



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COMMUNITY FORUM
HELPING AND PROTECTING OUR SENIORS
ORCHARD CREEK LODGE –BALLROOM

TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2009 – 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Ken Sheehan opened the Forum by thanking everybody that came and introduced Maeve Scott, Village 16B Coordinator, who moderated the event.

An earlier request for questions was sent to Board Members, Village Coordinators, Mail Box Captains, residents and the Yahoo Group. Maeve Scott introduced the guest speakers, Sheriff Ed Bonner and Acting Assistant District Attorney Scott Owens, who each gave a brief talk on the trends involving crimes against seniors in Placer County. Sheriff Bonner presented some case overviews and explained the process on how to report elder abuse. For example, someone looking for Mr. Smith knocks on the door and the door is answered. No Mr. Smith here. The individual goes on to the next house and knocks on the door. If no one answers the door, the house is burglarized. Any suspicious activity should be reported. The community needs to work together and do something important for somebody else. Make that call no matter how trivial it may seem.

Acting Assistant District Attorney Scott Owens stated that Placer County is ripe for elder abuse. Our seniors are easy prey, hold the most assets, Placer County has two Sun Cities, and a large rural community. Only one out of 11 cases of elder abuse is reported because of fear from retaliation, embarrassment, or abandonment. Types of abuse are physical abuse, psychological abuse (infliction of mental anguish) and financial abuse. Unauthorized use of checks, ATM and credit cards, identity theft, fraud, convincing or forcing elder to sign contracts, handling elders' money without durable power of attorney were some of the examples mentioned. Scott Owens stressed the importance of being careful when receiving telephone calls from somebody imitating a family member to send money or informing you that you've won the lottery. **DON'T SEND MONEY TO GET MONEY.**

Who are the perpetrators? 90% of the perpetrators are adult children, spouses, grandchildren, other relatives. 10% are friends, neighbors, unknown individuals or service providers.

Some of elder abuse red flags are missing property, bruises, signs of malnutrition or dehydration, behavioral or appearance changes and isolation. Some barriers faced by elders could involve the abuser that may control the elder's money. It is important that you protect your valuables from everyone.

Placer County's Victim Witness Program can provide help in Crisis Intervention, Emergency Assistance, Restitution, Funeral/Burial Assistance, Property Return Assistance, Victim of Crime Claim, Transportation, Court Escort/Transport just to name a few.

What can you do? If you suspect an elder is at risk, call your local law enforcement or contact the Adult Protective Services at **530 886-2271**.

Scott Owens introduced the following three panelists: Karen Bone, Adult Protective Services, specializing in the field of geriatrics, has handled over 1,000 elder abuse cases since November 2001. Jim Deslaurier, Deputy District Attorney, is assigned to elder abuse vertical prosecution (prosecutes all elder abuse cases) and Jason Maschmeyer, Lincoln Police Department, Investigation Division, deals with crimes against persons.

Question: *If a call is made to report concerns over a neighbor, how involved would one be expected to be? Does Adult Protective Services follow up with the caller to ensure action was taken?*

The caller remains confidential and the information about the victim is not shared with the caller. It is important to leave your name. The caller may call back to get an update but the information will not be shared.

Question: *What kind of tips to prevent theft?*

Keep your purses close to you and not in the shopping cart. Run a credit report twice a year. Go to the TodayShow.com to obtain information about opting out of direct mailing. Mark your property with your driver's license number; make a front and back photocopy of what you have in your wallet in case your wallet gets stolen, and use a cross-cut shredder.

Question: *What is the process to determine which service group (law enforcement, APS, etc.) to call for help?*

You should call 911 and the police department can transfer you to the right office.

Question: *What liability, if any, is there for making a call? Is it better to be safe than sorry?*

There are laws for making a false police report but if you are suspicious about a vehicle parked across the street from your house or something else that you are concerned with, it is okay to call the Lincoln Police Department.

Question: *It seems calling police about a concern for a disoriented person, or someone that appears to be neglected is harsh and potentially frightening. If the police came because of a call could the person end up sitting in a jail cell, or what becomes of them?*

The Lincoln Police Department will contact a family member. Adult Protective Services has a 24-hour number and will respond to the emergency and prepare a report in 10 calendar days.

Question: *Are there any guidelines on steps that a concerned resident can take when they suspect that another resident has been the object of fraud or abuse, or when he/she seems unable to care for themselves?*

Everyone needs their neighbors unless the neighbor starts taking advantage. If it becomes to be too much, you should contact Adult Protective Services.

Question: *What should a concerned resident consider so that he/she does not become an enabler when it comes to assisting a person so that he/she can remain in their home, rather than moving to an assisted living environment?*

Contact Adult Protective Services. Unless the person lacks a mental understanding of what they are doing, if they give money away to family members but can still afford to buy medication, then it is okay. Adult Protective Services will make a visit in a marked car (County policy) and talk to the individual. Will find out how isolated the person is. Are they in denial?

Adult Protective Services is a voluntary program for adults. As an adult you can take care of yourself which is totally different from Children's Protective Services.

The panelists were then open to several more questions from the audience.

Ken Sheehan thanked Molly Gamette from the Victim Services of Placer County's District Attorney's Office who helped organize the event in cooperation with Sun City Lincoln Hills Association and Neighbors InDeed who co-sponsored the event.

Ken Sheehan made a brief announcement on two upcoming events: National Night Out, August 4, 2009 and the Spring Potluck on June 11 for Board Members, Village Coordinators and Mail Box Captains.

The forum concluded at 2:45 p.m.

Notes respectfully submitted by Pauline Watson, Neighborhood Watch Secretary

HOW DO I AVOID BEING A VICTIM?

- Purchase and use cross-cut shredders
- When using ATM cards, never give your pin number to anyone
- When paying your credit card accounts by check, never put the entire account number on the check . . . only write down the last four digits
- Order free credit report at least twice a year www.annualcreditreport.com (TransUnion, Experian, and Equifax) or call 1-877-322-8228. You can also write to: Annual Credit Report Request Service, PO Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281
- Consider using your initials for your first and middle name on checks and don't print your telephone number. When ordering new checks, have them delivered to your bank.
- Photocopy all of the contents in your wallet. . both front and back
- Monitor bank and credit card statements monthly
- Choose a caregiver with caution
- Keep an inventory of all jewelry-written appraisals and photos
- Protect your incoming and outgoing mail
- Before having work done to your home, check a contractor's license number online at www.cslb.ca.gov or by calling (800) 321-2752, always get a written contract, never pay more than 10% down or \$1,000, whichever is less, and get multiple bids.
- Create a barrier between you and the solicitor, i.e., metal screen door, storm door and before letting inspectors into your home, verify with their employer they are legitimate.
- Consider allowing your bank to send a duplicate copy of your monthly statement to a trusted family member or professional advisor
- You will never win the Nigerian or Canadian lottery
- Get into the habit of discussing transactions/purchases over \$1,000 with a trusted family member
- Don't be pressured to make an immediate decision
- Register with the "Do Not Call Registry" 1-888-382-1222 or www.donotcall.gov (don't forget to add your cell phones too)