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**ST. ANDREW'S SENIOR SOLUTIONS RECOGNIZES
FALLS PREVENTION AWARENESS DAY 2009 WITH TIPS
DESIGNED TO REDUCE FALLS IN OLDER ADULTS**

ST. LOUIS, MO., SEPT. 16, 2009 . . . According to data from the Centers for Disease Control, nearly 16,000 older adults, aged 65 and older, die from injuries related to unintentional falls each year. With Sept. 22 marking the official start of the fall season, St. Andrew's Senior Solutions is joining the nation in recognizing Falls Prevention Awareness Day 2009. The annual event is observed on the first day of fall to promote and increase awareness about fall prevention among the senior population, and St. Andrew's is marking the occasion by providing a host of tips designed to help older adults prevent falls and the serious injuries that can accompany them.

"As we age, changes in vision, hearing, reflexes and muscle strength can increase the risk of falls in older adults, as can disorders such as arthritis and diabetes, side effects from the medications we take or safety hazards which may be present in our home environments," said Ann Bannes, Vice President of St. Andrew's Senior Solutions. "The good news is that falls are preventable, and with Falls Prevention Awareness Day 2009 upon us, we're working to show seniors how they can avoid the risk of falling."

To stay safe, St. Andrew's offers the following suggestions:

- Get regular hearing and vision check-ups. Have your eyes examined each year for vision changes, cataracts, glaucoma or other eye problems. Your hearing should also be checked every two years. And if a hearing aid is needed, be sure it's properly fitted.
- Discuss the risk of medication side effects with your doctor or pharmacist. Be sure to find out if a medicine being prescribed to you could affect your coordination or balance.
- Get regular exercise. Exercise helps improve strength, muscle tone and balance, and keeps joints flexible.
- Limit alcohol intake. Even small amounts of alcohol can interfere with medications and could affect balance.
- Take your time getting up after lying down for long periods of time. Getting up too quickly can cause you to become dizzy.
- If you feel unsteady, a cane or walker can provide balance. Be sure to use extra caution in wet and icy conditions.
- Wear low-heeled, rubber-soled shoes with good support. Refrain from wearing socks or smooth-soled slippers on hardwood and tile floors and on stairs.

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St. Andrew's offers fall prevention tips

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Additional changes in the home environment can also go a long way towards preventing falls. The following tips can help keep seniors safe at home:

- Be sure stairways and halls have good lighting and are clutter-free. Ensure carpet is firmly attached and use reflective tape at the top and bottom of stairs. Also check to make sure handrails are tightly fastened and run the entire length of the stairs.
- Arrange furniture in living areas to avoid interference with walking, properly secure area rugs and remove electrical and telephone cords from walking paths.
- In the bedroom, place a nightlight by the bed or check to see if there is a light switch within reach of the bed. Telephones should also be placed near the bed, and the floor should be free from clutter.
- Install grab bars near the toilet and bathtub in bathrooms. Also use nonskid tub mats or abrasive strips inside the tub and non-skid carpet on the floor. In addition, raised toilet seats can be useful for those who have difficulty standing or sitting.
- Clean up kitchen spills immediately, place items on lower shelves for easy reach, and use step stools on even surfaces when retrieving something on a high shelf.
- Outside, clear obstacles on walkways, repair stair and sidewalk cracks and remove ice from stairs and walkways.

St. Andrew's also encourages family members to get actively involved in preventing falls among their older adult loved ones by watching for noticeable changes in strength and balance and thoroughly checking their family members' homes for dangers that could result in falls.

To learn more about fall prevention and the potentially devastating impact of falls on the older adult population, contact St. Andrew's Senior Solutions, log on to www.standrewsseniorsolutions.com, or call (314) 726-5766.

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. To learn more about St. Andrew's Senior Solutions, call (314) 726-5766 or visit www.standrewsseniorsolutions.com.

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