Adult Dependent Care Recommendation #2

Summary of Recommendation:
There are needs in our adult dependent care community such as lawn care, home repair, transportation, and meal preparation that can not be fulfilled using traditional methods. Hence, there needs to be a system by which these everyday needs can be filled without overlapping with already existing services. We propose the development and implementation of a time/service barter system to meet these needs.

Statement of Problem:
There are needs in our adult dependent care community that can not be fulfilled using traditional methods because these particular needs are not marketable or enduring. Simple needs such as: lawn care, home repair, transportation and meal preparation are examples of such needs. Although these services could be addressed by a regular company or agency, often a dependent adult doesn't require these services on a regular basis but may need them only on special occasions. In addition, those persons living at or near poverty may not have the financial resources to purchase assistance. Hence, there needs to be a system by which these everyday needs can be filled without increasing financial burdens and without duplicating already existing services.

Recommendation:
We propose the development and implementation of a time/service barter system. Examples of established programs already exist in many communities across the United States. The most popular of these, Time Banks USA (www.timebanks.org) is based on a concept developed by Edgar S. Cahn. Briefly, Edgar S. Cahn is a graduate of Yale Law School. His involvement in social reform began in the 1960's. Over the years, Mr. Cahn has written several books dealing with establishing reform ideas that deal with the war on poverty. His two most famous books, *No more throw away people: The co-production imperative* and *Time Dollars* (co-author Jonathan Rowe, Rodale Press 1992) have been the basis for the development of TimeBanks USA. In addition to TimeBanks USA, Mr. Cahn also is the creator of Time Dollars, a service-based barter system. This system was developed in 1980 as a means "to validate and reward the work of the disenfranchised" by enabling them to rebuild their communities through social welfare initiatives. Later, in 1995, Mr. Cahn further developed a concept, Co-production, that provides a framework for reform of service exchange. Co-production refers to the idea that those who receive service can then also contribute back to the community by donating their own personal service time. Thus, a system to combat poverty was established that did not rely on money but instead relied on the trading of service.

Many examples of TimeBanks USA programs already exist with more than 60 outreach programs in 33 states. In order to use this established system, TimeBanks USA offers both software and training programs designed for communities to use to implement these ideas into their communities. For example, the most basic entry into TimeBanks USA is an introductory software program called, *Wow! Time Banking*. The cost of the software is $49 for 6 months of use. It is designed for communities to learn more about laying down the foundation of a structured framework for the Time Dollars system. Most

important in the *Wow!* introduction package is the TimeBanks USA Community Weaver software. This software program is specifically designed to help communities record in a database earned/redeemed Time Dollars. Additionally, TimeBanks USA offers more extensive training options such as seminars and training programs.

Our committee recommends either purchasing the software to implement a TimeBanks program in Athens Clarke County or developing our own service-based barter system.

Potential Examples of Implementation into the Athens community:

Lawn care, transportation, adult sitting…

Example 1: Transportation

Those people who do not have personal transportation can take part in a program that trades earned service hours for need hours. For example, an elderly lady who does not own a car or is unable to drive and needs to get to her doctor's appointment. If she was enrolled in the service program, she could be accumulating time dollar credits that she could possibly redeem to "rent" a ride on a community owned vehicle. She would earn time dollar credits by providing a service she can perform. Perhaps she could help prepare a meal for a working mother or maybe she could do some clothes mending. In our barter/service program, her needs could be met by the simple exchange of service for service. Again, this is accomplished without any money exchanging hands. Additionally, there is an insurance that the system can not be "taken advantage of" because the woman could only redeem service if she had accumulated her own Time Dollars by providing a tradable service.

Example 2: Basic housework/Adult sitting

Another possible example of how the time service could be implemented into our community could be the taking care of basic housework and adult sitting. For example, a man who cares for his elderly mother may need to take an occasional day off from caring for her so he can run some personal chores. He may need a personal day to do such basic and necessary things as picking up his children from school or attending a parent teacher conference. If this man was enrolled in the service program, he could use his earned time dollars to "pay" an adult sitter to come and stay with his mother while he ran his errands. The exciting bonus to this example is that the person who is "hired" to be the adult sitter, could themselves be a TimeBanks member and could be earning his/her own Time dollars which could be used for any number of needed services.

Many more examples can be imagined, only our creativity and willingness to get involved can limit the potential of such a program. Once the system is established, there are numerous ways in which many different needs can be addressed and fulfilled.

Background/Justification of Need:

The Athens Clarke County community provides many services to the older adults through multiple service providers. However the growth of the older population is far exceeding the ability to provide service. Currently in Clarke County there are 10,800 individuals over the age of 60 with over 1,543 within poverty. The Area Agency on Aging Gateway staff has a waiting list of services for Clarke County. Currently there are 98 people waiting for Meals on Wheels, 25 people requesting respite, and over 50 needing homemaker/personal care services. A person may be on the waiting list for an average of 8 months or more. In this interim time, periodic support, such as that provided through a TimeBanks system, could help reduce caregiver burden.

Challenges/Concerns:
Cost, training period, getting it started concerns…start up, development of Athens specific infrastructure