

## Memory Moment

### Additional tools to keep your loved ones safe!!

By Shannon Nosbisch, CDP, DCS

Keeping your loved one safe is the number one priority for most of us. And if one of our loved ones has a special need or a disability, it is even more important. In our community, we have a tool that can help us keep them safe! It is the Special Needs Registry/Premise Alert Program through the Effingham Police Department and the Effingham County Sheriff's office. By filling out the easy form, the Police Department, Sheriff's Office, Fire Departments and EMS have information that could be vital to you and your loved one's safety.

Disability is defined as an individual's physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities. This may be cognitive, developmental, intellectual, mental, physical, sensory, or some combination of these.

Special Needs is defined as those individuals who have or are at increased risk of a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by individuals generally.

Some, but not all, of the conditions could be behavioral issues, dementia, autism, hearing impairment, blindness, sensory issues (touch), medical conditions (such as needing oxygen, paraplegic or quadriplegic), etc.

The information from the form that is filled out by a caregiver or the person with a disability or special need will be used to offer guidance and direction to emergency responders dispatched by the Effingham City and Effingham County 911 Centers. It will remain strictly confidential and will only be used to provide assistance to those people with Special Needs, Disabilities or both. When the information is needed, it will **not** be sent out by radio for all to hear.

The information will be kept on file for a period of two (2) years after the date it was submitted. You may update or renew it at any time. You will be contacted when it is needing updated.

This information will be flagged by address and name. Also, if you are in an automobile accident in the county, and the name is mentioned to the 911 operator, the information will be there.

The form, called the Illinois Premise Alert Program Request Form, is available on the Effingham Police Department's and the Effingham Sheriff's Office's websites. If you want a printed copy, call Billie at 217-342-5327 (Police Department) and she will mail you one or you can pick up one at the Police Department or Sheriff's Office.

There is another way to keep your loved one safe, especially if you live outside Effingham County or travel a lot. Rapid SOS is a national program that provides information to 911 agencies on anyone registered with them. You fill out an Emergency Health Profile and that information will be accessed by your phone number only. Unfortunately, this system does not access information by name, it is by phone number only. This does not have to be only a disability, or special need, it can be a health issue (such as having one kidney, having heart issues, allergies to medication, etc.). When you call 911, the Rapid SOS alert will automatically popup. This alerts the First Responders to any information that can help them in responding. To register for this, go to [www.emergencyprofile.org](http://www.emergencyprofile.org). This service would be great if you vacation in the south in the winter or travel a lot.

Please use these tools if you have a loved one with Special Needs or Disabilities. It might save their life!

*Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness (EAAA) is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organization founded to provide education and support to all families, caregivers, and people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia in Effingham County and the surrounding area. For more information about Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness, check out the website at [www.effinghamalz.org](http://www.effinghamalz.org). If you are a caregiver & have specific questions or situations you would like information on, please feel free to call Shannon Nosbisch at 217-663-0010 or Amy Sobrino at 618-363-8372.*