



From the Desk of Director Susan Robinson

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Currently the SC Respite Coalition has issued 297 respite vouchers to help families who are trying to take care of loved ones who live in the home and cannot be left alone. The initial voucher funds came from a "Lifespan Respite Grant" from the US Government's Administration on Aging. Happily, SC was one of the first 12 states to be funded.

From that grant, we have a limited amount of voucher funds remaining and available to family caregivers who do NOT qualify for the **new** voucher funds offered through the Family Caregiver Support Program.

Eligibility for SC Respite Voucher Funds

Families eligible for OUR vouchers are those taking care of the following:

- (1) children with disabilities and special medical needs;
- (2) adults, 18 to 60 years, whose caregivers do not qualify for any other respite (cg. not old enough, care receiver has disability but sound mind, etc.); and
- (3) people of any age in hospice or CLTC (Community Long Term Care).

While these funds are limited, the SC Respite Coalition has a long-term goal of creating a statewide respite system for all ages. This program is called the **LIFESPAN RESPITE SYSTEM**. Partners include the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging and Family Connection of SC, Inc. Other organizations working with us are South Carolina's Dept. of Disabilities and Special Needs, Alzheimer's Association, Autism Society, the VA, and Dept. of Mental Health, to name just a few.

It is important to remember that **there will never be enough publicly funded respite. Volunteerism is vital to our mission.** This is why we work with faith communities and organizations that promote supporting worthy causes. One idea for any congregation or group to consider is a "Respite Benevolence Fund." Look under "Publications" on our website for a sample policy; suggest the concept or share the policy with your your faith community or group leaders. ALSO ... see our flyer about presentations I am doing with funds from the Alzheimer's Resource Coordination Center. They are for anyone who goes into the homes of older people. Please put me in touch with any group that would want a speaker.

LIFESPAN RESPITE SYSTEM

In May Lt. Governor McConnell released our statewide plan for developing the LIFESPAN RESPITE SYSTEM. The \$3 million he requested for respite was approved by the legislature. With your help, we will work to see it in the state budget every year, maybe with more funds for other groups too!



Eligibility for Family Caregiver Support Funds

The \$3 million will be distributed through the 10 Family Caregiver Support Programs at the Area Agencies on Aging. These funds will be for the following:

- (1) anyone caring full time for someone over 60,
- (2) grandparents 55+ raising birth grandchildren under 18 years of age,
- (3) parents over 55 of adult "children" with disabilities.

NOT eligible: people under 18, in hospice or CLTC, or spouses of people with developmental disabilities.

Alzheimer's funds will now come through them as well for caregivers of people of any age whose MD certifies they have dementia or Alzheimer's. However, the Alzheimer's Association will continue to give out the "sitter" funds for caregivers to attend support groups and educational events, call 1-800-868-9095.

To find your Family Caregiver Support program,
Call 1-800-868-9095 or go to

<http://aging.sc.gov/contact/Pages/FCSPContacts.aspx>

Try to be patient – this will be a big task for the Family Caregiver Support Programs! **And, very important family caregivers**, keep copies of your doctor's certification to use in more than one program.

To stay informed, please keep checking our website for resources and updates at www.screpitemcoalition.org.

Lastly, continue to tell your legislators about the importance of respite in caring for loved ones in the home. It improves quality of life AND saves substantial public funding.

Other news: Renée Gibson is now with the SC Dept. of Mental Health. We miss her.