

On Your Side--Because We Are At Your Side...

Let's suppose, just for the purpose of illustration and clarification, that you have a dear friend whom we will call *Margie*. Like most of us, Margie is getting older, but, on the surface, she seems to be getting along just fine in her own home. Her daughter, however, who lives in New York, is concerned that Mother should not live alone any longer. Their disagreement is causing a great divide--and yet you can see both sides of the issue and easily identify with each. What can be done? And, more importantly, when asked to choose, **whose side** will you take?

It might be wise to first remind your friend that she is truly blessed to have such a caring daughter! And, then gently point out that getting a little help around the house does not necessarily mean that she is no longer useful and able to care for herself.

Most of us want to maintain our independence and do things for ourselves. But even mild arthritis sufferers often encounter difficulty making a bed or any of the many *little* tasks and activities of daily living. Many with hip or knee pain have trouble standing over the sink and stove long enough to prepare and clean up after a homemade meal. That does not signal that it is time to sell one's home and move in with the

children. It simply means that the benefits of a personal aide in the home should probably be examined....

But there is more. Although she is more than just a bit reluctant about admitting it to others--especially Daughter--Margie just does not feel very comfortable driving anymore--and with the cost of gasoline and auto insurance, owning and maintaining a car is becoming a burden. But, she struggles with how giving up car and license would impact her frequent doctor appointments and her necessary marketing. To be honest, you recognize that Margie is beginning to be dominated by worry.

Being a dear and faithful friend, you offer to help. And, truth told, you are relieved that Margie knows you already have so many responsibilities of your own. So, how do you help your dear friend now? Suggest she call for a **free consultation with a Senior Advocate**. These professionals assess living situations and serve as personal advocates to help preserve dignity and promote the quality of life of people just like Margie. In our last newsletter, we introduced you to Heidi Smith who serves as Senior Advocate at Aker Kasten Home Health Care Agency.



Caregiver Spotlight

Many of you already know our Director of Nursing, Kim Raymond, RN. For those of you who have not yet met her, you will quickly detect a compassionate heart and a servant spirit which has marked her long career in healthcare.

The daughter of a physician, Kim began working at age 16 in the office of her father, Dr. L. E. Ed Barnhill (of Beckett, Barnhill, and Petersen, PA). Kim decided, after exposure to all facets of the practice--including time spent as

Office Manager--that she would enjoy caring for others as a nurse.

Kim left Florida to begin her undergraduate studies at Hollins College in Roanoke, Virginia. She later returned home to complete her Bachelor's in Nursing at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), successfully completed her exams, and became a Registered Nurse.

When Kim's father and his

colleagues determined to retire and close the practice, Kim began investing her nurturing tendencies in the home healthcare field. Impressed with the unique way home healthcare delivers real help to people in need, Kim derived deep satisfaction in her care for others in their homes.

With more than thirty years of healthcare experience, Kim serves The Aker Kasten Home Health Care Agency as Director of Nursing.



Check-In Service

When actual assistance in the home is not necessary **The Aker Kasten Check-In Service** is just the ticket. Tailored to each individual, each week you are phoned several times and an AKHHCA Family member visits at a mutually agreed upon time, just to *check-in*. This services assists you in living independently--because we are **on your side**. But, it also affords your family peace of mind that they have a partner in ensuring your daily comfort--they'll think we're **on their side!** This is a very affordable variant of home health care and will be **customized** to best fit your situation. **Call now for more info, 561-955-6010.**



Caregiver Spotlight, continued

While often making the initial call on a patient, Kim not only is actively involved in the formulation of a patient's Plan of Care, but is also involved with Rose Aker in determining which caregiver is best suited for each patient. Beyond that, Kim assists with various aspects of personnel management, oversight of training, testing, supervision, and retention of caregivers.

Kim is also a proud and grateful mother of Meredith, a high school senior.

When asked what is truly unique about Aker Kasten Home Health Care, Kim replied, without hesitation, that it is the motivation of the entire staff to invest selflessly in the lives of their patients.

She observes that the commitment to build meaningful relationships between the patients, their families, and Agency Leadership fosters a higher level of care on the part of each caregiver for his/her patient.

In addition, she says that Dr. John Aker consistently emphasizes and models a transparent concern for each patient and communicates that in every goal presented to The Aker Kasten Team.

With that kind of leadership, Kim's vision for helping others in a significant way is being realized each and every day....

Aker Kasten Home Health Care Agency--Where Kindness And Excellence Meet...

On Your Side, continued from front

Balancing the desires and needs of seniors, Heidi can recommend little changes which have large impacts. She is trained to assess, advise, and help implement plans to enhance quality of life. For your friend Margie, Heidi might request a personal home visit with Margie to determine what aspects of daily life present challenges. If they consist of bed linen changes, laundry, and transportation to the market, doctor's appointments, and her weekly synagogue/church/social meeting, Heidi might suggest the services of a Homemaker/Companion two or three times a week who would change bed linens, do laundry, help prepare meals, and so much more! Margie and her Companion could visit her doctor, do some shopping together, and call on a friend. And, if Margie were so inclined, Heidi would contact her place of worship to see if arrangements could be made to pick Margie up for services and/or women's meetings.

Heidi would very likely point out to Margie that Daughter's fears would be allayed knowing should any need arise, Margie would now have in her Companion someone **at her side**. (And, as Margie comes to the point of perhaps needing a Home Health Aide or Certified Nursing Assistant to be with her, she will have already established a trusting relationship with Heidi who would help in the transition to that next level of care.) **It really is a win-win!** Margie maintains her independence and her dignity and Daughter rests easier with the assurance that a well-trained caregiver who knows

Mother is already in place **on her side** and building confidence for whatever next step Margie might have to take on this journey of aging with dignity. Additionally, Mother and Daughter's relationship is enriched by their commitment to, and care for, one another. You see, a Senior Advocate is **on your side** building bridges of understanding and undergirding.

It is important for family members to realize that allowing someone else in the home and asking for help with tasks once done capably and well for years is most difficult. But, it is equally as important for all the *Margies* in your sphere of influence to recognize that there is a time--and it is better to act on it earlier rather than later--to ask for help. Accepting help with daily activities certainly does not diminish one's identity. Coming to that realization--**and acting upon it**--is not a mark of defeat or decline, but of determination to grow older with grace and dignity. And, for the *Margies* who might be business-minded, it can be seen as a promotion from laborer to management!

Because Aker Kasten prides itself in being a *family*, our caregivers are very carefully and thoughtfully selected for each patient. We strive to insure the greatest ease, comfort, and enjoyment of our patient. Our patients often lament when it is time to say goodbye to their caregiver because they have demonstrated through genuine concern, that they are **on the patient's side!**

Often, seniors living alone can benefit from a simple phone call. Some need a gentle reminder to take their medication. Still others are encouraged by their physician to take a short walk--and thereby improve strength and balance--if only there were someone to walk **at their side**. A Companion can do these things and so much more. Over the course of several visits, you might be surprised to see how a **weekly walk**, with the security of someone **at your side**, a nutritious noon meal, and some recreation can improve your perspective--and there is peace and power in such a perspective.

When actual assistance in the home is not necessary (or is resisted or rejected though necessary--as is sometime the case), Heidi recommends **The Aker Kasten Check-In Service**. Here, Heidi arranges to phone a senior several times a week, just to check in and chat for 15 minutes, and to drop by for at least one personal visit at a mutually agreed upon time. During these calls and visits, Heidi follows up on our nutritional concerns, medication reminders, safety checks, and general health and perspective questions to assist you all the more in living independently--because we are **on your side**. But, it also affords your family peace of mind that they have a partner in ensuring your daily comfort--they'll think we're **on their side!** **Check-In Service** can be tailored to fit your needs very specifically. This is a very affordable variant of home health care customized to best fit your situation.

And, if you so desire, you will be provided access to our On Call Phone Access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week...chaplain services...and compassionate and capable caregivers should you decide you could benefit from additional care. So, you see, it's clear--we truly are **on your side!**