

Balance

2008 Holiday Issue

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Serving people of all faiths.

CAREGIVER REFLECTIONS

The Art of Giving

For some of us, giving care comes naturally. We seem to know instinctively what other people need and give it with relative ease.

For others of us, giving care is difficult. We don't seem to know how to help or are reluctant to do so.

The challenge for the "natural" caregivers among us is to avoid over-giving. We've got to resist doing for our loved ones what they can and should do for themselves. We must also leave room for others to contribute to the care.

The challenge for the less skilled givers among us is to open our hearts and approach caregiving with a willingness to learn. We too can learn the art of giving by observing what other caregivers do and also by asking our loved ones what would be most helpful to them.

The Art of Receiving



When someone brings over a cake or a bouquet of flowers, we may feel obligated to do something in return.

What if, instead, we simply said, "Thank you, I appreciate it?" Period.

Nothing more is expected. Nothing more is needed. Nothing more, really, is healthy for us if we're in the midst of heavy-duty caregiving.

Kindnesses from others are God's answers to our prayers for help. Let's practice receiving them as we do the sunshine and daffodils – with simple delight.

From *Comfort and Be Comforted*, Pat Samples, ACTA Publications, Chicago. Used with permission.

12 Ways to Brighten the Holidays for Caregivers

1. Offer a few hours of respite time to caregivers so that they may spend holiday time with friends, or simply relax.
2. Send a card of appreciation or bouquet of flowers.
3. Offer to help with home repairs, yard work or indoor house cleaning, or encourage a local business to donate these services.
4. Help a family caregiver decorate their home for the holidays or offer to address envelopes for their holiday cards.
5. Offer comic relief! Purchase tickets to a local comedy club, give a family caregiver your favorite funny movie to view, or provide them with a book on tape.
6. Find 12 different family photos and have a copy center create a 2009 calendar that the family caregiver can use to keep track of appointments and events.
7. Offer to prepare a holiday dinner for a caregiving family in your community, so they can just relax and enjoy the holiday.
8. Ask elderly family members to share stories about holiday celebrations in their youth.
9. Encourage caregivers to take time out to attend a family caregiver support group during the holidays. Offer to provide respite so the caregiver can attend.
10. Call CAN at (513) 929-4483 and arrange for *Balance*, a free quarterly newsletter, to be mailed to caregiving relatives and friends.
11. Assist other caregivers in your community by informing the Caregiver CAREline of volunteer services in your area. (See page 2 *Share the News* for more details.)
12. Teach your children and grandchildren the gift of caring by involving them when you do things for others.



Holiday Survival Tips for Caregivers

Holiday time can be especially overwhelming for caregivers of family members. Many caregivers wish to hold on to family traditions, but old traditions do not always fit with new realities.

- ◆ Do it your way
- ◆ Plan ahead-set limits
- ◆ Involve the care-receiver as much as possible
- ◆ Do not force cheerfulness
- ◆ Create a holiday job list (hand-out)
- ◆ Keep shopping simple
- ◆ Use stress management tactics that work for you
- ◆ Prepare for post-holiday let down
- ◆ Seek support

HIRING AN INDEPENDENT CAREGIVER



As people age – or due to a life-changing event such as a stroke – the ability to live independently may change. Over 44 million Americans spend time caring for family members or friends who can no longer live on their own

without assistance. Often a family member or friend steps in to help the person with the activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing, everyday chores or preparing meals.

Over time, the need for assistance often increases, which in turn increases the time commitment from family and friends. Individuals often desire to remain in their own home, even though they need more help to stay there. It is frequently at this point that caregivers must begin to look at sources beyond the family to assist with care.

The home care industry is growing in response to the increased need for help in the home.

Caregivers can be hired from an agency or they can be hired as private or independent caregivers. When you hire a private or independent caregiver, that individual becomes your employee and you become the employer.

Frequently, families may utilize a privately hired individual for these reasons:

- They can hire a person they choose based on their best judgment.
- They have more control and choice in the care plan, which may provide more flexibility for the family.
- The cost is typically lower than that of an agency.
- There may be more flexibility in terms of the caregiving schedule.

Things You Need to Know

If you decide to hire an independent caregiver you should be prepared to:

- Locate potential caregivers
- Screen applications
- Conduct interviews
- Run background checks
- Administer payroll, including social security and other taxes

An excellent article prepared by Metlife in cooperation with the National Alliance for Caregiving will guide you through the details of the hiring process. Call the CAREline at (513) 929-4483 for a free copy.

“Sometimes their only voice is our voice.”
– Author unknown

FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE AWAITS YOU

As we age, issues such as estate planning and health planning become even more critical to protect our independence in unpredictable situations. In many of these cases, legal counsel can provide advice and help to create documents that will ensure our wishes are known and followed.

Elder law is a relatively new, specialized field of law that deals with issues faced by the fastest growing segment of the US population. It combines elements of estate planning, wills and trusts, conservatorship, health care planning and Medicare/Medicaid planning.

Any lawyer will offer legal advice to the best of his or her ability. However, just as a medical specialist offers expertise for certain health conditions, a specialist in elder law may be able to offer more specific knowledge about certain issues than a general attorney.

If you wish to obtain legal advice on elder law matters, here are a few suggestions on where to begin:

- Call Pro Seniors at (513) 345-4160
- Contact the Caregiver CAREline for a list of elder law attorneys who collaborate with CAN
- Talks at no cost for your church or facility on legal and financial issues for seniors and caregivers and related topics can be arranged by CAN through the CAN Speakers Bureau. Call (513) 929-4483 for more information. (These talks are among the most requested and popular offered by CAN.)

(A portion of this article was taken from *Aging Issues*, a publication of the Ohio Department of Aging.)

SHARE THE NEWS! SOME VOLUNTEER HELP IS AVAILABLE

Many callers to the Caregiver CAREline are frantically seeking nonmedical assistance for respite, transportation, etc., and are unable to afford to pay the cost. Does your church provide any limited volunteer help for caregivers and seniors? If so, please call the CAREline (513) 929-4483 so that this service can be made known to callers from your parish or congregation or neighborhood.

If your church or congregation does not offer volunteer assistance, and you would be willing to meet with others to explore what might be done to assist in your congregation or neighborhood, call the CAREline to discuss it.

CAN stands ready to help!



CAREGIVER NEWS

CAN salutes St. Peter in Chains Cathedral for honoring paid and volunteer caregivers in the area at a Mass on November 16, 2008 on the occasion of National Family Caregivers Month.

Congratulations to the National Family Caregivers Association on its 15th Anniversary. CAN is a member of NFCA and is grateful for its wide variety of services to caregivers. Check out their excellent website at www.thefamilycaregiver.org. NFCA membership is free to all family caregivers.

Ronald Kienzle, an intern in the Diaconate Program of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, assisted CAN during the Summer. Thank You!

During the Fall CAN was pleased to respond to an increase in the number of educational programs offered by CAN's Speakers Bureau to churches and healthcare facilities. Call the CAREline (513) 929-4483 for a listing of topics for Winter and Spring.

Resources

IN PRINT

Aftershock: What to Do When the Doctor Gives You-or Someone You Love – a Devastating Diagnosis, Jessie Gruman, Ph.D., Walker & Co., 2007. This book is a calming force within the storm of information and emotion overload.

I'm Not Alone: A Teen's Guide to Living with a Parent Who Has Mental Illness, M and D Sherman, Call 800-901-3480.

ON THE WEB

www.thoughtful-caregiver.com – A creative and insightful variety of poems, reflections, photos and art related to caregiving.

www.maturemarketinstitute.com – Check the “What’s New” section of this website for free informational bulletins on caregiver concerns, e.g. On providing care at home, choosing adult day services, etc.

www.alzcast.org – A DVD and webcast offering free coaching for caregivers dealing with dementia patients, provided by the Copper Ridge Institute in affiliation with Johns Hopkins University.

www.caregiver.org – An excellent variety of articles is available from the Family Caregiver Alliance.



People will forget what you said,
People will forget what you did,
but they will never forget
how you made them feel.
– Maya Angelou

Articles of Interest

CAN is pleased to share with you at no charge one or more of these articles that have recently crossed our desks. Call the CAREline (513) 929-4483 to receive your copy.

- “20 Practical Tips for Finding the Best Residential Care for your Relative”
- “Personal Health Care Journal” (This booklet helps you to keep records that will keep track of your medical services and make it easier for you to be a wise healthcare consumer.)
- “Older Adults and Mental Health: Anxiety Disorder”
- “Resource Phone Numbers” A Very comprehensive 11-page listing of phone numbers and web-sites for area seniors and caregivers compiled by the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio.
- Medicare’s Prevention Care Services. A new educational pamphlet on free and low-cost preventive services and screenings.
- “Planning for your Discharge.” A checklist for patients and caregivers preparing to leave a hospital, nursing home, or other health care setting.
- “Financial Steps for Caregivers: What You Need to Know about Money and Retirement.” A very practical & excellent 11 page guide for caregivers during these turbulent financial times.

Did You Know?

1. 1.3 to 1.4 million children – boys and girls alike – between the ages of eight to 18 years old care for someone who is sick or disabled.
2. Family caregivers experiencing extreme stress have been shown to age prematurely. This level of stress can take as much as **10 years off a family caregiver’s life**.
3. Elderly spousal caregivers with a history of chronic illness themselves who are experiencing caregiving-related stress have a **63 percent higher mortality rate** than their non-caregiving peers.
4. Researchers who put brighter lights into nursing homes have found that residents with dementia appear to suffer fewer symptoms. Improvements were modest, but the study showed a simple step that may improve life for many.



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The Caregiver Assistance Network is a program of Catholic Charities SouthWestern Ohio and funded in part by the Ohio Department of Aging through the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio.



Drs. Joseph Ilardo and Carole Rothman, Caring Matters, Keynote Speakers



On October 15th over 200 family caregivers and healthcare professionals took part in "Caring Matters-2008". The theme: "The Challenge of Caregiving: Finding Your Way Through the Maze" was addressed by Drs. Ilardo and Rothman of New York, and a host of local professionals and caregivers. The Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio co-sponsored the event with CAN of Catholic Charities SouthWestern Ohio, other sponsors, and more than 30 exhibitors. Attendees gave the program high marks!



Kathleen Donnellan, Executive Director, Catholic Charities SouthWestern Ohio
Arlene deSilva, COO, Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio



How Will Digital Television Affect Seniors?

On February 19, 2009, thousands of Ohioans could turn on their TVs only to find nothing is on . . . quite literally. On that date, all full-power television stations are required to begin broadcasting a digital signal only. What this means is that many households that receive their television signal through an antenna on an older TV set may find themselves staring at a lot of "snow" if they haven't prepared.

If you subscribe to cable or satellite TV you may not need to do anything. For more information on what you may need to do if you have an older set or receive your signal through an antenna, call 1-800-388-2009 or visit www.dtv2009.gov.