



In Support of Caregivers

A Publication of the Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Winter 2014

Vol. 26, Number 1

In this issue:

- ⇒ **Caregiving Workshops/Classes**
- ⇒ **Resistance to Accepting Help**
- ⇒ **Senior Housing Expo**
- ⇒ **Siblings and Caregiving**
- ⇒ **Telephone Scams**
- ⇒ **Juggling Work and Caregiving**

Dear Reader,

Periodically, we ask our readers for contributions to help defray the cost of the production of this newsletter. Those who receive this newsletter by regular mail can use the enclosed return envelope if you are able to contribute. Those who receive the newsletter electronically are invited to send your contribution to:

Tompkins County Office for the Aging
214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St., Ithaca, NY 14850

Make checks out to "Office for the Aging" and put "Caregiver Newsletter" in the memo line. Of course, contributions are entirely voluntary. Also, we rely on subscribers to let us know when they no longer are involved with family caregiving and wish to be removed from this mailing list. Email: dstoyell@tompkins-co.org.



Finally, mark your calendars for upcoming "First Thursday" caregiver presentations listed below. There are more details on the following presentations on page 3. **Please note that it is highly recommended that call ahead to register these workshops** because of limited space in the conference room. Call our office at (274-5492) to register for any of them or email me at dstoyell@tompkins-co.org.

First Thursday Caregiver Meetings

March 6, 6:30-8:00 PM: *"When an Elder Refuses Help"* Speaker: Ed Bergman

April 3, 6:30 -8:00 PM: *"Creative Ways to Process Your Experience as a Caregiver"*
Speaker: Margaret Page

May 1, Noon-1:30 PM: *"Navigating Decisions in the Caregiving Context"*
Speaker: Corinna Loeckenhoff

Upcoming Caregiver Meetings

The Caregivers' Resource Center facilitates the following groups. Call 274-5492 for details.



Caregiver Group Meeting

- Monthly meetings with a guest speaker presenting on a topic of interest to family caregivers. Note: this is not a “support group.” It is open to anyone interested in the topic.
- Meets the 1st Thursday of each month. (March 6, April 3, May 1)
- 6:30-8:00 PM (exception: May 1 presentation will be held Noon-1:30 PM)
- in the Office for the Aging Conference Room, 214 W. Martin Luther King, Jr/State St.

Because of space limitations, pre-registration for these presentations is sometimes required. See page 3 for more details.

Alzheimer's Support Group

- Open to those caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's or other cognitive impairments
- Meets the 4th Tuesday of each month (Feb. 25, March 25, April 22)
- 1:00 - 2:30 PM in the Office for the Aging Conference Room, 214 W. Martin Luther King, Jr/State Street

Evening Alzheimer's Support Group

In addition to the daytime group (above), people caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's or related disorders can also attend a group that meets at 6:00 PM on the 1st Wednesday of each month at Lifelong, 119 W. Court Street. For information, call the Alzheimer's Association at 785-7852 ext. 119.

Local Caregiver Services

Caregivers' Resource Center & Project CARE Services

Tompkins County Office for the Aging
David Stoyell, Katrina Schickel (274-5482)

The Caregivers' Resource Center & Alzheimer's **Discover the Resource Center**

Support Unit offers family caregivers information and consultation services, support groups, workshops, this newsletter, and a lending library of books and videos on caregiving topics. Stop by or call for an appointment.

Volunteers from *Project CARE* offer caregivers a needed break and help out in other ways as needed. We may also be able to arrange for paid home care services or short-term respite for stressed caregivers having difficulty paying for those services. Call Katrina to discuss your needs.

Caregiver Counseling

Family and Children's Service

Margaret Page (273-7494)



A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers periodically in her office or at their home and help them work through complex caregiving issues or for emotional support. There is no charge for this service.

Adult Day Program

Longview Adult Day Community

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays,
9 AM- 3 PM

Pamela Nardi (375-6323)



Adult day programs offer older adults companionship along with planned social and recreational activities. It often provides a break from caregiving and time for other matters. Both full day (\$38) and half-day (\$19) include lunch and snacks.

Caregivers' Resource Center Workshops on the First Thursday of the Month

The following presentations are offered free of charge at the Office for the Aging, 214 W. Martin Luther King, Jr./State Street.

Important Note

Because of the limited space in our conference room, we urge people to preregister for any of these workshops. Call (274-5492) or email David Stoyell at dstoyell@tompkins-co.org.

When An Elder Refuses Help **Thursday, March 6, 6:30-8:00 PM** **A Dialogue with Ed Bergman**

Ed Bergman is the Coordinator of the Long Term Care Services and Adult Protective Services units at the Tompkins County Department of Social Services. He will introduce the topic and some of the challenges facing caregiving families when elders will not accept assistance. Ed will then facilitate a discussion with attendees about approaches to dealing with the particular concerns of those in attendance. No charge, but advance registration is recommended.



Creative Ways to Process Your Experience as a Family Caregiver **Thursday, April 6, 6:30-8:00 PM** **Presented by: Margaret Page**

Drawing on her experience as an art therapist and caregiver counselor at Family and Children's Service, Margaret Page will demonstrate to those in attendance some creative things family caregivers can do to enhance their self-care. Attendees will have the opportunity to do some "art journaling" as a way of processing their own experience of caregiving. No charge, but advance registration is recommended.



Navigating Decisions in the Caregiving Context **Thursday, May 1, Noon-1:30 PM** **Presented by: Corinna Loeckenhoff**

Caregiving often involves difficult choices surrounding the care and well-being of elders. Disagreements within the family or between families and medical professionals can be particularly challenging. Corinna Loeckenhoff, a faculty member in Human Development at Cornell University, will discuss recent research findings that can help caregivers to better navigate such choices. No charge, but advanced registration is recommended. *(Please note that this is a lunch time presentation rather than our usual evening time. Bring your brown bag lunch if you wish. Beverages provided.)*



Feeling Stretched?

Let's Face It...

Caring for someone with a chronic illness such as dementia, heart disease, Parkinson's Disease or stroke can be stressful physically, emotionally and financially.



Balance Your Life

Powerful
Tools
for **Caregivers**

Spring 2014

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week educational program designed to provide you with the tools you need to take care of *yourself*.

You will learn to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate your feelings
- Balance your life
- Increase your ability to make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources

The program consists of six - 90 minutes class sessions held weekly and is offered free of charge to caregivers.

Not intended for professional caregivers

April 2 — May 7th (Wednesdays)
5:00PM—6:30 PM
at the Office for the Aging

At Our New Location: **214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St.**

Pre-registration is Required

**To register or inquire about the program, Call:
Tompkins County Office for the Aging, 274-5482**

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is offered by the Caregivers Resource Center of the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, with support from Cornell University, and NY Connects /Long Term Care Services Unit of the Tompkins County Department of Social Services

Siblings and Caregiving

In any family there may be sibling rivalries. These rivalries can take different shapes and forms throughout the years. Old feuds and patterns of behavior can return when caring for a parent becomes an issue. Sometimes everyone can come to an agreement on what is best for Mom and Dad, but there are times when reaching decisions seems impossible. Everyone may have different opinions and think that he or she knows what is best.



It is not uncommon for adult children to revert to childhood roles. Parents can contribute to this by favoring one child over another or by pointing out the good points of one child to all the others. Arguments can erupt if one child is shouldering more of the caregiving role. The primary caregiver may feel resentful and become hostile toward their siblings. Distance can play a key role in which sibling becomes the primary caregiver. Other factors that can affect roles are job situations, his or her own family, and economics. One of the best ways to cope with family caregiving is to keep the lines of communication open and find out what each person is able and willing to do. Having a clear plan that meets the needs of all parties is the ultimate goal.

It helps to acknowledge from the start that the division of labor among siblings will never be entirely equal. Not all siblings will be able to contribute the same amount of time, energy or money. The truth is that the bulk of caregiving tends to fall on one person, typically the one who lives closest to the parent geographically—or perhaps the daughter, who is the statistical favorite when it comes to eldercare.

Making an effort to keep family members who live at a distance aware of what's going on can

benefit the primary caregiver in several ways. It may help emotionally to be able to talk about their caregiving challenges and frustrations with siblings.

The primary caregiver needs to express their limits and ask for help during these conversations. The stresses of caregiving can be difficult enough without making it worse by having an attitude of resentment creep in because “they should know what I need.” On their part, once family members who live at a distance have had a chance to be updated and discuss caregiving issues, they need to make an effort to respect the primary caregivers’ decisions and be supportive.

Even though one child is likely to bear the heaviest burden, others can do their part by contributing something. “Your contribution, no matter how small, is appreciated and necessary,” writes Chris Cooper, who runs a geriatric care management firm in Ohio. It might take the form of helping with financial accounting, taking care of little repairs, or helping out financially. Although family members may live at distance, they can spend the time and money to stay with their parent for a few weeks—or bring their parent to stay with them, so their caregiving sibling can get a much-needed vacation.



Sometimes a third party can help. Call the Caregivers’ Resource Center at the Office for the Aging to discuss professionals who can assist caregivers and caregiving families in working through their differences, including caregiver counselors (see p. 2), geriatric care managers, and mediation services such as the WiseTalk senior mediation service available at the Community Dispute Resolution Center.

Senior Housing Expo

Are you an adult child who wants to help your parents transition out of their home and into a more supportive living environment? Or are you interested in learning more about senior housing for your own present or future needs?



**HOUSING
EXPO**

If you've been asking yourself these questions, then you may find the answers at the **Senior Housing Expo on Saturday, May 3, 2014, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at The Hotel Ithaca (formerly the Holiday Inn) at 222 S. Cayuga St., Ithaca.** The Expo will feature over 20 housing providers and facilities, as well as speakers about levels of care and downsizing. This free event is co-sponsored by the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute and the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.

The Senior Housing Expo will provide a unique opportunity to have the range of Tompkins County's senior housing providers on hand displaying their information and answering questions, all under one roof. In addition to representatives from independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing, and continuing care retirement community facilities, visitors to the expo can also enjoy two short presentations by experts in their fields.

David Stoyell, aging services specialist at the Office for the Aging, will lead off at 1:30 p.m. discussing the differences among levels of care facilities. Then, at 2:30 p.m., learn about the benefits of downsizing, and how to go about it with minimal stress, from Linda Story, a local

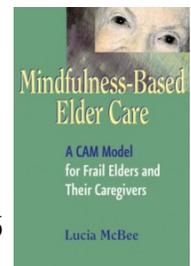
organizing consultant and CEO of Clear the Way (www.cleartheway.com).

For more information, contact Teri Reinemann at the IC Gerontology Institute (274-1607 or reinemann@ithaca.edu) or Dave Stoyell at the Office for the Aging, (274-5492 or dstoyell@tompkins-co.org).

Mindfulness-Based Elder Care
with Lucia McBee as Distinguished Speaker
Monday, February 24, 2014
7:00 PM Emerson Suites, Ithaca College
(Free Lecture)

Lucia McBee, MSW, MPH, CYI is a licensed clinical social worker who has worked with elders and their caregivers for 30 years. She received her MSW and Masters in Public Health from Columbia University and her yoga certification from Kripalu. For the past 15 years, she has integrated mindfulness, gentle movement, hand massage, aromatherapy, and other complementary therapies into her practice with frail elders in nursing homes, with homebound elders, and with their caregivers.

Her book, Mindfulness-Based Elder Care, published in 2008, is available in the Caregivers' Resource Center lending library at the Office for the Aging. Preregistration is not required. For further information, call the IC Gerontology Institute at 274-1606 or email reinemann@ithaca.edu.



News and Notes

New Support Groups

Parkinson's Spouses:

An informal group of women who have spouses with Parkinson's Disease has been meeting monthly in the Office for the Aging Conference Room. Next Meeting: Monday, March 3 at 11:00 AM. For more information, call the Office for the Aging: 274-5492.



A Stroke Recovery Group is forming starting March 6, 2014 that will meet every First Thursday of the month from 1:30-3:00 PM at the Finger Lakes Independence Center in Ithaca. These meetings are for Stroke Survivors and their families/allies. For more information email Dana Murray Cooper at Coop1663@aol.com or phone Joe Zanfordino at 227-0143.

Four Warning Signs of a Stroke

We do well to occasionally review the warning signs of a stroke so they are fresh in our minds when needed. The acronym "FAST" services to remind us:



- **F is for face.** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of face droop?
- **A is for arms.** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **S is for speech.** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?
- **T is for time.** If you observe any of these signs, call 911 immediately.

Telephone Scams

The number of scams targeting vulnerable older adults is on the increase. Make sure to register for the national "Do Not Call Registry." If you are registered at continue to get calls, file your complaint with the FTC at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov. If a loved one has suffered a loss from a scammer, that same site offer ideas on how to get money back (when possible) and link you to local and state agencies that may help with a consumer complaint. The same site can be used to file complaints about other types of consumer fraud. Alert vulnerable elders to hang up if they answer a caller who begins with "Do you know who this is?" Otherwise they may become the victim of an old scam (the "Grandparent Scam") that is on the rise again. This one comes from overseas and any money wired overseas is unlikely to be recovered.



Ease Assisted Living Transition

In the fall 2013 issue of "Care ADvantage," Allan S. Vann, a spousal caregiver, shared his thoughts about the "when" and "where" of transitioning a loved one with dementia to an assisted living residence. In a follow-up article in the winter 2014 issue, he offers his thoughts on the third aspect of this process, the "how". Read both articles online at www.alzfdn.org/Publications/care_advantage If you don't have Internet access, call the Office for the Aging (274-5492) to be sent copies of the articles.



Understanding Resistance to Care

Caregiving can be a very satisfying experience; on the other hand, it can be very frustrating when your loved one resists care. It may appear obvious to you that your loved one needs assistance with personal hygiene, household chores or other needs, but to your amazement they will not accept assistance.



This is a complex dilemma for caregivers. It is helpful to understand *why* you are facing resistance and what you can do about it.

Resistance is often attributed to a “stubborn personality.” In reality, a loved one who is resisting care from you or any other outside source is trying to communicate something to you. When your loved one resists care, step back and try to determine the source of their resistance.

Sources of Resistance

- **Denial** can appear to keep is at a safe distance from our problems. It protects us from pain. When faced with denial from your loved one, focus on his/her feelings and preserving the person’s dignity. Instead of trying to force your opinion, try approaching the problem from a different angle. For example, someone may be more willing to have someone in the home for companionship even though your primary concern is that they need help with chores. (For another, it may be exactly the opposite. You may think a loved one needs companionship, which they are resisting, and you try bringing in a friendly person to do some chores.)
- **Fear** is often at the root of resistance. Afraid of realizing one’s worst fears, a person may become hostile or resentful. A good way of dealing with underlying fear

is to empathize with the person. You may need for a time to avoid confrontation and just let them know you realize their concern. Redirect your attention to something else until they are less threatened by your suggestions.

- **Pride** is important to hold onto when a person is experiencing losses associated with aging or age-related diseases. It becomes extremely important to have your strengths and abilities affirmed. Empowering the person to make certain decisions may help them maintain a sense of self worth.
- **Family Dynamics** can contribute to resistance. Families develop patterns of behavior that dictate how they handle stressful circumstances. A parent may be more receptive to suggestions on certain topics from one of their adult children than another. Sometimes they may be more readily consider the recommendations of a professional whose advice is sought.
- **Burden-** A person may feel like a burden to the caregiver. Assuming that caregiving is meaningful to you and is your free choice, you need to communicate that to your loved one. You may need to vent your frustrations elsewhere.

Remember to choose a time when you and loved one are relaxed to hold discussions. Ask questions about



his/her preferences. Enlist the help of family members. It may take several conversations before feelings and concerns are expressed and your loved one feels understood by you.

Source: Material adapted from an article by Rich O’Boyle, “When Your Loved One Resists Care.”

Juggling Work and Caregiving

When a father has a stroke, a spouse/partner has a heart attack, or a mother has a fall that leaves her unable to care for herself, a family member who works full-time may become a full-time caregiver. However, a recent report from the AARP Public Policy Institute and United Hospital Fund surprised researchers who found that caregivers who remained employed are performing high level nursing tasks in similar proportions to non-employed caregivers. Nearly half of both employed and non-employed caregivers are assisting with medications, meters and monitors, in addition to offering familiar personal care and household supports.

Not surprisingly, while 49% of family caregivers who were not employed reported feeling stressed between caregiving and other responsibilities, 61% who were employed reported such stress.

Free E-book

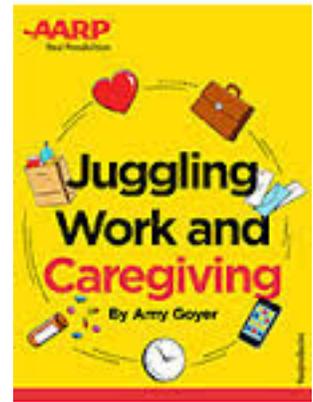
In a new e-book from AARP, *Juggling Work and Caregiving*, Amy Goyer shares her story of being a live-in caregiver for her parents for several years and offers suggestions that can help family members balance work and family caregiving. It can be downloaded for free from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Apple and other online bookstores. In the book, the author cautions family members, in their rush to help, not to sacrifice their careers unnecessarily.

Workplace Flexibility

While some may fear losing their job if they take on long-term family caregiving commitments, in reality the Human Resources Department of one's employer can often help an employee identify strategies for balancing work and family commitments. These will vary depending on the employer, but may include flexible work hours, split-shifts with co-workers, a workday divided between on-site and at-home hours, or a compressed four-day workweek. "Be as upfront as you can with managers," she advises.

When a reduction in hours seems necessary, the Family Medical Leave Act allows eligible employees of companies with at least 50 employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a family member without losing their position or benefits.

When it is medically necessary, employees may take FMLA leave intermittently – taking leave in separate blocks of time for a single qualifying reason – or on a reduced leave schedule – reducing the employee's usual weekly or daily work schedule.



Plan Ahead

Goyer urges anyone who thinks they may become a caregiver to explore all options before an emergency strikes. It is not unusual for families to compensate an adult child or sibling for caring for a loved one, especially if that person has surrendered income to do so. Depending on income, federal, VA, or state programs may be able to help.

Satisfaction

A recent AARP poll found that 8 out of 10 family caregivers gained satisfaction from the role. "There are some amazing and positive things about being a caregiver and I try to get across the joyful part of it," writes Amy Goyer. "I know that I have integrated a lot of fun and joy into my life with my parents." Nevertheless, family caregivers who do not pay attention to their own needs suffer a decline in health, often linked to poor diet and lack of exercise as the struggle to manage stress. The good news is that up-close experience with someone in the later years of life pushes many caregivers to recommit themselves to their own fitness regimen, which may help them maximize their own independence when they are older.

The Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit

Please call or visit us at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging in the County Courthouse basement, 214 W. Martin Luther King, Jr./State Street, Ithaca. Open weekdays, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM.

David Stoyell, CRC Coordinator and Newsletter Editor

Telephone: (607) 274-5492

E-mail: dstoyell@tompkins-co.org

Katrina Schickel, Project CARE Coordinator

Telephone: (607) 274-5491

E-mail: kschickel@tompkins-co.org



Websites of Interest to Family Caregivers:

Tompkins County Office for the Aging: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa

**Click on "Local Resources for Older Adults" to access our Tompkins County resource guides.*

**Click on "Newsletters" to view electronic editions of this newsletter for the past year.*

Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org

Caregiver Action Network: www.caregiveraction.org

AARP Caregiver Resource Center: www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving

Next Step in Care: www.nextstepincare.org

Note that **articles marked "reprinted with permission" may not be further reproduced, except for private use**, without permission of the original publisher. Other material in this newsletter may be freely copied with proper credit given to its original source.

This newsletter is made possible in part by a grant from the NYS Office for the Aging.