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For More Information, contact:



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

**HOLIDAY SEASON OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES TO EVALUATE AN AGING LOVED ONE'S
NEED FOR ADDITIONAL HELP AT HOME**

ST. LOUIS, MO., DEC. x, 2009 . . . In today's tough economic climate, increasing numbers of older adults are choosing to age in their homes, either because they can't sell their homes or because they are unable to afford the high cost of retirement living. With more and more seniors now aging in place, it's important for family members to be aware of warning signs that may signal the need for additional assistance at home to ensure that their older family members can continue to remain healthy and comfortable in their homes. And, the holiday season can serve as an excellent time to examine the health and well-being of aging loved ones.

"For older adults, the home represents a symbol of independence and plays a key role in enhancing quality of life, so it's no surprise that the majority of today's seniors desire to remain in their homes as they age," said Ann Bannes, Vice President, St. Andrew's Senior Solutions. "And with the economy still struggling, the number of seniors opting to age in place will continue to grow. But as our older loved ones age in their homes, it's important to be mindful of the physical, mental and psychological changes that accompany aging and can affect their well-being, many of which may be evident as we gather with them during the holidays."

Warning signs can include changes in eating habits or personal hygiene, frequent falls or loss of balance, decreased interest in social activities and signs of memory loss like forgetting to take medications, turn off the stove or remember important dates or names. An inability to accomplish daily tasks like grocery shopping, grooming, household chores and paying bills is another warning sign. For caregivers of aging loved ones, these kinds of changes may signal the need to enlist the help of a home health aide and/or Geriatric Care Manager (GCM).

Home care personal assistants can assist with bathing and grooming and other activities of daily living; help with nutrition, medication and diabetic management; perform housekeeping chores; run errands or provide transportation or escort services; and offer companionship. Services also offer a Respite for the caregiver. GCMs can make a professional assessment of an older adult's condition, connect family members with care services, help them find community resources, hire and supervise home help, if needed, and serve as an overall source of information for caregivers. GCMs can also play an important role in helping caregivers identify when more comprehensive in-home care may be needed for an aging loved one, or if a move into an independent, assisted or skilled nursing environment might be more appropriate.

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Holidays offer opportunities to evaluate need for additional help at home
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“If the holidays reveal a need for additional help at home for an aging loved one, we want caregivers to know that help is available,” noted Bannes. “St. Andrew’s employs an experienced staff of home health professionals and Geriatric Care Managers who are dedicated to helping older adults age in place safely, and strive to provide caregivers with the assistance and solutions they need to help them better care for their family members as they age.”

Individuals interested in learning more about home health and geriatric care management services are encouraged to contact St. Andrew’s Senior Solutions at (314) 726-5766, or visit www.standrews1.com. The non-profit organization offers an extensive list of services designed to enhance health and independence and help seniors remain at home as they age. The organization can also provide caregivers with a wealth of information, including tips for handling stress, managing time, dealing with health issues and finding appropriate support.

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.

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