



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
February 29, 2008

Contact: Monica Ramos
209-529-3784

SAFE Seminar Informs Public how to Prevent Elder Financial Abuse First Baptist Church, Modesto March 14, 2008, 9 AM – 1 PM

Stanislaus County, CA - Imagine losing your home or life savings due to a financial scam that you thought was a sound investment; or placing your personal financial affairs in the hands of a trusted person, only to realize that you have been victimized by the theft of cash, credit cards, or even your identity. Unfortunately, this is a stark reality for many senior citizens who fall victim to financial abuse.

That is why local financial institutions and Catholic Charities, as part of the Stanislaus Elder Abuse Prevention Alliance (SEAPA), are sponsoring the 7th annual SAFE Seminar on Friday, March 14, 2008, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the First Baptist Church in Modesto. SAFE stands for Seniors Against Financial Exploitation, and the seminar promises to deliver information that can help seniors protect themselves from financial exploitation. This event is free to the public.

Keynote speaker Greg Ovanessian, Inspector for the San Francisco Police Department Investigations Bureau, will talk about the varied financial crimes perpetrated by transient criminals against the senior population. "Elder financial abuse will affect somebody you care about, whether it's immediate family or the kindly person living down the street" Ovanessian stated. Ovanessian will discuss common crime scenarios, from street level con games to lottery and home repair scams, and explain "how the bad guys find their elderly victims."

Morning speaker Prescott Cole, Esquire, senior staff attorney for California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform (CANHR), will focus on estate planning financial scams, such as reverse mortgage seminars, and legal protection for seniors, encompassing Federal and State Government, as well as District and Civil attorneys. "Seniors have two major fears," Cole stated, "which are the fear of going into nursing homes and outliving their assets." "The reality of these fears sets seniors up for financial abuse." Cole's objective is to "deconstruct the predator's sales pitch" that sales professionals use to instill fear and confusion in potential elderly clients.

-MORE-

-CONTINUED-

Locally, there are around 400 reported allegations of elder financial abuse per year. Also, financial abuse is now the second most common type of confirmed elder abuse perpetrated by others in Stanislaus County, based on investigations by Adult Protective Services.

The SAFE Seminar provides public awareness of elder financial abuse issues that impact a vulnerable portion of our community. The information is intended to help prevent elder financial abuse, when possible, and help senior advocates apply more effective remedies in actual abuse situations.

The SAFE Seminar specific location is the Family Life Pavilion at the First Baptist Church, on the corner of 12th and Needham Street, Modesto. Thanks to generous sponsors, a free continental breakfast and lunch is provided. Reservations are required, so to reserve a seat, please call (209) 529-3784 by March 7, 2008.

For additional information, please contact Monica Ramos, Catholic Charities Program Director, at (209) 529-3784

#####