

NEWS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE

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### Local Agencies Team Up for Spiritual Care for the Elderly

El Paso, TX—Three area entities are teaming up this year to assure that local citizens who care for their elderly family members are recognized. The Area Agency On Aging, Royal Estates of El Paso, and University Behavioral Health Hospital of El Paso have teamed up to bring “Aging Issues in Basic Behavioral Health: Spiritual Care for the Elderly and their Caregivers,” beginning October 31, and concluding November 14, 2008. The original thought for caring for caregivers came from Miriam Maldonado, who serves as the Caregiver Education Coordinator for the Area Agency on Aging. “What we want to do is invite every faith-based organization in the El Paso Area to nominate one of their parishioners who is caring for an elderly family member to be recognized,” says Maldonado. “Once the person is nominated, we will work to give them a day of pampering, and of healing.”

Once they heard of the concept, the staff members of University Behavioral Health were on board with the mission. UBH houses the faith-based recovery program which was begun by renowned Physician and Theologian Frank Minirth, M.D. “We asked Dr. Minirth to come to El Paso to assist in training the people who will be involved with the day of healing, and we will participate with The Area Agency on Aging in any way necessary,” says UBH Chief Executive Officer Ron Mays. And Royal Estates Executive Director Isabel Rodriguez agrees. “Recognition of the caregivers is crucial. They are some of the most under-appreciated people around. We are happy to be joining forces to give these people what they need, and deserve.”

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Caregivers, add one

The process will begin with a training of local faith-based counselors by Dr. Minirth at Royal Estates of El Paso on October 31, 2008. The training for the counselors will be geared toward working with caregivers to debrief and manage their stressors while caring for their loved ones. The training will begin at 8:00 a.m. with a breakfast and tour of the Royal Estates Community. The presentation by Dr. Minirth will begin at 9:00 a.m., and will continue until noon. Three CEU's will be offered for social workers, counselors, and psychologists. The presentation is free, but space is limited, and will be first come, first served. Counselors wishing to sign up for the presentation are asked to call UBH at 915-544-4000 to reserve their space. The training will be held in the Royal Estates main conference room at 435 South Mesa Hills Drive.

Once trained, the counselors will in turn be available for caregivers on November 14 during the City's "Day of Caring" in order to allow the caregivers that debriefing time. Additionally, Royal Estates will feature a book reading and signing on November 13<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., featuring Pat Samples, author of the book Daily Comforts for Caregivers. Faith-based organizations wishing to nominate a member of their organization for recognition are asked to call Miriam Maldonado at the Area Agency on Aging at 915-533-0998. Anyone seeking any additional information is asked to call Tim Bullock from UBH at 915-525-8314.