

LOCAL

You have questions — they have 'Solutions'

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is of great help to individuals who are caring for an elderly parent, and especially for those who find themselves suddenly thrust into that role," said Dr. Bruce Cooperman, a Hazlet podiatrist who serves as president of S4S. "Today, so many people now in their 50s find themselves in what is called 'The Sandwich Generation.' They are 'sandwiched' in between the responsibilities of taking care of their own children, as well as caring for their aging parents. I read where many of these individuals spend more time taking care of their parents than they spend taking care of their children. Their parents are living longer, and life expectancy will lengthen with continuing advances in medical science, so the information that we provide at S4S will continue to be a valuable resource for caregivers."

"When it comes to caring for an elderly parent," said Laurie Loughney, past president of S4S and a founding member of the organization, "few plan ahead or see a crisis event coming. When a senior needs help, it's often immediate. I've often heard it said that the best gift a parent can leave to their children is to have a plan — a plan for what happens if dad has a stroke, or who'll take mom to the doctor's appointment if she loses her driver's license, or which one of the kids will go food shopping for them from week to week. The S4S referral network can help families wade through these issues during this challenging, daunting and emotional time."

The senior services providers who are members of S4S belong to a professional community of senior advocates who specialize in a wide variety of services geared directly to the special needs of seniors.

They include representatives from assisted living communities, elder law attorneys, adult day services, home care providers, hospice services, medical equipment providers, memorial

services, financial service providers, insurance providers, skilled nursing facilities, physical/occupational therapy providers, home/reverse mortgages, physicians, dentists, transportation providers and wellness centers.

"Most people are genuinely surprised to learn how many resources there are," said Dr. Cooperman. "We even have a list of doctors who make house calls! There are many doctors, services and organizations to pick from — and that list continues to grow. We've actually become a magnet where senior services providers are now coming to us. Different organizations now speak at our monthly meetings, and word is getting out about who we are and the information and referral services we provide."

Solutions for Seniors is also focused on community outreach. In conjunction with the Senior Citizen Activity Network — or SCAN — they offer health fairs, health screenings, seminars and expos. The organization's speaker's bureau covers a wide range of topics, including financial planning, health and wellness, legal issues, and many others that address the changing needs of today's seniors. Presentations can be tailored based on time, location and audience.

"It has been said that a mother can take care of six children, but it often takes six children to take care of one aging parent," said Laurie. "It's a challenge, that's for sure. But, knowing that you're not alone — and that there are individuals in professional organizations out there that can help you — really helps ease the load."

Laurie remembered a recent situation where a woman from Edison found herself suddenly responsible for the care of her father in Monmouth County, who had suffered a stroke.

"The woman said that she saw the Solutions for Seniors Information and Resource Guide at the Monmouth County Library and called us," said Laurie. "She was crying, very upset

and completely overwhelmed. Within two hours, we'd hooked her up with an assisted living facility and an elder attorney. After things settled down a bit for her, she called us back to thank us for our help, and she talked about how surprised she was that one phone call could provide so many answers."

One of the most recent additions to the growing list of S4S members is the Arthritis Foundation.

"Solutions For Seniors recently participated in the Arthritis Walk," said Dr. Cooperman.

"Peggy Lockwood, president of the Arthritis Foundation, was so impressed with S4S, that they became a member. And, at the Arthritis Walk, Senator Robert Singer from Ocean County, a longtime advocate for senior issues, took a case of our directories to distribute to folks in Ocean County!"

Solutions for Seniors is holding a number of fundraisers this year, primarily to raise money for the purchase of Global Tracking Devices for dementia patients. S4S is working with the Monmouth County Sheriff's Department in these efforts.

The idea to create an advocacy center network for seniors and their caregivers, Laurie remembered, "was born on a very rainy February night in 1999. Allen Harberg, who owns the Gateway Care Center — and is a founding board member — was there. We started with five members in the organization, and now we have 90 members — and we're growing bigger every day. But, our mission has remained unchanged since 1999 — that is, to connect families and caregivers with area resources that can help."

Dr. Cooperman, who lives in Holmdel, has been a member of S4S for over five years, and a practicing podiatrist for 16 years. He serves members of the senior community by seeing homebound patients in their homes.

"Many of my patients are seniors," said Dr. Cooperman. "That's one

reason why I'm with Solutions for Seniors. It's a way of giving back to them."

The vice president of S4S is Allison Quincannon, a second-generation owner in the family company, Memorial Properties. She is a pre-need counselor who helps others to pre-plan their memorial needs. (Memorial Properties has locations throughout the state, including Holmdel, Manasquan and Old Bridge.)

The treasurer of the organization is John Callinan, a certified elder

law attorney, serving Monmouth, Ocean and Middlesex Counties. Of the 79,145 licensed attorneys in New Jersey, fewer than 50 are certified elder law attorneys. John has offices in Middletown, Wall and Jamesburg.

Sandra Dalton, with Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc., serves as the secretary for S4S. Sandra often works with clients to develop a personalized financial plan and assist in the implementation of investments, insurance and annuities.

Family Barn Dance to be held on Aug. 25

MIDDLETOWN — A family barn dance will be held at the Croydon Hall Senior Center, 900 Leonardville Road in Leonardo, just off Rt 36, on Friday evening, Aug. 25 from 7:30 to 10 p.m. Couples and singles are welcome. There is a donation of \$3, children under 18 are free. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Refreshments will be provided. No dancing experience is needed. The caller will teach patrons all they need to know. The event is being sponsored by

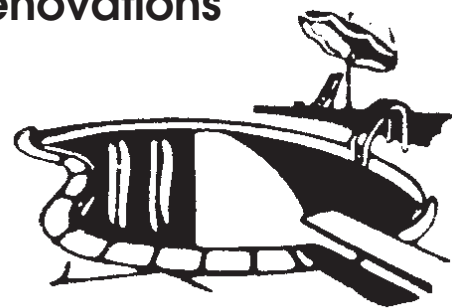
the Middletown Ramblers Square Dance Club who invite the public to come and see why square dancing is a great way to stay in shape, have fun, and meet lots of friendly people.

For more information and directions, call Betty at 732-291-1188, Phyllis at 732-450-1931, or check their web site at www.middletownramblers.org.

Square dance classes begin Sept. 26 at Henry Hudson Trail Activity Center, Rt. 36, Atlantic Highlands. Call Larry at 732-495-0358 or Betty at 732-291-1188.

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