



# Connections

## A Resource for Family Caregivers

*Spring 2015 Volume 4, Issue 2*

### Steering Committee

- Aging and Disability Resource Center of Sheboygan County  
[www.sheboygancounty.com](http://www.sheboygancounty.com)
- Alzheimer's Association Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter  
[www.alz.org/sewi](http://www.alz.org/sewi)
- Dementia Care Network  
(920) 838-1311
- HearthStone of Wisconsin  
[www.hearthstonewi.org](http://www.hearthstonewi.org)
- Mental Health America in Sheboygan County  
[www.mhasheboygan.org](http://www.mhasheboygan.org)
- United Way of Sheboygan County  
<http://www.uwofsc.org>
- UW-Extension Sheboygan County/Family Living  
<http://sheboygan.uwex.edu/>
- Family Caregiver Representative  
- Jeanette Gast

Welcome to the Spring 2015 issue of the Connections Newsletter produced by the Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County. The goals of the newsletters are to promote the Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County, share information about future events and provide a forum for caregivers and organizational members.

**The deadline to submit articles for the summer 2015 edition of the newsletter is Wednesday, July 1, 2015.** Please submit articles to Jane Jensen at [jane.jensen@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:jane.jensen@ces.uwex.edu). Please contact me at 920-459-5900 with questions.

Sincerely,  
Jane Jensen, Co-editor  
UW-Extension Sheboygan County/Family Living

### ADRC LET IT BE: keep your local one stop shop

The proposed Wisconsin State Budget for 2015-2017 calls for ending the ADRCs as they currently exist. Under the budget proposal ADRCs would no longer need to be offered in each county, and services might be provided regionally or even on a statewide basis. Private entities, such as insurance companies, could begin offering services currently provided by ADRCs, such as the long-term care functional screen or benefits counseling. In addition to these changes, ADRC governing boards would be eliminated, which would mean NO input by local citizens.

- Long term care options counseling
- Benefits Counseling (SS, SSI, Medicare, Medicaid, etc.)
- Transitional Services (young adults with disabilities in need of ongoing support after leaving the school system)
- Access to publically funded long term care programs and services
- Prevention and Early Intervention Services
- Family Caregiver Supports

Kathleen Manny  
Co-chair Family Caregivers Coalition

ADRC core services, which are FREE, currently include:

- Information and Assistance (any and all questions related to aging or disabilities)



If you would like to contact your state legislators to voice your opinions please call 1-800-362-9472 or go to <http://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/>.

### Inside this issue:

Caregivers Connect	2
Care to Share?	2
Caregiving Counts	2
Member Messages	3
"My Plate is Full! Can anyone help?"	3
Congratulations HearthStone	4
Dancing With Stars	4
Memory Café	4
Family Caregivers Coalition 2014 Annual Report	5
Things Not to Say to a Caregiver	6
Easy Marinated Bean Dip	7
Calendar of Events	7

## Caregivers Connect

- an initiative of the Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County

Meet with other family caregivers in an informal, social environment to learn practical tips on a variety of topics that will assist you to better meet the physical, emotional, financial and spiritual challenges of caregiving. Call the Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County c/o Aging & Disability Resource Center at 920-467-4100 or 800-596-1919 for more information or to **make a reservation**. (Some events open to care recipient and/or professional caregivers as **indicated below.**)

### ***Thursday, May 21, 6:00-7:30 PM: Me, Myself, & I: Managing Stress & Compassion Fatigue through Self-Care***

Presenter: Kate Baer, Director Mental Health America in Sheboygan County

While stress is a natural part of life, learning how to manage and cope with our stress in healthy ways is important for our overall well-being. Join this session as a caregiver to learn helpful tips on how to: identify your stressors, manage your stress with healthy responses, incorporate self-care tactics into everyday life to reduce burnout and ultimately live a happier, healthier life. (open to family caregivers and professional caregivers)

### ***Thursday, June 18, 1:30-3:00 p.m.: Grief and Loss related to Caregiving***

Presenter: Nancy Simenz, Chaplain

Grief is not just the death of a loved one. We experience loss throughout our lives and we need to acknowledge that loss. Learn about the emotional impact of grief and how we heal from it. (open to family caregivers)

***Care to Share?*** (Share your interesting tidbits. Please send to [jane.jensen@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:jane.jensen@ces.uwex.edu))

- ◆ Make extra food and freeze leftovers. You never know when there will be an emergency and you will be glad you have something ready to eat. Julie D.
- ◆ “I’m in my third phase of life and I am going to enjoy it.” Ninety-eight year old mom said after buying her first pair of jeans. Diane H.

## Caregiving Counts

- an initiative of the Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County



Caregiving Counts! Family caregivers provide a valuable service to a spouse, parent, child, sibling, friend or other loved one. The Family Caregivers Coalition promotes appreciation for family caregivers.

If your organization is interested in this opportunity to support a family caregiver, please contact: Ginny Nyhuis at 838-1311 or Kathleen Manny at 467-4079.

Thank you to TLC Homes for providing a basket of fine quality chocolates. Congratulations to family caregiver winner, Anna Marie K.

***Thank you for your commitment to aid in the mission and vision of the Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County.***

## Member Messages

### Support Groups Help

Jim Holmes is a family caregiver member of the Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County & Alzheimer's Men's Support Group Facilitator

In July, 2011, my wife Patti and I moved to Sheboygan to be closer to family. Patti was in the ninth year of dementia, late mid-stage, and I needed help caring for her. This was probably the hardest thing for any man to admit – HELP!

But, as my daughters helped me with Patti, it was recommended that I talk with Ginny Nyhuis of the Southeastern Wisconsin Alzheimer's Chapter about getting involved with a group of men that were in the same situation. I went to a Men Only Support Group and met men who had been through some of the tough times that all caregivers will experience. It was an informal setting but I found that it was very easy to discuss our experiences with our fellow men and we weren't embarrassed to relate. We all had questions of how to handle things as they came up and someone in the group would usually say "I've been there and done that."

We had Ginny at one of the meetings to show us where we can get help and training. We also had Kathy Manny of the

Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County help us with our concerns for financial aid and assistance. Note: Ginny and Kathy were the only women allowed at our meeting and they were a very great help.

Going through the caregiving process demands a lot of time, energy, patience, and change. The Men's Group helps us to understand this process. The final step, the loss of our loved one, is shared by the Group and in so, eases the burden of grief. Patti passed in February of 2014 and in memory of her, I will continue to be an advocate of "The End of Alzheimer's Starts With Me" by being a Facilitator of the Men's Group, by Walking to End Alzheimer's, by raising money for the Cure, and by being available to help men who are going through this tough process of caregiving.

We meet every month at 6:30 PM, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, in the Sheboygan Falls Library Basement.

### "My plate is full! Can anyone help?"

Embrace Care Management & Managed Home - Organization Member of the Family Caregivers Coalition

It is, understandably, difficult for family caregivers to juggle the many roles they have as parent, employee, and community member while also caring for their aging parent. Distance can also create challenges – many adult children have aging parents that live several cities or states away. Therefore, it seems there is a constant concern looming in the back of their minds: "I wonder if Mom/Dad is ok today?"

Geriatric Care Managers are professional social workers or nurses who have the education and expertise to help you navigate this time in your life. Geriatric Care Managers can evaluate the needs of an aging loved one, assist with connecting to appropriate resources, and offer follow through and ongoing monitoring of services that might be necessary to support them. Often, Geriatric Care Managers become involved because the time commitment or distance prevents a family caregiver from being able to be involved at the intense level that is required.

Some of the tasks that Care Managers might help with could be housing, finances, medical appointments and communication, family education, and emotional support. A family caregiver said this, "It was a tremendous relief to

have someone locally based checking in on the needs of my mother and reporting her status to the family."

Care managers are available to advocate and offer and educated direction, ensuring that the current needs are met and anticipated needs are planned for. They can assist with problem-solving and validate the decisions that you, as a family caregiver, need to make at such a difficult time of transition.

When choosing a Care Manager, ask what credentials and experience they have. If you are interested in hiring a Geriatric Care Manager, you can go on the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers (NAPGCM) website to search for one in your area. Being a member of this organization ensures that a Care Manager must adhere to a standard of practice and code of ethics. If you live in Sheboygan County, you can also contact us at Embrace Care Management at (920) 451-6228. We have Care Managers available 24 hours per day, seven days per week to ensure your loved ones are taken care of and to help eliminate your worry!

Kelly Lee, Care Manager

## Congratulations to Sheboygan's HearthStone



Congratulations to Sheboygan's HearthStone as they celebrate 20 years of advocating for people with disabilities. Watch for or visit the HearthStone website [www.hearthstonewi.org](http://www.hearthstonewi.org) to learn more about HearthStone activities including the annual fundraiser this coming fall.

HearthStone continues to be a strong advocacy voice for the disabled in our community and throughout the state attempting to influence legislative policies that improve services and promote greater independence



## Save the Date!

Be a star! Put on your dancing shoes and prepare to spend an enchanted afternoon on the dance floor at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Enjoy a light meal and seasonal drinks, view a demonstration, and then learn a few steps with ballroom dance instructor Susan Alby. Dance from your chair, dance anywhere, or don't dance at all and come have a ball!

Tuesday, June 30

4:00-7:00 p.m.

John Michael Kohler Arts Center  
608 New York Ave, Sheboygan

## Memory Café Coming to Sheboygan County



Share your stories and socialize with others who have worries about their memory. The Alzheimer's Association, in partnership with Generations, will host a monthly Memory Café for individuals who are living with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), early-stage to moderate Alzheimer's or other types of dementia and their care partners as well as those who worry about memory problems. Please note this is **not** a support group. This free social event will be held the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, 2:30-4:00 PM every month. The next session will be held April 22 at Generations, 1500 Douglas Dr, Plymouth.

Being active physically, socially and mentally is good for the brain! And we all understand: "We're all in the same boat!"

The Memory Café offers participants a safe and fun way to share their stories and socialize with others who have concerns about their memory. Come meet and mingle and create new friendships with others who have similar experiences. Learn how staying physically, socially and mentally active is good for the brain.

To register please contact Ginny Nyhuis at: (920) 838-1311 or [gnyhuis@alz.org](mailto:gnyhuis@alz.org)



## 2014 Annual Report to the Community

### Who We Are

The coalition consists of family caregivers, and organization members who share a common goal to support family caregivers. Current membership includes: 175 family caregivers and 56 organizations. There are no membership dues. Programs and initiatives are sustained through shared skills and resources of the members.

## Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County

The Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County maintained a commitment to identify, recognize support and enhance the role of those affected by caregiving through community outreach, education, peer support and shared resources in order help family caregivers thrive. A summary of the 2014 Annual report follows:

Family caregiver membership increased by 40 despite the fact that members also regularly withdraw from the coalition when they are no longer providing care to a loved one. Membership increased through attendance at caregiver programs, use of the media and member referrals.

Community resource information was distributed quarterly in Connections: A Resource for Family Caregivers, via a distribution of brochures, Quick Guides for Caregivers, bookmarks and the coalition website: [familycaregiverscoalition.org](http://familycaregiverscoalition.org)

Four Caregivers Connect Events provided an educational and a social outlet for 65 caregivers on a variety of topics. Presenters were Lynn Potyen/The GameBoard; Barb Gilmore/Certified Laughter Coach; Mary Patricia Voell/Legacies Founder; Pam Hertel/Clutter to Comfort, LLC; and Kim Murrow/Comfort Keepers.

The second annual Carefree Café event was attended by 85 caregivers and their loved ones, and extended family at Bookwork Gardens. The theme this year was an All American Picnic.

The third annual caregiver retreat was attended by 28 caregivers and was held at Aspira the Spa at the Osthoff in Elkhart Lake.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this another successful year!



See the 2014 Full Report at [www.familycaregiverscoalition.org](http://www.familycaregiverscoalition.org)

New members are welcome. For more information contact the Family Caregivers Coalition c/o Aging & Disability Resource Center at 920-467-4100.

## Things Not to Say to a Caregiver (bigtreemurphy.com)



It is time to discard the old clichés that have been imposed on our thinking process. Think about some of these statements before you use any of them.

- **The phrase, “The Burden of Caregiving,” is used almost exclusively to describe the care of our elderly and its association with Alzheimer’s Disease is accepted as fact.** While the tasks are difficult for those facing this illness, the constant imprint of this care as burden serves little purpose except to wear down the caregiver. The use of that phrase demeans the act itself and it demeans the caregiver by default. How does one provide a loving and life affirming environment for someone going through this disease when everyone characterizes your resolve in terms of drudgery? Child rearing is a challenge and the care of our elderly is also a challenge. We have to stop denigrating the care of our elderly as being something out of the ordinary. Our elderly deserve the same regard and love as do our children who are just as dependent upon us for help.
- **“It is so hard watching someone lose their dignity.”** Dignity is in the eyes of the beholder and has nothing to do with whether or not a person can dress, feed or toilet themselves. Those are simply tasks, they are not a measure of a person's worth as human being.
- **“You will want your children to remember their grandparent as they were, not as they are now.”** This is used as an excuse to justify not visiting an elder frail member of the family. Generations of people before us shared the aging and death experience with their elders as a continuum of the life cycle without any known perversion of their memories of them during happier times. We respond to what we are told to expect. If there are no expectations for connections, none happens. However, vast numbers of us experience a sense of completion and peace by being able to share in the last days with a family member. Some of us learn to see it as a right of passage, of a necessary part of our own growth and as our role in helping our family member meet their death with dignity and grace.
- **“Why visit ‘him’ so much, he doesn’t even know who you are anymore.”** I maintain that as long as we know who they are, that is all that matters. We don't wrestle with these issues in working with infants. We have learned that people in a coma benefit from the presence of family members. We also know that infants die when they are denied nurturing. They languish and they die. Are elders, particularly those with dementia, less needful of human contact, touch, and tender loving care?
- **“Don't feel guilty.”** If only it was just that simple. I believe people deal with grieving issues with this disease. I believe the use of the word guilt is over used and over worked. It really doesn't apply to most of what we caregivers experience with each and every decision we make as we watch our people fade. The tears, the anger, the frustration that is expressed in these circumstances evolve out of a sense of loss and knowledge that the losses will continue. It evolves out of the recognition that we have begun to say good bye long before good bye happens. We need permission to feel what we feel, and guilt is really nothing any of us see as a positive attribute. Caregivers need options, encouragement, and acceptance. What they don't need are mindless clichés.
- **“You should get out more often.”** Isolation, lack of money, loss of friends, and care obligations, often leaves the caregiver with no where to go. The bottom line is that if the family member isn't taken care of, the caregiver cannot leave to go anywhere. If you are going to toss that one off, at least toss it with some suggestions on adult-day-care, and volunteer options. And here's a novel thought, volunteer yourself.
- **“You must be so relieved it's over. (After the family member has died).** A caregiver who has lived through a long-term illness with a family member is still going to experience mourning when that person dies. The grieving process they face may be different from those who face sudden death, or the death of a child, but the loss is still real. To diminish the event is to diminish their effort and the life of the family member.

## Easy Marinated Bean Dip

1 medium onion, diced  
 2 avocados, peeled, pitted and chopped  
 2 large tomatoes, diced  
 1 can black olives, drained and sliced  
 1 can black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed\*  
 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed\*  
 1 can red beans, drained and rinsed\*  
 1 - 16 oz. bottle Italian salad dressing\*  
 1/4 cup grated or shredded Parmesan cheese



Mix together and chill several hours or overnight. Stir again before serving. Serve with tortilla chips.

### Notes:

- \* you can substitute any canned beans, have also used northern, garbanzo and pinto beans
- \* we prefer Ken's Steak House Lite Northern Italian with Basil & Romano dressing
- \* this recipe works well with low-salt diets – many beans are available with low salt as are tortilla chips

Submitted by Caregiver Julie D

## Calendar of Events

- April 7**                    **Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease: The Basics**  
 1:00-2:30 p.m., Mead Library - 3rd Floor, 710 N 8th St, Sheboygan
- April 21**                    **Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Advocacy Day**  
 9:30 a.m. Advocate Training  
 12:15 p.m. Legislative Visits  
 Registration required and due by April 15 by contacting Tim Harrington, (800) 272-3900 or [tharrington@alz.org](mailto:tharrington@alz.org)
- May 4**                        **Effective Communication Strategies - When Caring for a Person with Dementia**  
 10:00 a.m. - Noon, Sheboygan Falls Memorial Library - Lower Level, 330 Buffalo St, Sheboygan Falls
- May 21**                    **Me, Myself, & I: Managing Stress & Compassion Fatigue through Self-Care**  
 6:00-7:30 p.m., Aging Disability Resource Center, 650 Forest Ave, Sheboygan Falls  
 Presenter: Kate Baer, Director Mental Health America in Sheboygan County  
 Please make reservation by calling 920-467-4100 or 800-596-1919
- 4th Wednesday**        **Memory Café**  
 2:30 - 4:00 p.m., (next session April 22), Generations Library, 1500 Douglas Dr, Plymouth
- June 18**                    **Grief and Loss related to Caregiving**  
 1:30-3:00 p.m., Aging Disability Resource Center, 650 Forest Ave, Sheboygan Falls  
 Presenter: Nancy Simenz, Chaplain  
 Please make reservation by calling 920-467-4100 or 800-596-1919



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Phone: 920-467-4100  
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Website: [www.sheboygancounty.com](http://www.sheboygancounty.com)

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## Family Caregiver Coalition Mission

***The mission of the Family Caregivers Coalition in Sheboygan County is to identify, recognize, support and enhance the role of those affected by caregiving through community outreach, education, peer support and shared resources in order to help family caregivers thrive.***