

## DIVISION OF AGING SERVICES



**Aging • Disability • Support • Safety**

### Governor Deal signs Elder Abuse Law

MOULTRIE, GA -Governor Nathan Deal made a stop in Moultrie to sign a bill for elder abuse.

The Elder Abuse Act passed the House with a unanimous vote. During his stop in southwest Georgia to sign the bill, Governor Deal stated this shows how much lawmakers are dedicated to protecting those who can't protect themselves.

"I think it indicates an acknowledgement on the part of the General Assembly that they probably have heard of examples of elder abuse in their particular parts of the state and they came together and said this is something that really does need to be done," said Governor Deal.

Deal says elder abuse can range from physical abuse to financial thefts.

The Elder Abuse Law lays out the definition of elder abuse in an effort to prevent both physical and financial abuse of senior citizens.

"We are seeing an increase in that because unfortunately because we have an older population and the percentage of our population is elderly and is continuing to grow," added Deal.

Dougherty County officials say they've noticed a growth in elderly crimes. In November 2012, an elderly woman was found malnourished and living in deplorable conditions while in the care of her sons. In the last week of April 2013, a former caregiver was indicted by a grand jury for allegedly bilking thousands out of patient's account.

"This older generation is more trusting so they're more accepting for someone to actually steal their identity's get their credit cards or their check. Unfortunately they fall prey to a lot of those," said Tom Jackson, Dougherty County Police.

Captain Jackson says many times older citizens live off a limited income and when that's gone, they can't start over. He says that's why the passing of this bill was necessary.

"There's more people out here now that are required to report abuse if they suspect it and that's what they're trying to accomplish because sometimes these elderly people don't want to speak up for themselves," said Tom Jackson.

[mysouthwestga.com/news/story.aspx?id=893335#.UZ2RYUrg-JQ](http://mysouthwestga.com/news/story.aspx?id=893335#.UZ2RYUrg-JQ)

*DHS State of Georgia*

*Division of Aging Services*

#### DAS Mission:

The Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services supports the larger goals of DHS by assisting older individuals, at-risk adults, persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers to achieve safe, healthy, independent and self-reliant lives.

#### Inside this issue:

Governor Deal Signs Elder Abuse Law	<b>1</b>
Spirit of APS Awards	<b>2</b>
White Paper of ANE Released	<b>2</b>
NPR Series on Aging and	<b>2</b>
Employee Spotlight—Jill Crump	<b>3</b>
From the Director's Office	<b>3</b>
Matter of Balance	<b>4</b>



**World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is June 15th. Show the world you care about ending elder abuse and neglect by wearing purple.**

## Spirit of APS Awards

May 22, 2013 – Adult Protective Services announced the annual Spirit and Heart of APS awards with an all-staff program. The Spirit awards are a long standing tradition to recognize excellence categorically for: Family Service Worker; Program Associate; Central Intake; Case Manager; Manager; and a Group award. A separate award, known as the Heart of APS award, is the Administrator's award.

Winners for 2013: Lois Trular (Family Service Worker); Tracy Wright (Program Associate); Joyce Merritt-Williams (Central Intake); Allison Risner (Case Manager); Lisa Sewell (Manager); Metro-Dekalb (Group Award) and Cathy Ward (Heart of APS Award).

Congratulations to all 2013 nominees and award winners, who join the ranks of excellence with those before them. We are very proud of your work and accomplishments!



## White Paper Released on Georgia's At Risk Adult Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police unanimously adopted a Law Enforcement White Paper on At Risk Adult Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation in Georgia: Review and Recommendations. The White Paper can be found on their website at the following link: [http://www.gachiefs.com/pdfs/White%20Papers Committee%20Reports/AtRiskAdultAbuseWhitePaper.pdf](http://www.gachiefs.com/pdfs/White%20Papers%20Committee%20Reports/AtRiskAdultAbuseWhitePaper.pdf)

## NPR Airs Five-Part Series on Aging and Abuse

The most recent estimates suggest 1 in 10 seniors are abused, neglected or exploited, and that has serious implications for individuals and communities. Victims of elder abuse are much more likely to end up in hospitals and nursing homes. Seniors lose almost \$3 billion a year due to financial exploitation, which leaves them vulnerable and dependent on government or family assistance. With an aging population, elder abuse is only expected to increase, and social service agencies are often not able to keep up. In this five-part series, we look at the complexities of elder abuse in the D.C. region and why the problem is so difficult to address. To view the series: [http://wamu.org/aging\\_and\\_abuse](http://wamu.org/aging_and_abuse)



## Employee Spotlight— Jill Crump

### Welcome aboard Jill Crump

**What do you do?** Aging Services Coordinator with Community Care Services Program (CCSP).

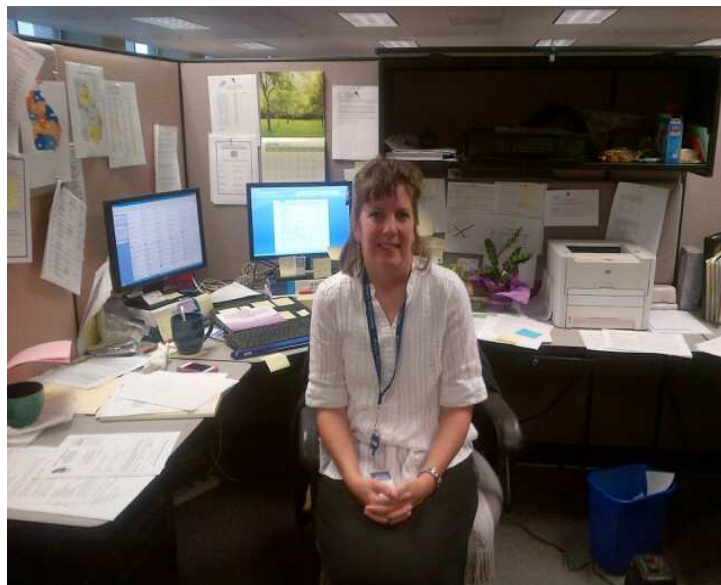
**Where are you from?** Rome, GA.

**What college(s) did you attend?** Berry College in Rome, GA.

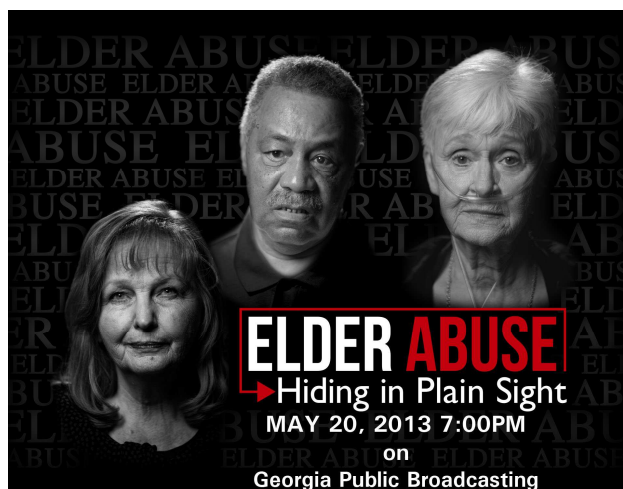
**Family?** Married with two children at Berry (Son/Senior and Daughter/Junior) and one daughter who is a Junior at Rome High.

**Hobbies?** Being a mom and wife

**Fun Fact About You?** I'm very boring and like to be the introvert that I am.



## From the Director's Office



Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) aired a live presentation of “Elder Abuse: Hiding in Plain Sight” on May 20, 2013, which brought attention to the fight against abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in Georgia. Panelists included:

- Vernon Keenan, Georgia Bureau of Investigations Director
- Dr. Tom Price, medical director of DeKalb County’s VALARI (Vulnerable Adults Living at Risk Invisibly) multi disciplinary team
- Elaine Wilson, Long Term Care Ombudsman - Southwest Georgia Region
- Meg Heap, Chatham County District Attorney.

Intermissions from the show showed the phone banks where staff volunteers answered over 70 calls from viewers who requested additional information about the services DAS provides. During these intermissions Pat King and I were interviewed. Thanks to all

who helped make this program a success. To view the program in its entirety, visit: [www.gpb.org/elder-abuse](http://www.gpb.org/elder-abuse).

*Jay*



## Matter of Balance



Have you stopped doing certain things you enjoy because you were concerned about falling? If so, you are not alone. Chances are you or someone you know has fallen or is afraid of falling and might even restrict their activities because of these concerns.

Many older adults share a common fear of falling that is so strong they actually limit their activities. Up to 50% of Americans over the age of 65 who live independently experience a fear of falling. When older adults limit their activity due to this fear, it can reduce their mobility and independence, affecting quality of life and actually increases the risk of future falls. It can also increase isolation and depression due the lack of interaction with family and friends. These who are most likely to be afraid of falling are likely to have already fallen once.

A Matter of Balance manages concerns about falls, acknowledges the risk of falling, but emphasizes practical coping strategies to reduce this concern in order to remain active and independent. The program consists of eight two-hour sessions led by trained facilitator.

### **During the class, participants learn to:**

View falls and fear of falling as controllable

Set realistic goals for increasing activity

Find ways to change the environment to reduce fall risk factors

Learn simple exercises to increase strength and balance

Falling is not a natural part of aging and can be avoided by assessing your risk factors and making changes to your environment.

### **You should attend A Matter of Balance if you:**

Are concerned about falls

Have had a fall in the past

Restrict activities because of concerns about falling

Are interested in improving flexibility, balance and strength

For more information on how you can be involved with the “A Matter of Balance” program, either as a participant, or as an instructor, please contact your local Area Agency on Aging: <http://aging.dhs.georgia.gov/local-area-agencies-aging-aaas>.

