



In Support of Caregivers

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

Fall 2016

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REGISTER NOW FOR FALL CLASSES

Earlier this summer, our local “Powerful Tools for Caregivers” program was strengthened by the addition of seven new co-leaders who bring extensive experience in working with older adults and who each recently completed a two day training to certify them as class leaders. As a result, we will be able to offer the classes three times this fall, giving family caregivers more choice about when and where to take the class that would be most convenient for them.

Joining the ranks of class leaders are: Evelyn Kalish, a social worker at Kendal at Ithaca, Jane Segelken, a social worker at McGraw House in Ithaca, Rhoda Meador, Director of the Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center at Ithaca College, Zack Nelson, Senior Program Coordinator at GIAC, Fran Manzella, Associate Director of the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes, Chris Pogorzala, Ithaca College Gerontology Institute faculty member, and Beth Harrington, RN, Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response.



Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week educational program designed to provide you with the tools to take care of yourself when caring for a loved one who has chronic illness or disabilities. Such caregiving responsibilities can be stressful physically, emotionally and financially. The curriculum teaches tools for reducing stress, improving self-confidence, communicating better, balancing your life, locating helpful resources, and making tough decisions.

See the complete list of classes on page 5 and register soon to reserve your place.

Local Caregiver Support Services

Caregivers' Resource Center & Project CARE Services

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

David Stoyell (274-5492)

Katrina Schickel (274-5491)

The Caregivers' Resource Center & Alzheimer's Support Unit

offers family caregivers information, consultation services, support groups, workshops, this newsletter, and a lending library of books on family 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

Ann Dolan (273-7494)

A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers periodically in her office to help them work through complex caregiving issues or provide emotional support. Special circumstances may be considered for in-home service. No charge. Donations accepted.



Adult Day Program

Longview Adult Day Community

Monday thru Friday, 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. Fee: full day (\$45) or half-day (\$31 with lunch, \$22 without lunch).



Support Groups



Caregiver Support Group

3rd Tuesday of each month

6:30 PM-8:00 PM

Family and Children's Service

127 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St., Ithaca.

Facilitated by Ann Dolan, LCSW. Especially for caregivers of older adults. Call for information, 273-7494, before attending first time. Please ring buzzer located next to the front door for entry.

Alzheimer's Support Group

4th Tuesday of each month

1:00-2:30 PM

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

214 W. Martin Luther King Jr/State St., Ithaca

Facilitated by David Stoyell. Open to anyone caring for a relative or friend with significant memory impairment. Call 274-5492 for more information.

Other Alzheimer's Caregiver Groups

1st Wednesday of each month at 5:30 PM

at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca. For information, call Nicole Roustin, 279-5525.

3rd Wednesday of the Month, 12:30-1:30 PM

at Walden Place, Cortlandville. Call 756-8101.

Companion care for your loved one available during the meeting.

Cancer Caregiver Group

2nd Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:00 pm

At the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes, 612 W. State St., Ithaca. For family, friends and caregivers of individuals with Cancer. For info, call 277-0960.

Parkinson's Spouses Group

Meets monthly at the Office for the Aging. Call David Stoyell, 274-5492 for further information.

Advance Medical Directives

Most of our readers are familiar with the commonly used legal documents that enable an individual to tell medical professionals and caregivers how to proceed in the event they become temporarily or permanently incapacitated.

These include the **Health Care Proxy**, the document that names the individual you want to make health care decisions for you if you are unable to make them for yourself.

Sometimes individuals also leave written instructions that explain their health care wishes. These can be included in the health care proxy or in a separate document called a **Living Will**. New York State courts have determined that a living will must be honored as long as it provides “clear and convincing” evidence of your wishes.

For Those Facing Serious Health Issues

Less familiar to some are the legal documents that may be completed only when someone is already facing more serious health issues. These include the Non-hospital DNR and the MOLST.

The **Non-hospital DNR** is an order that provides instruction not to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in the event your heartbeat or breathing stops.

The **MOLST**, which stands for “Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment,” is the bright pink, four page document that is generally used for patients with serious health conditions. It provides instruction for intubation, mechanical ventilation, future hospitalizations, artificially administered fluid and nutrition, use of antibiotics, as well as a section available for instructions regarding the starting/stopping of such treatments as dialysis or transfusions. Physician determination of one’s capacity is required prior to completion of this document and it must be signed by the physician and the order must be updated on a regular basis.

For more information regarding advance directives, consult your physician and other medical providers. A helpful web resource, “Compassion and Support at the End of Life.” addresses this subject matter. Visit it online at www.compassionandsupport.org

Also, the NY State Attorney General’s office has produced a valuable guide titled “Planning Your Health Care in Advance” which can be viewed online at www.ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdfs/publications/Planning_Your_Health_Care_in_Advance.pdf

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging has a supply of the pink MOLST forms if you would like a copy to discuss with a physician. They also can be viewed online and ordered from the “Compassion and Support and the End of Life” website referenced above.



Power of Attorney

A separate legal document, called the **Durable Power of Attorney**, must be executed if you want to give someone the ability to act in your place on financial and other personal matters. Although a durable power of attorney executed in NY State does not include medical decision-making power, it does give your designee wide-ranging power to make other personal and financial decisions on your behalf. It can help avoid the costly and emotionally difficult process of having to get legal guardianship over an individual who has lost the mental capacity to make important decisions. Individuals should consult with a lawyer to assist in executing a durable power of attorney.



Fall Trainings of Interest to Family Caregivers

Note: See page 9 for upcoming workshops for those caring for persons with Alzheimer/dementia.

Legal and Financial Concerns for Caregivers

Thursday, December 1, Noon-1:30 PM

at the Office for the Aging, 214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St.

Presented by: Marcie Finlay, Esq.



Ms. Finlay, a local elder law attorney, will address common legal and financial concerns of the elderly and their caregivers such as planning for the expense of long-term care and planning for incapacity (advance directives, guardianship). Please call ahead, 274-5492, or email dstoyell@tompkins-co.org to register for this program. Free.

**The following workshop is being held at Lifelong, 119 W. Court Street, Ithaca
Pre-registration is required. Call Lifelong, 273-1511.**



Medicare Basics- Sarah Jane Blake - Tuesday, October 4, 5:30-7:30 PM

For those just starting to learn about Medicare. Topics will include: Medicare Part A (hospital), B (medical), and D (Medicare prescription drugs). Also, Medigap plans and Medicare Advantage plans, EPIC, Extra Help and Medicare Savings Program subsidies available to income-eligible individuals/couples. How retiree plans and VA coverage work with Medicare. Free.

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**The following free workshops will be held at the Finger Lakes Independence Center
215 Fifth Street, Ithaca. Call 272-2433 for information or to register**

Durable Medical Equipment- Scott Jones- Friday, Oct. 7, 3:00-4:30 PM

Scott is FLIC's Architectural Barriers Consultant. This workshop will focus on equipment that supports mobility, safety, health and wellness and increase independence allowing people to continue living in a community setting.



Home Modification- Scott Jones- October 21, 3:00-4:30 PM

Attendees will learn about home modifications to make housing more accessible to people with disabilities, whether as a permanent or temporary solution.

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**The following workshop is being held at Cooperative Extension
615 Willow Avenue. Ithaca. Pre-registration required. Call 272-2292, ext. 150.**

Money Smart Seniors- Kenneth McLaurin, Jr.- October 15, 3:30-5:30 PM

Free class raising awareness among older adults and their caregivers on how to prevent financial exploitation and to encourage advance planning and informed financial decision-making. Includes also guarding against identity theft and finding other helpful resources for managing their money.



Feeling Stretched?

Let's Face It...

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



Balance Your Life

Powerful
Tools
for **Caregivers**

Fall 2016

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week educational program designed to provide you with 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 90-minute class sessions offered weekly for six consecutive weeks.

These classes are offered free of charge to those caring for spouses, parents or other adult relatives/friends. (It is not intended for professional caregivers.)

Choose the class most convenient for you:

Wednesdays, Sept. 14- Oct. 19, 3:00-4:30 pm
at the Slaterville Fire Station

2681 Slaterville Rd. Slaterville Springs, NY 14881

Thursdays, Oct. 13- Nov 17, 1:00-2:30 pm
at Kendal at Ithaca

2230 N. Triphammer Rd. Ithaca, NY 14850

Mondays, Oct. 17- Nov. 21, 6:00-7:30 pm
at McGraw House

221 S. Geneva St. Ithaca, NY 14850

Register as early as possible as class size is limited.

**To register or inquire about the program, call the Tompkins County Office for the Aging:
607-274-5482**

Respite = Care for Caregivers

Respite—the chance to take a breather, the opportunity to reenergize—is as important as any other item on your caregiver’s to-do list. People think of respite as a luxury, but considering caregivers’ increased risk of health issues from chronic stress, those risks are a lot costlier than some time away to recharge. **Respite**—the key to your own well-being. Respite protects your own health, strengthens family relationships, prevents burn-out and allows your loved one to stay at home up to three times longer. No wonder respite is one of the most frequently requested support services for family caregivers.

R is for “Rest and Relaxation”

Everyone needs a little “R and R”—especially family caregivers. Relaxing is the best way to return refreshed to handle your many responsibilities as a caregiver.



E as in “Energize”

Caregiving is often round-the-clock 24/7. Respite isn’t simply “getting a few hours off.” It is necessary to help you reenergize, reduce stress and provide care for your loved one.

S as in “Sleep”

Caregivers often have sleep problems. Address sleep problems and insomnia before they take too great a toll on your health.

P is for “Programs that can help you.”

Respite—which can be in the home or out of the home—can be hard to find if you cannot get substitute care from family/friends. You might hire aides from an agency or hire someone privately. Sometimes volunteer “friendly visitors” can give caregivers a break for an hour or two while they visit with your loved one. Low-income seniors may qualify for aide service through the Medicaid or NY State EISEP Program. Call the Office for the Aging (274-5492) to discuss these options.

I as in “Imagination”

Let your mind run free; read a book; see a movie. You have been so occupied with the nuts-and-bolts of caregiving that refreshing your mind will actually help you be a better caregiver.

T as in “Take Five”

...or better yet, take ten. Do you find yourself saying, “I wish I had just ten minutes to myself?” Don’t feel guilty. You need a reprieve—a few minutes to temporarily disengage.

E is for “Exhale”

A simple breath in and then a long exhale can help you focus and increase your vitality. A few deep breaths can give you more energy, reduce stress, and lift your mood.

Making the Most of a Nursing Home Visit

Let's face it. Visiting someone in a nursing home can be emotionally draining and bring up issues you'd rather not deal with, such as guilt, remorse, and your own mortality. Add to these issues the reality that the person you're visiting may have difficulty following conversations, or may not even recognize you any longer. If we keep putting off nursing home visits until another day, we may be left with more apprehension than ever.

So, how can you make the most of a visit despite these challenges? Broome County's "Action for Older Persons" offers the following tips to ease your worries and make your visits more enjoyable for both you and your loved one:

First of all, remember what you loved one was like before moving into the nursing home. What interests did they enjoy? What hobbies did they have? What were their accomplishments? Bringing these subjects up in conversation is often enough to fill your visit with reminiscing and strolling down memory lane. You may also want to bring in items to help keep your loved one occupied during their free time—whether it's paints, sewing materials or old care magazines.

(You may want to share what you know about your loved one's likes and dislikes, daily routine and life history with staff at the nursing home. The more staff know about your loved one, the better they will be able to provide care.)

Bring in a family photo album of older pictures to look through together. The ability to recognize faces lasts longer than the ability to read words. So even if your loved one is unable to remember your face, they may recall faces from the past. This gives them a wonderful chance to share old stories and tell you about their friends from long ago.

Music is another great boost. If you're unsure of your loved one's preferred musical tastes, simply

start by bringing in music from their era. If your loved one tends to be unresponsive during your visits, this may be a great way to enjoy time together without an "awkward silence." And consider this: Music is not always present in some nursing homes, so you may find several residents gathering around to share in this musical gift.

Consider reading a book out loud, particularly if your loved one was an avid reader in their youth. Oftentimes, residents comment that they're unable to enjoy books, magazines, or the newspaper since their vision has failed. Reading can be a productive listening experience as well as "food for thought" long after you are done.

Most importantly, remember the power of the visit itself, regardless of how long you stay or what you accomplish while you're there. Many residents long for conversation and human touch. Simply sitting together and holding your loved one's hand may bridge the gap between the awkwardness you feel when visiting a nursing home and the loneliness they may feel living there. Your visit shows them you care.

The Care Plan Meeting, to which you may be invited, generally includes staff from all of the departments. This is a good time to get to know the people

involved in your loved one's care and determine what aspects of the care you are able to assist with. Some family



members assist at meals or transport to activities. Others may take responsibility for laundry or other tasks with which they are comfortable. You may just sit and visit with your loved one and advocate to the staff for him or her when that might be helpful.

Medicare Home Health Care Coverage

Many Medicare beneficiaries frequently ask whether or not they qualify for home health care coverage. The answer could be yes, but only under certain conditions. First, and most important, the home health care services must be ordered by a doctor and coordinated through a Medicare-certified home health care agency.



Medicare covers the following types of care:

- *Skilled nursing services* – Medicare pays in full for part-time skilled nursing care, which is care that can only be performed safely by a licensed nurse. Part-time means that care is provided up to seven days a week for no more than eight hours per day and 28 hours per week.
- *Skilled therapy services* – This includes physical, speech, and occupational therapy provided by a licensed therapist. Note that occupational therapy is only covered if you also need physical or speech therapy. You will not qualify for the home health benefit if you only need occupational therapy.
- *Home health care services* – This includes services provided by a home health care aide if you also need skilled care. Home health aides provide personal care such as help using the bathroom. If you only need personal care, you will not qualify for the home health care benefit.

Under the home health care benefit, Medicare also covers medical social services, such as counseling; medical supplies, such as catheters; and durable medical equipment, such as a wheelchair or a walker.

It is important to note that although the home health benefit covers the services of a home health aide when skilled care is also needed, it does not cover 24-hour care. The home health benefit also does not pay for meals delivered to your home or homemaker services, such as grocery shopping.

Medicare covers home health care if:

- Your doctor has certified that you are homebound, meaning it is very difficult for you to leave your home and you need help doing so.
- You need skilled nursing services on a part-time basis and/or skilled therapy.
- You have a face-to-face meeting with a doctor within the 90 days before beginning to receive home health care or within 30 days after the first day you receive care. Your doctor must sign a certification of home health care and re-certify it every 60 days.
- You receive the home health care from a Medicare-certified home health agency. In Tompkins County, this is the Visiting Nurses Service.

Always check with your doctor first to find out if you will qualify for home health services covered by Medicare.

Alzheimer's Notes

Fall Dementia Workshops

The following workshops will offered this fall by staff from the Alzheimer's Association. They are held free of charge at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca.

Pre-registration is required. Call 273-1511.



Alzheimer's Basics

Monday, November 7, 5:30-6:30 PM

The program provides information on detection, causes, stages of the disease, treatment and much more.

Effective Communication Strategies

Monday, November 14, 5:30-7:00 PM

Effective Communication Strategies explores how communication takes place when someone has Alzheimer's or a related disease causing dementia. Offers tips on decoding the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia and helpful ways to respond.

Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior

Monday, November 28, 5:30-7:00 PM

During the middle stage of dementia, the person with the disease often starts to exhibit new behaviors that can be confusing or challenging for a caregiver. This session will assist caregivers to identify triggers, decipher behaviors, and determine how best to respond.

Free Enrollment in Medic Alert + Safe Return

Scholarships are now available for enrolling persons with dementia and their caregivers in the "Medic Alert + Safe Return" program. The CNY Alzheimer's Association recently received state funding that allows them to enroll folks in

the program at no cost. It is a 24-hour nationwide emergency response service for individuals with dementia who wander or have a medical emergency. Enrollees can choose from a small or large stainless steel bracelet or stainless steel pendant which will be inscribed with a member ID # and an 800 phone number for people to call if someone is found who is wearing the ID. Caregivers can also order a bracelet or pendant to wear which identifies them as caring for someone with dementia who may need assistance if they have a medical emergency themselves. Both the cost of the bracelets/pendants and the annual enrollment fee are covered by the grant. Tompkins County residents can call the Tompkins County Office for the Aging to be sent an enrollment brochure (274-5492).



My Dear, I Love You

by Jerry Ham

From one who has Alzheimer's, and yes it is hard
Just for a moment, let me share from my heart.
Please forgive me for the things that I say.
If I were well, I would not be this way.
Although I can't tell you, I'm so glad you are here.
But I know you are hurting, cause I see your tears.
I wish I could tell you, what you mean to me.
Could we please go back to what used to be?
But no, we are here, and I'm a stranger it seems.
Though I might wish otherwise,
it's more than a dream.
Please, just remember, when I curse and yell,
it's not really me that you see, just my shell.
In spite of the difficult days we'll go through,
this one thing is true...my Dear...I love you.

The Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit

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

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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

CaringBridge: www.caringbridge.org

Caregiver Action Network: www.caregiveraction.org

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

Next Step in Care: www.nextstepincare.org

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