

# Caregiver Chronicles

August 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/)



Photo by Gail Brooks

***“One of the strange laws of the contemplative life,” Thomas Merton, one of its sovereign explorers, pointed out, “is that in it you do not sit down and solve problems: you bear with them until they somehow solve themselves. Or until life solves them for you.”***

— Pico Iyer, *The Art of Stillness: Adventures in Going Nowhere*

# Caregiver Chronicles

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## It's a Marathon

My sister-in-law is a marathoner and triathlete. At age 62, she is still participating in the sports she loves because she has made a commitment to self care and is willing to accept limitations as they present themselves. She is willing to immerse herself into tubs of ice, invest in the right equipment, and pay careful attention to nutrition and sleep. When she enters a race, she carefully plans her training, and when the seasons change, she adjusts her schedule. She's willing to seek help when injured, and when faced with an injury she walked, rather than ran, for a year until she'd healed enough to resume running. She envisions herself pursuing her passion as long as she possibly can, and her commitment to caring for herself is fierce.

I thought about her when a woman recently told me that her role as caregiver was a marathon. Depending on the situation, caregiving may be a way of life that persists for years, and it isn't a role most people choose. Even when a caregiver is happy to support a loved one, it can be a tough and relentless job for which support and resources can be hard to find. Those of us who seek to support caregivers often think in terms of one-time events. We can create a "day out" or even provide some temporary financial assistance. We can find resources in a crisis. These are important supports. But when caregivers are in the race to manage a loved one's care in addition to so many other obligations—work, children, perhaps even health problems of their own—what can we do to help ensure they can maintain their own wellbeing and their role as caregiver in the long run?

Support groups are one way. By finding a network of peers to learn from and share with, many caregivers have found a needed outlet. **This Fall, we're expanding Dane County's network of support groups to include a series for Adult Children & Employed Caregivers** that will provide speakers along with discussion and support during a time suited to the schedules of working caregivers. **(Learn more on page 5.)**

**Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class** is another resource with an evidence-based program that provides caregivers with important skills to give them confidence in handling difficult situations, emotions, and decisions. A new class will begin on August 24. **(Learn more and register on page 10).**

**Mindfulness for Caregivers Class** is a new program this Fall that aims to provide tools to help caregivers maintain balance in their lives and manage stress. **(Learn more and register on pages 2 & 3).**

We hope to see you at the programs that benefit you and that we can provide some of the support needed to help you keep going.



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

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



Phone: 608-261-5679  
Email: debroux.jane@countyofdane.com

## Mindfulness for Caregivers

Mindfulness meditation can help people cope with stress, which makes it an ideal practice for many caregivers. It lowers stress overall, and has been linked with decreased levels of cortisol, the stress hormone. It can also help the brain achieve better control over processing pain and emotions.

Because caregiving can be a marathon that lasts for years, establishing a mindfulness practice can be a valuable support in helping caregivers maintain life balance. There is evidence it can lower blood pressure and improve sleep. The ability to occupy the present moment reduces the ill effects of ruminating on the past or obsessing about the future.

***The Dane County Caregiver Program is introducing a Mindfulness for Caregivers class in September. You can register using the form on page 4. The following is by Chris Smith, family therapist and longtime senior teacher at the UW Health Center Mindfulness Program in Madison, who will be the instructor for the class:***

In this course, I invite you to try on this radical mindset and see what happens (remember, you only have to try this on for five weeks). This mindset is to consider stress, not as the enemy, but rather, as an ordinary human experience. Consider making stress your friend and see what happens.

The concept of stress as a friend became very clear to me not that long ago. Right before dinner one night, I suffered a panic attack. I had some of the signs—my hands were sweaty, my thoughts were racing, and I was gasping for air. I hung on to the kitchen doorframe because I was dizzy and my legs felt weak. As I experienced these symptoms, my wife was in the kitchen preparing dinner. At one point, she stopped cutting carrots and looked up. “What’s going on?” she asked. With tears in my eyes and desperation in my voice, I replied, “I am having a panic attack.”

“Oh, OK,” she replied, and casually returned to cutting the carrots.

Her response was brilliant—oh, there he is. He is having a panic attack. No big deal. In effect, she was communicating to me her belief that she had confidence I could deal with the panic attack. I was confused by her response at first. Why wouldn’t she rush to my side? Later, it became clear that if my wife had this type of confidence and belief in me, then why couldn’t I have this same confidence and belief in myself? I began to think of stress as not something to be feared but, rather, as something that happens to all humans. I began to think of stress as something positive, which could actually help and assist me. I continue working with this mindset today, and I invite you to consider doing the same in this course.

### Mindfulness for Caregivers Class

Mondays, September 19 & 26; October 3, 10 & 24

9:00—11:00 am

UW Madison Arboretum

1207 Seminole Hwy, classroom 2

Caregiving can be rewarding, but it can also be a source of long-term stress. Living mindfully can reduce stress and enhance life's positive experiences. When the day-to-day is overwhelming, mindfulness can help restore a sense of wellbeing.

This five-week class will familiarize caregiver participants with stress-reducing mindfulness techniques and invite them to establish a daily practice. Each two-hour class will include practice techniques, discussion time, and stress reduction exercises.

*Instructor Chris Smith is a licensed marriage and family therapist, and senior teacher at the UW Health Center Mindfulness Program in Madison. He teaches stress reduction to groups locally and nationally.*

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TO REGISTER fill out this form and submit with a check payable to Dane County for \$15 (class is a \$350 value) by September 1, 2016. Class size will be limited to 15 participants.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to care recipient \_\_\_\_\_

(spouse, parent, friend, neighbor, etc.)

**MAIL to:**

Howard Thomas

Area Agency on Aging of Dane County

2865 N. Sherman Ave.

Madison, WI 53704



"Mindfulness for Caregivers" is presented by the Dane County Caregiver Program to support caregivers who make it possible for older adults and those with Alzheimer's and other dementias to remain at home longer. Caregiving can be an enormous undertaking, and we strive to provide needed support.

***If you have questions about the class or would like to learn more about our programs and supports for caregivers contact:***

Jane De Broux, Caregiver Program Coordinator at  
608-261-5679 or  
debroux.jane@countyofdane.com.



## Online Resources

### Hobbies and Activities for Seniors: Tips from Family Caregivers

AgingCare.com

Explore activity suggestions for booklovers, patients with dementia, and seniors who are blind or have low vision. There are suggestions for crafts, household activities that can contribute to their sense of purpose, daytime care and respite programs, technological devices, and more. Lastly, there are insights on what to do when a loved one refuses to participate or no longer shows any interest in social and recreational activities.

<http://bit.ly/2a9uQQU>

### When Elders Don't Accept Outside Caregivers in the Home

AgingCare.com

When discussing NFCSP grant funding with caregivers, I often hear that the care recipient just can't or won't tolerate a stranger in their home, or they are unable to have people they don't know help with personal care. This article offers some useful advice on the issue of paid caregivers.

<http://bit.ly/2ahro6K>



### **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](http://www.daneadrc.org)



### **NEW! Learn & Support Group for Adult Children & Employed Caregivers**

In order to further address the needs of Dane County's adult children caring for parents and/or employed caregivers (ACE Caregivers), we're offering a new "learn & support" group in September. With the schedules of employed caregivers in mind, the new groups will begin with a light supper and decompression time on Thursdays from 5:30 – 6:00 pm when participants can drop in at any point. The "learn & support" will begin at 6:00 pm. Sessions will alternate between the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Dane County located on Madison's North side, and at the Verona Senior Center.

Caregivers from the sandwich (and club-sandwich) generations and employed caregivers of any age are pressed for time now more than ever. The goal of the new groups is to provide important and useful information along with a chance to discuss, ask questions, and connect with other caregivers to share experience and strategies. Planned topics include: information on resources; involving siblings when caring for a parent; issues when your loved one resists care; long distance caregiving; family leave and the workplace, and more.

Look for a detailed schedule in the September issue of *Caregiver Chronicles*.

For more information contact Jane De Broux, 608-261-5679 or [debroux.jane@countyofdane.com](mailto:debroux.jane@countyofdane.com).

- ◆ The typical US caregiver is a 46-year-old woman who works outside the home and spends more than 20 hours per week providing unpaid care to her mother.
- ◆ The majority of caregivers are 35 – 64 years old.
- ◆ Among caregivers age 50 – 64 years old, an estimated 60% are working full or part-time.
- ◆ Caregiving can last from less than a year to more than 40 years.
- ◆ Cost to businesses to replace women caregivers who quit their jobs because of their caregiving responsibilities has been estimated at \$3.3 billion.
- ◆ Absenteeism among women caregivers due to caregiving responsibilities costs businesses almost \$270 million
- ◆ The cost to businesses because of partial absenteeism (e.g., extended lunch breaks, leaving work early or arriving late) due to women's caregiving has been estimated to \$327 million.
- ◆ Caregiving-related workday interruptions add another \$3.8 billion to the burden borne by businesses.

## Of Interest: Adult Children Caregivers

Free webinar:

**“When to Stop Driving and How to Talk to Your Loved Ones About It”**

**Wednesday, August 17, from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**



After many years behind the wheel, it can be difficult for an individual with diminishing vision to determine the appropriate time to stop driving, but it could be one of the most important decisions they make.

Featured speakers include Jim Kubek, Supervisor for AAA Driver Training, who will discuss how to talk to an individual who must consider ending their time behind the wheel. A representative from the Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Medical Review team will talk about laws regarding specifics on who can drive and who is capable of removing driving privileges.

Our webinar will offer supportive advice for individuals contemplating whether to stop driving.

***The presentation will also identify talking points adult children can use with their parents during discussions about no longer driving.***

**To register** contact Justin Lemke by calling 1-800-783-5213 or email [jlemke@wcblind.org](mailto:jlemke@wcblind.org).

This webinar is sponsored by the MG&E Foundation and Smith & Gesteland.

*The mission of the Council is to promote the dignity and independence of the people in Wisconsin who are blind or visually impaired by providing services, advocating legislation, and educating the general public. To learn more about the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired please contact Gale Hellpap, Director of Community Relations and Marketing, at 1-800-783-5213 or visit [www.wcblind.org](http://www.wcblind.org).*



Photo by Jane De Broux

## Good for Your Brain

### Communication Tips and Strategies

Learn ways to effectively and compassionately communicate with someone who has dementia

Friday, August 12, 10—11:30 am  
Waunakee Senior Center, 333 S. Madison St.  
Waunakee  
*Free. No registration required.*



For more information, contact ADAW  
608-232-3400

### Brain Health

Improve your odds. Reduce your risk.

**Monona Library**



### Memory Screenings

10 minutes! Free!

By reservation or drop in

**Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> 2:30-5:30 pm**

Make a reservation at [mononallibrary.org](http://mononallibrary.org) / register for events

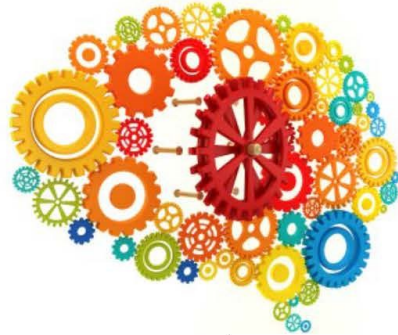
Or call 608-222-6127

**Dementia  
Friendly**

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Dementia Friendly Monona Initiative &  
Dane County Human Services







*Improve your odds.  
Reduce your risk.*

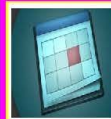
## Fall Brain Health Series



*Thursdays at 1 PM*



**Location: MSCR East**  
**4620 Cottage Grove Road, Madison**



### SCHEDULE

**Thursdays at 1 PM**  
**September 22<sup>nd</sup> thru**  
**October 27<sup>th</sup>**

**September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

#### **Brain Healthy Lifestyle**

Joy Schmidt, Dementia Care Specialist  
Aging & Disability Resource Center of Dane County

**September 29<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Exercise & Protect Your Brain**

Darcie Olson, PhD/OTR, Instructor  
Madison College

**October 6<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Effects of Sleep on the Brain & tips to improve sleep**

Dr. Barbara Bendlin, PhD  
WI Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

**October 13<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Healthy Eating for Your Brain**

Anne Breckenridge Swanson, Master Chef  
Agrace Hospice

**October 20<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Music & Memory**

Julie Hyland, Director  
Wisconsin Music & Memory Program

**October 27<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Mindfulness & Wellbeing**

Chris Smith, MDiv, LMFT  
Mindful Meditation Instructor  
UW Health Mindfulness Program

**Dementia  
Friendly**



For more information: Contact Joy Schmidt at 608-240-7400 | [Schmidt.Joy@countyofdane.com](mailto:Schmidt.Joy@countyofdane.com)  
Registration will be available online at [mscr.com](http://mscr.com)

## Caregiver Support Groups



### Men's Support Group North/Eastside Senior Coalition and Heartland Hospice

Please join Heartland Hospice and the North/Eastside Senior Coalition for men's support group located in the Warner Park Recreational center.

This is a drop in group open to the public for anyone who has experienced a loss and is grieving. This group will take place the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. The first group starts July 13th and ends December 28th.

**Facilitator:** Jim Jaeger M.Div. Heartland Hospice  
*Spiritual Care Coordinator*

**Co- Sponsor:** North/Eastside Senior Coalition

**Place:** North/Eastside Senior Coalition inside  
Warner Park Community Recreation Center  
1625 Northport Drive  
Madison, WI 53704

**Date:** 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each Month—  
July 13th thru December 28th

**Time:** 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Light refreshments will be provided.

If you have any questions or would like to register,  
please contact:

Ruth Hellenbrand  
*Programs Manager*  
*North/Eastside Senior Coalition*  
**Phone:** 608.243.5252 x209



**Heartland**   
Enriching life.

## Caregiver Support Class



### Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class Wednesdays, August 24 –September 28, 2016 5:00 –6:30 pm

New Life Church  
7564 Cottage Grove Rd.  
Madison, WI 53718

One of the greatest challenges of being a family caregiver is maintaining one's own physical and emotional health. **Powerful Tools for Caregivers** is designed to provide caregivers with tools to increase self care and give them confidence in handling difficult situations, emotions, and decisions.

Topics include tools designed to help a caregiver:

- Reduce personal stress
- Communicate feelings and needs
- Use community services
- Deal with emotions such as anger, guilt, and depression

#### Instructors:

**Siv Goulding** has been a Powerful Tools for Caregivers leader since 2008, and has 20 years professional experience as a case manager and counselor to older persons in Central Illinois. She currently volunteers with the Dane County Caregiver Alliance, has had personal caregiver experience with a parent and in - laws, and now cares for her spouse. She facilitates three caregiver support groups in Wisconsin.

**Diane Wiedenbeck** has been a Powerful Tools for Caregivers leader for about 15 years, and has been a family caregiver. She participated in the Dane County Caregiver Alliance and currently serves on the RSVP of Dane County Board as Vice President and Cottage Grove Triad Chair.

Cost of the class \$10, and includes a copy of The Caregiver Helpbook (a \$20 value).



**TO REGISTER** fill out this form and submit it with a check for \$10 (payable to Dane County).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to care recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

(spouse, parent, friend, neighbor, etc.)

#### MAIL to:

Howard Thomas  
Area Agency on Aging of Dane County  
2865 N. Sherman Ave.  
Madison, WI 53704

If you have questions, or need the \$10 registration fee waived in order to attend, please contact: Jane De Broux, Dane County Caregiver Program Coordinator at 608-261-5679 or debroux.jane@countyofdane.com.

# Caring for the Caregiver Program

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY

2865 N. Sherman Ave.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53704

Phone: 608-261-5679

Fax: 608-240-7402

Email: [debroux.jane@countyofdane.com](mailto:debroux.jane@countyofdane.com)



## 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](mailto:debroux.jane@countyofdane.com)