

The Eleanor Palmer Trust

PRESS RELEASE

25 January 2008

Caring for an elderly person?

“A kindly man with a strong sense of duty, my Dad was almost at breaking point after five years of caring for Mum full-time. We, his children, did what we could to support them both, but were looking after families of our own, and had busy jobs. Too proud to ask for help, when Dad finally learnt about respite care, and found a nice place where Mum could be looked after on a short-term basis several times a year, a huge weight was lifted from his shoulders. Just knowing that respite care was available gave Dad the break he needed, and the strength to keep going.”

This is a familiar story. If you are looking after an elderly friend, neighbour or relative, this sort of situation can be difficult for both of you - and you may not know how, or where to get help from, when you most need it.

Respite care enables carers to take a break for a weekend, a week or a month and may involve the elderly person going to stay for a short period of time, perhaps several times a year, in a residential care home such as the popular Canteloves House in Barnet, managed by the Eleanor Palmer Trust (www.eleanorpalmertrust.org.uk).

There is no long-term commitment with respite care. It gives you both the chance to experience the facilities, catering, entertainment, level of daily care, cleanliness and quality of management at first hand BEFORE you even think about whether this may provide a longer-term solution.

Residential care homes in the Borough are inspected regularly by the independent Commission for Social Care Inspection (see www.csci.org.uk). This link is an invaluable guide to standards of care and lists all homes in the Borough. You can do additional research by asking your GP, district nurse, social worker or people involved in community care which care homes they can recommend.

You may prefer to make your own respite care arrangements directly with a care home. Some people prefer to fund respite care themselves too. Information leaflets are available from Cantelowes House by calling 020 8364 8003.

Alternatively, respite care can be arranged by Social Services following an assessment of the person you care for, and also of your own needs under the Carers' Act, if you wish. According to Barnet Council's website (www.barnet.gov.uk/respice-care), you may be required to pay for some of the services you receive. How much you pay will depend on your income and the amount of help you need. You will be asked to complete a financial assessment form. You may be entitled to benefits, and if so, Social Services will help you to claim them and will give you advice about this. Following an assessment of your needs, you will be allocated a number of vouchers, which can be exchanged for respite services as and when you need them. These are subject to availability and other options may be recommended as an alternative to residential care.

This article is designed to help carers in Barnet to take a well-deserved (and often much-needed) break from looking after elderly friends, neighbours and family members.

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Note to Editors:

The Eleanor Palmer Trust is one of the oldest surviving organisations in Barnet's history. Founded by Eleanor Palmer upon her death in 1588, the objective of her legacy was, and still is, to assist *"the relief of persons in the area of benefit who are in need, hardship or distress."* Today the Trust manages a residential care home for elderly people, sheltered housing and almshouses and makes grants to local people and organisations in need of support.

Eleanor's story is about local people caring for each other and having the foresight to plan ahead for the future.

More information about the Trust and its' history can be found at www.eleanorpalmertrust.org.uk. The Eleanor Palmer Trust is directed by a group of local Trustees and managed by the Clerk to the Trustees.

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