



Dementia Respite Program Funding Request

Senate Sponsor: Senator Kathleen Passidomo

House Sponsor: Representative Bob Rommel

Naples Senior Center (NSC), a non-sectarian, human service organization, is dedicated to meeting the needs of seniors in Collier and southern Lee Counties. NSC's goal is to help seniors (60 and older) who struggle with isolation, loneliness and dementia. This is achieved by providing professionally delivered services that are welcoming and supportive. The hallmark of NSC is our visionary approach to senior issues, our responsiveness to meeting their needs and our commitment to researching and implementing evidence-based programs to address needs identified within the community. This has been exemplified during COVID-19, with new services and programs offered virtually for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) and their caregivers.

The number of people impacted by dementia is rapidly reaching staggering proportions, particularly in communities such as Naples, Florida, where a third of the population (122,000 individuals) are age 65 and older. By 2025, the number of older adults is expected to increase by 24%. Despite the rapid growth rate in Collier County, there are very limited senior services offered, particularly for the estimated 22,000 seniors with ADRD. NSC has stepped forward to fill that gap and has become the community's leading provider of dementia services to seniors residing at home.

Research has shown the devastating impact of isolation and loneliness on seniors. We are now observing this first hand amongst our clients and their caregivers. Sixty percent (60%) of caregivers of family members with dementia rate the stress as high, or very high. NSC caregivers have expressed to staff that they feel overwhelmed, anxious and depressed. In a recent survey NSC conducted with caregivers, some say they barely have time to go the bathroom by themselves and they are finding it increasingly difficult to meet their own care needs.

NSC, for the last 6 years, has run a Dementia Respite Program for seniors, residing at home, who have a medical diagnosis of ADRD and their caregivers. This program provides socialization and activities to stimulate short and long term memory, to help decrease agitation, reduce anxiety, strengthen communication skills and increase self-esteem. The highlight is music therapy. Research shows participation in activities that are meaningful for individuals with ADRD helps bring purpose to their life. The program is evidence based that centers on the Brookdale Model and the Teepa Snow model of Positive Approach to Dementia which integrates what is known about functional brain changes that occur with dementing conditions. After attending the program caregivers may observe participants are less agitated, have better long term memory recall, show improved communication skills and are more responsive to other people. NSC's Dementia Respite Program has been described as cutting edge, innovative, and provides the highest standard of care for individuals with ADRD. Since COVID-19 we are providing 11 weekly virtual Dementia Respite Groups.

NSC appreciates the continued support the Collier Legislative Delegation has provided this program. We understand the tremendous, pressing budget needs for the upcoming year. We are requesting \$75,000 in funding for this program due the enormous needs facing this segment of the population.

For more information please visit our website: www.naplesseniorcenter.org or call 239-325-4444.