

**Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging
Elder Abuse Prevention Workgroup Meeting Minutes
Tuesday June 22, 2021**

Present: Terri Tobey, Gerald Richards, Jim Donnelly, Jill Kleiner, Margueriette Williams, Andrea Mitroff, Dr. Michelle Hernandez, Sue Meltzer and Dave Tag.

Guests: Zachary Williams, Elder Abuse Detective from the Contra Costa Office of the Sheriff

Staff: Margueriette Williams (temporarily standing in until secretary takes over)

Announcements –

The group agreed that there will be no meeting for July 27, 2021.

Approval of Agenda/Minutes

- Approval of Today's Agenda – Jim asked Margueriette to revise the agenda and remove item topic on meeting for July 27th since group decided not to meet on that day. Gerald motioned and everyone approved on the change to the agenda.
- Approval of May Minutes – Everyone approved.

Presentation: Zachary Williams, Elder Abuse Detective from the Office of the Sheriff.

- Detective Williams have been with the Office of the Sheriff since 2007.
- He worked in the jails, courts, county hospital, transit authority unit, and patrol with many years of experience as a member of the Mental Health Emergency Team, Homeless Outreach, and the Crisis Intervention Team.
- His goals as an Elder Abuse Detective are to work collaboratively with EHSD, APS, the FAST team, the various Multi-Disciplinary Teams, law enforcement agencies and County Mental Health to increase the flow of information between all members of the elder protection teams in this county.
- He believes that if we can increase awareness of and reporting of elder abuse, we can reduce the amount of incidents.
- There are different types of Elder Abuse, such as Physical, Financial, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect. Detective Williams provided examples of each type.
- Fremont has been investigating a string of robberies.
- Detective Williams is responsible for investigating all cases of elder abuse in Contra Costa that occur in unincorporated areas, or areas that do not fall within the boundaries of a city.
- He explained his investigative process which is described on slides 10 and 11 in his Elder Abuse PowerPoint presentation.
- If the cases are large, involve multiple victims in multiple states, or take place across state lines or internationally, Detective Williams and his team often request the assistance of the Federal Government: FBI, Secret Service, Department of the Treasury, etc.

- The District Attorney's Office also has sworn investigators and subject matter experts such as High-Tech Detectives and Forensic Accountants to assist with investigations.
- The overall goals of the Elder Abuse investigation process are holding the suspects accountable for their crimes, education for prevention of further abuse, restitution for victims, and getting victims connected to services in dealing with all factors of being victimized and to prevent further victimization.
- Detective Williams shared some statistics on Elder Financial Abuse which include:
 - -By the year 2030, there will be almost 72 million seniors in the US, up from 40 million in 2010.
 - -85 plus is the fastest growing age group in our nation.
 - -Seniors control almost 70% of our nation's wealth.
 - -1 in 5 people ages 65 or older reports being a victim of financial fraud or abuse.
 - -Elder abuse costs seniors in the US roughly \$36.5 billion dollars each year.
 - -9 out of 10 who commit elder abuse are family members or other trusted individuals.
 - -Nationally 1 in 44 seniors who are financially exploited never report the abuse.
- Seniors have increased vulnerability to financial abuse due to:
 - Isolation and lack of contact with friends or family
 - Disability causing limits on social interaction and often times physical and cognitive dependence on others.
 - Seniors are very trusting of others and often take someone at their word and circumstances at face value.
 - The abusers are family or trusted persons 90% of the time.
- He shared ways on how the elderly can prevent and combat abuse and exploitation which include:
 - Know that it can happen to you or your loved one.
 - Stay connected. Being isolated makes an elder more vulnerable to exploitation.
 - Create a financial roadmap. Draft a plan that makes it clear what is normal and what is not regarding how money is spent. Share it with a financial professional or someone you trust that is not dependent on you.
 - Beware of dependents. It may sound harsh, but supportive arrangements can be exploited. Set boundaries for dependents.
 - Report your concerns. If you think you or a loved one is being taken advantage of or abused, contact local law enforcement or Adult Protective Services.
- The workgroup asked Detective Williams various questions about Elder Abuse, reporting and his role.
- Detective Williams is available for questions, assistance, and direct reporting.
- The workgroup thanked Detective Williams for presenting to the group.

Set Topics for next meeting, August 24, 2021: Mary Knox, Deputy District Attorney from the District Attorney's Office will present on their program and how they address elder abuse. The workgroup will schedule presentations to facilitate throughout Contra Costa among the senior population.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: 11:20am