Keeping Up With Care ~ July 2021

The Kansas Experience

KABC Resumes Travel for Training Events

KABC had the honor of traveling to Anthony, KS to present to the Community Resource Council at the Patterson Health Center. The Resource Council consists of healthcare workers and social service professionals spanning across Harper County and surrounding areas who frequently work with elders and adults with disabilities. We shared the different resources we provide their clients in need of long-term care services, and talked about the one-on-one support system we have created for those searching for quality care or who have concerns about the care they are currently receiving. Advocate on their side in long-term care.

AND, July is Healthy Vision Month, so we thought it would be a great opportunity to highlight the work of KABC FACEBOOK FAN AND RETIRED RED CARPET LIBRARIAN, VIKKI HORAN OF TOPEKA. The Red Carpet is an exemplary program of the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library (TSCPL) serving, among others, blind, visually impaired, low vision and homebound Topekans by bringing books, audio-books and music to their homes: private, assisted living and nursing homes. Vikki began working at Red Carpet in 1988 and retired in 2016.

The TSCPL program was ahead of its time and received national recognition for its unique outreach for persons who could not travel to the library. Instead, Vikki says, the library came to them.

Vikki loved her job because she got to know the people for whom she was selecting books, which helped her select books, including large print and audio books to match the needs, interests and desires of her regular clients. The Red Carpet program is now almost 50 years old and was started by Jean Tevis (retired). Jean started the program by filling grocery carts with books to deliver in the area surrounding the library. The program later graduated to volunteers using their own cars to deliver books. And now the library has its own bookmobile.

You can find out more about the Red Carpet by calling 785-580-4400, and asking for LaVoyce Ewing or visiting https://tscpl.org/services/red-carpet. It is unknown how many libraries in Kansas have programs like the Red Carpet. Also we have to put a plug in for Lawrence’s AudioReader program, for the blind, visually and print impaired: a program also founded by KABC’s founder, philanthropist Petey Cerf, located at: https://reader.ku.edu/. Audio Reader services are available throughout Kansas.

KABC Visits Nursing Home Post-COVID Lockdown

KABC is getting back to it’s roots once again: touring a nursing home and interviewing residents just like our founders did nearly 50 years ago, and have done throughout our history.

Executive Director Margaret Farley made it a priority to stop in and visit a continuing care community while she and Outreach & Sustainability Coordinator Claire Shanovich visited the Wichita area for a conference. During the visit Margaret and Claire toured the nursing facility together, and later Margaret toured the assisted living facility while Claire talked with a resident on the porch to learn about his life at the home. KABC recognizes the importance of facility visits to inform our understanding of the experiences of those for whom we advocate.

Advocacy In Action

Support KABC At No Cost!

Dillons/Kroger

Before you shop at Dillons be sure to designate KABC as your Community Rewards Charity, to improve elder care as you shop. Click the photo to sign up and designate.
Restoring Visitation Rights in Facilities after COVID

KABC APPLAUDS the new State Long Term Care Ombudsman (SLTCO), Camille Russell, for her excellent article in the Kansas Reflector.

Ms. Russell rightfully calls out the ongoing practice of many nursing and assisted living facilities to unnecessarily restrict the visitation rights of residents living under their roofs. It is still happening in too many Kansas nursing and assisted living facilities.

We hear from families that residents and their visitors are being told there is a facility limit on the number of visitors allowed in the care home at any one time, or only so many visitors per day or per week. Some claim federal law requires these limits. That is simply not so. Federal law still protects the right of residents to have visitors of their choosing anytime, any day, several times a day. This is a throwback to nursing home care before the Nursing Home Reform Law of 1987. Vaccinations are working to control the virus. Facilities must, as always, assure resident safety and residents' rights. They simply cannot breach human rights just because they do not have enough staff, it is too much trouble or they fear the oversight of visitors once again in their buildings. We know isolation, loneliness and depression are dangerous to residents' health, safety and welfare and this continued ban on visitors puts all residents at unnecessary risk.

We join the State Long Term Care Ombudsman in calling on the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services to revoke assisted living facilities' "authority" to block or curb visitors. Federally regulated nursing facility owners and operators know, or should know, they no longer have any real reason to block, narrowly limit or otherwise thwart residents' rights to visitors. We appreciate the commitment of the SLTCO to the health, safety and quality of life for all nursing home residents in Kansas.

Resources

How to Prevent Elder Abuse: "Failing Mom"

By Evie Curtis, Development Officer at Assured Trust Company and former KABC board member.

"There are times you do everything right, you do everything the "experts" tell you to do, you commit your time, your heart, and it all falls short. Barbara and Sally have reached the end of their collective rope in trying to help their mom." Read the full article here.

With Workers In Short Supply, Seniors Often Wait Months For Home Health Care

For at least 20 years, national experts have warned about the dire consequences of a shortage of nursing assistants and home aides as tens of millions of baby boomers hit their senior years. "Low wages and benefits, hard working conditions, heavy workloads, and a job that has been stigmatized by society make worker recruitment and retention difficult," concluded a 2001 report from the Urban Institute and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

This article from NPR touches on several topics like Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), Better Care Better John, staff turnover/low wages, etc.

COVID-19 Resources

Deaths of assisted living residents spiked during COVID-19 pandemic. A new study, led by Brown
researchers shows the crucial need for specific attention to be paid to assisted living residences in response to pandemics and other emergencies.

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From the National Consumer Voice: Reports Show Limits on Visitation Continue to Harm Residents

Despite the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccinations, the precipitous decline of COVID-19 cases and deaths in nursing homes, and the relaxation of some visitation restrictions, residents and families continue to face limitations on visitation and daily activities. The Consumer Voice has released reports in January and in May, based on surveys to families. They still here that residents continue to be significantly limited in their activities inside facilities, including being confined to their rooms, being unable to dine communally, and having little or no group activities.

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About Kansas Advocates for Better Care

KABC is a charitable 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to improve long-term care for older adults in Kansas. Our mission is achieved through public policy advocacy, trainings and education, and by providing guidance & support to older adults and their families who need help with long-term care issues.

Our Contact Information

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