



Caregiving Coalition Honorees

The Next 20 Years in Caregiving Conference | March 21, 2016

This year, we are honored to host three family caregiving advocates who have launched new family caregiving coalitions in their home states. To learn about our National Network of Caregiving Coalitions, visit www.caregiving.org/coalitions.

Dr. Angela Norman, Arkansas Caregiving Coalition

The Arkansas Coalition is facilitated by Sherry White, Project Director from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. The coalition is open to anyone in Arkansas with an interest in caregiving. Started in 2016, current members include employees of the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging who facilitate the Schmieding Home Caregiver Training Program with a goal of increasing the number of formally trained home caregivers and family members in Arkansas. There are currently eight caregiver replication sites in Arkansas. Members of the coalition also work in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Human Services and the Arkansas Children's Hospital Foundation to train Respite caregivers statewide. The Arkansas Coalition is also planning to be a partner in an upcoming statewide evidence-based practice caregiver support program, which will offer resources and counseling to informal caregivers.



Chris MacLellan, South Florida Caregiving Coalition

Chris MacLellan is spearheading the development of the South Florida Caregiving Coalition which will be headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The coalition will be a community of business representatives who come together to address the needs of family caregivers across the lifespan. The South Florida Caregiving Coalition is an outcome of Chris's MA Thesis entitled, *Caregiving, Stress and Impact in the Work Place* and will focus attention on caregiver stress and its financial impact on both the caregiver employee and employer. Chris is affectionately known as "The Bow Tie Guy" in many caregiving circles and the author of *What's The Deal With Caregiving?*. He has been an ardent advocate for caregivers and their care recipients through his blog, *The Purple Jacket* and weekly radio show, *Healing Ties*. Chris and his deceased partner, Bernard Richard Schiffer were featured in the South Florida Sun-Sentinel article, "In Sickness and in Health: A Couple's Final Journey" which was seen by over 400,000 people worldwide and nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 2015.



Spencer Blalock, LCSW, BCD, Mississippi Family Caregiver Coalition

Spencer Blalock currently serves as a member of the Steering Committee for the Mississippi Caregiver Coalition and recently served as chair of the Mississippi Caregivers Task Force. The Task Force was created by the Mississippi Senate Concurrent Resolution 561 to study the issue of caregiving support in the state. After gathering input from several state agencies, advocacy groups, and family caregivers, the Task Force made a report to the governor and legislature in December 2014. The report's first recommendation was to pass the C.A.R.E. Act, which then passed the legislature in 2015. The Mississippi Family Caregiver Coalition was formed shortly thereafter. Any organization, public or private, as well as private citizens can join. The purpose of the coalition is: (1) to build and sustain a community coalition with a focus on improving the well-being of caregivers; (2) to be a vehicle for the patient and family voice; (3) to organize and encourage efforts of organizations with shared visions with the goal of improving interagency information and referral; and (4) to collaborate and encourage the education of caregivers about accessing community resources and support networks. Current priorities of the coalition include: applying for Lifespan Respite Grant funding; creating a comprehensive resource guide for caregivers; and improving access to caregiver education.

