

Georgia Power Foundation Grant Helps Improve Quality of Life for Seniors

FAYETTE COUNTY, GA. March 31, 2011. Bettye Gurley Mintz spent a lifetime quietly helping to lessen the burden of people in need; whether a child in need of clothing, a family struggling with medical bills, or a shut-in needing a friend. A retired educator, accomplished pianist, and dedicated community volunteer, Bettye Mintz passed away at the age of 78 after a valiant battle with Dementia. As a tribute to her mother, Peachtree City resident Candy Peacock, along with her husband Derrick, partnered with non-profit, Fayette Senior Services (FSS) to establish The Yellow Butterfly Fund. The fund is used to help senior citizens with basic needs and other quality of life improvements that they otherwise can't afford.

With the Peacock's initial contribution of \$5000, this year the fund has provided support to nearly 25 senior citizens who needed help with obtaining some essential needs such as prescription drugs, transportation to medical appointments, and assistance with housekeeping/home repair. Thanks to the Georgia Power Foundation, which matched the \$5,000 in seed money, the growing needs of Fayette's growing senior population can continue to be met.

Fayette County is home to the third fastest growing senior population in metro Atlanta and the current economy has posed a greater set of challenges for many seniors who are on fixed incomes. "While Fayette County's quality of life exceeds that of other communities, we still have senior citizens who cannot afford to have routine dental care, or purchase some of their medications or medical supplies not covered by Medicare," says Fayette Senior Services President, Debbie Britt. She adds, "Because of the extraordinary generosity of people like Derrick and Candy Peacock and such a significant community investment from the Georgia Power Foundation, many deserving older adults (who often feel forgotten) will be able to have a better quality of life.

Just ask Ida Walker who lives in Fayetteville. Her upbeat attitude shines under her brightly colored hat, but Ida knows all too well what it's like to be sick with worry. A diabetic who is no longer able to drive; Ida's total monthly income is barely adequate to cover her rent and utilities. She struggles to properly maintain her special diet and she cannot afford the cost of transportation to the dialysis center three times a week. Ida, who will be 70 years old in July, states, "I've been on my own since 1986 and I don't like to ask for help but I didn't know where to turn when I started needing dialysis so often. When I found Fayette Senior Services, my life changed for the better. They told me they could help me with transportation and to make sure I am eating right. They even bring me to their Life Enrichment Center so I can be active and exercise so I can stay healthier. What they deliver is simple human kindness and you can't put a price on that."

Marie Doyle, Care Manager Supervisor, states "Most of the seniors we've helped through the Fund have significant medical needs that are not covered by insurance. However, the greatest need for assistance is in the area of transportation. Even though we charge a nominal fee for our transportation services (fees are based on a sliding scale of income), many low income seniors have difficulty affording service when they have to go to medical appointments on a more frequent basis." The Yellow Butterfly Fund has been a lifeline, especially for those who need wheelchair-assisted transportation. During the last year, Fayette Senior Services has experienced a 29% increase in the demand for wheelchair-assisted transportation. Overall, FSS will provide over 15,000 trips to more than 450 individuals this year, many who will need fee-assistance.

The meaning behind the fund's name is expressed best by Candy Peacock, "My mom loved yellow butterflies. We are lifted each time one flies by as we wonder if it is Mom's sweet spirit just checking in on us. That thought brings us great comfort. To many, the butterfly symbolizes the soul that physical death cannot destroy. We felt this was the perfect way to pay tribute to my mother's quiet passion for helping others."

The Yellow Butterfly Fund is administered by Fayette Senior Services, Inc. a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to the fund can be made at www.FayetteLifeEnrichment.org or make checks payable to Fayette Senior Services, 4 Center Drive, Fayetteville, GA 30214. For more information call Marie Doyle at 770-461-0813.

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