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EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



PRESS RELEASE

Area Agency on Aging to host REACH25! - the 25th Annual REACH Conference in Longview

October 5-6 at Maude Cobb Convention Center



Longview, TX, September 27: Approximately 500 administrators, practitioners, caregivers and those who work with the senior population will receive training October 5 and 6, 2016, at REACH25!, the 25th Annual Regional Education on Aging, Caregiving and Healthcare (REACH) Conference at Maude Cobb Convention and Activity Center from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The Conference is hosted each year by the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) which is administered by the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG).

The conference, themed ***"Yesterday's Vision, Today's Reality, Tomorrow's Impact"*** boldly covers all disciplines and areas of aging, caregiving and healthcare. This year's conference theme celebrates years of accomplishments in aging services, a future look and purview of what's on the horizon. We celebrate the compassion and care provided to those who serve our older populations.

REACH is a collaborative effort to provide educational workshops, plenary sessions and networking opportunities for professionals, caregivers, and anyone interested in Aging issues. REACH provides attendees a choice of five Keynote Presentations and more than 40 workshops over the two-day event, access to over 50 exhibit booths, and accreditation and/or continuing education hours relative to the attendees' field of work. Accreditation/continuing education hours are offered for the following: ethics, social work, activity professionals, licensed professional counselors, licensed nursing facility administrators, assisted living managers, adult day care directors, guardianship, and Ombudsman.

"Once again, there is a distinguished line-up of speakers set to take the stage and captivate the audience at this two-day event. Each year speakers, sponsors and participants bring knowledge, experience and networking to the REACH Conference," says Bettye Mitchell, Director of Aging Programs for the Area Agency on Aging.

We are pleased to introduce a leader in elder law, policy and aging issues, Robert (Bob) Blancato. Bob, an internationally recognized pioneer and expert on aging and disability issues, will present *Yesterday's Vision*,

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Today's Reality and Tomorrow's Impact on Aging in America. The presentation will provide thought-provoking trends and events in the evolution of services, legislation and programs to older Americans. Bob will share his perspective on the historical past and future preview of Aging in America. Bonnie Estes, LPC, a licensed professional counselor, presents *Humor and Humility in Healthcare*. Oftentimes seeing ourselves as a control group of adrenaline junkies, we find respite in the tales of peers who share the desire to make a difference, to laugh in the face of the unimaginable, and calmly stare down surprise with "WHAT was I thinking?"

There is a memorable keynote opening titled: *Aging and Resilience: The Lived Experience of Holocaust Survivors* by actual Holocaust survivors on World War II. Bill Benson, says, "**The first person survivors are remarkable not only for having survived the many horrors and unimaginable traumas of the Holocaust, but for managing to come to this country through many different routes and circumstances and then not only survive but to thrive in so many ways. These are exceptionally resilient humans.**" Bill has been commissioned by the Smithsonian Institute to capture the stories of Holocaust survivors. Local attorney, John Ross, IV, will present an informative luncheon keynote: *The Intersection of Neurocognitive Disorders and Medical Decision Making*. This is a review of the interaction between medical incapacity and legal incompetency and how the distinction applies to medical decision makers and treatment professionals. To close out our conference, Chief Mike Alexander (Palestine) returns to REACH. He presents *Stages in Development* while tying his topic into this year's theme.

REACH is partially funded by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. This year's Gold Sponsors are At Home Healthcare, Buckner Westminster Place, the East Texas Aging and Disability Resource Center (ETxADRC), Prestige Estates, Southwest LTC and Texas Home Health. Silver Sponsors include Civitas Senior Living (Arabella), Brentwood Hospital, Gateway Dental Mgmt Srvcs LLC, Clairmont Longview Genesis Healthcare, and Heart to Heart Hospice. Our six Bronze Sponsors are Copeland Insurance Group, Encompass Home Health, good Shepherd medical Center, Haven Care Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, and Right at Home. REACH is organized by a planning committee made up of 14 state and local agencies.

For more information, call the Area Agency on Aging of East Texas at (903) 218-6500 or visit our website at <http://www.etcog.org/404/REACH-Conference.htm>. For further updates and additional information, follow us on Facebook at Area Agency on Aging of East Texas.

About East Texas Area Agency on Aging

The Area Agency on Aging of East Texas is designated by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to coordinate services for persons in East Texas who are 60 or older, with particular attention to low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas. Programs include, but are not limited to: Information, Referral and Assistance, Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance, Nursing home Ombudsman, Care Coordination, Caregiver Support Program and transportation provided by GOBUS. The Area Agency on Aging provides Nutrition programs delivering hot, nutritious meals to eligible homebound senior and providing congregate meals at local senior center. The Area Agency on Aging is a program of ETCOG serving its 14-county region.

About ETCOG

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within the fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. Established in 1970, ETCOG, either directly, or through its contractors, provides programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers. ETCOG and its contractors also build the 9-1-1 emergency call delivery system, provide peace officer training and homeland security planning services; and deliver rural transportation services, business finance programs, and environmental grant funding for the region.

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