



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
For More Information, contact:

Shelene Treptow or Ann Bannes
The Hauser Group, Inc. St. Andrew's Senior Solutions
(314) 436-9090 (314) 726-5766

**ST. ANDREW'S SENIOR SOLUTIONS ENCOURAGES CAREGIVERS TO 'SPEAK OUT'
AS NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH APPROACHES**

ST. LOUIS, MO., OCT. 20, 2009 . . . In any given year, an estimated 50 million people provide some level of caregiving services. And despite the fact that the care they provide is valued at more than \$375 billion a year, the majority of these caregivers carry out their duties in silence, going virtually unnoticed as they go about their daily caregiving routines. As the nation prepares to celebrate *National Family Caregivers Month*, St. Andrew's Senior Solutions is encouraging area caregivers to speak out about the valuable role they are playing in the lives of their loved ones, and working to demonstrate how speaking out can help shed light on the growing issues surrounding caregivers and help them feel less isolated in their caregiving roles.

A caregiver is defined as any individual, who out of love and concern, takes on responsibility for the physical care and emotional well being of an aging loved one. From providing transportation to doctor appointments and the pharmacy, preparing meals and assisting with bathing and grooming to helping pay bills, administering medications and offering companionship, the duties of a caregiver are seemingly endless.

"With more and more seniors now seeking to age in their homes or being forced to for economic reasons, the role of a caregiver continues to grow and expand," said Ann Bannes, Vice President, St. Andrew's Senior Solutions. "The current reality is that family caregivers are serving as long-term care providers for their loved ones. But, because so many caregivers consider their responsibilities to be nothing more than family duties, they don't identify themselves as caregivers. As a result, their incredible contributions and personal sacrifices are going unnoticed, their needs are going unmet and they're feeling as though they are alone in their responsibilities."

Of the approximately 50 million individuals serving as caregivers in the U.S., current statistics indicate that family caregivers are providing 80% of all home health care services, with 40% also providing some level of nursing support to their aging loved ones. On average, caregivers spend 10 hours a week attending to their loved ones' needs, with one in every 12 caregivers devoting 35 hours or more per week to their caregiving duties, often in addition to maintaining full or part-time jobs and juggling other family responsibilities. The result is stressful lifestyle that causes caregivers to experience more health-related problems, more emotional stress and higher rates of depression than the rest of the population.

-more-

National Family Caregivers Month

First and Final Add

The issues surrounding family caregivers are also taking a toll on corporate America, which loses an estimated \$33.6 billion each year as a result of the decreased employee productivity due to caregiving responsibilities.

“We want caregivers to know they are not alone, and that choosing to stand up and be counted can help protect the health and safety of their loved ones and themselves,” added Bannes. “By nature, caregiving is a selfless act. But, by simply assuming that they are just ordinary Americans who are doing their jobs as devoted family members, caregivers may jeopardize their health and the health and well-being of those they care for. That’s why it is so critical for caregivers to recognize and celebrate the valuable role they play, and become advocates for their own needs and the needs of the greater caregiver population.”

With more and more individuals taking on caregiving responsibilities, Bannes notes that it will become increasingly important for caregivers to speak out, in order to engage lawmakers, make them aware of the issues surrounding family caregivers and encourage them to keep those issues top of mind as part of health care policy.

“As caregiving advocates, we can play an important role in helping to shape local and national policies so they address the growing issues surrounding caregivers,” said Bannes. “And with caregiver needs expected to skyrocket as the baby boomer generation ages, there’s no better time than now for caregivers to speak out and make their needs and challenges known.”

Individuals in search of caregiving resources are encouraged to contact St. Andrew’s Senior Solutions at (314) 726-5766, or visit www.standrewsseniorsolutions.com. The non-profit organization offers a wealth of information to caregivers, including tips for handling stress, managing time, dealing with health issues and finding appropriate support. It also employs an experienced staff of Geriatric Care Managers dedicated to providing caregivers with the assistance and solutions they need.

St. Andrew’s Senior Solutions is a private, non-profit organization that is an affiliate of the St. Andrew’s Resources for Seniors System. Founded in 1961, the St. Andrew’s Resources for Seniors System is not-for-profit and provides housing, health, in-home care and supportive services, as well as services and assistance to the family caregivers of seniors. Currently, St. Andrew’s sponsors and/or manages 20 senior communities (independent living, assisted living and skilled care, as well as apartment communities for low-income seniors) in Missouri and Illinois, and serves more than 5,000 seniors annually.

###