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Leesburg Patch

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Tips to Keep Senior Loved Ones Safe in Emergencies from Experts



Tips offered from Spring Hills Assisted Living Communities & Poet's Walk Memory Care Communities

Keeping a senior loved one safe in an emergency can be an overwhelming responsibility. Whether it's due to extreme weather conditions, a natural disaster, fire, extended power failures or something with other serious circumstances, there are many steps to take to provide as much comfort and safety as possible. Lesa Scott, Vice President Resident Services & Program Development for Spring Hills Senior Communities and Poet's Walk, Spring Hills Memory Care Communities, believes that providing support for those in need is most important.

Recently, when Hurricane Harvey struck the state of Texas, there was a family in great need of help for their mother. They were able to find immediate refuge at Poet's Walk San Antonio. The family was so relieved that the son wrote this to Poet's Walk, "I cannot thank you enough... My mom was displaced from her facility due to the hurricane, and in less than 24 hours she was moved and settled in... This was the most unbelievable customer service experience I have ever witnessed...I will be forever indebted to Poet's Walk." Scott said the staff felt personally rewarded to be helpful to this family in such a stressful situation.

www.PoetsWalk-SpringHills.com



Scott has created a set of steps to help families prepare for emergencies or what to do during an emergency. She said, "Providing a sense of comfort for seniors during a crisis situation is often the best way we can be helpful. There is much we can't control, but if people in charge stay calm and reassuring, it is the beginning of easing fears of seniors. We are including several tips that we hope will be useful."

**USEFUL TIPS PRIOR TO AND DURING EMERGENCIES:
PRIOR TO EMERGENCY:**

- Create and then update an emergency and evacuation plan annually, including a list of phone numbers for local police dispatch, fire, ambulance services, any kind of emergency support possibly needed.
- Be sure to have a good contact list of all those who care about your loved one including cell numbers and e-mails. This list can be stored "as a group distribution" for quick communication if needed later.
- Determine the nearest exit(s), the best route to follow in advance of an emergency and a designated safe area for sheltering in place.
- Have an ice chest filled with water bottles and refrigerated medicines as well as a list of all medications and doctors contact information.
- Always walk to the nearest exit or designated area, do not run and do not use the elevators.

- Be sure to bring the list of have phone numbers of police dispatch, fire, ambulance services, etc.
- Bring the ice chest of water and refrigerated medicines as well as other vital medications and the list of medications and doctors.
- Just before a storm hits, fill a washing machine with ice and the items wanted to keep cold. The washing machine is designed for water so when the ice melts, it will automatically drain properly.
- Store pictures, documents and even dry goods in the dishwasher; turn off the water supply to the dishwasher. Putting the papers in a plastic bag adds to the protection. The dishwasher is designed to keep water in, therefore it will also keep water out in a flood. Nothing is 100 percent guaranteed so be sure to bring with the most important documents if evacuating.

- Be sure to call 911 and give them name, location and phone number of senior, especially if that person cannot evacuate.



DURING AN EMERGENCY:

These tips and more are already proving to keep the residents at all Spring Hills and Poet's Walk communities safe in an emergency. When Hurricane Irma hit Florida, Nick Lynn, Spring Hills Lake Mary Assisted Living Executive Director, took it one step further by opening the doors to all of the Spring Hills Lake Mary staff and their families. "Our building has many safe areas when sheltering in place and being safe is what's most important," Lynn said. "I knew that some of my staff and their families needed help so bringing them here where we had shelter, food and water was important to me. It also meant that our residents, who were afraid during the storm, had their caregivers they've grown to love here to help them. We wound up with a community filled with amazing support during the Hurricane."

About Spring Hills Senior Communities & Memory Care Communities:

All Spring Hills Senior Communities and Poet's Walk Memory Care Communities offer a distinctive and innovative approach to assisted living, memory care and Home Care Services as led by Alexander Markowits, President/CEO. Signature Touches is the company's approach to offering services that are designed to meet the needs and preferences of residents and clients. Personal choice is top priority, which is exemplified by recreational programs led by professionals in one of the company's eight Spring Hills communities located in NJ, VA, OH and FL, in the company's Poet's Walks communities located in TX, NV, VA and soon-to-be FL, or in their own home. For more information about their commitment to senior living, including information on Spring Hills Home Care Services, visit www.spring-hills.com or www.poetswalk-spring-hills.com.