

# Caregiver Chronicles

July 2018



Caring for Caregivers

**AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY**  
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Life is a thorough university; pain and hardship are its distinguished professors.

—*Matshona Dhliwayo*

### Independence doesn't mean standing alone

Whatever the reason might be, the month of June appeared to be a tough one for a number of the caregivers I've been working with this year. Alongside the stories of caring and inspiration I regularly hear, there was a spike in challenging situations and struggles. If life is indeed a thorough university, this summer reminds me of taking both statistics and economics during the summer session before my senior year of college. My answer to that overloaded situation was to enlist study group support. In this edition of *Caregiver Chronicles* I've included resources I hope will help readers get support for some of the more intractable challenges of caregiving.

One of the most difficult challenges for caregivers is to help their loved one cope with pain—physical, emotional, and psychological. Before my own caregiver journey began, I had no idea what palliative care was and how it differed from hospice care. Palliative Care Social Worker, Deanna Truedson McKillips, tells us what palliative care actually is, and how it can help (page 3).

Another challenge for caregivers is how to help an isolated loved one. We've learned from a study out of Brigham Young University in 2015 that loneliness is a big public-health issue, and it might be a more significant health factor than obesity, smoking, exercise or nutrition. One way to address the need for good nutrition and socialization is to encourage older adults who are able to take advantage of the Dane County Nutrition Program's invitation to try new community meal options. So far, they've been very successful in pairing tasty menus with good company. Angela Velasquez, Aging Program Specialist for Dane County's AAA, provides the details (pages 6 & 7).

As caregivers grapple with these challenges and others, keeping up with self care can take on a life of its own. Sometimes simply mentioning the need causes stress—as though self care is just one more daunting task. If you enjoy listening to podcasts, try getting yourself out for a walk with wisdom from journalist Jane Gross (Online Resources, page 4) or dial in Caregiver Teleconnection sessions on getting help and caring for your own needs (page 5).

You can also kick off the month of July by celebrating what independence means to you. You may be intricately involved with another's life as a caregiver, but you are your own person as well. There is no need to go down with the ship when caregiving reaches a rough point. Contact the Caring for Caregivers Program for resources and support. You can also reach out to your [local senior center or coalition](#) and the [ADRC of Dane County](#). We're here to help.



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Caring for Caregivers

## Help your loved one cope better with effects of a serious illness

**D**o you care for a seriously ill family member who has uncontrolled symptoms or troubling behaviors? Is it a challenge to keep them comfortable or to prevent their actions from hurting others?

It's easy to feel alone and helpless as a caregiver. If you've run out of ways to address ongoing physical symptoms or behaviors by your care partner (such as those related to dementia), try asking their doctor about palliative care.

Most caregivers have heard of hospice, but palliative care is appropriate for adults who are at *any point* in a serious illness. Hospice care is specifically for people whose main goal is comfort, not a cure, and who are likely in their last six months of life. You usually cannot have hospice care while you are also having treatment. The goal of palliative care is to help people get more relief from their physical symptoms, pain, stress, and other health problems as well as from side effects of medicines and treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiation. This kind of care looks at the whole person and considers their lifestyle, social, and emotional needs.

Detailed, in-home visits may be made by a nurse practitioner or doctor and are covered by Medicare Part B. For programs like Agrace's PalliaHealth, patients must qualify medically, meaning it's difficult for them to leave home and travel to their doctor due to their illness. Staff often visit people who have trouble expressing their needs, due to dementia or another condition.

"A consult can give you new ideas for helping a loved one who has uncontrolled symptoms or behaviors and doesn't clearly qualify for hospice care," says Susan Husom, RN, practice manager for PalliaHealth. "We can talk about tools, care techniques and medications that may help you and your loved one cope better. We try to help our patients improve so they can stay in their current setting longer—whether in their own home or a communal setting such as assisted living."

—Deanna Truedson McKillips, MSW, CAPSW  
Palliative Care Social Worker, [Agrace Hospice & Palliative Care](https://www.agrace.org/find-care/palliative-care/)  
<https://www.agrace.org/find-care/palliative-care/>  
Member, Dane County Caregiver Alliance





## Online Resources

### *Listen to the Podcast*

#### **The Far Shore of Aging**

***On Being*, Jane Gross with Krista Tippett**

<https://onbeing.org/programs/jane-gross-the-far-shore-of-aging/>

“It is a story of our time — the new landscape of living longer, and of dying more slowly too. Jane Gross has explored this as a daughter and as a journalist, and as creator of the *New York Times*’ “New Old Age” blog. She has grounded advice and practical wisdom about caring for our loved ones and ourselves on the far shore of aging.

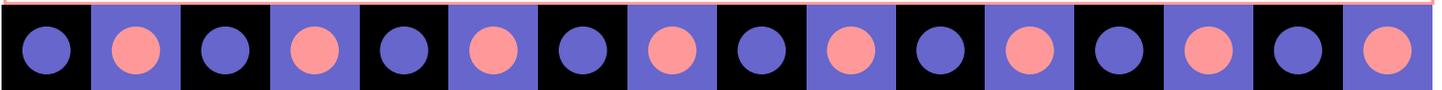
You can listen via the links above, or subscribe on Apple Podcasts or [Stitcher](#).

#### **How to Curb the High Cost of Caregiving**

**by Reshma Kapadia, *Barron’s*, March 17, 2018**

<https://www.barrons.com/articles/how-to-curb-the-high-cost-of-caregiving-1521253021>

“Caregiving is often so easy at the start, you don’t even think of it as caregiving. It’s a few days off from work to accompany Dad for medical tests, or a couple of hundred dollars a month for someone to check in on Auntie, or a few extra flights home to help your parents move into a senior community. It seems manageable—until it isn’t. Short-term fixes can stretch into years, upending lives, taking family dysfunction to new levels, and blowing up otherwise solid retirement plans.”



Open 7:45 am—4:30 pm Monday  
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# CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

[www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org)



Date	Time	Topic	A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS
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Monday, July 9th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific (Arizona)	<b>Home Care Services: How Help for Your Loved One Helps the Caregiver with Laurie Miller</b> <i>Do you find that now that you are a caregiver, you just don't have enough time, energy, strength, or have health problems of your own? Learn how home care services can help and let you be the best caregiver for your loved one. Find out the difference between home care and home health care, how much it costs the family or loved one, and how some families have found financial resources such as Veteran Benefits to pay for it. ***Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection***</i>	
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Tuesday, July 17th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific (Arizona)	<b>How to Fall in Love with Yourself with Cynthia Hazel, M.A.</b> <i>We are taught from birth that we are to love others, but relational love can be challenging. If caregivers don't understand how to meet their own needs, how can they be there for their charges? In the presentation, we will explore the importance of loving ourselves and caring for our own needs as a necessary way to complete this task without losing ourselves and dealing with negative emotions, like resentment.</i>	
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Tuesday, July 24th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific (Arizona)	<b>LOLA - Loss of Life Advocates with Esther Pipoly</b> <i>If you ask someone if they are prepared for a life transition or loss, they generally say they don't want to think about it, or they lean in and say, "I think so." There is so much that goes into getting someone prepared and when you do the work, afterwards you will have the feeling of comfort knowing at the time of a transition or loss, all the decisions have been discussed or made already. LOLA walks you through as a guide talking about all the things together. "I realized after losing my father in 2014 and then my husband shortly afterwards, there was no one to be a guide for me.- that is when I came up with Loss of Life Advocates, named after my mother, to help individuals, and families prepare"</i>	
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A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

Register online at [www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org) or call 866.390.6491 Toll Free

### My Meal—My Way Is Going “Out to Lunch”

#### *Dane County Seniors Invited to try a New Community Meal Option*

It's Thursday around noon and the joint is jumping! The conversation is lively, the music takes you back to the late '60s, and there are often few open tables, but you're welcomed by folks to an empty seat at any table if you're age 60 or older. The smoky flavor of pulled pork, beef brisket, or salmon begs more than just a bite—all to be followed up by the tasty ice cream flavor of the day! You may be surprised to learn this food utopia with 10 meals to choose from—Ziggy's BBQ Smoke House & Ice Cream Parlor on Main Street in Oregon—is just the newest restaurant location for the senior nutrition program in Dane County, available every Thursday between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Feel like a hearty breakfast will do the trick since the traditional fish fry is your thing on Friday nights? Try the incredible French Toast topped with fresh strawberries & blueberries, smothered in real maple syrup, and served with locally-sourced sausage and freshly-squeezed orange juice on Friday mornings at Cranberry Creek Café in Monona. Or, mix it up and have the steel cut oatmeal with cranberries and pecans, brown sugar, and cream; or the scrambled eggs with ham and freshly-made potatoes. All this and more is available to folks age 60 and over every Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Is having breakfast for lunch your thing? Then Wednesdays at Fink's Café in Mount Horeb or The DeForest Family Restaurant in DeForest is where to feed that craving for lunch. It's all about choice at these locations as well. Choose between breakfast or lunch from their menus of 10 selections including everything from eggs to spaghetti and meatballs.



So, if you think getting the proper nutrition as an older adult had to be boring, you haven't tried the senior nutrition program in Dane County lately. All sites now include a vegetarian option daily and a salad option weekly, and whether you choose to dine at one of our *My Meal-My Way* locations or one of our other popular senior dining locations across Dane County (go to [https://aaa.dcdhs.com/pdf/nutrition\\_brochure.pdf](https://aaa.dcdhs.com/pdf/nutrition_brochure.pdf) for a list of all 28 locations) you are always welcome! All locations offer seniors a meal on a donation basis—meaning you pay what you can afford, with no set cost charged to dine.

For help in locating a site near you, please call the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Dane County at (608) 240-7400. Join us in aging well by eating right and getting *Out to Lunch!*

—Angela Velasquez  
Aging Program Specialist  
AAA Dane County



*My Meal—My Way* diners enjoy good food and good company at Cranberry Creek Café in Monona.



# Caring for the Caregiver Program

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