

## Health

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### CHECKUP

# Parents' care needs put demand in focus

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Sally and Don Olin got the idea for their business after trying unsuccessfully to find home care for his elderly mother, 800 miles from Charlotte in upstate New York.

"We fell back on neighbors and friends, asking them if they knew somebody that could go in," Sally Olin said.

Sometimes the hired help didn't show up. One day, her mother-in-law fell and was on the floor five hours before anyone knew. She broke a hip and moved to a skilled nursing center, where she later died.

The experience led Sally Olin, a nurse, and her husband, a marketing professional, to start their company two years ago.

Partners in Care provides in-home care for about 40 clients in Mecklenburg, Rowan, Union and Cabarrus counties. It has 75 employees, including professional caregivers and certified nursing assistants.

There is not the only such company in Charlotte. Others have also seen the growing demand as Americans live longer and baby boomers try to care for aging parents, often from long distances.

"There's tons of people caught in this situation," Sally Olin said. "All of a sudden your mother comes home from the hospital, and you don't have any training. How do you get her on the commode beside the bed? How do you help her take a shower?"

Family caregivers can get answers to those kinds of questions in a series of classes starting this month. Sponsored by the American Red Cross, four two-hour classes will be taught by Annette Haskell, a professional caregiver with Partners In Care. The classes are Jan. 11, 18, 25 and Feb. 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Jewish Community Center, 5007 Providence Road.

The fee is \$5 per person. Space is limited to 30 people. Register by calling Mary Jane Bruton, (704) 944-6753.

The classes will be repeated in March and April at branches of the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County.

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