

Caregiver Chronicles

December 2019



Caring for Caregivers

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/)



Kindness can transform someone's dark moment with a blaze of light. You'll never know how much your caring matters.

—Amy Leigh Mercree
Author

Wishing You Peaceful Holidays

Many of us look forward to the holidays but dread huge “to-do” lists that can take some of the joy right out of the season. This month’s feature articles encourage both small changes to make the season more manageable (page 3) and the idea of a *Reverse Gift List* (page 4) to promote self-care by asking for what we need and engaging our family, friends, and community in support. Asking for help doesn’t come naturally to some of us, caregivers in particular. The Reverse Gift List allows some thought and preparation to go into just deciding what would help most and framing it as letting those around us know we may value some time to ourselves much more than that lovely pair of leather gloves or the newest gadget for around the house. It also allows us to feel more connected, which is part of what makes the holidays special.

Over the course of the busy season be sure to take time to think about what makes the holidays joyful for you. If they’ve always been a stressor, think about creating a space for something positive and meaningful. Consider foregoing the extensive light display or Martha Stewart-inspired table settings in order to focus on time with loved ones or quiet pursuits that spark happy holiday memories. I think part of what made the holidays so special to me as a child was that I didn’t do anything but enjoy them! The adults in our world did all the work. Take a little time to find your inner child and connect in small ways when possible. It’s not realistic to upend everything all at once, but some small changes can make all the difference.

If you enjoy reading time, check out Online Resources (page 6) where you’ll find the link to the comprehensive special report, “Fading Away: Wisconsin’s Dementia Crisis” by *Wisconsin State Journal* Reporter David Wahlberg. The report includes stories from family caregivers and professionals across the state accompanied by beautiful color photos and videography. It’s a compelling and important read.

New Year’s Day is now right around the corner, and if you’ve resolved to focus on a healthy way of eating you can find support with free nutrition counseling (page 8) for Dane County residents age 60 plus. If your priority is to find more support and strategies for improving your wellbeing as a caregiver, there’s a Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class at Stoughton Hospital coming this January (page 9). The evidence-based program is focused on self care, effective communication, problem-solving, and more.

It’s also a new year for the National Family Caregiver Support Program Caring for Caregiver grants. For a caregiver to receive a grant, the care recipient must be a resident of Dane County and the caregiver must be at least 18 years of age. Funds provide help to those caring for:

- Persons age 60 and older who cannot perform at least two activities of daily living
- Persons with Alzheimer’s or dementia regardless of age
- Children (under age 18) being raised by their grandparents or other relatives (age 55+)
- Severely disabled adults (ages 19 - 59) cared for by parents (age 55+)

Contact me at the phone number or email below for more information on the grant or general caregiver support.

Wishing you a peaceful holiday season!



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



Caring for Caregivers

608-261-5679
debroux.jane@countyofdane.com

Small Changes Make a Big Difference

The holidays can add stress to already challenging situations, particularly when expectations run high and we take on too much. When that happens we struggle to enjoy the season and set ourselves up for burnout. We all long for a pace of life that doesn't overwhelm us. At the same time, making big, dramatic changes can be overwhelming, too. By choosing to make small, manageable changes we can find our way to a healthier state of being and a more enjoyable holiday season.

During the holidays, consider these small but significant changes:

Scale it down. Make a list of what you would like to be able to do. Rate what is most important and cross the bottom one or two items off the list. Exhale.

Prioritize. What makes the season meaningful to you? Is holiday music your favorite? Make time to attend a concert, sing at a service, or just sit and listen to your favorites. Is it all about the kids? Watch an old movie or animated favorite with a child in your life; attend a program put on by children; or step outside, catch a snowflake on your tongue, and remember how exciting snow was when you looked forward to sledding, skating, or making a snowman. Be willing to forego something further down on your list to make sure you do what brings you joy.

Streamline activities. Can you order pre-made cookies to decorate or join a cookie exchange? Can you order a complete meal from a local grocery store or restaurant? Switch from a fresh tree to an artificial model with lights?

Assign a task. Can another family member provide some of the foods you would typically prepare? Wrap the gifts? Decorate?

Ask for what you really want. When it comes time for gift exchanges, let family and friends know that you'd prefer respite for time away, transportation for your care partner to an appointment to give you a break, or a visit along with the meal they dropped off.

Whether you can implement one or many small changes, you may find yourself more at peace this holiday season and all year long.

—Jane De Broux, Caregiver Program Coordinator



Be sure you make time for what means the most to you over the course of the holidays.



Make a Reverse Gift List



This year as the holidays draw near, consider a helpful new way to think about gifts. Creating a Reverse Gift List—an exercise in which you think not about giving, but getting—may go against all you’ve been taught, but when you care for someone else it is also vitally important to care for yourself! The Reverse Gift List will help you get started.

Grab a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Make two columns on your paper and label the first one “People I Trust.” Label the second column “Things They Can Do.” Next, think of all the special people in your life who love you and care about you: neighbors; family (siblings, children, grandchildren, cousins); clergy; and friends. Write down some things they may enjoy doing or find easy to do that would also be helpful to you like cook a meal a week, pick up groceries or medications, vacuum or dust, stop for a visit, or sit with your loved one while you do something on your own. Not everyone likes to cook, but your sister may really enjoy it. Your daughter may not be thrilled to clean your house for you but may find it easy to pick up your groceries while she’s at the store anyway. Your cousin might enjoy doing your laundry or sweeping some floors while catching up on the latest news. Your pastor or priest could schedule regular visits so you have someone else to talk to. Your grandchild would likely enjoy stopping over after school for a snack and a visit each week.

Once you have written your Reverse Gift List you can ask someone who is close to you to help you distribute it or you can talk to the people on the list and tell them your ideas. At this time of year your friends and family will be wondering about holiday gifts for you. This is the perfect time to have a list of practical and helpful things you need and would appreciate most.

The truth is most people enjoy helping. Allowing the people that care about you to help is a rewarding experience for them. The joy of giving is knowing you’ve given a meaningful present. And just so it doesn’t feel lopsided, remember all the kind things you’ve done for other people and know that you can pay it forward at a time when your life isn’t consumed with caregiving. For everything there is a season, and this holiday season is a wonderful time for you to receive. As a caregiver, you are giving all year around. Take a moment to write your Reverse Gift List and let others take care of you for a change! Happy Holidays!

—Jane Mahoney, Older American’s Act Consultant
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources



CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Telephone Learning Sessions



Date	Time	Topic	A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS
Wednesday, December 4th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	La otra cara de la Navidad cuando eres cuidador de un familiar con Letty Guzman-Sanchez <i>La Navidad es sinónimo de alegría, reencuentro, fiestas, comidas y regalos pero la realidad es que estas celebraciones pueden ser días de dificultades, agotamiento e incluso tristeza para familiares que cuidan a un ser querido enfermo. Es importante prepararnos para estas fechas y poner en práctica algunos consejos útiles para lograr equilibrio y serenidad durante estas fechas y de esta manera disfrutar de la temporada decembrina.</i>	
Thursday, December 5th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	Communication Tips for Alzheimer's and Dementia with Ginny Funk <i>Alzheimer's disease and other dementias gradually diminish a person's ability to communicate. Communication with a person with Alzheimer's requires patience, understanding and good listening skills. There are strategies that can help both you and the person with dementia understand each other better.</i>	
Monday, December 9th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	Caregiving and the Holidays: Changing It Up with Zanda Hilger <i>Annual session on surviving and thriving during the holidays as you juggle your caregiving responsibilities with the holidays. The speaker will share the experiences of other caregivers about self care, listening to your loved's wishes, family gatherings, and other challenges. Listeners will be able to explore how to make the most of the coming weeks. **Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection**</i>	
Thursday, December 12th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Dear Lucy with Lucy Barylak, MSW <i>With the holidays approaching, it can get even more stressful at times trying to balance everything. Dear Lucy will be discussing how to make it through the holidays and still maintain balance. This is an interactive session where Dear Lucy will answer questions and have a conversation with caregivers regarding the issues they face in their caregiving journey.</i>	
Wednesday, December 18th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	Take Your Oxygen First! with Dr. James Huysman, PsyD, LCSW <i>Dr. Jamie Huysman, LCSW, CAP has been a fierce advocate for family caregivers, their rights, and wellbeing for over 15 years. Since 2009, "Take Your Oxygen First" has been an ever-evolving call to action for caregivers to engage in taking care of themselves their own sakes, as well as that of their loved ones. This motivational and informative session will give you necessary tools for you apply to your caregiving journey right now.</i>	



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

Register online at www.caregiverteleconnection.org or call 866.390.6491 Toll Free

Online Resources



[Fading Away: Wisconsin's Dementia Crisis](https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/health-med-fit/special-report-fading-away-wisconsin-s-dementia-crisis/collection_cbaedc8e-f459-5a60-bbb4-f472213d10a4.html)

https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/health-med-fit/special-report-fading-away-wisconsin-s-dementia-crisis/collection_cbaedc8e-f459-5a60-bbb4-f472213d10a4.html

MADISON.COM, by *Wisconsin State Journal* Reporter David Wahlberg, November 24, 2019

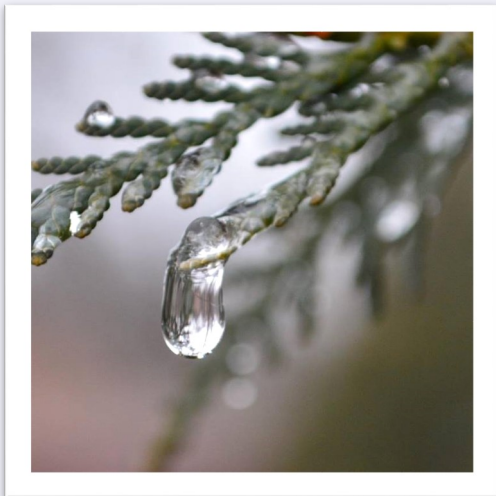
This comprehensive special report on dementia features family caregivers and professionals from across Wisconsin with beautiful color photos and videography.

[How to Get Through the Fog of Grief: The inability to think clearly for some time is common with significant loss](https://bit.ly/2skuuVn)

<https://bit.ly/2skuuVn>

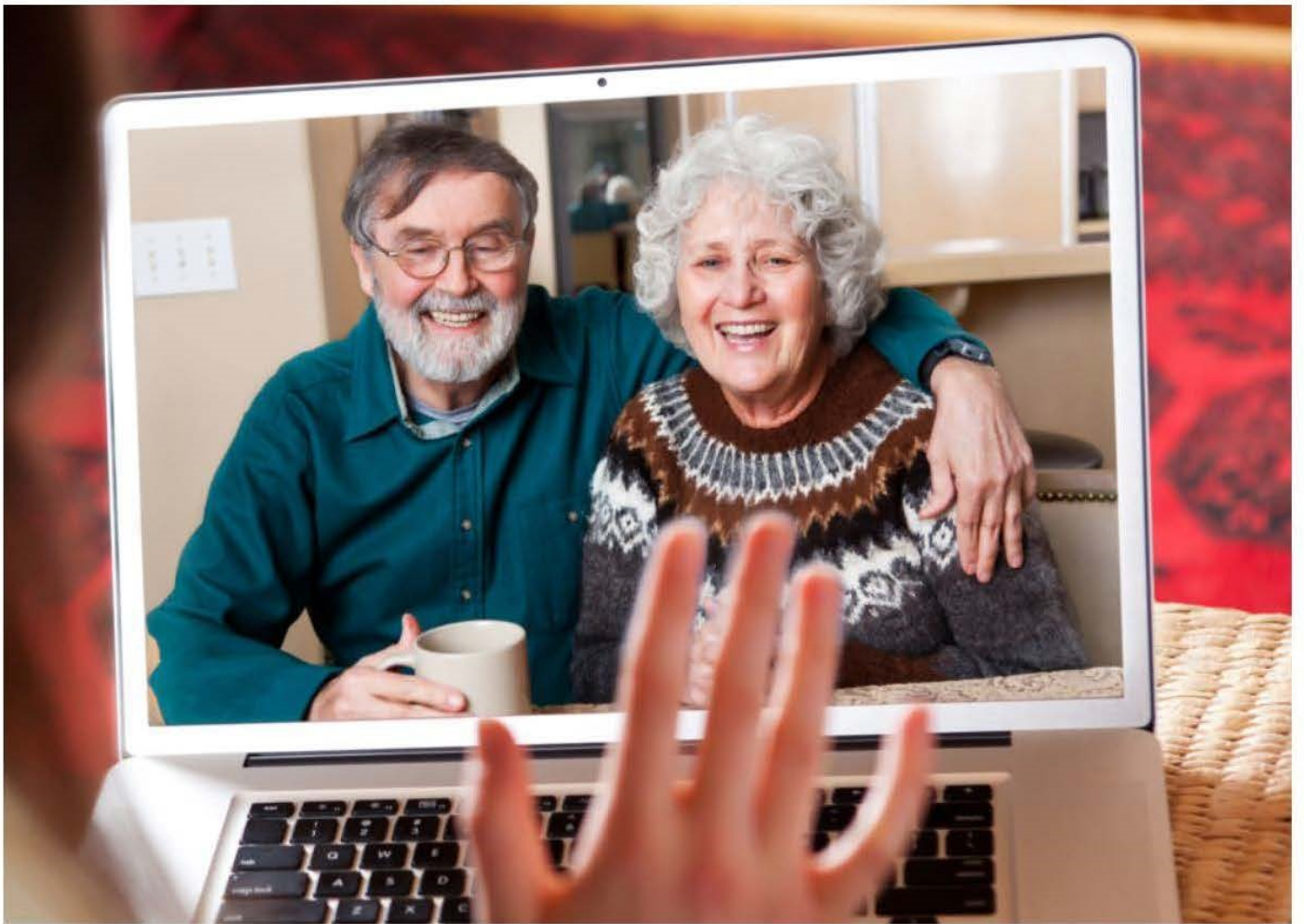
Next Avenue, by Kerri Fivecoat-Campbell, May 7, 2019

“When my 57-year-old husband, Dale, suddenly died of a massive heart attack on November 20, 2018, two days before Thanksgiving, to say I was in shock was an understatement. More than a month later, I realized just how much my mental capacity was affected by this life-changing trauma.”



As we struggle with shopping lists and invitations, compounded by December's bad weather, it is good to be reminded that there are people in our lives who are worth this aggravation, and people to whom we are worth the same.

—Donald E. Westlake
Author



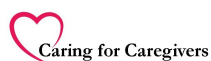
Caring... from far away

Uncertainty. Worry. Frustration. Guilt.

When someone you love needs care but doesn't live near you, finding help can be time-consuming, stressful and overwhelming.

Good news! Help is right at your fingertips.

The Dane County Caregiver Program offers support to family caregivers of older adults living in Dane County even if they live elsewhere themselves. Call **608-261-5679** or email: debroux.jane@countyofdane.com for information.



Older Adults in Dane County can improve nutrition and eat healthier in the new year with Personal Nutrition Counseling available at no cost

Through a contract with Dane County Area Agency on Aging, NewBridge Madison provides personal nutrition counseling to older adults looking for information on ways to improve their overall health. Registered Dietitian Alyce Miller meets with older adults age 60 plus to discuss nutrition-related questions or difficulties. Common topics include (but are not limited to): diabetic diet; food interactions with medication; severe weight loss; heart-healthy diet; taste and smell changes; difficulties chewing or swallowing; poor appetite; constipation; acid reflux; cooking for 1 or 2; and basic older adult nutrition. To learn more about this *free* community resource or to schedule an appointment, contact Alyce at 608-261-5678 or miller.alyce@countyofdane.com.



***Connecting People with the
Assistance They Need***

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

Call (608) 240-7400

Visit the ADRC office:

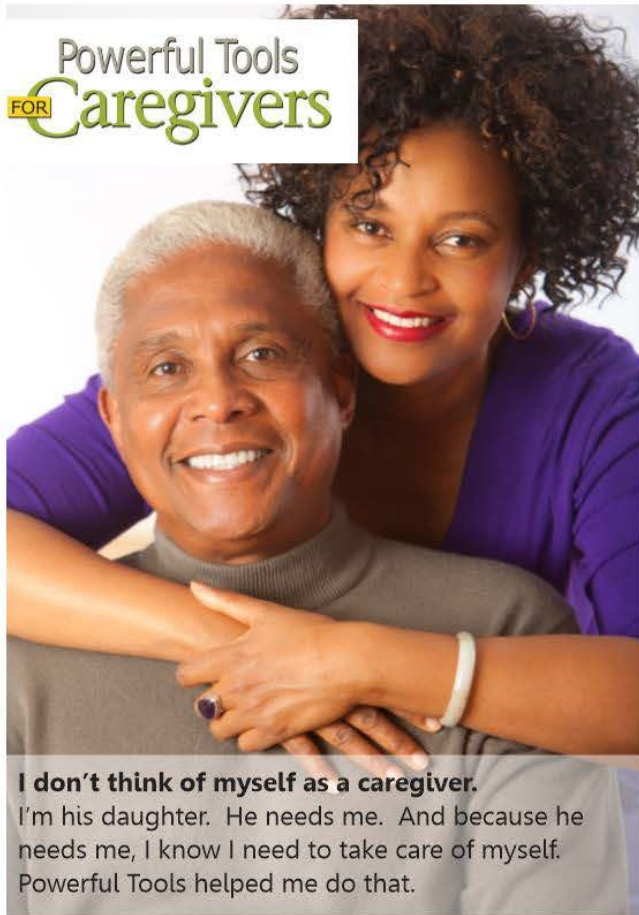
2865 N. Sherman Ave., Madison

Website:

Email: ADRC@countyofdane.com

www.daneadrc.org

Powerful Tools
FOR Caregivers



I don't think of myself as a caregiver.
I'm his daughter. He needs me. And because he needs me, I know I need to take care of myself. Powerful Tools helped me do that.

There's a Powerful Tools for Caregivers workshop starting soon near you!

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is Coming to Stoughton!

Thursdays

January 16 - February 20, 2020
1:00PM - 3:30PM

Stoughton Hospital
East Conference Rm.
900 Ridge Street
Stoughton, WI 53589

Cost: \$25; includes snacks and book

To register call: **608-235-8426**



Caregiving is rewarding.

But it can be challenging too.

Caring for someone with an injury or illness — such as dementia, cancer, heart disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke or others — can be physically, emotionally and financially demanding.

Taking care of yourself is important.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) can show you the way!

What is Powerful Tools for Caregivers? And why should I take it?

Powerful Tools focuses on **your** well-being. The class meets once a week for six weeks and has been studied and shown to help family caregivers:

- Reduce stress, guilt, anger, and depression and improve emotional well-being
- Manage time, set goals, and solve problems
- Master caregiving transitions and be part of decision-making
- Communicate effectively with the person needing care, family members, doctors, and other helpers
- Find and use community resources



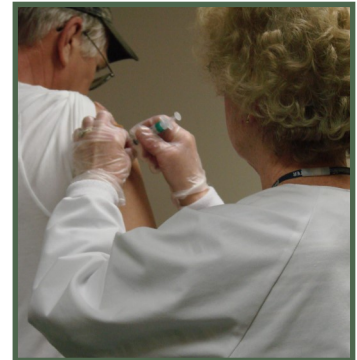
Monthly MIPPA Moment: Preventing Pneumonia

MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act) has a goal of educating older adults on Medicare's cost-saving benefits & preventive services.

Did you know that about 1 million Americans go to the hospital with pneumonia each year? Pneumonia is a lung infection caused by pneumococcal disease, which can also cause blood infections and meningitis. The bacteria that causes pneumococcal disease spreads through person-to-person contact.

There's a vaccine to help prevent pneumonia, but only 67% of adults 65 and over have ever gotten it. Medicare can help protect you from pneumococcal infections by getting the pneumococcal shot. Medicare Part B covers the shot and a second shot one year after you got the first shot. You may be at a higher risk for these infections if you:

- Are 65 or older
- Have a chronic illness (like asthma, diabetes, or lung, heart, liver, or kidney disease)
- Have a condition that weakens your immune system (like HIV, AIDS, or cancer)
- Live in a nursing home or other long-term care facility
- Have cochlear implants or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks
- Smoke tobacco



Protect yourself from pneumonia—get your pneumococcal shot today.

For more MIPPA program information, call MIPPA Program Specialist Leilani Amundson at 608-240-7458.

COFFEE BREAK FOR MALE CAREGIVERS



Are you a Male Caregiver caring for someone with Alzheimer's or Dementia? Take a coffee break with us...



1ST MONDAYS | 10 – 11 AM



WARNER PARK COMMUNITY CENTER
1625 Northport Drive, Madison

RSVP NOT REQUIRED. PLEASE CONTACT JOY SCHMIDT WITH QUESTIONS.



Joy Schmidt
Dementia Care Specialist
ADRC of Dane County
608-240-7400

Coffee Break for Male Caregivers meets once a month in a relaxed environment, and provides a forum for male caregivers to talk about their experiences in caring for a loved one living with dementia. Strategies and resources are available.



Festival Foods Memory Cafe

Intended for individuals with dementia or other mild cognitive impairment and their caregiver or friend, the café is a social gathering place where common interests are shared and refreshments are served in a caring, stress-free environment.

WHEN:
SECOND THURSDAY
OF THE MONTH
STARTING IN OCTOBER
10:30 AM - NOON

WHERE:
FESTIVAL FOODS
810 E WASHINGTON AVE
MADISON
COMMUNITY ROOM
(LOCATED ON THE UPPER LEVEL,
ACCESS STAIRS OR ELEVATOR
NEAR DELI)

*For Questions or Info Contact the
Alzheimer's Association at 800.272.3900*

alzheimer's  association®

THE BRAINS BEHIND SAVING YOURS:™

 festival
foods



Caring for the Caregiver Program

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Caring for Caregivers

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Save paper and reduce postage costs

Please let us know if:

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

Contact:

Jane De Broux

608-261-5679

debroux.jane@countyofdane.com