



United Way
of Bradley County

Senior citizens caregiving program helped through United Way grant

(First in a series detailing the 14 programs receiving United Way of Bradley County grants made possible through the Bradley Memorial Hospital Endowment Fund)

"You just want to make their lives better."

When asked about one of the newest programs in Bradley County, Kim Queen of the Senior Citizens Home Assistance Services said this is their mission.

The Senior Citizens Home Assistance Services (SCHAS) is one of 14 programs to receive a United Way of Bradley County grant from the Bradley Memorial Hospital Endowment Fund, for 2010.



SCHAS actually started in Bradley County in the fall of 2009, but Queen said that it was only serving a few clients at that time, and was being operated out of McMinn County. Logistically, it was difficult to provide the program in this community.

However, receiving the grant has changed that.

"We were so excited to learn that we received the grant, because I am not sure we would have been able to provide these services as well in Bradley County," Queen stated.

SCHAS is presently serving 18 counties in East Tennessee, and has been in operation since 1970.

"SCHAS originated in Knoxville, and has expanded to these other counties, and now includes Bradley County," Queen said. In other areas where fundraisers are conducted to help provide monies for the program, the United Way grant allows the program to devote its first year in Bradley County developing the program and enrolling clients.

Queen said as of mid-January, they now have six clients, and have had 12 clients since beginning last fall. She admitted this is a small number, but pointed out that when the program began in McMinn County, it provided about 50 to 55 hours of caregiving per month, and is now at 110 to 115 hours per week.

"While it took us two years, in Monroe County, we are now providing 3,000 hours a month of care," she noted.

Clients receive services that "are individualized to fit their needs." These can include assisting with homemaker services such as light housekeeping, meal preparations, running errands, arranging appointments, caring for house plants and/or pets, helping write letters and correspondence and medication reminders.

"We do not provide medical care, however, but can remind them when it is time to take medication, or even take them to a doctor for their appointment," Queen explained. She said that the program also provides transportation to religious services, social outings and shopping trips, if the client is able to make such trips.

The program also has an in-home hair care service for those who may not be able to leave their homes.

The SCHAS services are based on a sliding scale because of the financial assistance through the United Way grant. Queen said some of the services provided are free of charge, depending on the client's situation.

"We don't turn anyone away," she said.

Queen did explain that when they provide these services, often times they may find that the person needs a more specialized care, such as services that can be provided by an adult day care facility or even a nursing home.

"Their care ... their wellbeing is our main concern, so if that is best, then we can refer them," she said.

It is easy to see the concern for the clients when speaking with Queen, as she not only serves as the Bradley County Director, but has also provided care to clients since joining the program.

She served as a caregiver to a Bradley County woman who was a cancer patient, staying with that lady for 12 hours a day while the family worked. Queen still remembers fondly the time she spent with the woman and the experience she received caring for her.

"It's amazing, but these folks are so humble and so grateful for you being there. When you first meet them, the first thing that they want is a hug," she said.

Queen said that SCHAS learned of the United Way grants at a meeting of the Community Action Network they attended in 2009. They learned they would begin receiving the funds when the grants were announced in October, and began receiving these funds this month.

"I really don't think we could be here without this help," she said. "Though we loved working with those early clients in Bradley County, it was a strain to operate the program out of McMinn County, and it was very limited due to that."

Now, with a new office set up in the Creekside Center (3555 Keith St., Suite 112), the program is looking at expanding much in the way SCHAS has in McMinn and Monroe counties.

"By the end of the year, I am looking at providing senior assistance services of 300 to 500 hours a week," Queen said.

Matt Ryerson, United Way Vice President of Community Investment Strategies, said that "the SCHAS team is going to be an incredible blessing to many families in our community and we are excited to play a small role in the implementation of this program."

To find out more about SCHAS, contact Kim Queen at (423) 790-1681, or email her at kqueen@schas.org.



GRANT RECIPIENT – Senior Citizens Home Assistance Services was one of 14 programs to receive a United Way grant through the Bradley Memorial Hospital Endowment Fund. From left are: Wanda Musick, Regional Director; Tim Howell, CEO; Linda Rarick, McMinn County Coordinator; Kim Queen, Bradley County Coordinator; and Tom Coulter, CFO.