

Caregiver Chronicles

August 2018



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/)



Until one has loved an animal a part of one's soul
remains unawakened.

—Anatole France

The Ups and Downs of Caregiving

In this issue of *Caregiver Chronicles*, we address some of the ups and downs of caregiving. As surely as Summer will pass into Fall, the experience of caregiving will change for individuals in the role. In her article (page 3), “The Caregiving Roller Coaster,” Jane Mahoney describes how you can recognize some common emotions before they become problematic, and shares what you can do to center yourself. Some caregivers may reach a point of “compassion fatigue,” which *Caregiver Teleconnection* presenter Amy Cunningham identifies as different from stress or burnout. You can listen to her talk on *Caregiver Teleconnection* (page 5). If you miss the live talk, the archived presentations are available on the website [here](#).

We also take a look at some of the pure joys and rewards of caregiving. Caregiver Lori Getter shares the story of her mom’s journey from deep sadness to a new happiness, thanks to a little fellow traveler named Millie (page 6). Lori introduced me to the program that made it possible, “Seniors for Seniors,” where senior adults capable of caring for a pet are paired with a senior pet who might otherwise never find a home of their own. You’ll also find links to articles on the health benefits of pets for older adults and the important considerations to take into account (page 7).

Speaking of pure joy, bicycling has been just that for me since I was five years old. I was thrilled to learn recently that Dane County is now home to “Cycling Without Age Greater Madison.” In 2016, I watched a Ted Talk that had gone viral and appeared in the Facebook feeds of several friends. Copenhagener Ole Dasso had launched a program to help Elderly Danes get back on bicycles. I laughed and cried through the presentation and thought I wanted to be part of that. Clearly lots of other people felt the same! See the announcement (page 8) for details on how to volunteer or sign up to take a ride! You can view the original [Ted Talk](#), or learn more about the idea for cycling without age [here](#). It’s an intergenerational gem of a program, and there is nobody who loves to bicycle who doesn’t identify with the wonderfully free feeling of the wind in your face as you go. To that end, the trishaw cycles transport riders in the front of the vehicle where they can feel just as they did when they used to ride. The delight shining from the faces of the riders (and the volunteers) says it all.

Whether you need help to cope with the challenges of caregiving, or are looking for programs to enhance the life of the person you care for, you are welcome to contact the Dane County Caregiver Program. We’re here to help.



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The Caregiving Roller Coaster

Caring for an older adult can sometimes feel like a roller coaster ride. Much of the time you are filled with joy and pride as you spend time with your loved one. Then there are times when you feel overwhelmed and stressed by the challenges of caregiving. Guilt often follows. Then your loved one thanks you for all the work you do and you feel love and joy once more. These emotional ups and downs often occur during the course of one day. When you are caregiving, life becomes a rollercoaster that doesn't stop to let you off!

It is normal to experience a large array of emotions when providing care for a loved one. Caregivers who report higher levels of satisfaction have learned the skill of managing their negative emotions. They are also able to focus on all of the benefits of caregiving, including:

- Growing closer to their loved one as they spend time together
- Feeling enhanced self worth for coping with a difficult situation
- "Repaying" their loved one who used to care for them
- Having an increased sense of purpose in their life and a sense of achievement

But, no matter how positive a person is, negative feelings will still come around. The first step toward managing these feelings is to recognize them before they become problematic.

Some common emotions that creep up on caregivers are frustration, anger, fear, and guilt. Some early warning signs of these feelings may be tension, headaches, and increased impatience. As soon as you recognize negative feelings heading your way, step back and calm yourself before they take over. The following techniques can be helpful in keeping negative emotions at bay:

- Take some slow, deep breaths
- Look at the event in a different way
- Try to understand the other person's perspective
- Leave the room for awhile
- Remember the good times
- Participate in physical activity
- Concentrate on the benefits and rewards of caregiving

When you are calm again, think about what triggered the negative emotion and how it could have been avoided. You can use negative feelings as a catalyst for change. You may find you need more respite care, a change in routine, an outlet for emotional needs such as a support group, or to distribute tasks to family members.

Negative emotions may not be pleasant, but they don't have to leave you full of anger and frustration. Learn to recognize the warning signs, calm yourself and initiate change to prevent it from happening again.

—Jane Mahoney, Older Americans
Act Consultant
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging
Resources





Online Resources

Listen to the Podcast

Animal House: Why Seniors Should Have Pets

GLT's Sound Ideas by Laura Kennedy, December 6, 2017

<http://wgl.org/post/animal-house-why-seniors-should-have-pets#stream/0>

"Seniors and pets make a potent combination. Just because we're older doesn't mean we can't care for a pet any longer." If the person you care for is cognitively capable, could a pet provide companionship that could make them less lonely? Pets can also promote exercise (dog walking), and help make social connections."



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

Call (608) 240-7400

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

Website: www.daneadrc.org

Email: ADRC@countyofdane.com

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

**"Kindness is my
only guiding star.
In its light, I sail
a straight route,
I have my motto
written on my sail:
'To live in love.'"**

—ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX



CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

 WELLMED
www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Date	Time	Topic	A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS
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Wednesday, August 1st Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific (Arizona) 10:00 am	Compassion Fatigue with Amy Cunningham <i>In this talk you will learn the how to differentiate between, stress, burnout, and Compassion Fatigue. You will learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of Compassion Fatigue, identify the trajectory, and begin to implement the 5 resilience's needed to assist you in achieving growth.</i>
Thursday, August 9th Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific (Arizona) 8:00 am	Lucy Barylak, MSW as "Dear Lucy" <i>Caregivers will have the opportunity to call in and ask questions, make comments and express yourself regarding the issues you face as a caregiver. You can submit your questions or comments by e-mail or phone.</i>
Monday, August 13th Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific (Arizona) 10:00 am	Anxiety and Depression Medication in the Geriatric Population with Rick Rayl, R.Ph <i>What are medications used to treat anxiety and depression in the geriatric population? Learn about how medications affect older adults. Be able to recognize side effects and adverse reactions associated with each class of drugs. What does a caregiver need to know about the relationship between diagnosis and medication treatment? ***Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection***</i>
Monday, August 20th Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific (Arizona) 9:00 am	Developing a Care Plan: Know your Future Now with Evalyn Greb, LCSW <i>Evalyn Greb, LCSW will discuss how to properly assess your situation for you and your loved one as it is and help you understand how to prepare for the future care of your loved one. Learn about the importance of having a plan in place in order to avoid crisis situations.</i>
Tuesday, August 28th Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific (Arizona) 9:00 am	Dementia: Effective Communication Strategies with Russell Gainer, LCSW <i>We will explain the communication changes that take place throughout the course of the disease, decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia and respond in ways that are helpful to the person, and identify stages to connect and communicate at each stage of the disease. Specific focus will attend to dealing with the strong personality and dementia.</i>



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

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

Seniors for Seniors—A Caregiver's Story

My mom lost her husband of 67 years in April. It had been a bad year with his cancer, moving from their house to an apartment, leaving friends, etc. When he died, she went through a lot of grieving and I took her to her physician right away. She has mild dementia and she was put on antidepressants and some medication to help with sleep but nothing was working—she really lost her will to live.

We went to the doctor on May 25 and she had recommended that maybe Mom needed a cat. I have two pets, and my mom has enjoyed them, but at first I immediately said “no.” My mom will be turning 89 soon and I didn't think my Mom could take care of a pet in her apartment. I happen to volunteer with Community Cat, which is headquartered in Whitewater, Wisconsin, so I went home that night and sent an email to the rescue coordinator to see what she thought. Community Cat President Tammy Frahman Neumeister told me about the “Seniors for Seniors” program that pairs senior cats and sometimes dogs with seniors who are able to take care of them. The Seniors for Seniors program is run through the rescue. They pull animals from across southern Wisconsin that are in danger of being euthanized. They also get a lot of older and disabled animals from Chicago Animal Control. These are cats that likely have little prospect for adoption.

I spoke to my mom and she started getting excited. Obviously, the senior's family has to be involved to make sure the cat is being taken care of properly because if it is not a successful match, the cat is returned to the rescue. I showed Mom photos of a couple of potential adoptable cats that were just pulled from Chicago. Mom saw Millie's picture and fell in love! Millie is a ten-year-old senior cat. We filled out the paperwork, and Mom met Millie that Sunday. I had not seen her smile like that in a long, long time! When we got home, Millie settled in right away. Mom had never had a cat before and it had been many years since she had a pet but she has been doing wonderfully! We have taken Millie to the veterinarian and Mom is taking excellent care of her. All she talks about is Millie and she is soooooo happy! I think it is wonderful because they both needed each other and Millie has given Mom a reason to get out of bed and take care of her. It is so cute! Millie follows her around all the time and meows at her.

I know this program might not be for everyone but it has made a huge difference for my Mom. It has prompted her to take better care of herself. She is sleeping and eating better and is so happy. Another happy development is that Mom is meeting new people in her apartment building because everyone wants to come meet Millie!

—Lori Getter, Caregiver

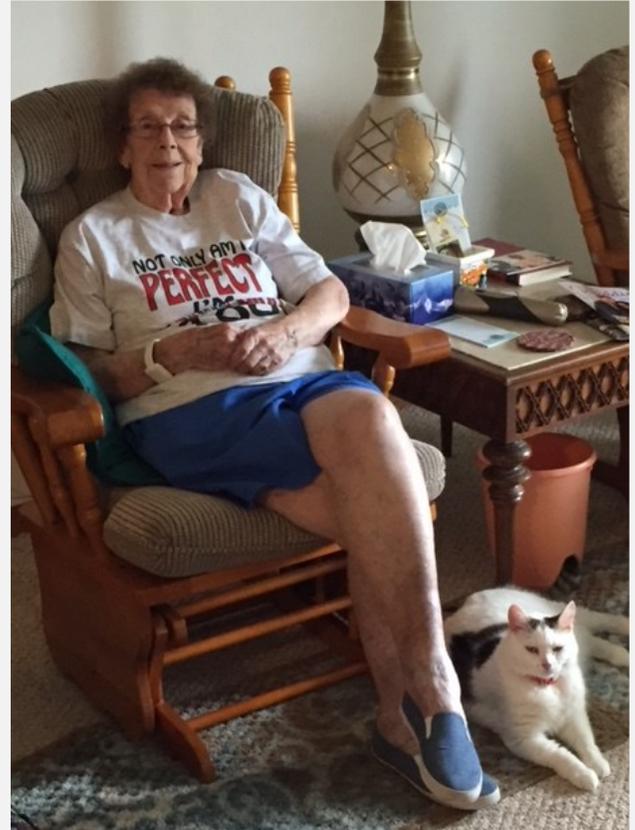
For more information on Community Cat:

Phone: (608) 201-3241

Email: communitycat@yahoo.com

<https://www.commcats.org/>





Above left: Jean meets Millie for the first time. **Above right:** Jean and Millie relaxing at home in Jean’s new apartment. Millie has also helped Jean make new friends with neighbors who enjoy Millie, too. Photos by Lori Getter.

[The Health Benefits of Pets for Older Adults](#)

Next Avenue by Ronnie Gordon, March 16 2017

<https://www.nextavenue.org/health-benefits-pets-older-adults/>

“Research also shows that pet owners (primarily of dogs and cats) can decrease their risk of coronary heart disease, the most common cause of death of men and women 60 years and older . . . According to the American Heart Association, studies have shown that pet owners have lower blood pressure and smaller increases in heart rate and blood pressure in response to stress, lower resting Baseline heart rates and blood pressure, significantly smaller increases in heart rate and blood pressure in response to stress, and faster recovery times from stress.”

[How to Pick a Pet for a Senior Citizen](#)

Aging Care by Carol Bradley Bursack, Minding Our Elders, Updated September 28, 2017

<https://www.agingcare.com/articles/pick-a-pet-for-senior-172923.htm>

“While animals can make wonderful companions, they also require care and must be a good match for their human partner’s personality, functional abilities, and financial situation. Use these pointers to ensure a senior is up for pet ownership before matching them with the perfect new furry friends.”



“Cycling Without Age Greater Madison”

Do you love to ride?

Cycling Without Age is a great way to share the joy of riding

Community wide volunteer recruitment

**Please join us August 5th for pilot training here in Madison or
sign up for future trainings to be scheduled later.**

Partnering with our community to help offer seniors & people with disabilities trishaw rides.

Call (608) 630-8981 or email cwagreatermadison@gmail.com

 facebook page  @CWAgreatermadison

Together we can give people with limited mobility a chance to feel the wind in their hair, share a smile, and wave a fine good day to their neighbors by getting back out into nature, hearing the birds, feeling the warmth of the sun, and sharing a story or two.

Also if you would like to sign up to receive a ride please call or email to be put on the ride list ☺

Cycling Without Age Greater Madison is a program of a local non-profit, Community Light Elder Network, communitylighteldernetwork.org They are an affiliate partner with Cycling Without Age whose headquarters are in Denmark.

See great videos & learn the history and success of “Cycling Without Age” at cyclingwithoutage.org

Together we can make Greater Madison the friendliest biking community in the country for all, including those with limited mobility!





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



**1ST MONDAYS | 10 AM – 11 AM
STARTING AUGUST 6TH, 2018**

**KAVANAUGH'S ESQUIRE CLUB
1025 N Sherman Ave. Madison**

**Cost: the cost of a cup of coffee from
the Esquire Club**

RSVP REQUIRED. PLEASE CONTACT EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING:

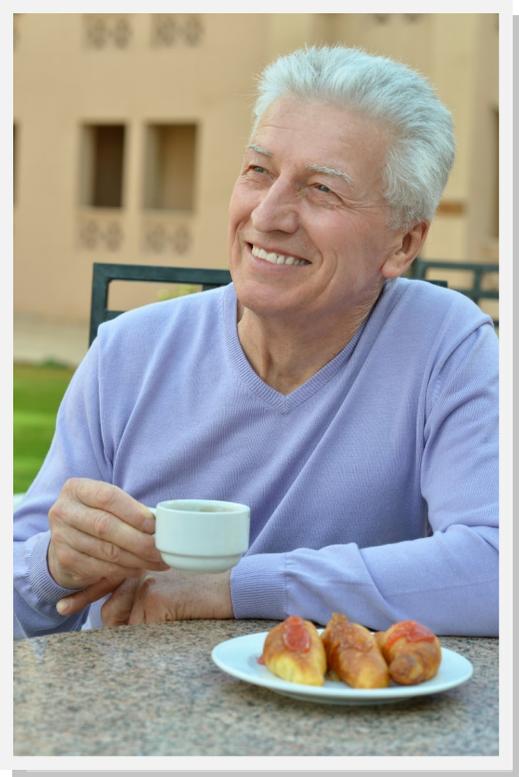


Joy Schmidt
Dementia Care Specialist
ADRC of Dane County
608-240-7400



Bonnie Nuttkinson
Program Coordinator
Alzheimer's Association
608-203-8500

According to the Alzheimer's Association, almost two-thirds of Americans with Alzheimer's are women, and a growing number of caregivers are men. In addition, men are sometimes less likely to seek out social support than women. If you are a man caring for someone with Alzheimer's or Dementia, this new group may be just right for you. **It is an ongoing group on first Mondays, so if you are unable to make the first one, feel free to join at any time.**





SAVE THE DATE!
Wednesday, August 29, 2018
FALLS PREVENTION KICKOFF EVENT



SAVE THE DATE

Falls Prevention Kick Off Event

Wednesday, August 29, 2018
5:30- 7:15 p.m.

**Madison School &
Community Recreation - East**
4620 Cottage Grove Rd, Madison

Secrets For Better Balance:

Discover the Keys to Effective Exercise Activities.

Join us for a falls prevention kick-off event where members of the Dane County Falls Prevention Task Force will unveil balance exercise tools to help instructors improve curriculum and to help people find activities that are good for balance. Enjoy class demos, snacks, and a door prize drawing!

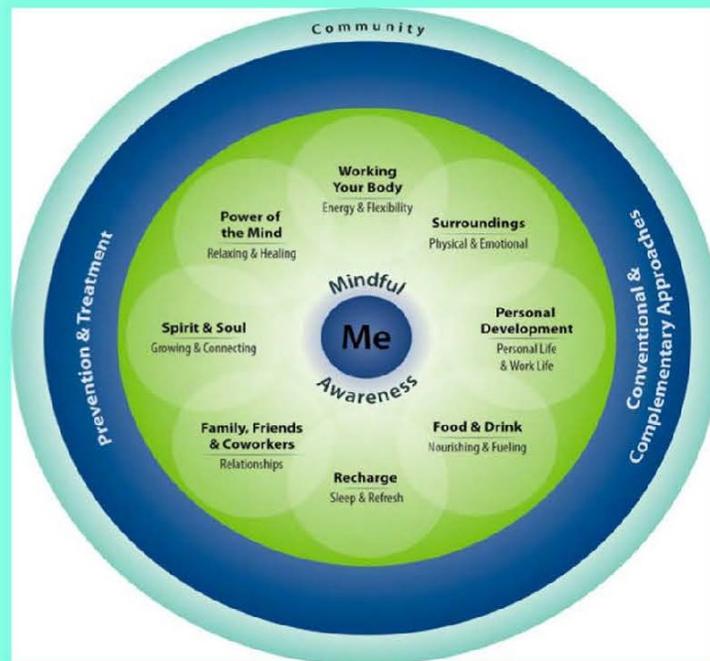
info@safercommunity.net



Safe Communities
Madison-Dane County
2453 Atwood Ave. Ste. #209
Madison, WI 53704
608.441.3060

6th Annual Madison VA Community Mental Health Summit

*Whole Health: Focusing on What Matters
Most*



Bethel Lutheran Church
312 Wisconsin Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

Please register at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) or RSVP to Donald Bialkowski @ 608-280-7084 x 11980

September 5th 2018
8:00 am – 3:30pm

Participant sign-in and Resource Fair begins at 8:00 am
with introductory remarks starting 9:00 am

Caring for the Caregiver Program

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY

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Madison, WI 53704



Caring for Caregivers

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Save paper and reduce postage costs

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- You are no longer interested in receiving the newsletter

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