

Date: September 9, 2008

Direct Care Workers Conference Dedicated to Improving the Care of People with Alzheimer's Disease & Related Conditions

The National Alzheimer's Association estimates in 2007:

- About 5 million people are living with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. Individuals with these types of chronic, progressive illnesses require increasing types of support and hands-on help over time from family, friends and health care professionals.
- Almost 10 million people give care to someone who has Alzheimer's disease.

The bulk of care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease who live at home is provided by family members and friends. Outside supports may be considered when the person's care needs exceed the knowledge, skills and capacity of informal helpers. These might include home-based services and adult day programs to assist with day-to-day care; even other living environments such as an assisted living program or nursing home.

A 2008 Report of the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine indicates nursing assistants; home health aides; personal and home-care aides:

- Comprise the 'linchpin of the formal health care delivery system' for older adults.
- Have rewarding but difficult jobs; and often work under high levels of physical and emotional demand.
- Receive inadequate training and continuing education to acquire necessary knowledge and skills to meet the complex health and care needs of frail older adults, and people who have Alzheimer's disease, and other behavioral and cognitive disorders.

The 2008 Report also notes minimum training requirements vary across states, job categories and care settings. Improving the basic education and training of direct care workers is one strategy that can improve the quality and desirability of the jobs they perform. Another strategy is to find ways to improve their work environment, by:

- Increasing the participation of direct care staff in decisions related to care planning.
- Providing positive, high-quality supervision.
- Offering opportunities for direct care workers to expand current roles, develop new areas of specialized skills and become leaders of care-resource teams.

In addition to having special knowledge and skills, caring for people with Alzheimer's disease also requires a positive environment and relationship with each person involved.

continued

Optimal Life Designs in Dementia Care is hosting a one-day conference for direct care workers:

Program: 7th Lillian and James Portman Conference Celebrating Direct Care Workers

Date: November 10, 2008

Time: 8:45 am – 4:30 pm

Location: Schoolcraft College -VisTaTech Center, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, Michigan 48152

Registration: Individual Rate: \$75, Special rate for 3 or more staff: \$65 per person

In-service credits available

Contact: Jo Campbell, Conference Coordinator.

To register and obtain a program brochure, call 810.632.5599 or e-mail portman2008@ymail.com

Over 300 nursing assistants, home health aides, activities assistants and other direct care workers are expected to attend. Program supervisors, care coordinators and trainers are also invited to come with your team of direct care staff.

Optimal Life Designs is widely known for offering high-quality education and training programs that include presentations by national and regional leaders on emerging topics and dementia care practices.

- Speakers for the 7th Lillian and James Portman Conference Celebrating Direct Care Workers, include:
- MariaElena Del Valle, Paraprofessional Health Care Institute, New York, NY
- Nancy Fisco Miller, Registered dietitian, Cleveland, OH
- LeDonna Jenson and Marilyn Hartle of Jentle Harts Care Consulting, IN
- Karen Stobbe, In-the Moment, Black Mountain, NC
- Cheri Bales, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI
- Roxanne Chang, Attorney and limited licensed psychologist, Plymouth, MI
- Ingrid Deininger, Individualized Home and Hospice Care, Ann Arbor, MI
- Alan Dengiz, M.D., St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Ann Arbor, MI
- Jill Hess, Heritage Community, Kalamazoo, MI
- Denise Jacobs, Holistic Healing Facilitator, Birmingham, MI
- Maureen Sheahan and Darlene Kauffman, Paraprofessional Health Institute, Lansing, MI
- Beth Spencer, The Silver Club, Ann Arbor, MI
- And an esteemed panel of direct care workers from group living, adult day and home care services.

“This is a premier opportunity for staff to learn cutting-edge information about approaches for caring for people with dementia and their families. It is well worth the investment!”

– Chris Curtin, RN, President, Community Services Network of Michigan

“Huron Woods has been a two-time recipient of the Michigan Center for Assisted Living Seal of Best Practice quality award. We recognize that education is the most critical tool that we can give to our direct caregivers so that they can effectively provide consistent quality care to each individual resident. Our direct caregivers unanimously agree that last year’s Lillian and James Portman Conference was the best educational experience that they had ever attended and it enabled them to put much of what they learned into practice.

– Susan Huber, RN, Administrator, Huron Woods
