



Connections

*Supporting and promoting Adult Day Services as a viable care option
to meet the needs of seniors and disabled adults*

A Community Newsletter

Spring 2006

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A Moving Testimonial

by Ruth Ann Hanson

My 87-year-old father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2003. Before that time we had noticed a steady decline in his cognitive abilities, but had considered it a part of the aging process and that fact that he is 80% deaf. My mother who hadn't really disclosed to us the extent to which he had been digressing was starting to show many signs of stress. My mother has had a quadruple heart bypass and we just recently found out her aortic valve is bad, so the stress she had been dealing with was not good for her health.

Up until we had started sending my father to Breath of Life Day Care, we were at a loss as to how to handle his disease. The continuous stress my mother and I (his primary caretakers) were dealing with was taking a toll on us. My mother, who is very social, started not engaging in social activities as much and was becoming depressed. I believe she was feeling a sense of hopelessness.

We had employed a home health care agency for a while but they didn't supply the care and reliability we needed and many times they actually added to the stress. When we quit using the home health care agency, we called Breath of Life and asked if we could start my dad out for two days a week to see how he did. After a brief time there, we immediately moved him up to three days a week. It is so comforting to us when my dad is waiting at the window for Bob to come and pick him up, and he looks so forward to going to Breath of Life Day Care. My mother has been able to get back to her active life style, enjoying her social activities, while having the freedom to go to her doctor appointments. and run the many errands that she needs to which wasn't possible for her before. She has hope and is living her life again. One of the greatest blessings for all of us is knowing that my father is active and doing things with people and isn't just sitting in a chair day after day staring into space. Dealing with his disease has been very difficult, but the peace we have experienced since Dad has been attending Breath of Life is priceless. I honestly do not know what we would do without the service and wonderful care that Breath of Life has to offer; they are truly a blessing and a lifesaver for our family.

[Editor's Note: This testimonial was written in praise of the services offered by Breath of Life Adult Day Services in Brainerd. I'm sure that there are many more testimonials, at least one for each Adult Day Services Center. Each testimonial is an affirmation of the services that all of us provide. Please share them with all of us through this newsletter.]

The President's Line...

by Laura Phibrook

It's a beautiful morning. The sun is shining, the birds are singing. I have just returned from a walk and as I have my second cup of coffee, I will share a few thoughts with you.

It is with great pleasure that I tell you, membership in the Minnesota Adult Day Services Association (MADSA) is up this year. About 70% of centers have realized the value of membership, and we have 5 friends of MADSA who are supporting us with individual memberships. Your monetary commitment is necessary to provide us with the expert consultants we have come to expect, for governmental advocacy, for state-of-the-art website management.

But money isn't everything. There are committees that need some new blood. Not that we are getting old, but new ideas are always welcome and encouraged.

Do you have a passion for what is happening at the Capitol? Maybe you would like to be part of our governmental affairs committee. We meet monthly, the second Thursday of each month at 7:30am at the Perkin's restaurant on Riverside Avenue in Minneapolis. Join us on July 13th and check it out. And let our chair, Nancy Schafer (651-646-3846), know you will be there, so we reserve a bigger table.

There are spots open on our board. Don't count it out because you think you don't have enough experience. If this is something you would like to know more about, contact any of the board members for time commitment and job duties. We meet monthly, the 3rd Friday, at 12:30pm at Calvary Church in Excelsior. If this is something you are interested in, let us know and join us on July 21st.

Other committees need your help as well, and they have limited time commitments, rather than ongoing.

Our conference committee needs a new chair. Joanne says it is time for someone else to take the reins, but I know she will be available for consultation. If chairing the committee is not your cup of tea, then consider just joining the committee.

Our membership drive is done for this year, but committee members are needed for next year. Our yearly drive runs from October through February or March. Whatever help you can give will be appreciated.

Do you have education ideas that would benefit all of our members? Then the education committee is for you. MADSA can co-sponsor events; this helps to share the cost burden for the sponsoring center.

I enjoy serving as president of our organization. But as you can see, there is work for everyone. Enjoy your spring and summer, but don't forget about MADSA. The board isn't MADSA; each and every one of us is, so get involved. It is the right thing to do.

— Laura

Legislative Update

by Iris Freeman

The 2006 Minnesota Legislative Session has ended. Here, in brief, are the results on issues we have been monitoring:

Alternative Care Grants – A \$3.3 million deficit exists in the state budget for the ACG program. The Governor proposed replenishing the funding. The Senate accepted this proposal, but the House did not. Failure to restore dollars to the ACG could slow clients' access to the program. HF4162, the Omnibus Supplemental Spending bill, restored \$1.7 million.

Scholarships – Representative Samuelson and Senator Berglin had bills to ease the requirements for organizations to obtain scholarship funds for home and community based waiver direct service workers. The changes would open up eligibility to include providers who have at least a \$300,000 annual budget in MA-related services (the previous minimum was \$500,00), and unused dollars in the program may remain available to organizations into the next year. HF4162, the Omnibus Supplemental Spending bill, did include this provision.

Caregiver Support – Senator Kiscaden's and Berglin's bill would have extended the use of personal sick leave benefits to include caring for a spouse, parents, grandparents, and step-parents. The closest bill in the House was HF61 (Thissen), and that had no action this session. This remains work for next year.

Physical Therapy – HF854 (Finstad) and SF637 (Solon) would have expanded consumer choice in therapy services. The bill received Committee hearings in the House and the Senate. Legislative Information Services indicate that neither the House nor Senate took the bill up for final action and a vote.



MADSA's New Overnight Respite Initiative

MADSA is proud to announce its new Overnight and Weekend Respite Initiative, also known as the B & B project. It is the latest innovation in our 30+-year history of building services that creatively respond to the needs of older and disabled persons, their families and communities.

A Need Exists

Recent local and national needs assessments have underlined what day center families have been telling us for a long time---that there is a great need for short -term overnight respite care. Family caregivers need time off for emergencies, family events and simply for having the occasional weekend or evening to enjoy some personal time. Using respite can reduce physical, mental and emotion demands on the caregiver and everyone in the household benefits.

The Birth of the Center-Based B&B

About three years ago MADSA members Lynne Zimmerman, Laura Philbrook and Joyce McIntosh began looking into offering overnight respite services at their centers. Their sites appeared to have everything needed — including guest bedrooms — to provide a safe and pleasant overnight stay. By adding overnight staff on the evenings, their “B&B’s” were open, they’d be able to offer care in a congenial, familiar, safe, and accessible setting. And by combining the night service with existing day programming, clients could have a two or three day continuous stay. Best of all, clients and families would be working with a program and staff they already know and trust.

For many months the work group took up questions of needs, licensing, staffing, costs, and county contracting. Late in 2005 they submitted a proposal on behalf of MADSA to the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging to fund a three-center respite project under Title IIIIE of the Older Americans Act. The one-year demo project was funded starting in January of this year. Ann Long, former Wilder Foundation Director of Community Based Services for Older People and an experienced consultant, was hired as Pilot Project Coordinator.

What will the demo project mean for MADSA member agencies?

- ***A new service for clients.*** Weekend and overnight services are available now at two sites: Common Sense Services in South St. Paul and AlterCare in St. Louis Park. A third site will be opening soon. During the project’s first phase, each center will serve its current participants. In the second phase, other MADSA member centers and county case managers will be invited to refer their clients.
- ***Assistance in starting their own programs and becoming part of a MADSA respite network.*** Throughout 2006 the Project Coordinator, an experienced consultant, will be available to assist any MADSA members who would like to explore the feasibility of starting their own overnight respite programs.
- ***An opportunity to build on the experience of others.*** Because each of the three sites has its own history, licensing, client base, capacity and constraints, the project can develop and test three different models for service delivery. Their experience with operations, pricing, funding and staffing will be invaluable to providers thinking about starting their own respite services.
- ***Great publicity for Adult Day Services and MADSA.*** Announcing this new initiative will help us reach new audiences to once again tell our communities about the Adult Day Services Centers’ vital role in supporting older and disabled people and their families. The availability of this service also may attract new clients and families to our centers.

The MADSA Overnight Respite Initiative is funded under contract with the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging, Inc. as part of the Older Americans Act Program.

Changes behind the scenes at MADSA

Mary McDonough has retired

Mary McDonough retired from her position as MADSA administrative assistant early this spring after XX years of service. She is looking forward to being a full-time grandmother and to traveling with her husband.

We have appreciated Mary's organization and helpfulness, and MADSA will be the stronger for her contributions.

Thank you, Mary, and best wishes for a full and happy retirement.

Gail Petersen is the new administrative assistant

Gail enjoys scrapbooking, photography, working on the computer, fishing with her husband (only when it is nice out and sometimes in the winter). She retired after 34 years of working for a company that she started with right out of high school. She helps her dad with her mom who has a hard time getting around. She says she's happy to be on Team MADSA, and she's here to help and to learn.

The phone number and email address remain the same as always. Only MADSA's mailing address has changed. Please note the new address below and on the front page.

Larry Nelson is the new newsletter editor

Larry Nelson has been the website editor for over two years, and with this edition of the newsletter, he has also taken the position of newsletter editor.

Larry has enjoyed working with MADSA on its web presence and looks forward to helping spread its message in print as well.

He is always on the lookout for good ways to tell the MADSA story and welcomes photos and articles for **Connections**. Even if you have only an idea for a story, he would love to hear it. Email ideas and newsletter contributions to him at larry@windyridgedesign.com.