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E-NEWSLETTER

EVENT CALENDAR

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Free educational event on elder fraud and exploitation prevention to be held June 14

In recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, the Community Alliance of Sarasota Stakeholders in Aging Consortium is hosting its second annual free educational forum on elder fraud and exploitation prevention on Friday, June 14, from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at The Salvation Army Fellowship Hall, 1701 S. Tuttle Ave., Sarasota.

This year's event will focus on educating community members and professionals who work with older adults about the reality of elder fraud and exploitation.

Topics include: how to identify potential abuse; what to do when financial abuse is suspected; available resources; the legal process of handling fraud and exploitation cases; key elements in exploitation cases; and tips from community organizations dedicated to elder abuse and exploitation. Speakers will include community experts from law enforcement, the Florida Department of Children and Families' Adult Protective Services Program, the State Attorney's Office, elder law firms, and several local organizations who advocate for the safety and well-being of older adults.

Every year an estimated 2.1 million older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation. That is only part of the picture. Experts believe that for every case of elder abuse or neglect reported, as many as five cases go unreported. The MetLife Mature Market Institute estimates that the cost of financial abuse of the elderly is at least \$ 2.9 billion a year, a number that may be grossly underestimated. Additionally, it is believed that seniors lose an average of \$ 145,000 each year from fraud committed by family, friends, caregivers and others.

"Remember, elder abuse can happen to anyone and can occur anywhere — in a person's own home, in nursing homes or assisted living facilities, even in hospitals," said Anne Ridings, director of the Guardianship Services in Sarasota at Lutheran Services Florida.

"It affects elders across all socioeconomic groups, cultures, and races. Based on available information, women, elders who are homebound or isolated, and individuals ages 80 and older are most at risk," Ridings added. Perhaps most surprising is that the mistreatment is most often perpetrated by the individual's own family members. If you suspect elder abuse, report it. Act to protect seniors by bringing suspected abuse to the attention of the appropriate authorities. You do not need to prove that abuse is occurring; it is up to the professionals to investigate your concerns and suspicions."

Even if it is determined that no crime has been committed, counseling or other services may be suggested. To report suspected abuse, contact the 24-hour toll-free hotline: 1-800-96ABUSE.

Continental breakfast and a boxed lunch will be provided for registered attendees at the forum. Space is limited. To register, visit www.elderexploitationsrq2013.eventbrite.com, contact Raquel Sikes at Raquel_sikes@doh.state.fl.us, or call 941-861-2575.

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