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## **New Elder Abuse Initiative in Northwest Baltimore**

Baltimore, MD - As our parents age and begin to face medical issues, caregivers, paid and family members, often become an important part of their lives, assisting with everything from food shopping to medication administration. Unfortunately, this dependency can leave our parents vulnerable to abuse.

Elder abuse is becoming a public health concern in our country with more than one million elderly in the United States abused each year. To protect our seniors, CHANA recently launched SAFE: Stop Abuse of Elders (SAFE), a comprehensive Jewish approach to counteract this growing problem.

SAFE brings together Jewish Community Services (JCS), Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital, along with CHANA to provide a menu of services to help abused seniors get the care they need.

Utilizing the expertise of these three nonprofits, SAFE is a Jewish response to elder abuse, offering counseling, prevention education and if needed, a temporary shelter to vulnerable seniors in Northwest Baltimore. The initiative addresses many concerns expressed by older adults such as physical and emotional safety, relationships with family and caregivers and overall financial well-being.

“SAFE is the result of identifying a need in the community and repurposing existing services to care for and support this growing population,” states Nancy Aiken, Executive Director of CHANA.

As part of this collaboration, CHANA coordinates intake and counseling in order to help families navigate the many issues that surround abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. CHANA also assists with counseling and referrals to legal representation as necessary. JCS assists in locating and obtaining long-term resources for the elder, such as finding an apartment where he or she can live safely in addition to providing counseling and temporary financial assistance. Levindale provides a secure and safe place for an older adult to receive the level of care and attention needed.

In the United States, two to 10 percent of persons over the age of 65 report being abused. Most alarming, 24 percent of murder victims over the age of 60 are killed by their spouse and 42 percent are killed by their children.

Ellyn Loy, Director of SAFE notes that, “The state of Maryland looks at SAFE as a model for addressing elder abuse in other communities around the state. Members of SAFE’s staff consult with other social service agencies as to how best develop a support system for vulnerable older adults.”

CHANA is a supported program and JCS is a supported agency of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore. Levindale is a part of the Lifebridge Health network and a constituent partner agency of The Associated and does not receive an annual allocation.

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