Sponsored Content

Alabama Agency on Aging expands its advocacy to ensure justice for older adults

e are all aging, and for those in the latter stages of this process. it can often become overlooked, forgotten, or misunderstood in society. Older adults are often lacking the adequate care and support needed during this important stage of life.

The Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A) is helping to educate about the importance to support older adults and family caregivers, by equipping them with proper tools so they can better care for their loved one.

As a society, much is done to prepare people to become parents of children, but little is done to prepare children to become caregivers of aging parents.

"It is important for family members, neighbors, and local residents to serve as the 'voice' for older adults when needed, which can stop them from feeling isolated and depressed, especially if the elder lives alone with little or no support," said Carolyn Fortner, Executive Director of M4A. "We need to rally around them and ment so people can live with continue to provide them a sense of community, and a social life, that empowers will increase coordination and energizes them to age with dignity, purpose, and responders, law enforcepeace. They have given so much of themselves over the vears, and now it is time for us to give back to them and support them to continue to age in place across our communities.

M4A, in partnership with several key stakeholders, and support to older resihas brought together a network of multi-disciplinary agencies and organizations it organization, 4 ALL as a strong force to create the Elder Justice Alliance of Alliance as well as work with Shelby County. The mission of the Elder Justice Alliance is to mobilize communities Program and a Temporary to prevent and properly Elder Emergency Shelter respond to adult mistreat- in Montevallo. This facility



There are four kinds of people in the world. Those who have needed a caregiver, those who have been a caregiver, those who are a caregiver, and those who will be a caregiver."

– Rosalyn Carter

dignity, purpose, and peace as they age. The Alliance and collaboration among ment, service providers, and other relevant stakeholders; improve the prevention, detection, reporting of, and response to elder mistreatment; and deter elder abuse through community education, professional training, dents and caregivers.

M4A's new nonprof-Foundation, will oversee the stakeholders to develop an Adult and Caregiver Respite

will also provide direct support and assistance to older adults and their caregivers and provide extensive training to professionals and the general public.

"The center will also enhance autonomy and independence, while mitigating the risks of recurrent abuse so vulnerable adults can remain safe and independent in their local communities as they age," Fortner said.

According to an article published on AARP. org, more than one in five Americans (21.3 percent) are caregivers, having provided care to an adult or child with special needs at some time in the past 12 months.

This totals an estimated

United States, a number the financial or emotional Carter who said, which is up from the estimated 43.5 million caregivers in 2015.

'There are many misconceptions about our aging population," Fortner said. "Many perceive our older population as 'frail, elderly, and dependent' on others. Most elders are thriving, very active, and strong leaders across their local communities. Over 90 percent want to live out their lives at home, in their communities that they helped build for the other generations. We need to support them to 'age in place' when they need our assistance."

While most families want to keep their loved ones in a home setting as they 53.0 million adults in the age, many may not have

resources needed to keep them at home, which is why M4A encourages the importance of planning early for a caregiving journey. Some of the ways to do this include seeking support, training, and resources through the

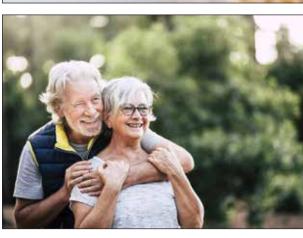
aging networks. "The local Area Agencies on Aging across the state provide extensive resources, support and programs to care for older adults, individuals of any age with a disability, and caregivers," Fortner said. "For the purpose of the elder justice center, we will be easily accessible to offer support, direct services, training and

resources." Referencing Rosalyn AAAs in Alabama.

are four kinds of people in the world. Those who have needed a caregiver, those who have been a caregiver, those who are a caregiver, and those who will be a caregiver," Fortner said the statement is true and if elder justice center and families can begin the discussion and better "prepare to care," the task will be less strenuous on the care recipient, and the family

> members. For additional resources visit www.m4a.org. www.elderjustice.org or www.4allfoundation.org, or by visiting the Alabama Department of Senior Services website at www. alabamaageliine.gov to find the contact number for all







CENTER 4 **ELDER JUSTICE** & ADVOCACY

Help us purchase a building we can call "HOME" for 4 ALL Foundation and the Center for Elder Justice & Advocacy.

Our goal is to build a stronger social structure to support older adults and their caregivers.

Our Mission is to meet the diverse elder justice needs of **Alabama's Older Adults through:**

- Elder Justice Resource Center Victim & Elder Justice Support Services
 - Professional & Community Training
 County Elder Justice Networks
- Caregiver & Adult Respite Program (Coming Soon)
 Temporary Emergency Shelter (Coming Soon)



To Report Elder Abuse & Mistreatment **Adult Abuse Hotline: 1-800-458-7214**

Reports can also be made to a County Department of Human Resources or local law enforcement. Reports can be made anonymously.

elderjusticeal.org | Phone: 205-490-8448



