



In Support of Caregivers

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

Vol. 23, Number

Fall 2011

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First Thursday Caregiver Programs start Oct. 6



Mark Your Calendars: for the first Thursday of every month, from October through next May, to join us at 6:30 PM at Lifelong.

Every month, we will have a speaker on a different topic of interest to those caring for aging relatives and friends. The speaker will make his/her presentation for 30-45 minutes. After a brief break, we will reconvene for about an hour for a general conversation on whatever issues and concerns are on the minds of those in attendance. This conversation will be “support group style,” meaning that what is shared by those present is confidential. This part will be open only to those who are unpaid caregivers of family members and friends. Anyone is welcome to attend the presentation by the speaker.

Thursday, October 6 Presentation:

Topic: *Self Care*

Speaker: Robert Levine
at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca



You may get a phone call!

Mr. Levine will be collaborating with other staff from the Office for the Aging on the development of this new program for family caregivers being offered in Tompkins County. He will be calling many of you during the month of September to discuss your concerns and get a feel for what your needs are. He would also love to hear your thoughts or suggestions regarding caregivers' needs and interests via email: rlevine1@binghamton.edu

Come and join us this first gathering. If you can't make this gathering and want to be informed by email of the topics and speakers for future “First Thursday” programs, email dstoyell@tompkins-co.org and ask to be included on the “First Thursday” email group list.

Fall Support Groups

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



1st Thursday Caregiver Speaker and Group Meeting

- Open to those caring for parents, spouses or other elderly relatives or friends.
- First Thursday of each month:
(Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Dec. 1)
- 6:30PM – speaker on selected topic followed by support group meeting
- Meets at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St.

Alzheimer's & Other Dementia Caregiver Support Group

- Open to those caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's or other cognitive impairments
- Meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month:
(Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 22)
- 1:00 - 2:30 PM in the Office for the Aging Conference Room (320 N. Tioga St., Ithaca)

Parkinson's Support Group

- Open to Parkinsonians and their Caregivers.
- Meets Quarterly:
(Next Meeting: October 19)
- 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM at Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca

Local Caregiver Services

Caregivers' Resource Center & Project CARE Services

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

David Stoyell, Katrina Schickel, Robert Levine
(274-5482)

**Discover the
Resource Center**

The Caregivers' Resource Center & Alzheimer's 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* give 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.

In-Home Counseling & Respite Service

Family and Children's Service

Jessica Gosa (273-7495)



A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers at their home, her office, or elsewhere and help them work through complex caregiving issues or for emotional support. This program also offers grant-funded respite aide service to give caregivers a needed break.

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. Includes lunch and snacks.

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

A Legacy Health System Program

Fall 2011

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

September 19th—October 31st, Mondays, 6 PM-7:30 PM
Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca, NY

September 20th— October 25th, Tuesdays, 10 AM-11:30 AM
Brookdale Senior Living, 103 Bundy Rd., Ithaca, NY -

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 the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, Kendal at Ithaca, Lifelong, Cornell University, Tompkins County Department of Social Services, Long Term Care

Other Upcoming Free Seminars of Interest to Caregivers

All of the following workshops are free and will be held at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca.

Reminder:
Take
Care of
Myself



Self-Care - Thursday, October 6, 6:30 PM, Robert Levine

For family caregivers to thrive in their role, they need to attend not only to the needs of their care receiver, but also to their own needs. Family caregivers in attendance (those caring for aging relatives or friends) will be invited to stay after the presentation for an hour of informal (and confidential) group discussion about any of their own caregiving concerns. *(Pre-registration is not required for this particular workshop).*

(Pre-registration *is required* for all of the following workshops. Call Lifelong at 273-1511.)

Paying for Long-Term Care - Tuesday, 9/13, 10AM-12PM, Dave Stoyell

Medicare generally does not pay for long-term care (non-medical care) services. Mr. Stoyell will discuss the costs of various long-term care services including home care, assisted living and nursing home care, the odds that such care might be needed, what public assistance may be available for those who cannot afford to pay for long-term care services, and give a brief introduction to the topic of long-term care insurance.



Retiring From Driving: It isn't the end!- Thursday, 9/15, 2:30-3:30 PM, Ray Weaver

This presentation, sponsored by Way2Go and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, will educate participants about how to approach retiring from driving, and what resources there are in Tompkins County to aid in transportation after driving retirement. Topics will include medical transportation (in and out of the county), transportation for daily tasks and beneficial programs offered to help keep seniors active after retiring from driving.



Planning for Funeral Needs - Wednesday, 9/28, 3:30PM-5PM, Barry Adams, David Bandler, and Wayne Sinclair

A seminar and discussion on various topics: advantages of making your own plans, funeral options (cremation, burial, donation, etc.), cost control, ways to reserve money for funeral costs, how to read funeral homes' general price lists, price variations for services in this region, more sources of information. The Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes is a nonprofit organization dedicated to consumer education and protection. It also provides opportunities for making simple funeral plans.



Caring Through the Holidays: - Wednesday, 10/19, 6PM-7:30PM, Edward Bergman

The holidays can be a very stressful time; it can be especially stressful for caregivers. Learn tips, hints and information to help caregivers deal with the holiday stress. Topics will include safety, how to recognize and avoid stress, traveling with your loved one and gift ideas. (Ed Bergman is on the staff of the Alzheimer's Association of CNY. Although some of this workshop will focus on Alzheimer's issues, the information and focus of the training could benefit all types of caregivers.)



(See also p. 9 for workshops for Alzheimer's caregivers.)

Introducing In-Home Care When Your Loved One Says “No”

Desperate though caregivers may be for a temporary respite from their care responsibilities, many care recipients are resistant to strangers coming into their home to help. The help may be perceived as an invasion of privacy, a loss of independence or a waste of money. Yet in-home assistance is often critical in offering caregivers a break and time to relax and rejuvenate.



There are ways to make this transition easier. Here are some tips for making your loved one feel more comfortable with in-home help:

1. ***Start gradually.*** Begin by having the aide come only a couple of hours each week, then add hours as your loved one builds a relationship with the helper. If you feel comfortable with the attendant running errands or preparing meals that can be brought to the house, you can start with those services, which can be done outside the home.

2. ***Listen to your loved one’s fears and reasons*** for not wanting in-home care. Express your understanding of those feelings. If possible, get your loved one involved in choosing the aide. He or she will feel more invested and comfortable with the decision.

3. ***“This is for me. I know you don’t need help.”*** Expressing the need as yours, rather than the your loved one’s, helps maintain her sense of dignity and independence. You can also add that having someone stay at home allows you not to worry while you are gone. Make it clear that you will be coming back.

4. ***“This is prescribed by the doctor.”*** Doctors are often seen as authority figures and your loved one may be more willing to accept help if she feels that she is required to do so.

5. ***“I need someone to help clean.”*** Even if this is not the real reason, often people will allow someone in to clean when they “don’t need” care for themselves.

6. ***“This is a free service.”*** This strategy may work if other family members are paying for the home care or if it is, in fact, provided without charge. Your loved one may be more open to using the service since she does not feel that she is spending money for it.

7. ***“This is my friend.”*** By pretending that the attendant is a friend of yours you are relating the home care worker to the family. This can help with establishing trust and rapport. You can also say that your “friend” is the one who needs company and that by having him or her over your loved one is helping him out.

8. ***“This is only temporary.”*** This strategy depends on the condition of your loved one’s memory. If she often forgets what you say then she may also forget that you said this.



By presenting the situation as short-term you will give some time for your loved one to form a relationship or become comfortable with home care as part of her daily routine, and give you a chance for a well-deserved break.

(Reprinted with permission from the Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA) website. For more detailed information about employing someone in your home, see the FCA Fact Sheet, [Hiring In-Home Help](#) found at www.caregiver.org.)

News and Notes

Patients Rights Hotline

The New York StateWide Senior Action Council has helped thousands of New Yorkers with their questions about their rights as health care consumers in a hospital, nursing home or through home care. You can call StateWide at 800-333-4374 (or email info@nysenior.org) if you have been:



- denied emergency treatment,
- transferred unsafely,
- denied admission or discharged too soon,
- kept in a nursing home even though you wish to return to the community,
- found conditions to be below acceptable standards,
- have difficulty understanding what is covered by your insurance.

Falls Prevention Guide

A new “Tompkins County Falls Prevention Resource Guide” is now available from the Office for the Aging and online at www.tompkins-co.org/cofa.

This 26-page booklet is full of information about local programs and services that can help reduce one’s risk of a life-altering fall. It includes lists of places where people can take “strength and balance classes,” similar programs for use at home, home safety and modification resources, assistive equipment loan and purchase options, a home falls prevention checklist, and information on screening for medical conditions that increase one’s risk of falls.



Depression Conference

If you have an interest in issues of loneliness and depression in older adults, mark your calendar for November 10. The details of this year’s depression conference are still being worked out, but it will



feature Dr. Bill Thomas, a world-renowned authority on geriatric medicine and eldercare. The general theme of this year’s conference will center on mental/emotional health of elders. For more information as it becomes available, contact the Mental Health Association or the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.

Changes in EPIC

Starting in January, the New York State EPIC program will only help with prescriptions charges for Medicare recipients who fall into the coverage gap (donut hole). However, remember that another benefit of belonging to EPIC is that EPIC will pay the Medicare D premium (up to \$38.69/month in 2011) for EPIC enrollees whose annual income during the prior year was less than \$23,000/individual or \$29,000/couple.



EPIC enrollees also have the privilege of one special enrollment per year that allows them to join or change their Part D plan *at any time of the year*. Starting in January, 2012 there will be no fee charged to belong to EPIC.

Annual Open Enrollment Period

The annual open enrollment period for changing Medicare health plans and Medicare prescription plans has changed from prior years! This year it will run from October 15 through December 7. Changes must be made by December 7, or you will need to wait another year to make changes unless you qualify for a special enrollment period. Any changes made during this open enrollment period will become effective on January 1, 2012.



For help in understanding Medicare health insurance options, contact a health insurance counselor at Lifelong (273-1511) or the Office for the Aging (274-5482).

Caregiving: Both Demanding and Rewarding

Caregiving can be stressful...

The follow test will help you become aware of your feelings, pressures and stress you currently feel. Which of the following are *seldom true*, *sometimes true*, *often true*, or *usually true* for you?

	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Usually true
I find that I can't get enough rest.				
I don't have enough time for myself.				
I don't have enough time to be with other family members besides the person I care for.				
I feel guilty about my situation.				
I don't get out much anymore.				
I have conflict with the person I care for.				
I have conflicts with other family members.				
I cry every day.				
I worry about having enough money to make ends meet.				
I don't feel I have enough knowledge or experience to give care as well as I'd like.				
My own health is not good.				

If your response to one or more of these areas is “usually true” or “often true,” it may be time to begin looking for help with caring for your care-receiver and help with taking care of yourself. Call the Caregivers’ Resource Center at the Office for the Aging to discuss your options. Consider participating in the “Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes” (see p. 3) and/or “First Thursday” monthly caregiver program (see front cover), or an Alzheimer’s Support group if applicable to your situation (see p. 2.)

Yet Caregivers Report Many Positives...

Even those who voluntarily choose to enter into caregiving will end up with some negative feelings about their role, “but caregiving should not be viewed as a negative situation. It can, and should be viewed as a two-way street, with both receiver and giver enjoying benefits from the relationship.”

Ruth Raimon-Wilson, a former faculty member at the Department of Human Ecology, Cornell, invited caregivers to reflect on why they got into the caregiving situation in the first place (someone was in need of care and the love they could give) and then consider what they might be receiving in return:



- A deep, important relationship.
- New skills. We develop skills that we wouldn't have sought to develop except out of necessity.
- Appreciation. While it may not come often enough, it can add depth and satisfaction to life.
- Newly discovered strengths in yourself and your family—it can help you discover qualities you didn't know you and your family had including tolerance, patience, understanding, generosity.
- Peace and resolution. Caregivers and care-receivers may be in the enviable position of being able to resolve long-standing misunderstandings and conflict before death destroys that opportunity.

Additional Medicare Savings

There are two programs offered by Medicare and Social Security that offer assistance with Medicare Premiums, coinsurance, deductibles and prescription drug plan costs.



Extra Help

Extra Help provides help with Medicare's prescription drug plan (monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription co-pays).

To qualify for Partial or Full Extra Help, the monthly income limits are \$1,353.75/individual and \$1,821.25/couple. Asset limits are \$8,100/individual and \$25,010/couple. You can pick up applications for Extra Help at the Social Security Office or the Office for the Aging.

Medicare Savings Programs

These programs look at just at the applicant's monthly income *and not at resources or assets*.

Qualified Individual (QI): This program pays your Medicare B premium for you (and your Medicare A premium if you happen to have to pay a premium for Part A).

Eligibility: Monthly income limited to \$1,246/individual or \$1,645/couple.

A person who qualifies for this QI benefit also automatically will receive full Extra Help with their Medicare prescription drug plan.

There are **other Medicare Savings Programs** for individuals with even lower monthly income that may help with Medicare co-pays and deductibles in addition to paying the Medicare B premium. If a person also has few assets, these programs may work together with a "Medicaid Spenddown" to minimize out-of-pocket medical costs. For more information regarding qualification and for application assistance, contact Lifelong (273-1511) or the Tompkins County Office for the Aging (274-5482) to arrange to speak to with a HIICAP (Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program) counselor.

The Golden Rules of Medication Management

1. Prepare a list of medications currently being taken and keep it up to date. (Include the name of the drug, dose and how often it is taken).*
2. Bring the medication list with you to all medications appointments and hospital visits.
3. Purchase medications from the same pharmacy.
4. Contact your physician, nurse or pharmacist when you have a question about a medication being taken.
5. Review the medication list with the doctor or pharmacist at least every six months.

*Remember to include all over-the-counter medications, vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements.



Free lecture:

“Informative Tips to Help Keep the Elderly Safe with Their Medications”

To be given by Mike Judd, RPh., M.B.A.
Director of Pharmacy Services, Cayuga Medical Center

Silver Service Lecture in the auditorium at Kendal at Ithaca

September 9 from 2pm – 3pm

Open to the public. Light refreshments

Alzheimer's Notes

Family Caregiver Training Series

Wednesdays, 9/7, 9/21, 10/5, 6PM- 8PM

Presenter: Edward Bergman (3-sessions)

Location: Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca

9/17: Part 1 – Basics of Alzheimer's and Communication;

9/21: Part 2 – Managing Challenging Behaviors

10/5: Part 3 – Caregiver Tips

Sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association of Central New York. A question and answer period will follow each session. All participants will be provided with free educational materials. The workshops are free, but advance registration is required. Call Lifelong, 273-1511.

(Additional workshops are listed on page 4.)

Study: Caregivers and Relatives Perceive Care Differently

A recent study interviewed 266 pairs of primary caregivers and their loved one with mild to moderate dementia and the results appear in the August issue of the *Gerontologist*. Each person was interviewed separately about five values: autonomy, burden, control, family, and safety. The authors found that adult children underestimated the importance of the five core values to their parents with dementia and that the discrepancies were associated primarily with the caregivers' beliefs about their loved one's involvement in decision making. They conclude that it is important for caregivers to gain a more accurate idea about their loved one's values and preferences, perhaps in the earlier stages of dementia, since caregivers will become the surrogate decision makers as the disease progresses. For more information, visit:

<http://live.psu.edu/story/54337>.



Ten Tips for Family Caregivers

(from the National Family Caregivers Assn.)

1. Caregiving is a job and respite is your earned right. **Reward yourself** with respite breaks often.
2. **Watch out** for signs of depression. Don't delay in getting professional help as needed.
3. When people offer to help, **accept the offer** and suggest specific things they can do.
4. **Educate yourself** about your loved one's condition and how to communicate effectively with doctors.
5. There's a difference between caring and doing. **Be open** to technologies and ideas that promote your loved one's independence.
6. **Trust your instincts**. Most of the time they'll lead you in the right direction.
7. Caregivers often do a lot of lifting, pushing and pulling. **Be good to your back**.
8. Grieve for your losses, and then allow yourself to **dream new dreams**.
9. **Seek support** from other caregivers. There is great strength in knowing you are not alone.
10. **Stand up for your rights** and as caregiver and as a citizen.



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, 320 North Tioga St., 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.tompkins-co.org/cofa

(Click on "Gateway to Senior Services" at the top of the home page to access our resource guides and back issues of this newsletter.)

Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org

Next Step in Care: www.nextstepincare.org

National Alzheimer's Association: www.alz.org

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