes in memory, mood, or behavior. Don't delay; some symptoms are treatable.

2) Know what community resources are available. Contact your local Alzheimer's Association office for assistance in finding Alzheimer's care resources in your community. Adult day programs, in-home assistance, visiting nurses and meal delivery are just some of the services that can help you manage daily tasks.

3) Become an educated caregiver. As the disease progresses, new caregiving skills may be necessary. The Alzheimer's Association offers programs to help you better understand and cope with the behaviors and personality changes that often accompany Alzheimer's.

4) Get help. Trying to do everything by yourself will leave you exhausted. Seek the support of family, friends, and community resources. Tell others exactly what they can do to help. The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 helpline (800-272-3900), online message boards, and local support groups are good sources of comfort and reassurance. If stress becomes overwhelming, seek professional help.

5) Take care of yourself. Watch your diet, exercise and get plenty of rest. Making sure that you stay healthy will help you be a better caregiver.

6) Manage your level of stress. Stress can cause physical problems (blurred vision, stomach irritation, high blood pressure) and changes in behavior (irritability, lack of concentration, change in appetite). Note your symptoms. Use relaxation techniques that work for you, and talk to your physician.

7) Accept changes as they occur. People with Alzheimer's change and so do their needs. They may require care beyond what you can provide on your own. Becoming aware of community resources – from home care services to residential care – should make the transition easier. So will the support and assistance of those around you.

8) Make legal and financial plans. Plan ahead. Consult a professional to discuss legal and financial issues including advance directives, wills, estate planning, housing issues, and long-term care planning. Involve the person with Alzheimer's and family members whenever possible.

9) Give yourself credit, not guilt. Know that the care you provide does make a difference, and that you are doing the best you can. You may feel guilty because you can't do more, but individual care needs to change as Alzheimer's progresses. You can't promise how care will be delivered, but you can make sure that the person with Alzheimer's is well cared for and safe.

10) Visit your doctor regularly. Take time to get regular checkups, and be aware of what your body is telling you. Pay attention to any exhaustion, stress, sleeplessness, or changes in appetite or behavior. Ignoring symptoms can cause your physical and mental health to decline.

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*Oast & Hook thanks the Alzheimer's Association for allowing us to publish this important information. This brochure, as well as additional resources and important information, is available at the Alzheimer's Association website at: www.alz.org.

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

Announcement

The members of the Oast & Hook family have been pleased to support fundraising efforts for Alzheimer's research. On Saturday, October 8th, several members of the Oast & Hook family (including several pets), participated in the Alzheimer's Association 2011 Western Tidewater Walk to End Alzheimer's, held in Suffolk, Virginia. The Oast & Hook team raised over \$1,200, and the Suffolk event raised over \$28,000. On Saturday, November 5th, Oast & Hook family member Lauren Hook participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer's held in Washington, D.C. The Walk consisted of a three mile trek around the Mall, starting and ending at the Washington Monument. The event helped raise over \$400,000 for Alzheimer's research.



Walk to End Alzheimer's -- Suffolk



Walk to End Alzheimer's -- Washington, D.C.

Ask Allie

O&H: Allie, please share your special message for our readers this week.

Allie: Sure! Once again, Thanksgiving is here. I know that I have a lot to be thankful for this year. First, for my wonderful home with my mom who loved and cared for me. Second, for her family who cared for me until I could find a new home. Finally, I'm thankful for being back with my Oast & Hook family once again, including my new mom Sandy, and my feline sister Crissy (even though we are still figuring out how to get along), and for the opportunity to share my column with you each week. I hope all of our readers have a Happy Thanksgiving . . . See you next week!

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, telephone us at 757-399-7506, or fax us at 757-397-1267.

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