

The Wilson County Family Caregiver Support Program

If you are caring for any person age 60 or over, such as a relative, friend, or neighbor, you can qualify for various kinds of assistance from the **Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP)**, an Area Agency on Aging program funded under the Older Americans Act. *The caregiver can be of any age.* The care you are providing could be simply preparing meals, grocery shopping, managing medications, paying bills, transportation to doctors, or more involved functions such as assistance with bathing and dressing and other personal care, and arranging for services.

In Wilson County, the Family Caregiver Support Program provides 1) care planning and management to assess needs and arrange for supportive services; 2) referrals for home health and personal care services, emergency response systems, telephone reassurance; 3) educational seminars for powerful tools for caregivers; 4) respite services for temporary relief from caregiving activities; 5) a caregiver support group; 6) advance planning and advance directives; 7) a low cost nutritional supplement program; and other services as indicated by a needs assessment 8) referrals for grandparents age 60 or over raising grandchildren.

Respite services for the caregiver are grant funded and provided through a local home health agency. This service includes a care level assessment by a registered nurse and respite service by a certified nursing assistant. This service is free and can be extended through cost sharing.

The **Caregiver Support Group** meets monthly on the second Thursday from 11AM until noon at the First Baptist Church on Nash Street at Park Avenue in Wilson. The group is facilitated by the program coordinator and offers programs with a format in accordance with the needs of the group members.

Powerful Tools for Caregiving, designed by Mather Lifeways and licensed through AARP, is a course given twice yearly for caregivers which provides twenty five tools for meeting the challenges of caregiving. Some topics covered are: managing stress, communicating effectively especially in challenging situations, working with health care professionals, being assertive though not aggressive, getting personal and caregiving needs met, using community resources, dealing with guilt, anger, transitions and loss. This course is available to individual caregivers as well as church groups and community organizations.

During the several years the program has been funded in Wilson County, the Caregiver Support Program has served well over 100 caregivers and has grown in services in accordance with the needs of the registered caregivers. The office is located in the Senior Activity Center on Goldsboro Street next to the NC Dept of motor Vehicles and the Agriculture Building. The program coordinator can be contacted by phone at 206-4067.

The FCSP would like to speak at your club or civic organization, or with your church group about helping older adults remain independent in their own home; contact the coordinator for information. Employers may contact the coordinator for information on assistance for their employees with caregiver responsibilities. Physicians provide information via the Making the Link program with caregiver materials placed in their professional offices.

As a resource provider for seniors, the Caregiver Support Program actively participates on the Wilson County Council on Aging. The Wilson County Council on Aging meets the third Tuesday of each month at 3:30PM at the Wilson County Senior Activity Center located at 1808 S. Goldsboro Street next to the NC Dept. of Motor Vehicles and the Agriculture Building.