



Charles E. Smith Life Communities

HEBREW HOME OF GREATER WASHINGTON • WASSERMAN & SMITH-KOGOD RESIDENCES
COHEN-ROSEN HOUSE • ELDERSAFE CENTER • HIRSH HEALTH CENTER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charles E. Smith Life Communities expands coalition working with ElderSAFE Center

Rockville, Maryland. Jan. 29, 2015 – Charles E. Smith Life Communities, the largest senior services provider in the region, welcomed advocates for seniors, including local, state, and Federal representatives, to inaugurate the ElderSAFE Center, which officially launched in September 2014. The ElderSAFE Center was established to safeguard seniors from abuse and to provide safe, temporary shelter for abused seniors. This is the first program of its kind in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

“Elder abuse encompasses physical, sexual, psychological, and financial mistreatment as well as neglect. It is a complicated and multi-faceted problem that is underreported. For every one case of elder abuse that is reported, 23 cases are not,” notes Tovah Kasdin, JD, director of the ElderSAFE Center at Charles E. Smith Life Communities. “Elder abuse is a serious issue, affecting as many as one in ten older adults living on their own.”

An attorney with more than 15 years of experience in Domestic Violence law, Tovah Kasdin formerly served as a prosecutor with the Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office handling domestic violence cases. “We know caregivers can be abusers; family members can be abusive; people we trust can take advantage of us financially. So we know elder abuse is difficult and it’s personal.”

To help strengthen the community’s coordinated response to this problem, the ElderSAFE Center has forged a multi-disciplinary coalition of community partners, including area hospitals, law enforcement, and social service agencies. “Together we can address this issue,” Kasdin said, a sentiment echoed by Debbie Feinstein, chief, Family Violence Division, Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office.

Feinstein spoke to the more than 100 attendees at the community ElderSAFE celebration at Charles E. Smith Life Communities January 28, underscoring the county’s anticipated growth in the 65+ population and the need to leverage financial resources, political capital, and real-time discussions across Montgomery County agencies to address elder abuse.

“Only four percent of reported elder abuse cases come from the elder person; 96 percent of the reports come from somewhere else. That makes us – physicians, law enforcement, care providers -- so

important. We need to recognize the red flags of elder abuse, act as ambassadors, and educate the community,” Feinstein said.

Elizabeth Loewy addressed the area of financial exploitation, a common form of elder abuse. Loewy was previously chief of the Elder Abuse Unit, New York County District Attorney’s Office, and is now general counsel and senior vice president of EverSafe, an organization working to identify potential financial exploitation, scams, and fraud before irreparable harm is done. She emphasized the role of dementia, isolation, lack of awareness, and unscrupulous heirs in “financial violence.” Loewy will participate in a seminar for professionals on March 19 on protecting seniors from financial abuse.

The ElderSAFE Center at Charles E. Smith Life Communities is modeled on a program established at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale, New York, and is supported by the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc.; Montgomery County, Maryland; and the Board of Governors of Charles E. Smith Life Communities. Community partners include:

- Catholic Charities Legal Network of the Archdiocese of Washington
- Holy Cross Hospital
- Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA)
- Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA)
- Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA)
- Montgomery County Adult Protective Services (APS)
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Police, Elder Abuse Unit
- Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office

Referrals to the ElderSAFE Center at Charles E. Smith Life Communities can be made by agencies or programs at the ElderSAFE helpline, 301.816.5099, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Questions about the March 19 seminar can be directed to 301.770.8329. Additional information is available at www.eldersafe.org.

Charles E. Smith Life Communities was founded in 1910 in Washington, DC, as the Hebrew Home for the Aged, and moved to Rockville in 1969. Today, the organization provides services to more than 1,000 Washington-area seniors on its 38-acre campus in Rockville. Services include long-term care and the Post-Acute Care Center at the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington; independent senior living at Revitz House and Ring House; assisted living at Landow House; memory care assisted living at Cohen-Rosen House; a medical practice at the Hirsh Health Center; and the ElderSAFE Center which provides temporary shelter, advocacy, and education to benefit victims of elder abuse.

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