

Care Connect of Hampton Roads

Christina Drumm-Boyd helps families care for loved ones, plan for future care

BY TRENNA NEES

Talking with family members about aging is hard. Considering details like funeral planning, nursing homes versus assisted living centers, living wills, asset reduction, Medicare versus Medicaid – all of it is overwhelming and even emotional. These are difficult decisions and not always very well understood. But there is help available to sort through the mountain of information and the decisions to be made whether it is personal future planning, or planning for an aging parent.

Care Connect of Hampton Roads specializes in serving both seniors and the families that care for them. Owner and President Christina Drumm-Boyd knows the challenges and the frustration that can accompany caring for the elderly.

She saw it on a daily basis when working with patients and their families at an area residential care facility. She knew then that there had to be more for seniors and their families. It shouldn't have to be that hard and that emotionally depleting. There should be some way to easily find the information or assistance needed to make sound, resolute decisions regarding personal aging care.

So it wasn't long after leaving that position that Christina decided to help family and friends with those very same issues. And then it really hit home: She had to deal with the same issues with her very own mother.

The difference was that her mother had a plan, one that Christina helped her mother to devise. And then Christina knew what she really wanted and needed to do. She had to help other families have peace of mind when the time came for either themselves or their aging parents to face the inevitable.

Although Christina has a teaching degree from Old Dominion University, her passion and personal experience to care for the aging urged her to make her vision a reality. She successfully earned her Certified Seniors Advisor (CSA) certificate in 2007.

As a CSA through the Society of Certified Senior Advisors based out of Denver, Colorado, Christina is trained in understanding the most important issues regarding senior care and planning. There are 20 different principles that she intensely and rigorously studied for to earn her qualification, even signing a code of ethics agreement to uphold the integrity of the purpose.

Care Connect of Hampton Roads offers a variety of services focusing on individual needs through a certified assessment.

Care Connect works with families and seniors to find viable at-home options to include coordination of home health aids, companion aids and even assistance with daily living needs such as home repair needs.

The company also provides in-home service coordination, screening and monitoring to ensure that each family member rests assured knowing that their parent or relative is receiving care from qualified, trained and ethical providers. Care Connect staff provides close monitoring to ensure that physical, mental and emotional needs are being met.

For seniors and their family members who need to find residential care service, Care Connect assists families and seniors to arrange all aspects of placement into a healthcare or retirement community, which includes assistance with Medicare or Medicaid applications. Care Connect services also offer care-plan assessments to identify potential issues, determine eli-



Certified Seniors Advisor Christina Drumm-Boyd gets ready to go consult with another family to help them plan for future care of aging family members.

gibility and specific personal needs of the client.

"We also act as a liaison to families living away from the parent so that there is someone near to handle issues if and when they arise," Christina says. "There is nothing more frustrating than needing to get to your parent or aging relative to resolve an issue and not being able to get there expediently. We provide that peace of mind and alleviate the stress and anxiety of feeling helpless when you need it most. And family members rest easier knowing that if their child cannot be there right away, we can. There is someone on their side to listen, to comfort and to address their concerns."

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But it is not just reactive personal care and services that Christina and Care Connect offer. One of the most common and overlooked issues of aging is planning. And that is where Care Connect can provide peace of mind before there is an emergency situation. The goal of Care Connect is to assist seniors with maintaining quality of life whether they are still able to remain at home or to assist in residential care placement, to provide financial guidance, to offer legal resources, to facilitate insurance coordination, and to ultimately provide an end of life customized plan of action.

"In most cases, family members find that their parents have nothing in place that would direct their children to oversee their personal wishes regarding healthcare, finances and personal asset," she states.

Planning for the future is so important, in fact, that Christina recently presented a program for the Hampton Roads Society of Human Resource Managers, explaining how her newly devised employee benefit program called Care Connect at Work can

help before a crisis situation arises.

"When I meet with clients and we go over a comprehensive plan that covers all the bases regarding their personal aging needs or their parent's, it is amazing the look of relief that their faces reveal," Christina says. "It's true that it's an unpleasant thought to think about the fact that you yourself or your parent may become incapacitated at a moments notice. But it happens. And when my clients know that they have a plan of action to address common aging occurrences, like bad falls that leave a parent housebound or unable to get around by themselves in order to bathe or even eat, they feel better and so do their parents."

Christina also encourages anyone and everyone who is going to have a say in the direction of care to be present at the consultation so that everyone's needs are met and all voices are heard.

"I reiterate to my clients that this is a thoughtful and well-organized plan that will enable them to feel in charge of their personal care or the care of their parents. As unpleasant as it may see, it is instrumental in going forward in the right direction and it provides peace of mind. Minimizing the chaos and the feelings of helplessness helps the family and the loved one to transition more assuredly. I truly believe that Care Connect of Hampton Roads can provide a sense of calmness in the midst of the storm," she says thoughtfully. "Having a plan makes all the difference in the world!"



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