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ELDER LAW ATTORNEYS, INC.

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*Special needs require special lawyers.*

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## HOLIDAY TIPS FOR FAMILIES WITH ELDERLY RELATIVES

In the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it's hard to forget the festive season isn't just about your children, the gifts, the big dinner, the tree, and the parties. Our parents, grandparents, and older relatives are often the loneliest at this time of year. Shirley McGee, owner of Home Sweet Home Care Inc., says that there are things we can do, however, to make sure they feel loved and included.

- **Include them as much as possible.** If the seniors in your family aren't as mobile as they used to be, then offer to pick them up and drop them off, or arrange for a cab or for someone else to do the driving.
- **Recognize their limitations.** Grandma may be used to whipping together turkey dinners for 12, but her hands and eyes aren't what they used to be. You should encourage older family members to take it easy, and you should pamper them for a change. But let them help with smaller, less complicated tasks if they want to participate.
- **Listen to their stories.** Many of our older relatives live in their memories. Encourage them to talk about holidays past. If they keep albums, ask to see the photographs. They may have some wonderful traditions from their childhood that you can incorporate into your own family's plans.
- **Give them the best gift of all; give them your time!** Most of the seniors that Oast & Hook works with say that the best gift of all is spending time with family. Unhurried, uncomplicated family time will mean the most to your loved ones and will create memories to last all year long.

- **Don't let it end.** With the excitement over and the families getting back to their normal routines, the weeks right after the holidays are often the hardest for seniors. Make it your New Year's resolution to spend more time with your older relatives throughout the year.

It's often around family holidays that you will notice that your parents, grandparents, or older relatives aren't doing as well as they once did. If you need assistance meeting the needs of your senior family members, then please call the attorneys at Oast & Hook. The attorneys at Oast & Hook can assist families with their estate, financial, insurance, long-term care, veterans' benefits, and special needs planning issues.



**All of us at Oast & Hook wish you a happy holiday season and a healthy 2012!**

#### **Ask Allie**

O&H: Allie, we've heard that people should watch out for holiday hazards that could harm their pets. Please tell us about them.

Allie: Sure! I know that pet families want to include us in the celebrations. Some holiday traditions, however, can cause serious health or safety issues for us. For example, holiday foods can be a source of temptation for both dogs and cats. Watch out for garlic, onions, artificial sweeteners, yeast dough (can expand and cause problems), alcohol, chocolate, and raisins; all of these items can cause illness or death, especially for cats. Yeast dough, while not toxic, can expand in the digestive system and can cause serious problems. Although pets love chicken and turkey, be sure that the bones have been removed; the bones can splinter and become foreign bodies in the digestive tract. Holiday decorations can also be hazardous. Tinsel, yarn, and ribbons can cause problems both in the mouth and intestinal system. Broken ornaments or hooks can cause cuts, and chewing on electrical lights poses the risk of electrocution. Lit candles can pose a fire hazard both directly to the pet, and to the household if the candle is knocked over. Holiday plants, while beautiful, can be toxic to pets or cause stomach upset. Please pay particular attention to mistletoe (the most toxic holiday plant), poinsettia, pine needles and ivy. It's also important to have a safe, quiet place for your pets to have some peace and quiet during

the hustle and bustle. (OK, maybe you will want to join them for peace and quiet too!) The bottom line is to be observant and aware of your pets' movements around the house, so that you all have a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season. Time to try and find my Christmas presents (easy when there is catnip involved!) Happy Holidays and see you next week!

### **Distribution of This Newsletter**

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