

Caregiver Chronicles

November 2016



AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY
2865 N SHERMAN AVE, MADISON, WI 53704
608-261-9930
[HTTPS://AAA.DCDHS.COM/](https://aaa.dcdhs.com/)



Celebrating National Caregivers Month
Thank you for all you do!

Caregiver Chronicles

Thankful for Caregivers

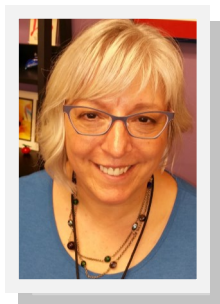
It makes perfect sense that National Caregivers Month falls in November, the month Americans also celebrate Thanksgiving. In the US, family caregivers provide a service with benefits that reach far beyond the person to whom they provide care and their immediate family and friends. Nationwide, the monetary value of that care is \$475 billion per year, and that doesn't take into account the care provided to recipients who are not eligible for Medicaid. In the state of Wisconsin, our family caregivers provide 538 million hours of care, estimated at a value of \$7 billion. Some caregivers invest their own money and leave jobs to provide care at great consequence to their own financial wellbeing. Caregiving also takes an emotional, psychological, and spiritual toll. Many caregivers find meaning in the care they provide, but they often find themselves in heart-wrenching situations as well. As a society, we owe family caregivers a significant debt.

In 2000, the National Family Caregiver Support Program was put into place in order to address the needs of family caregivers. The program recognizes that in order to allow older adults to stay in their homes as long as possible, there will likely be a period of time when they require care. Family, friends, and neighbors step into that space of need and provide help with home chores, personal care, meals, transportation, medical information and decisions, finances, housing, and keeping their loved one engaged in community. This can become a tall order when a senior begins to need progressively more help with multiple tasks and activities. Dane County "Caring for the Caregiver" grants are available to help ease the burden for caregivers.

Although eligibility for an individual "Caring for the Caregiver" grant is determined by the care recipient's situation, qualifying caregivers need only be over the age of 18 (or age 55 if they are grandparents or other relatives raising a relative child under the age of 18). Sometimes, what a caregiver needs most to support them in the role is respite that benefits them directly—straightforward time away or just time to themselves. It may be useful for them to have help with home chores and personal care, but it may be even more important to the caregiver to get a massage, take a meditation class, join an exercise program or take an art class.

Because the "Caring for the Caregiver" grant cycle coincides with the calendar year, remaining funds are limited for 2016. However, if you, or a caregiver you know, can benefit from a service or class that is best spread throughout the year, now is a good time to plan for 2017. If getting a personal emergency response system would provide relief, the grant funds can be maximized by starting the service at the beginning of the calendar year. The same is true for joining an athletic facility or any other program billed on a monthly basis. These types of services cannot be paid in advance as there are a number of situations that can have an impact on eligibility throughout the course of the year.

"Caring for the Caregiver Grants" are awarded one time only, and are meant to provide support in a time of transition and need. You can access the program through the ADRC or Senior Focal Point Case Managers. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about the grant program.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane De Broux".

Jane De Broux
Caregiver Program Coordinator
Dane County Area Agency on Aging



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Death, Driving, and Dollars: How to Discuss Taboo Topics with an Elderly Loved One

No one relishes the thought of pondering death for too long. Aging adults don't want to consider what giving up the keys to the car will mean for their independence. And, thanks to the prevalence of identity theft, financial information always has an aura of silence surrounding it. However, as you begin assuming more and more responsibility as a caregiver, there will come a time when you will have to discuss these awkward issues with an aging family member.

Here are **Seven Strategies for Discussing Sensitive Subjects with an Elderly Loved One:**

Don't give advice unless it's asked for: This is an especially important tip for adult children who are looking after their aging parents. Your mother and father are used to providing you with advice and guidance. When this dynamic begins to shift, it may start to lower their self-esteem and make them feel out-of-control. Getting an outside expert—such as a financial advisor, or elder law attorney—to provide professional guidance can make an elder more receptive to new information.

Pick your battles: It's likely that your loved one needs help with multiple tasks—don't try to tackle all of them in a single conversation. Prioritize their needs and address those needs over a series of discussions. This will allow each talk to remain focused on identifying a single problem and all of its potential solutions.

Listen to what they're saying: Make sure you're *really* listening to what your loved one is saying. Try not to interrupt, or fill the silence during a conversation. When it's your turn to speak, summarize what you think your loved one just said and then ask them if you have correctly interpreted their sentiments.

Accept differing viewpoints: Expect and accept disagreement, especially when discussing hot-button topics. Acknowledge your loved one's questions, concerns, and viewpoints. Try to come up with a compromise that everyone can accept.

Speak calmly and clearly: Especially if things begin to get heated, avoid raising your voice or shouting during a conversation. An argument can quickly escalate if either party starts acting flustered. Also, when speaking to older adults with hearing issues, it's important to keep your voice low and to make sure to properly enunciate. This will smooth the communication process by ensuring that your loved one is literally hearing what you have to say.

Don't patronize: No one likes to be talked down to, especially if they've been living decades longer than the person they're conversing with. Even if you're talking to someone who suffers from Alzheimer's, or some other form of dementia, don't infantilize them by speaking to them the same way you would speak to a child.

Choose your setting carefully: Plan out where you want the conversation to be held. Pick an area that is quiet and has few distractions (television, radio, too many people). Make sure you're facing your loved one at all times.

(continued on page 4)

Caregiver Chronicles

(continued from page 3)

Put yourself in their shoes: Remember that your loved one is probably feeling like they are losing control over their own life. In their mind, their freedom and independence are being threatened. Be mindful of these feelings and approach every discussion with sensitivity and empathy.

Provided courtesy of AgingCare.com, the go-to destination for family caregivers. AgingCare.com offers resources and support to help guide family members through difficult conversations, like [talking with parents about death](#) or money. This article is one of a series of articles included in the eBook, *Family Caring for Family*. Download your free copy at www.AgingCare.com/ebook.

Online Resources

Raising the Children of the Opioid Epidemic: Solutions and Supports for Grandfamilies, Generations United, 2016

“For generations, substance use—including opioids, crack cocaine, meth, and alcohol—have led grandparents and other relatives across races, ethnicities, and geographic areas to step in to care for children. The opioid epidemic is the next chapter in this narrative that demonstrates a need to better support these grandfamilies so the children in their care can flourish.”

Go here: http://www.gu.org/Portals/0/documents/Reports/16-Report-State_of_Grandfamilies.pdf

From National Alliance for Caregiving

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released a new Study on **Family Caregiving for Older Adults**. The report reflects a national consensus building process to identify the challenges facing family caregivers of older adults, and recommends a national plan for caregivers. Get the full report and summary report here: <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2016/families-caring-for-an-aging-america.aspx>



The Aging and Disability Resource Center of Dane County (ADRC)

The ADRC offers free, unbiased information and assistance on resources and services for older people and adults with disabilities. Staff provides information to all callers regardless of their income, assets, age, or disability, and they help callers identify options, solve problems, and plan for the future.

Open 7:45 am—4:30 pm Monday through Friday

Call (608) 240-7400

Visit the ADRC office, 2865 N. Sherman Ave, Madison

Appointments are not necessary

Website: www.daneadrc.org

Email: ADRC@countyofdane.com

Tools for Tough Caregiving Topics

November 10, 2016

5:30 pm Light Supper

6:00—7:00 pm

Presentation and Discussion

(No cost, no registration required.)



When to Stop Driving and How to Talk About It

Presenter

James Kubek

AAA Driver Training Programs

American Automobile Association of Wisconsin

Adult Children and Employed Caregivers Learn & Support group

Located at the Aging & Disability Resource Center

2865 N Sherman Ave in the Northside TownCenter shopping center

Contact: Jane De Broux, 608-261-5679

debroux.jane@countyofdane.com

Dementia-specific Education and Support

Reflections on the Art of Love
A Caregiver Gathering and Appreciation



November 2

6pm-7pm

November is National Caregiver Month! In the United States, there are more than 15 million Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers. Join us to recognize all of the work they do and the memories they have with the people they care for.

Music : Socializing : Appetizers

Suggested donation in honor of your loved one.



WHERE

333 W. Main Street

FREE PARKING

**In parking ramp across from
333 W. Main Street**

Social Outings Everyone Can Enjoy

Monday, November 28

3:00—4:00 pm

Stoughton Area Senior Center
248 W. Main Street
Stoughton, WI 53589
608-873-8585



Truly Remarkable Loon

Bring your family for an intergenerational program. Truly Remarkable Loon—Yes! Truly Remarkable Loon is his real and legal name—has been performing as a comedy juggler for almost forty years. Loon's comedy and juggling show, *Merry Anticipation of Disaster* features a variety of technical juggling and balancing feats, non-stop comedy patter, and a big dose of foolishness. The best thing about the show is its very wide audience appeal.

**Adults and children alike will be amused, amazed and entertained!
Open to all!**



Caring for the Caregiver Program

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- You are willing to receive the newsletter via email
- You are no longer interested in receiving the newsletter

Contact:

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