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SANDWICH GENERATION ANSWERS TO LIFE'S CHALLENGES: DO YOU NEED IT? THIS WILL HELP YOU DECIDE!

UMC of Monroe Creates an Event to Help Address Common Challenges Faced by the Sandwich Generation (Those with Families and/or Those Who Are Taking on Caretaker Roles)

Monroe, CT, February 1, 2018— **The UMC of Monroe will launch its first Generation Bridge Event, on Saturday April 21, 2018 at Masuk High School in Monroe, CT.** The event will tackle common life, financial, and health and wellness concerns faced by those who may have kids getting ready to transition to college / out of the house, and by those who may be taking on new caretaker responsibilities (“The Sandwich Generation”).

The congregation investigated new ideas to give back in the community and provide services that could help people answer important questions regardless of religious affiliation. Many ideas were considered, but after meetings, and a polling of the congregation, the Generation Bridge event was created. “This event was a communal effort, based on getting the input and feedback from the entire congregation. While we are excited to be putting it on, we are more excited that we are creating something that helps a wider spectrum of people in our neighborhood. By providing expert speakers on important topics and bringing the wider community together, we hope that the challenges we all face in our lives will be a little easier to navigate,” said Brian Sherwood, the co-chair on the event.

The Reverend Martha Epstein explained why she feels this event is important. She said, “it has been very exciting to see how our church family has come together to discern this need and work towards

helping to fill the void. As a “sandwich generation” person myself this is something that I would attend even if we weren’t sponsoring it, as I have many questions about sending off my child to college, saving for retirement and remotely caring for aging parents. I love being a part of the Monroe community and look forward to many more opportunities to learn and grow together.”

Our church wanted to do something different and something that would appeal to the wider community in Monroe and surrounding townships like Easton, Newtown, Shelton, Trumbull and other towns in Fairfield County CT. We know people face serious challenges in life, but we often try to tackle them in isolation. The reality is that we can be better prepared for these challenges when they arise by being informed about what kinds of resources to bring in and when to apply those resources. While technology allows us quick and easy access to relevant information, a quick 10-minute conversation with someone who has already dealt with a challenge can provide you with information you would never have thought about otherwise. Sometimes it’s just easier to meet people who have been through “it”.

Co-Chair for the event, Darlene Dobler-Palin draws from personal experience to explain why she is committed to this event. When asked why Generation Bridge was relevant to her, she said, “I have been through a “sandwich era” of my own with my mom. Experiencing the emotional challenges of seeing an elderly parent deteriorate and not knowing where to turn or who to ask. Fortunately, I have a wonderful family and we got through it, but many are not so lucky. We (UMCM) are bringing credible sources together in one place covering major challenges for folks currently in this situation and others, and I couldn’t be more excited to co-chair this event.”

The event is still taking shape and updates will be provided as the event gets closer, but we already have experts scheduled to speak about:

- 1) Palliative Health Care – What you need to think about
- 2) Brain Fitness – keeping your brain active and training it to combat long term memory loss, dementia, Alzheimer’s, etc.)
- 3) Financial and Estate Planning and how to navigate the conversation between parents and adult children
- 4) Medicare Bootcamp – what you need to know for yourself and for your parents

In addition to the scheduled seminars on the main stage, local resources like the Monroe Senior Center, our speakers, and our official sponsors like The Drazen Law Group and Talcott Financial Group will be onsite to offer advice and guidance within their areas of expertise. They understand how being informed and prepared can reduce the stress we feel when experiencing life’s challenges. Attorney Steven Rubin from The Drazen Law Group summarized it succinctly, “What you don't know can cost you in time, money and stress.” CFP™ Craig Breitsprecher from The Talcott Financial Group cited some statistics that illustrate a REAL need for aging parents and adult children to come together and be on the same page, “According to a recent survey by Fidelity, only 6% of aging parents think that they will need care at some point from their adult children. Their kids think the opposite, and this is creating a new generation gap.”

As the event approaches, there will be more content scheduled including potential breakout sessions on relevant topics, pop-up conversations with exhibitors and more.

Registration for the event is open and tickets cost \$20. The ticket price helps to cover the costs of the event AND can serve as a fundraiser for other congregations and charities. Registrants can allocate \$10 from that ticket price to the church or charity of interest. While this serves as a fundraiser for the UMC of Monroe, it doubles as a fundraiser for the community at large.

There are also many ways that businesses and community organizations or non-profits can participate. For more information, please visit the event website (www.generation-bridge.com) or contact Brian Sherwood at 203.570.4150 or email at Bsher12@yahoo.com.

Generation Bridge: The Generation Bridge series of events is brought to you by the United Methodist Church of Monroe, BUT it is NOT a "church" event. It is a non-denominational event seminar that helps to address the unique life, financial, and health challenges we face at different stages of our lives.

In our first event we are tackling some of the concerns of the sandwich generation - those who are in their 40's - 60's who may be starting to transition into care-taking roles, preparing for life without kids in the home, dealing with health concerns, etc.

For information on the current speakers, please feel free to visit this page: <https://www.generation-bridge.com/speakers>

The United Methodist Church of Monroe is a diverse multi-generational congregation of Christian believers. We take seriously the balance of witness outreach and care of the saints that has been the cornerstone of Christian faith and vitality throughout the history of the church. To this end we offer many programs that focus both internally and externally as a mission to not only the Monroe community, but to our entire world. Here you will find the Holy Spirit alive and well in the variety of gifts employed by our fellowship as we seek to worship God and reach out to our world with healing in Jesus' name.

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