

Caregiver Chronicles

May 2016



AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY
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[HTTPS://AAA.DCDHS.COM/](https://aaa.dcdhs.com/)



Photo by Cheryl Batterman

I am determined to be cheerful and happy in whatever situation I may find myself. For I have learned that the greater part of our misery or unhappiness is determined not by our circumstance but by our disposition.

—*Martha Washington*

Older Americans Month: Blaze a Trail



May is Older Americans Month. The Administration for Community Living is working to raise awareness of important issues facing older adults and to highlight ways older Americans advocate for themselves, their peers, and their communities.

The first Older Americans Month was established in 1963. At that time, there were 17 million Americans aged 65 and older—a third of whom were living in poverty. With few programs to address their needs, concern for the welfare of older adults grew. President John F. Kennedy met with the National Council of Senior Citizens, and subsequently declared May of that year “Senior Citizens Month.” In 1980, President Jimmy Carter updated the designation to “Older Americans Month.” In 2013, the most recent year for which there are statistics available, the number of Americans over the age of 65 grew to 44.7 million, and the oldest segment of that population is burgeoning. According to the Population Census Bureau, those who are 85 and older are the fastest-growing segment of the US population today.

This year’s theme for Older Americans Month shines a light on older adults who blaze trails for us. Seven of our eight sitting Supreme Court Justices are over 60 (the venerable Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg is 83), and the two frontrunners in the 2016 Presidential Election are over 65. The average age of a US Senator is 62, and the average age of Nobel Laureates in all categories is 59. Our veteran population is also heavily represented by older adults. There are many heroes to whom we owe so much, but many of them are unsung—members of our caregiving population among them.

It’s inevitable caregiving is a significant part of life for older adults. It’s also clear that how we help one another as we live longer lives, and the way we interact with those from different generations, is worthy of serious attention. Caregivers keep our long-term care system from collapse, and the care they provide will determine the quality of our end-of-life experiences. In keeping with honoring trailblazers this month, *Caregiver Chronicles* recognizes former First Lady Rosalyn Carter. Founder of the Rosalyn Carter Institute for Caregiving, at age 88, Mrs. Carter is a powerful voice in building support for caregivers worldwide. You can learn more about The Rosalyn Carter Institute at www.rosalynncarter.org.



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Mother's Day

Mother's Day is relatively simple for us when we're little ones, presenting our handprints memorialized in craft clay or concocting breakfast in bed as a special "surprise" for her. As we grow, we may enjoy family brunches together or present flowers and other keepsakes. Later, we may even be able to delight Grandma with photos and mementos of our own children. But once she is no longer able to live independently or care for herself, Mother's Day can become something quite different. There can be emotional challenges that arise when the mother/child relationship is flipped.

One way to make the best of the day is to be mindful of self care. If you're a mom, be sure to enjoy something of the day that is special for you, and take some time to celebrate. Share the day in a way that feels best for everyone, and connect with your Mom in a way that allows her to engage and participate. Perhaps you would enjoy looking at photo albums together, or sharing family stories. If she is interested and able, you could arrange a video chat with family members who live far away.

If your mom has Alzheimer's or dementia, meeting her where she is at this point in her life is even more important. Choose a time to interact when she is most present for the day, and meet in familiar surroundings. Be aware of mood changes, and do your best to be flexible and adapt. Use gestures to help provide visual cues, and keep your words and tone positive. Touch is an important part of communication, and look her in the eyes as well. Even if you can't talk as you once did, you can communicate your focus, attention, and acceptance.

Most important of all, do your best to be patient and present. It may be a painful experience to compare your Mom to the person she once was. Anne Morrow Lindbergh acknowledged this in her book, *Gift from the Sea*:

"When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand . . . Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what it was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now."¹



—Jane De Broux

¹Sound Options, Inc., May 2015. Referenced 4.29.16, <http://www.soundoptions.com/blog/celebrating-mothers-day-when-mom-has-dementia>

Caregiver News Online

Emotional Side of Caregiving

If you don't deal with all of your emotions, they can be like a two year old who wants your attention—they will keep tugging at you until you stop and acknowledge them. Not paying attention to your feelings can lead to poor sleep, illness, trouble coping, stress eating, substance abuse, etc. When you admit to your feelings, you can then find productive ways to express them and deal with them, so that you and the care receiver can cope better in the future.

<https://www.caregiver.org/emotional-side-caregiving>

Why Aging and Caregiving Are Harder for LGBT Adults

Many face isolation from family and a lack of appropriate services.

<http://www.nextavenue.org/why-aging-and-caregiving-are-harder-for-lgbt-adults/>

Listen In!

Dementia-Friendly Communities, Joy Cardin Show

Recording of the show that aired April 26, 2016

Finding new ways to recognize the worth of people with dementia is the only humanistic approach to understanding old age. That's according to Joy's guests who are helping to create dementia-friendly communities in Wisconsin.

<http://www.wpr.org/shows/dementia-friendly-communities>

What is Mindfulness and How Can It Help Me as a Caregiver? Tele-learning Session

Wednesday, May 4, 2016

11:00 am CST

Caregiving is no easy task. The responsibilities that come with overseeing the day-to-day needs of another person—while often managing a household and balancing work obligations and family needs—can quickly leave even the most cheerful and organized of individuals feeling under stress. Listen to Dr. Jamie Huysman discuss the practice of mindfulness and how it can be an effective stress management tool.

This tele-learning session is open to all without charge. [Register online](#) or call 866-390-6491 toll-free, weekdays 8:00 am—5 pm. Presented by WellMed Charitable Foundation/Caregiver SOS.

Keeping Those You Care for Safer at Home

Stepping On: An Evidence-Based Falls Prevention Program in Dane County

Wisconsin's death rate due to falls among the 65+ population is more than twice the national average. Nationwide, more than one third of adults aged 65 or over fall each year. The good news: completing the evidence-based program *Stepping On* greatly reduces seniors' fall risk! This seven-week class series is being offered throughout Dane County this Spring. Taught by a trained leader, participants learn simple and fun balance and strength training along with a wide range of information about factors that contribute to falls. Guest experts visit to share information on the role of vision in keeping your balance, how medication and supplements can contribute to falls, ways to stay safe in your home and out in the community, what to look for in safe footwear and much more. The physical therapist leader or guest expert demonstrates the exercises and is available for follow-up. Participants receive an exercise manual along with many handouts from this Stanford University-developed curriculum.

Most importantly, participants share falls stories, tips, techniques and support in interactive and fun sessions. Anyone who is 65 years or older, has experienced one or more falls, or fears falling, can benefit from the class. Nationwide, participants who complete the class reduce their falls risk by 30%; in Wisconsin, data supports a 50% reduction in falls risk. With support from Safe Communities and the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County, the cost is \$35.00 and includes instruction, materials, and healthy snacks.

Space is limited. Call 608-235-1957 or see: http://www.safercommunity.net/falls_prevention_classes.php for more information and for up-to-date class listings.



Tour the Aging & Disability Resource Center & Area Agency on Aging

We hope you will join us for our 2016 Open House! (See the details on page 7).

Jane De Broux, Caregiver Program Coordinator, will give a short presentation on resources and programs for caregivers, and will be available to answer your questions about the National Family Caregiver Support Program.

Cheryl Batterman, Area Agency on Aging of Dane County Manager, will present on the Senior Focal Points—the organizations and centers where you can access services for older adults.

You can also learn about Dementia-Friendly Communities, and the “Share the Care” Program. The ADRC is the first point of contact to help caregivers find programs and services for care recipients. The event will be helpful for those who are currently caregivers, and for those who are designated by a family member or friend to provide care in the future. Adult children with parents who will need services to remain in their homes long term will find a wealth of resources.

Hope to see you there!



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

Open House!

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) of Dane County &
Aging Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Dane County
Wednesday, May 18, 2016, 4:30–6:30 pm
(2865 N Sherman Ave—at the Northside TownCenter)



In addition to contracting with numerous community-based aging agencies, AAA offers programs and services to enable older adults to remain living safely at home.



The ADRC provides free, unbiased information about resources and services for older adults and adults with disabilities.

Celebrate National Older Americans Month & Wisconsin's ADRC Month! Learn about AAA & ADRC services, tour the facility, enjoy refreshments, and attend short information sessions!

Dane County Executive Joe Parisi will offer comments at 4:45 pm.

5 pm *What is Dementia Friendly?*
5:30 pm *Caregiving Resources*

5:45 pm *Share the Care Program*
6 pm *Focal Points' Services*



Fun! Food! Tours!

AAA & ADRC are operated by the Dane County Department of Human Services



Caring for the Caregiver Program

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