



PARTNERS IN CARING

During the past month I have been reading the online PSRC survey and focus group responses. I've also been reviewing the data collected for the Age Friendly Community project. One thing that stands out to me is the number of people who do not seem to be aware of our support and guidance services (Partners In Caring). I wonder—are these services less visible because the staff is at Spruce Circle and much of the work is done quietly, confidentially, one-to-one, often on the phone? Or is it because people don't think they need the services—until they do? We are here when you realize you need us!

This year my parents have needed more support than before, and I have wondered many times what I would do if I had not learned so much from fifteen years of helping people at PSRC, if I didn't have the caregiver support groups, and if I didn't have such amazing, creative, professional colleagues. I hope you have had a chance to meet Sharon Hurley and Dave Roussell, the new Support and Guidance staff. Together with Fran Angelone and me, we offer a wide range of services to help people navigate the challenges that arise and the resources that exist to help.

◆ **Information and Linkage** We can help you find resources and area services. These range from choosing a home health company to getting help organizing and downsizing, to understanding transportation options. We are on the phone every day with people who live in this area who need help finding a local resource. Sometimes there are several services needed from different providers (rides, meals, homecare, rehabilitation) and it can be overwhelming to manage all the parts. Many calls come from someone who lives here but is concerned about a family member who lives at a distance; or they can come from someone anywhere in the world seeking help for a family member or friend who lives here.

◆ **Benefit Assistance** Fran can help you explore whether there are any federal, state or local benefit programs to help make your resources stretch. Sharon is a great help with Veterans' and hospice benefits; and Dave can help with disability benefits. We can also make appointments with SHIP (State Health Insurance Providers counselors for questions about your Medicare benefits).

◆ **Consultations** When the question is more complex than a brief phone call, you can schedule an appointment with one of us. We will meet with you and/or your family (with your permission—confidentiality is important to us.) We help you identify key areas of concern, resources and needs, and create a new plan of action and coordinate care. One example might be talking about whether to get care at home or move to a residential

community. Another might be helping a neighbor/friend/family member get help when he or she begins to be forgetful. It can often be beneficial to look at the bigger picture of what is going on. From our professional experience with older adults, we can suggest related issues or solutions that may not have been considered. For example, a person might call because s/he has decided to stop driving. In addition to enrolling in Crosstown transportation, we discuss other transportation options and how to get groceries and continue social connections with a volunteer or friend to support quality of life and independence at home.

◆ **HomeFriends** Dave is the coordinator of this volunteer program which matches people who don't get out often with volunteers who visit every 1-2 weeks for conversation or to help with tasks like reading the mail or grocery shopping.

◆ **Support Groups** PSRC now hosts 16 groups facilitated by professionals. Some are primarily social while others are focused on a topic such as caregiving. They provide wonderful opportunities to meet other people with similar interests and experiences. I'm reminded how wonderful it is to have someone just listen and say "I've been there; this is what helped me."

◆ **Transportation** Fran and Jeanette can enroll you in Crosstown and tell you about other transportation options serving Princeton.

◆ **Education** We make efforts to know about resources and developments in the field of aging. We attend professional networking programs and share what we discover through articles in this newsletter, hosting lunch and learn programs and workshops, as well as in the fall conference. We take the "resource" part of our name seriously!

◆ **Resources** Please visit our website (princetonsenior.org) and look at Community Resources. We list thousands of services and organizations that we have learned about over the years. Call if you need help finding the right ones for you.

Thanks to several grants, fundraising events, and generous donors, we continue to offer these services without charge. We are grateful for donations that support this critical part of our mission work. We hope you will remember these services when you, or someone you know, needs help.

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