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GIVING: DEMENTIA RESPITE SUPPORT GROWS WITH NEED

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The number of Americans living with Alzheimer's and dementia-related diseases is projected to more than double over the next 30 years. Thanks to the generous support of community-minded groups like the Southwest Florida Community Foundation, the Naples Senior Center

is able to address this growing crisis.

The Southwest Florida Community Foundation provides critical funding to support our Dementia Respite Support program for seniors in Collier and southern Lee counties who have a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or related dementias and their caregivers. This weekly four-hour program offers a safe and stimulating environment providing activities for older adults with early to mid-stage dementia.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, there are 5.8 million Americans living with Alzheimer's costing the nation \$290 billion. By 2050, this population is projected to rise to 14 million with the costs as high as \$1.1 trillion. It's further estimated someone in the United States develops the disease every 65 seconds.

Dementia-related diseases are currently the third leading cause of death behind heart attacks and strokes and are the leading cause of disability among seniors. Dementia does



not discriminate between wealthy and poor. We see this all the time in our dementia respite groups, where we'll have a former head of Porsche sitting next to a former Las Vegas cocktail waitress. And it's not just the individuals who are affected.

Studies show caregivers of loved ones with ADRD experience higher rates of physical illness, social isolation, emotional distress and financial hardship compared to non-caregivers in the population.

Research shows 40 percent to 70 percent of family caregivers suffer from clinical depression and are at a greater risk of developing a chronic illness. What caregivers have in common is the need for support.

The Naples Senior Center provides eight weekly Dementia Respite Support groups in the community for individuals

with a medical diagnosis of ADRD. The groups are designed to help enhance communication skills, to improve an individual's mood, to help access long term memory and to increase socialization.

There also is an Early Memory Loss Group for individuals with mild cognitive impairment, significant concerns about their memory or very early dementia. In addition, we offer quarterly Caregivers Boot Camps and weekly Caregivers Support Groups. These programs are designed to provide caregivers with:

- Tools that will enable them to provide self-care, including ways to reduce and better manage stress.
- Tools to better manage the care of their loved ones.
- An outlet for socialization and the experience of social support from other caregivers.

Comments that we receive from caregivers reinforce the need for this program within the community. Caregivers share with staff that their family members are benefiting significantly from this support. As one caregiver stated, "She is doing better since she started coming here. Now we can cook together a little bit and she is happier and we have new things to talk about," in reference to the activities that occurred in the group. This dual benefit improves the quality of life for both participants and caregivers.

The Naples Senior Center is the only human services agency of its kind, providing "one-stop shop" programs and services addressing the emotional and social needs of seniors in Collier and southern Lee counties. We serve individuals of all backgrounds and beliefs. Since opening our doors in January 2014, we have seen an increase in the depth and scope of need for comprehensive senior services in this region.

To accommodate future growth, we have embarked on "A New Era for Seniors" capital campaign to raise \$15 million to build and equip a new state-of-the-art facility serving the

community. A lead \$5 million gift by local philanthropists Patty and Jay Baker puts the capital campaign on a successful track and will inspire others to help in the cause. Additional support is being provided by the Brookdale Foundation, members of the Naples Senior Center Board and a matching grant from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation.

For additional information on the Naples Senior Center and its comprehensive programs and social services for area seniors and their families, call (239) 325-4444 or visit www.NaplesSeniorCenter.org.