

Couple helps provide resources to seniors

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WENDY FOSTER

“We’re really an information resource, and if it comes back to us as business, that’s great. But we’re trying to be a resource,” said Michael Doepke.

The Western Springs resident who with his wife Mary owns and operates Home Helpers Inc. was referring to his recent affiliation with SR Alliance Suburban Chicago.

Home Helpers Inc. provides non-medical assistance to seniors wishing to remain independent and active in their own homes.

SR Alliance, part of a national organization, is a network of local professionals who market goods and services predominantly if not exclusively to the senior market. The SR Alliance, Doepke explained, combines these professionals in an effort to “provide one-stop shopping to the senior community.”

Doepke said that SR Alliance is similar to, yet more focused than, the well-known Business Networking International (BNI) of which he was formerly a member.

“My chapter had thirty different professionals and that was great for awhile and we shared leads. But they didn’t target the senior market. SR Alliance is like BNI but specifically targeted for seniors,” he said. “We only allow one company in every

industry segment.”

For instance, SR Alliance of Suburban Chicago includes one financial planner, one medical supply company, one senior living facility, etc.

With 15 members currently, Doepke said, “We’re inviting people all the time that we think would be a good addition to the group. We meet monthly and one of the things we talk about is what we’re missing, for instance a geriatric care manager.”

Doepke continued, “We try to bring in people who are well known, well networked, and professional. We do background checks. It’s really meant to help seniors by providing a one-stop shopping group while at the same time helping us make our marketing efforts more efficient. It’s a win-win relationship. We’re always looking to add the right people to our team,” Doepke said.

SR Alliance of Suburban Chicago combines marketing initiatives through joint fliers and brochures, and also works cooperatively to address various senior groups.

“We also have a phone line where people looking for a particular service can call in and talk to a real person,” Doepke said.

Being a member of SR Alliance has been “great for a lead standpoint. We’re always getting leads from the group. It’s also good for us because we’ve had trouble getting in front of certain audiences where someone else may have a connection,” Doepke said.

Importantly, Doepke said, his affiliation with SR Alliance has permitted him to refer his clients to trusted partners.

“We’ve already referred our clients and the businesses have performed well and made us look better,” he said.

Through Home Helpers, Inc., Doepke said he is increasingly learning more about the various needs of seniors including medical equipment, financial help, etc.

“I hadn’t had that kind of exposure before but now I can talk to that a lot more than I could before. It gives a much broader perspective and helps us to become better advocates for our clients,” he said.

SR Alliance, Doepke concluded, is “a work in progress. It’s a new concept. We’re trying to break ground every day. We’re learning as we go and we attend more health fairs, and talk in front of more senior groups.”

For more information, call SR Alliance of Suburban Chicago at (630) 532-0637 or visit www.atisorrestweb.com. For further information about Home Helpers Inc., visit www.MaryandMikeCare.com

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