

Aging at home 'optimum'

SALVATORE CAPUTO
Staff Writer

Bob Roth considers himself a businessman, but he didn't want to get into the family business, a company then known as Cypress Staffing Solutions.

"Are you kidding me?" he says. "Take over a business with 90 employees? I have three kids at home," and that was as much responsibility as he wanted at that point. (He had his own solo business.)

Such was his response on a Friday, he says, but by that Sunday he had changed his tune.

He realized he had a strong connection to part of the business: home health care.

"My wife helped remind me of the care my mother had received" from professional caregivers during an illness from which she died, he says.

Now, as National Family Caregivers Month shifts into full gear, Roth has been managing partner of Phoenix-based Cypress HomeCare Solutions for 22 months and is co-chairman this year (with Dr. Tom Updike, CEO of Jewish Family & Children's Service) of Memory Walk 2005, a fund-raiser for the Desert Southwest Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association.

Any link between his two roles is coincidental, Roth says.

However, Alzheimer's sufferers are mostly seniors (there are rare cases of individuals in their 40s being diagnosed), and Roth estimates that 80 to 90

percent of his company's clients are seniors.

Seniors — whether sick, injured or made frail by age — are also among the most likely to need someone in their family to regularly care for them.

The care that family members give includes help with grooming, dressing and bathing; doing errands like shopping; household chores; and transportation. For seniors, this level of care, allowing them to stay at home rather than moving into a nursing home, is a key to their happiness and health, he says.

"Aging in place is optimum," Roth says, meaning that it's best "to keep them (seniors) at home for as long as possible."



Bob Roth

Seniors are more comfortable in surroundings familiar to them, which keeps them more engaged and active, he says.

However, seniors aren't the only people who use family or professional caregivers. Babies and ailing children and adults of all ages can use care when they're shut in at home, he says.

Cypress conducts free family care-giving seminars to help family caregivers help their loved ones. Seminar modules, developed by the American Red Cross, cover such topics as "Home Safety," "Healthy Eating," "Legal and Financial Issues" and "Caring for a Loved One with Alzheimer's Disease or Dementia."

Cypress HomeCare isn't the only company in the Valley to

provide in-home care.

"We work closely with other home-care companies," Roth says. "If I know that I can't staff a need, I can freely refer another company to do it."

The avowed businessman looks to a different bottom line from the one in the financial ledger: "It's all about caring for people — allowing them to keep their independence and dignity."

Details

What: Family Care-giving seminars

When: 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 10

Where: HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, 9630 E. Shea Blvd., Scottsdale

Cost: Free

Call: 602-264-8009

What: Memory Walk 2005

Who: Desert Southwest Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association

When: 7 a.m. registration, 9 a.m. walk, Saturday, Nov. 5

Where: Wesley Bolin Plaza, 1700 W. Washington St., Phoenix; Surprise Community Park, 15953 N. Bullard Ave., Surprise

Cost: Free, walkers collect donations

Call: 602-528-0545