

June Newsletter

Financial Exploitation of Elders

Special Dates

June 3 –Volunteer meeting - 4-5pm

June 15 -World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Current Needs

- **New pillows**
- **Liquid hand soap**
- **Pine-Sol type cleaner.**
- **New Women's underwear—all sizes**
- **Baby monitors**

In recognition of June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, let's focus on one particular form of abuse that is all too common among our senior population—financial exploitation. We know that seniors can be victims of all forms of abuse, (physical, sexual, emotional, etc.), but as they age, and perhaps become less cognitively able, they are particularly vulnerable to financial abuse. In addition to situations where family members or caretakers take unfair advantage of a senior's financial assets, there are numerous scams and fraudulent schemes designed to target elderly folks.

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has listed several to watch out for:

- ◆ **Medicare/health insurance scam**– Perpetrators pose as official representatives to obtain personal and financial information. *Know that Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security Administration will never ask for financial information over the phone.*
- ◆ **Counterfeit prescription drugs**– Older folks turn to the internet for more affordable medications; drugs sold on certain sites may be ineffective or even harmful. *Always look for the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Site (VIPPS) seal to make sure the pharmacist is licensed.*
- ◆ **Telemarketing/phone scams** –Scammers try to obtain personal information or sell a wonderful product over the phone. *Ask for written materials to be mailed to you and have someone with financial expertise review the offer.*
- ◆ **Internet fraud** –Pop-up windows may fool victims into downloading a fake anti-virus program at a substantial cost, or an actual virus will allow the scammer to see information on your computer. In another scam, a senior receives a message from what appears to be a legitimate company, asking them to update their personal information. *Instead of responding to the email, contact the company through a phone number or email address that you know is legitimate.*
- ◆ **Grandparent scheme** –The scammer calls an older person and says something like, “Hi Grandma, do you know who this is?” When the senior guesses their grandchild's name, the scammer now has established a fake identity. They will usually ask for money to get them out of some financial situation; they want you to wire the money or give them numbers from Walmart gift cards, which don't require identification to collect. *Either verify the person's identity by asking questions only the real grandchild would know, or get off the phone and call them back to make sure the loved one really has a need.*
- ◆ **Sweepstakes and lottery scam** - The mark is informed that they have won a prize and are required to make a payment to obtain the prize. *You should never have to pay a fee to claim a prize, and if they are asking for gift card numbers as payment, it's a sure sign of a scam.*

These are just a few schemes that are targeted toward seniors. Please share information about these fraudulent practices and encourage older folks to check with a trusted loved one before giving out any personal information to strangers.

Survivor Story

Brooke Astor



At the center of one of the most high-profile elder abuse cases is the renowned philanthropist and “grande dame” of New York social life, Brooke Astor. Astor inherited \$60 million in 1959 upon the death of her third husband, Victor Astor; this fortune was supposed to be left to the Astor Trust and other charities upon Brooke’s death. These circumstances set the stage for her son, Anthony Marshall, to execute a plan to siphon off a large portion of her money.

Astor admitted to being a somewhat disconnected parent to Marshall, and did not have a close relationship with him as an adult, but some family friends have indicated that Marshall’s third wife may have had an influence on his determination to obtain his mother’s wealth. At age 90 at the time of her son’s marriage, Astor was just a few years away from beginning to show signs of Alzheimer’s, although it wasn’t until 2000 that she was actually diagnosed. Prior to this time, Astor had changed her will several times to increase donations to various charities; but by 2003 Marshall had obtained power of attorney over her finances, and arranged for her will to be changed, leaving all of her wealth and properties to himself.

Around this time, Phillip Marshall, (Anthony’s son), became aware that his grandmother was living in poor conditions; he was appalled to find her living in dirty and dilapidated surroundings, sleeping in “torn nightgowns and eating pureed peas and carrots on a urine-stained couch.” Her once beautiful home had become decrepit and foul-smelling, and her son prevented her caretakers from making her life more comfortable. Marshall then filed a petition to have his own father removed as Astor’s guardian, and was able to have another guardian appointed; in 2009 the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office filed charges against Anthony Marshall, who was convicted of fraud, grand larceny, and forgery, but the charges of abuse and neglect were unsubstantiated. Marshall was jailed for two months before being released due to failing health.

After a new guardian was appointed, Astor was moved to her estate in New York where she was cared for until her death in 2007 at the age of 105.

Although there was no conviction for physical abuse in the Astor case, the trial helped to raise awareness and understanding of elder abuse, and drew attention to financial exploitation as an elder abuse crime.

Recap of Events

Mother’s Day Fun

The number of clients who stay in our shelter varies greatly from week to week, but it just so happened that we had a pretty full house, with lots of children, over the Mother’s Day weekend. Sabrina planned this fun activity to help the children create beautiful suncatchers, key chains and cards for their mothers. The kids had a great time and the moms were excited to receive these special gifts! Check out their creativity!



Basement Organization

Kudos to our wonderful volunteers, Ardie and Wanda, who spent most of a day in our lovely basement, organizing and arranging stuff! We are moving toys and household goods from two very small, dark rooms, into a larger space; it should make it easier to see what we have and will be nice to have the items in a cleaner area. We “shop” downstairs for gifts for kids’ birthdays, and are able to provide some household goods when a client moves out into her own space. There is more organizing to be done, but this is a great start—thanks ladies!



TRIAD



Almost 200 seniors participated in the 18th Annual TRIAD Conference on May 16 at the Woodstock Moose, and Response was there, along with about 20 other vendors. We shared goodie bags which contained a variety of publications pertaining to seniors, including information about scams and frauds. There were several speakers throughout the day, with topics ranging from Medicare options, to signs of dementia, to staying healthy after 65. It was a great opportunity to reach out to this underserved population; we had some wonderful conversations with our local seniors.

Community Safety and Wellness Day



A sunny, hot day greeted about 1000 visitors to the 8th annual Community Safety and Wellness Day on May 18! This fun, free event was full of activities for kids to do, all centering on a safety/health theme. There was a bike rodeo, emergency vehicles to explore, a petting zoo, food and prizes, and so much more! Response offered a pinwheel-making activity for the kids and lots of safety information for the parents. It was so



much fun to see the creativity in action. Thanks to Becky and Ardie for helping us to reach out to our community!

Upcoming Event

Moving Beyond



Spread the word—there is a new “Moving Beyond” support group starting on Wednesday, June 5! It will be held at the historic courthouse in Woodstock, on Wednesdays from 5:30–6:30. Topics include boundaries, safety, coping, and more. Those interested in participating may contact us for questions or more information, but registration is being handled through Parks and Rec—459-6777. Please share on social media, word-of-mouth, or come get flyers to hang around town—we’d love to see a good turnout for this!