

ElderSAFE takes lead in community response to elder abuse; draws on campus capabilities



Charles E. Smith Life Communities is one of the most highly regarded not-for-profit elder care organizations in the nation. With eyes open to the societal crisis of elder abuse, locally and nationally, we expanded our role in the community two years ago by establishing the **ElderSAFE Center**, a program that provides safe, temporary shelter and advocacy for abused and neglected older adults throughout MD, DC, and Northern Virginia. ElderSAFE is a natural extension of our mission as we strive to educate the broader community about elder abuse and exploitation in all its forms: physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and neglect.

On September 18, ElderSAFE celebrated its second anniversary. "I'm thrilled to see the steady growth of this undertaking," said Center Director **Tovah Kasdin, JD**. "Starting from ground zero, ElderSAFE's program manager **KerryAnn Aleibar, LCSW-C**, and I have worked hard, with the commitment of our Board of Governors, including ElderSAFE Advisory Council chair Andy Friedlander, senior leadership, and community partners, to create a model shelter program for elder abuse prevention and response. Looking forward, we have more bold initiatives on the drawing board." *[Pictured above, KerryAnn Aleibar, left, and Tovah Kasdin.]*

ElderSAFE has garnered praise and commendation from our community partners. Debbie Feinstein, Senior Assistant State's Attorney and Chief of the Special Victims Division in Montgomery County, notes that "as our region's population of seniors continues to grow, a resource such as the ElderSAFE Center is essential to those of us who are first responders to cases of elder abuse."

ElderSAFE holds educational and training programs for:

- ◆ Adult Protective Services
- ◆ Domestic violence professionals
- ◆ Family caregivers
- ◆ Faith leaders
- ◆ Financial professionals
- ◆ First responders
- ◆ Home healthcare agencies
- ◆ Hospital-based social workers (CEU-certified education program)
- ◆ Local nonprofits
- ◆ Senior centers

ElderSAFE also connects with shelters serving older adults across the country through the SPRiNG Alliance coalition. We join together on monthly calls to discuss successes and challenges in working with abused older adults and the latest innovations in the field. In April 2017, we will host the **National SPRiNG Alliance Symposium** on our campus, inviting shelter leaders to participate in a review of strategies for prevention and intervention response. We look forward to seeing how the ideas generated will be implemented in the field.