

# Caregiver Chronicles

March 2021



Caring for Caregivers

**AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY**  
2865 N SHERMAN AVE, MADISON, WI 53704  
608-261-9930



No winter lasts forever; no  
spring skips its turn.

—Hal Borland  
*American author, journalist,  
and naturalist*

## Be kind to yourself in the In-between Time

The hardest mile of the 26.2 mile marathon usually falls between miles 18 through 23 depending on the individual runner. We are getting to a similar point in the pandemic where we realize how far we've come, yet how much further there still is to go. I'm hearing that's the way many caregivers, colleagues, and friends are feeling. For many of us the conditions under which we live and work are similarly draining. We are tired and spent. We are all putting one foot in front of the other. It's a state of being different from anything else we've experienced because we are all going through it together yet we must keep our distance even from those we love most. Then there's the freeze/thaw of March, waiting for Spring to come. The air has changed, the days are longer, and the birds are singing again but it's still cold with a whole lot of snow yet to melt.

There is good news to keep us going. Vaccinations are moving along and as of February 23, over 1,340,000 vaccine doses have been administered in Wisconsin. It looks like the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be approved adding a third option to boost the pace of vaccinations. COVID-19 cases are going down, although it is critical to continue masking, social distancing, and hand washing to ensure variants don't take hold and the spread slows. We can continue to do those things. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

It's important to be particularly kind to ourselves during this in-between time. To that end, the video below is a balm for our tired psyches and can imbue a sense of peacefulness, wellbeing, and a reminder that seasons change and Winter eventually yields to Spring and Summer. According to John Daly of [Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy](#), it has been described as "therapy for the senses" by several coordinators at senior centers and memory cafes. Please enjoy a short journey to this special place.



If you need caregiver information, support, or referrals please don't hesitate to phone or email me at the Dane County Caregiver Program.



Jane De Broux  
Caregiver Specialist  
Dane County Area Agency on Aging

 Caring for Caregivers

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## Trualta Highlight: Stroke Recovery

Sadly, strokes are common among older adults and they are the fourth leading cause of death in the United States (National Institute on Aging, 2017). Having a stroke can lead to serious long-term disabilities, and recovery and rehabilitation after a stroke can be challenging for both the person who suffered the stroke and their caregiver. Depending on the type of stroke and the severity, recovery can take many months or a person may live with the effects of a stroke for the rest of their lives. When caring for someone who has suffered a stroke or is at risk for a stroke, it is important to understand the signs of a stroke, measures that can be taken to prevent it, and how to help your loved one with the recovery process.

Trualta recently added a new badge dedicated towards helping caregivers care for their loved ones who have survived a stroke. Here you will find up to date and accurate information regarding the most common areas of stroke recovery, including:

- How to help your loved one through meal times along with navigating swallowing and chewing
- The different cognitive changes that can result from a stroke
- How your loved one's perception about themselves and their environment may have changed in spatial relations, time awareness, apraxia, unilateral spatial neglect, visual changes and sensation
- How strokes can affect communication and strategies for effective ways to communicate with your loved one
- The different physical changes that can occur with a stroke, and how to help your loved one if they are experiencing low tone (when muscles in the body don't get enough signals from the brain and they feel heavy or floppy) or high tone (when some muscles can be working harder than others, often in a pattern of movement)
- Helping your loved one (and yourself!) navigate the emotional recovery that is necessary after surviving a stroke
- Preventative care, including important healthy lifestyle changes and the five warning signs of a stroke

For more information about helping your loved one with stroke recovery, visit the Trualta site and click on the learning badge *Stroke Recovery*.

Trualta is a free and easy-to-use online resource for caregivers living in Dane County. It covers a wide variety of caregiving topics and can be trusted as a reliable and accurate source for up-to-date and evidence-based information. If you would like access or more information about Trualta, contact Sarah Schupbach at the Dane County Area Agency on Aging Caregiver Program at 608-335-6506 or [schupbach.sarah@countyofdane.com](mailto:schupbach.sarah@countyofdane.com).



National Institute on Aging. (2017, May 16). *Stroke*. Retrieved from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/stroke>.





## Caregiving Basics

When you first learn that a loved one needs help it is hard to know where to begin. Sometimes there is a sudden change of health that prompts you to get involved. Other times it is a gradual realization that a person is no longer capable of meeting all their needs. In either situation, knowing what steps to take can be difficult. The following are some basic steps to get you started.

### **Learn about your care partner's illness, disease, or condition**

Understanding the nature of the disease, its symptoms, and what to expect is helpful in caring for them. Talk to a healthcare provider, research the internet, or read books or pamphlets to help you understand what they are dealing with and specific ways you can help.

### **Determine areas of need**

Write down specific needs such as housecleaning, grocery shopping, meal preparation, help with bathing, and transportation to medical appointments. Then discuss possible ways to meet these needs with friends, family members, local agencies, and your care partner's healthcare provider.



### **Research community resources**

Explore options like home-delivered or grab-and-go meals, in-home supportive care services, personal emergency response systems, transportation services, and adult day care. [Dane County Senior Focal Points](#) have a range of services including senior dining sites, case management, supportive home care, Cultural Diversity Program, and health, fitness, social, and recreational programs. The [Aging and Disability Resource Center \(ADRC\) of Dane County](#) is a free and unbiased source of information and phone lines are staffed weekdays. (See page 13 for contact details.)

Contact organizations to educate yourself on specific diseases such as the [Alzheimer's Association](#), [Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin](#), [American Stroke Foundation](#), [Parkinson's Foundation](#) and others. Not all agencies are fully open during COVID-19, but staff will be available to answer the phone and assist you in meeting your needs.

### **Plan for immediate care**

Find out your care partner's wishes for immediate and long-term care. Adapt the environment by doing a home safety check as well as purchasing items for any special needs such as a walker, commode, wheelchair, or other adaptive equipment. Find a way to log the person's health such as eating patterns, symptoms, and medications. This information is helpful at medical appointments.

### **Enlist the help of others**

Determine what you can realistically do, then make a list of other people who can help. Don't try to do it all on your own. Write down tasks that others can help with such as running errands or providing a meal. Many tasks can be completed while following social distancing guidelines.



### **Organize important information**

Write down pertinent medical information including doctors' names and phone numbers, insurance information and medication/pharmacy information. Collect and list financial and other important information such as household bills, loans, bank accounts, and insurance policies. Also include copies of social security card, driver's license, and insurance cards. Be sure to keep this information in a safe location that other family members know about.

### **Plan for the future**

Get information about the long-term prognosis in order to make appropriate plans. Assess the financial situation and contact a financial advisor who is familiar with caregiving issues if necessary. Talk to a lawyer about a durable power of attorney for health care and finances. Include your care partner as much as possible in the planning.

### **Take care of yourself**

Find support through a friend, counselor, or support group. Many are meeting virtually during the pandemic and can be found in [Dane County](#) and [statewide](#). Talk about your struggles and how it feels to be a caregiver. Take regular breaks from caregiving and keep up with activities or hobbies that bring you pleasure. Make sure you are eating well, getting enough sleep, exercise and are staying connected with family or friends to keep yourself healthy. Ask for help when you need it. No one can do it all!



—Jane Mahoney, Caregiver Support Specialist  
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources



# "THE 5TH LITTLE GIRL"

*A Conversation with*  
**SARAH COLLINS RUDOLPH**

SATURDAY  
**13**  
March  
3:00 PM CST

.....

In 1963, Ku Klux Klansmen bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Sarah survived the blast, but her sister Addie Mae and three other little girls did not. Experience history as she shares her powerful story!

.....

Join us for this **FREE** virtual program via Zoom

**Register** [Click here to register](#)





## ***Let's Get Away Together***

This series is comprised of interactive sessions with each week focusing on a new place or cultural activity, while incorporating storytelling, music, poetry writing, and/or a simple craft. Each session will include a follow-up message filled with tips, activities, and recipes for families to continue to enjoy after the virtual trip. The focus of each group is to explore a new world, experience a variety of engaging opportunities, and enjoy a sense of camaraderie and community.

Let's Get Away Together is intended to be an enjoyable activity for family caregivers and the person they care for. Those receiving care who are able to participate in the discussion and activities are encouraged to attend with their family caregiver.

### **March 2—Exploring the Wisdom and Wit of Dr. Seuss!**

Explore Dr. Seuss' influential wisdom and wit, and much of his lesser-known and hidden artwork, in honor of his birthday!

### **March 9—Flash from the Past: Iconic Toys and Other Collectibles**

Let's explore and reminisce about iconic toys and other collectibles - you may be surprised at what you discover!

### **March 16—Virtual St. Patrick's Day Party!**

Bring your green and join Katrina for a celebration of St. Patrick's Day, including live, traditional Irish fiddle music and history of the holiday!

### **March 23—Nature's Wonders: Exploring the Spring Equinox**

Spring is here! Let's welcome the new season by viewing extraordinary gardens and waterscapes around the world.

**When:** Tuesdays, February 23 to April 13, from 1 to 2 p.m. (PT)

**Where:** Online

**Cost:** No charge

**Registration:** [Click here](#)

**Contact:** [edprograms@caregiver.org](mailto:edprograms@caregiver.org)

**Registration is open to family caregivers.**

### **March 30—Spring has Sprung!**

A joyful look at spring through art with an April Fool's twist

### **April 6—Encore! Celebrating Classical Music**

Learn about well-known composers and listen to their music in this informative dialogue on classical music favorites, including a LIVE performance.

### **April 13—Adventures to Fiji!**

What islands have you traveled to? Let's explore the gorgeous beaches, oceans, culture, and life of the Fijian Islands.



National Center on Caregiving

*FCA supports and assists caregivers of adults with chronic or disabling health conditions regardless of race, ancestry, national origin, creed, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, income, or age.*

## Webinar/Phone Family Caregiver Education Programs – March (All presentation times listed as Central Time, unless otherwise noted)



### 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's and other dementias cause memory, thinking and behavior problems that interfere with daily living. Join us to learn how to recognize common signs of the disease; how to approach someone about memory concerns; the importance of early detection and benefits of a diagnosis; possible tests and assessments for the diagnostic process, and Alzheimer's Association resources.

Wednesday, March 3, 3:30-5:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, March 10, 1:00-2:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Monday, March 8, 2:00-3:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Tuesday, March 16, 8:30-9:30 am | [REGISTER](#)

### Behavioral & Psychological Symptoms of Dementia

People with MCI, early stage Alzheimer's disease and other related dementia along with their family care partners; and professional caregivers are invited to join Dr. Cary Kolenberg as he reviews the presenting symptoms of various common types of dementia. He will help distinguish various forms of dementia and highlight behavioral symptoms that often accompany progressive dementias. He will also discuss both behavioral and medication approaches to help minimize behavioral symptoms and provide an update on current Clinical Research studies.

Monday, March 15, 11:00 am-12:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

### Comfort & Joy on Your Caregiving Journey

Times are tougher than normal. Places and people where we found encouragement and respite may not be there right now. Join a former family caregiver, Karen Stobbe, for a place to breath, find comfort and hopefully a little joy. Karen is the Chief Purpose Officer at In the Moment. She is a past caregiver to her Dad and her Mom who lived with her family for 12 years. She created a training program on dementia for Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services that was free to every nursing home in the country. Her work has been featured on NPR, Guideposts and Real Simple magazine as well as presenting a TEDMED talk with her husband, Mondy, whom she met many years ago while performing improvisation.

Thursday, March 4, 6:00-7:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Thursday, March 18, 6:00-7:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

### Dementia Conversations

When someone is showing signs of dementia, it's time to talk. Often, conversations with family about changing behaviors can be challenging and uncomfortable. This program provides tips for breaking the ice with your family so you can address some of the most common issues that are difficult to discuss: going to the doctor for a diagnosis or medical treatment, deciding when to stop driving, and making legal and financial plans for future care.

Wednesday, March 3, 12:00-1:30 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, March 24, 12:00-1:30 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Tuesday, March 30, 12:00-1:30 pm | [REGISTER](#)

### Effective Communication Strategies

Communication is more than just talking and listening – it's also about sending and receiving messages through attitude, tone of voice, facial expressions and body language. As people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias progress in their journey and the ability to use words is lost, families need new ways to connect. Join us to explore how communication takes place when someone has Alzheimer's, learn to decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia, and identify strategies to help you connect and communicate at each stage of the disease.

Monday, March 1, 5:30-6:30 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Tuesday, March 9, 2:00-3:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Thursday, March 11, 2:00-3:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, March 17, 7:00-8:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Friday, March 26, 2:00-3:30 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, March 31, 10:30-11:30 am | [REGISTER](#)

**Register for any of our education programs by calling 800.272.3900 or online at [alz.org/crf](http://alz.org/crf).  
You will receive connection information after you register.**



## Webinar/Phone Family Caregiver Education Programs – March

(All presentation times listed as Central Time, unless otherwise noted)



### Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body

For centuries, we've known that the health of the brain and the body are connected. But now, science is able to provide insights into how to make lifestyle choices that may help you keep your brain and body healthy as you age. Join us to learn about research in the areas of diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity and social engagement, and use hands-on tools to help you incorporate these recommendations into a plan for healthy aging.

Monday, March 15, 2:00-3:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Thursday, March 18, 2:00-3:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, March 17, 10:00-11:00 am | [REGISTER](#)

Friday, March 26, 12:00-1:30 pm | [REGISTER](#)

### Understanding Alzheimer's & Dementia

Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging. Join us to learn about the impact of Alzheimer's; the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia; stages and risk factors; current research and treatments available for some symptoms; and Alzheimer's Association resources.

Tuesday, March 2, 1:00-2:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Monday, March 15, 3:30-4:30 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, March 24, 1:00-2:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Thursday, March 11, 11:00 am-12:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, March 17, 1:00-2:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

### Understanding & Responding to Dementia Related Behavior

Behavior is a powerful form of communication and is one of the primary ways for people with dementia to communicate their needs and feelings as the ability to use language is lost. However, some behaviors can present real challenges for caregivers to manage. Join us to learn to decode behavioral messages, identify common behavior triggers, and learn strategies to help intervene with some of the most common behavioral challenges of Alzheimer's disease.

Tuesday, March 2, 2:00-3:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Thursday, March 25, 10:00-11:00 am | [REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, March 17, 11:30 am-1:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Monday, March 29, 1:00-2:00 pm | [REGISTER](#)

#### TO REGISTER:

This URL will take you to a document with live registration links:

<https://www.alz.org/media/wi/documents/Region-5-Education-March.pdf>

Register for any of our education programs by calling 800.272.3900 or online at [alz.org/crf](http://alz.org/crf).  
You will receive connection information after you register.

## Monthly MIPPA Moment: March is Save Your Vision Month

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

***For information on MIPPA Programs call MIPPA Program Specialist Leilani Amundson at 608-240-7458.***

***March is Save Your Vision Month*** as declared by the American Optometric Association. Original Medicare does not cover routine eye exams, glasses or contact lenses. However, Medicare coverage for specific tests or procedure is offered if you have glaucoma, cataracts, diabetes, or age-related macular degeneration. Advantage plans may offer more options for broader coverage of vision, depending on your plan.

Original Medicare Part B covers a glaucoma screening once every 12 months *if you're at high risk.*

Medicare Part B covers cataract surgery if it's done using *traditional surgical techniques or using lasers.* Part B also helps pay for corrective lenses with standard frames or one set of contact lenses only *if you have cataract surgery to implant an intraocular lens.* You pay any additional costs for upgraded frames.

Medicare Part B covers eye exams for diabetic retinopathy once each year if you have diabetes. The exam must be done by an eye doctor who's legally allowed to do the test in your state.

Medicare Part B may also cover certain diagnostic tests and treatment (including treatment with certain injected drugs) of eye diseases and conditions if you have age-related macular degeneration.

With Original Medicare, you pay 20% co-insurance of the Medicare-approved amount for your doctor's services, and the Part B deductible applies. In a hospital outpatient setting you may pay a copayment and deductible if it applies.

*Adapted from [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).*







# FREE Virtual (Online) Welcome to Medicare Seminars

***Sponsored by Area Agency on Aging of Dane County's  
Elder Benefits Specialist Program***

## **What you need to know about enrolling in Medicare**

If you are turning age 64 this year, we can help you make informed choices about your Medicare options! You'll receive accurate and detailed information from unbiased experts in benefit programs.

**March 20, 2021, 9-11:30 am**

Email [aaa@countyofdane.com](mailto:aaa@countyofdane.com) to register by **3/11/21**

**May 15, 2021, 9-11:30 am**

Email [aaa@countyofdane.com](mailto:aaa@countyofdane.com) to register by **5/6/21**

**July 17, 2021, 9-11:30 am**

Email [aaa@countyofdane.com](mailto:aaa@countyofdane.com) to register by **7/8/21**

Seminars will  
be offered  
via Zoom.

Email for more  
information.



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

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

**(608) 240-7400**

Website:

Email: [ADRC@countyofdane.com](mailto:ADRC@countyofdane.com)

*Click on the button to follow the ADRC on  
facebook.*



# Caring for the Caregiver Program

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- 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)