

Make family meetings a smooth, helpful affair with these tips

Senior Beat

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Remember when you were a kid and your parents held “family meetings?” Was your typical reaction to these get-togethers eye rolling and groaning and dreams of growing up and never having to sit through them again?

Well, now you are older, but so are your parents, so if you’re caring for them and providing

support for them, family meetings may need to be, once again, on the docket of your life. Caregiving is difficult and can be a serious strain if the responsi-

bility rests with one person. It can be much easier to deal with a crisis, or even with on-going issues, if everyone is on the same page. Family meetings are the best bet.

Now, we all know that most families have some challenging dynamics and a meeting could fraught with potential trigger points. However, for the sake of the older person, it is important that everyone tries their best. Here are some guidelines on holding successful meetings:

Agree on who may attend. Some families limit the meeting to parents and adult children only.

Other families will include aunts, uncles, family friends, in-laws and ex-in-laws. A good practice is to include everyone who will be a part of making the decisions for the elder

person.

Choose a meeting time and location that works for everyone. For working family members, weekends may be best.

Hold the meeting on neutral ground instead of a family member’s home, if possible, such as a conference room at a hospital, senior center, or school. This prevents one person being responsible for holding the meeting and avoids the possibility of the home court advantage feeling.

Do not, under any circumstances, even if a family member pushes all of your buttons, use the meeting time as a power play. Sentences that begin, “If you really loved Mom, you’d...” never end well.

Have a time limit for the meeting and an agenda and then stick to it. This helps to prevent peo-

ple from going off on tangents and wasting everyone’s time.

Send important information in advance to all who will be attending.

Have child care available so that small children will not be a distraction. While it’s lovely to see them, this is not a family reunion. There is serious business to discuss.

Have a moderator and someone assigned to take minutes for the meeting. Or use a tape recorder. Write down issues that aren’t on the agenda, with the agreement that they’ll be discussed at a later meeting.

And finally, let every person speak. Listen respectfully and actively, don’t just bide your time waiting until it’s your turn to talk.

It’s also important to re-

member that caregiver tasks can differ. One family member may spend more time doing day to day care, while another may accept a larger part of the financial responsibility. Someone else may do shopping, take the person to appointments or provide respite. Let go of family rivalries or unresolved conflicts with the person you’re caring for. And if you need professional help or support, get it.

Although getting family meetings off the ground may be a challenge, the result of having everyone aware of the elder’s needs is worth it. Sometimes families end up with closer relationships after coming together and working toward a common goal for a loved one.

Remember, Eastern Area Agency on Aging’s

family caregiver program that can help you with referrals, resources, respite, support and support groups, and education on caregiving. EAAA has Family Caregiver Specialists who are also trained on caring for someone with Alzheimer’s disease. You could even take the Savvy Caregiver training and learn how to be the best caregiver that you can be for a person with dementia. Call 1-800-432-7812 or log on www.eaaa.org for more information.

Sometimes just talking to someone can make a big difference. Start building your caregiver team.

Carol Higgins Taylor is an advocate for seniors and owns Bryant Street Public Relations in Bangor. Email her at bryantstreetpr@gmail.com

American Airlines to offer summer service to NYC out of Bangor

American Airlines will be offering summer service from Bangor International Airport to New York’s LaGuardia Airport starting in June, according to airport director Tony Caruso.

The weekend service will kick off on June 4 and run through Sept. 4, Caruso said in a statement.

The service will be offered once daily on Saturdays and Sundays. Flights will depart LaGuardia at 8 a.m. and arrive in Bangor at 9:45, and flights will depart Bangor at 10:15 a.m. and arrive back in New York at 11:50.

The service will be on a 50-seat CRJ200 plane.

“We are very pleased with American’s announcement to start weekend summer service to LaGuardia,” Caruso said in the statement. “This service will be a great addition to the Bangor market, giving our

customers more choices to New York City, one of our top destinations.”

American Airlines also offers service from Bangor to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., and is the airport’s largest carrier, transporting more than 44 percent of the airport’s passengers daily.

Reservations can be made by visiting American’s website, www.aa.com, or contacting your travel agent.

EMHS names new senior vice president and chief strategy officer

EMHS president and CEO, M. Michelle Hood is pleased to announce that Matthew Weed has joined EMHS as senior vice president and chief strategy officer.

Weed fills a position vacated nearly two years ago by Jerry Whalen, former vice president of Business Development at EMHS. Weed will be re-

sponsible for developing and implementing both short- and long-term strategies. In addition, he will provide leadership and coordinate activities for the Strategic Planning Committee of the EMHS Board of Directors, as well as select leadership steering committees and teams.

“We look forward to welcoming Matt to our EMHS family. I’ve known Matt for a long time and find him to be a thought leader and problem solver,” said Hood. “With more than 30 years of experience in healthcare and strategy, he will also be instrumental in building and managing relationships with various stakeholders both internal and external to EMHS.”

In addition to strategic planning, Weed will oversee marketing and communications, community health and grants, government relations, and philanthropy,” Hood said.

Weed received his Bachelors of Arts in Political Science at the Uni-

versity of Utah in 1982, and his Masters of Business Administration at Brigham Young University in 1984. During his distinguished career at Intermountain Health in Utah, Weed held a large variety of positions, including senior financial consultant and manager of costing systems; director of Physician Relations; assistant administrator; assistant vice president of Strategic Research and Planning; assistant vice president of Healthcare eBusiness; and director of Strategy, Planning, and Business Development.

A lifelong resident of Utah, Weed and his wife, Annette, have relocated to Maine to experience their first winter in the Northeast.

“Having spent time here on multiple occasions, we are happy to be Maine residents,” Weed said. “I have great respect for EMHS — its not-for-profit mission, its leadership, and the system’s progressiveness in the industry. I’ve studied EMHS closely for the past

several years and I am thrilled to now be part of it.”

Pulse Marketing to move from downtown to Bangor Mall Area

After three years at its current Exchange Street location, Pulse Marketing Agency announced that it will move into a new office on Monday, Feb. 1, at 34 Penn Plaza, across from the Bangor Mall. The move comes as the agency is rapidly expanding. In the past two years, the agency’s staff size and business volume has tripled requiring additional the office space. The agency is expecting to see continued rapid growth over the next few years including doubling its current staff size and expanding its service footprint to outside the State of Maine.

“It’s a bittersweet feeling as we have always been in downtown Bangor, and we love the downtown community,” said Pulse president and founder Cintia Miranda. “This new location near the Bangor Mall was selected for various reasons, but

most importantly because we needed a location with our own parking lot for our staff and clients. We’re sad to leave downtown, but very excited with the prospect of having more room.”

The Penn Plaza office is three times the size of the Agency’s current location, and it will offer plenty of office space for staff growth, a sound-proof recording room, a staff lunch room, and a training room for the recently launched Pulse Marketing Academy. The agency has now been divided into dedicated departments for graphic and web design, marketing, and operations.

At the new location, the agency will hold its recently launched Pulse Marketing Academy training program for small business owners and fellow marketers, including free monthly live marketing seminars, free quarterly webinars, and custom marketing

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