



Family Caregivers Newsletter

January/February 2015

The Alzheimer's Caregiver: New Year's Resolutions

By Ellen Woodward Potts | Tales of Alzheimer's & Caregiving

Do you make resolutions this time of year? We usually do, and often catch ourselves repeating the same ones we made last year. And the year before, and so on. Looking back on the years I was a caregiver for my father with Alzheimer's disease, I honestly don't remember making New Year's resolutions. This is not surprising. The overwhelming stress and duties of providing care can crowd out everything but the essentials.

We who have been in this role often discover the hard way that we must take care of ourselves as we care for others. Caregiving for those with dementia and Alzheimer's disease is a marathon, not a sprint, and requires a healthy lifestyle for the body, mind and spirit. If you are a caregiver and haven't had the time or the will to resolve anything yet for 2015, may I make a few suggestions?

Resolution #1: I must rest. I must take the time each day to remove myself from the situations that stress me and make me tired, and I must do so safely.

Resolution #2: I must ask for help. I must not feel guilty for this. I know my friends and loved ones would want to assist. And for me to rest, I will have to ask for help.

Resolution #3: I must adopt a healthy lifestyle. I will attempt to get physical exercise every day if possible, if even for a few minutes. I will make healthy food choices, and I will not abuse alcohol or drugs. I will schedule and keep regular visits with my healthcare provider.

Resolution #4: I will take care of my spiritual health. I will feed my inner self through meditation, prayer, silence, reading, the arts, or in other ways I consider true. I will seek wise and professional council if needed.

Resolution #5: I will take care of my emotional health. I will not walk this road alone. I will share my story with others. I will seek their advice. I will continue to enjoy hobbies and explore new ones that interest me. I will seek professional help if needed.

Resolution #6: I will educate myself about the disease that is affecting my care partner. I will investigate accepted caregiver resources and attempt to follow recommendations.

Resolution #7: I will find humor in living each day. I will not feel guilty about laughing, even when times are bad. I will try and laugh with my care partner.

Resolution #8: I will continue to see my care partner as a vital person, and validate him daily. I will look past the disease that is affecting him and into his heart and soul. I will love him in the moment, in the now, just as he is. I may grieve at times, but I will honor the person he continues to be and my relationship with him.

Resolution #9: I will see myself as a hero and value my gift of caregiving. Heroes are human and have faults and weakness. But heroes draw upon a silent strength and overcome. Often, the most heroic thing I can do is to say, "I will wake up tomorrow and try my best."

Resolution #10: I will clasp the hand of my care partner and the hands of other caregivers, lifting both mine and theirs in triumph over the disease that seeks to steal. I will give back to them, and to myself, our humanity.

Caregiver Support

Lunch Bunch Memory Café



The Lunch Bunch Memory Café is a place to meet with other caregivers and their loved one in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Once a month the café offers a chance for everyone to step out of their daily roles and share a positive experience in a supportive environment. It's a place to listen, share and learn from other caregivers who may be on a very similar journey.

Location, Date & Time: Lunch Bunch Memory Café meets at the Black River Beach Neighborhood Center in North La Crosse on the **last Tuesday of each month from 11:30am—1pm.**

Lunch is available at a suggested donation of \$4 per person and an RSVP is encouraged.

Education, Music & Art: Each month a different local service provider will be invited to briefly share information about their services. They will also be available to answer questions and visit with family caregivers during the café. Occasionally, art or special music may be featured at the café.

Upcoming Dates: **January 27, 2015; February 24, 2015; March 31, 2015; and April 28, 2015**

If you would like more information, or to be added to our mailing list, please contact
Amy Brezinka at 608.785.3460 or abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

Caregiver Support Groups

Early Stage Support Group for Persons with Dementia and Caregivers

When: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the Month from 3pm to 4pm

Where: Village on Cass, 225 South 24th Street, La Crosse

Contacts: Chris Brown, Terry Fleming and Art Peek at 608-392-9505

Caregiver Support Group—Alzheimer's/Dementia

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month at 5pm

Where: Onalaska Library, Room A, 741 Oak Ave S, Onalaska

Contacts: Janita Larson at 608-406-3917 or Amy Brezinka at 608-785-3460

Caregiver Support Group

When: 4th Wednesday of the month at 1:15pm

Where: Hillview Health Care Center—Sunshine Room
3501 Park Lane Drive, La Crosse

Contact: Nikki Weisenberger at 608-789-4867

Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Thursday of the month at 1pm

Where: Lakeview Health Center, 902 E Garland Street, West Salem

Contact: Luann Rose at 608-786-1400 ext 40155

Caregiver Support Group— *A group for Women caring for someone with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*

When: Every Monday from 8:30am—Noon

Where: Perkin's in Onalaska—9428 Wisconsin 16, Onalaska, WI

Contact: Mitch Mader at 608-519-0753

Parkinson's Support Group

When: 4th Tuesday of each month from 2pm-4pm

Where: Gundersen Health System

Contact: Julie Halzwarth at 608-775-2789

Great Rivers 2-1-1 ~ For more information about area support groups dial 2-1-1

Funding for the Caregiver Coach Program

Since April 2013, the La Cross County Aging Unit's Caregiver Coach Program has served over 250 family caregivers. Funding to make this program possible in our community is due largely in part to a grant funded by the Helen Bader Foundation. Who is the Helen Bader Foundation and what do they do?

A national model for the golden years' challenges

Across the state, thousands of families face tough choices in how to care for their older adult relatives. When memory loss or dementia is part of the picture, all of life's choices – big and small – become that much more difficult.

The Need: A grayer Wisconsin brings opportunities to how aging is approached

For two decades, the Helen Bader Foundation has brought together partners from across the state and around the world to support families with compassion, creativity and the latest knowledge. Together, we have helped make Wisconsin a national leader in how we view growing older – yet, there is much more that needs to be done.

As the state's average age rises, Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia will become increasingly prevalent. This decade represents a pivotal opportunity for professionals, families and leaders to join in the fight.

Our Approach: Connecting partners, supporting families

At the center of our interest in healthy aging is Alzheimer's disease, and finding ways to offer hope to families grappling with the long goodbye. Our efforts are guided by four strategies:

- **Program Development:** We help nurture and expand critical services with a focus on underserved urban and rural communities. From adult day programs that provide respite for families, to the memory loss clinics that identify the first signs of the disease, our support helps build a strong statewide network of care.
- **Education and Training:** Our grants and networks ensure that health professionals, volunteer caregivers and family members have opportunities to sharpen their skills and stay current on aging-related issues. With particular emphasis on frontline care workers, we address critical gaps such as worker retention and strengthen programs that enhance the quality of care provided to older adults throughout Wisconsin.
- **Applied Research:** We all need to reshape our thinking about how to effectively care for older adults. Our sole national funding strategy seeks innovative applied research projects that have direct links to Wisconsin, or that can provide a direct model for replication here in our home state.
- **Public Policy:** The policies that impact the lives of families are only as effective as the information behind them. While we do not shape specific legislation, we do create educational opportunities so decision-makers at all levels can better understand the complex, changing and current findings in aging – and how good policy can impact the well-being of older adults and their families.

We are stronger together against Alzheimer's disease

The Helen Bader Foundation believes that Wisconsin can continue to be a national leader, not just in how we address the challenges posed by Alzheimer's disease, but in how we view growing older and the later stages of life. Connecting the best minds is the first step. The Foundation aims to nurture new ideas that can make a concrete difference for families today, while working with academic and institutional partners on education and research that will lead to long-term benefits to families. To learn more, visit the Helen Bader Foundation's website at: www.hbf.org

Caregiver Resources



Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an educational program designed to help family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a relative or friend. You will benefit from this class whether you are helping a parent, spouse, or friend. Class meets for 90 minutes, once per week, for six weeks.

Participants will learn to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate feelings
- Increase their ability to make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources.

Dates: Mondays, March 2, 2015 to April 6, 2015

Time: 1pm – 2:30pm

Location: Hillview Terrace Assisted Living
3503 Park Lane Drive, La Crosse

Cost: \$10 per person (Includes a copy of “The Caregiver Helpbook”)

Respite Care: If you need respite care for your loved one while you attend the classes, please contact Amy Brezinka to make arrangements.

For more information, please contact: Amy Brezinka at 608-785-3460 or abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

Tax Information



It's that time of year again. Do you need help with your taxes? AARP provides a tax aide to help seniors with their taxes. If you would like help with taxes or have more questions about this program contact the La Crosse Public Library at 608-789-7100.

Still Seeking Participants for an Online Survey

Caring for Aging Populations: Examining Compassion Fatigue & Satisfaction

Your participation could help the researcher examine the experience of caregivers for aging populations.

Qualifications for Participation:

- Currently (for 6 months or longer) providing care to an individual who is 65 years of age or older.
- You must choose one of the following three categories which best describes you:
 - Formal Caregiver (Employed in a Caregiver Role)
 - Adult Child (Caring for Aging Parent)
 - Spouse/Partner (Caring for Significant Other)
- You must be eighteen years of age or older
- Must have access to the internet for the online survey
- Can read and comprehend eighth grade English

Next Steps:

- Contact the researcher: sjthorsonolesen@viterbo.edu
- Review an Informed Consent Form for more information about the study.
- Follow a link to the online survey (estimated time for participation is approximately 15 minutes)

For more information, please contact: Dr. Stephanie Thorson-Olesen at 608-796-3718.

Participation is voluntary and involvement will be kept confidential. Your willingness to participate in this survey is greatly appreciated, as the researcher strives to better understand and ultimately enhance the experience of caregivers. Thank you for your time and consideration!

How to Live Better as a Caregiver

When you take care of someone with a chronic condition, you are pulled along for the same ride; the ups, the downs, the pain, the stress, the frustrations, and the uncertainty about your future. Some days it feels easier to be the person receiving the care than the person giving it.

Could you be managing better? There is a program being offered by the La Crosse County ADRC that helps people living with a chronic health condition and those who care for them learn how to improve their quality of life. The program was developed by Stanford University and studied over decades. It has been proven time and again that people who attend the classes report less fatigue, improved emotional well-being, improved communication with family and health providers, improved physical activity, improved pain management and fewer hospitalizations and ER visits.

If you are a caregiver, or yourself live with an ongoing health condition like hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, anxiety or chronic pain, and you are ready to learn some tools to help live better, consider registering for the Living Well with Chronic Conditions Classes.

There are 6 weekly classes, held on Thursdays, 2 ½ hours each week.

- **When?** Next session begins Thursday January 15th and end February 19th, 9:00 am to 11:30 am.
- **Where?** Solberg Heights Community Room, 215 South 6th Street, Downtown La Crosse.

Topics for the classes include better sleep, better breathing, healthy eating, communication skills, problem solving, pain and fatigue management, better decision making, dealing with difficult emotions and more. Refreshments will be provided.

FREE SAMPLE CLASS is scheduled for **FRIDAY JAN 9th, 9:30 am – 10:30am** in the Solberg Heights Community Room, 215 South 6th Street, Downtown La Crosse. No need to call, just come!

All classes are FREE. There is a \$15 returnable deposit for the book. **SPACE IS LIMITED**, so call to register early. Registration is open to the public, but only those who have registered will be allowed to participate. Registration will close on Wednesday Jan 14th (or earlier if the class is full).

Classes lead by Violette Rose RN and Jacqueline Williams Social Worker, both from the ADRC of Western Wisconsin

To register or receive more information, please call the ADRC at (608) 785-5700

Ask about the “Living Well” Program



In Partnership with:
**The La Crosse Housing
Authority**
La Crosse Aging Unit



Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Relief Grant Program

Home Instead Senior Care providers and the Hilarity for Charity organization have come together to create the Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Relief Program to help caregivers. This program provides funds for caregivers to be able to hire home health care services for their loved one. The goal of this grant is to help those effected by Alzheimer's and Dementia. The hope is that this grant will help give caregivers the ability to get the best care for their loved one and also be able to take some time to take care of themselves.

For more information on this grant and to apply, please go to: www.helpforalzheimersfamilies.com and search for “Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Relief Program”.

Click “Apply” on the program home page to apply for the grant.

For Questions about this program please contact Home Instead Senior Care at 608-782-4000

Caregiver Resources



Alzheimer's Association Activity Ideas for Care Partners

1. Dance
2. Create a collage of family photos
3. Make a cherry pie
4. Clip coupons
5. Fold laundry
6. Have a friend visit with a well-behaved pet
7. Brush each others hair
8. Remember famous people
9. Play hangman
10. Make holiday cards
11. Play Dominos
12. Sting Cheerios to hang outside for the birds
13. Arrange fresh flowers
14. Give manicures
15. Put a puzzle together



Could You Use Some Ensure?

Ensure Nutrition Supplement is available through the La Crosse County Aging Unit

Available in four flavors– Chocolate, Vanilla, Strawberry, Butter Pecan

\$20.00/24-can case

For more information, call 608-785-6137

For Delivery or Pick Up

\$3.00 Delivery Charge



**Butter
Pecan**



Vanilla



Chocolate

“Some days there won't be a song in your heart.

Sing anyway.”

~Emory Austin

Caregiver Resources

Spotlight Book on Caregiving

I Still Do: Loving and Living With Alzheimer's

By: Judith Fox



When the author's husband was diagnosed with Dementia she started taking pictures of him to show the person behind the disease. She confronts the illness by taking pictures and appreciating what her husband is still able to do.

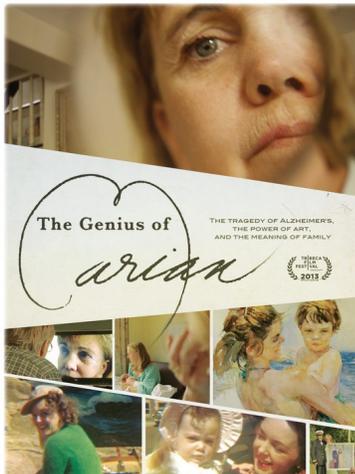
This book is available through the Onalaska branch of the Winding Rivers Library System

Helpful Websites:

- **www.caregiving.org** - A website published by the National Alliance for Caregiving. This website gives information on recent research that has been published on diseases such as Alzheimer's and Dementia as well as general caregiving research. They also have information on caregiver groups across the United States and conferences that these groups create. Many more resources are available.
- **www.caregiveraction.org** - A website published by the Caregiver Action Network. This website has the answers to many common questions asked by caregivers whether they are just starting out or have been a caregiver for years.

Spotlight Movie on Caregiving

"The Genius of Marian"



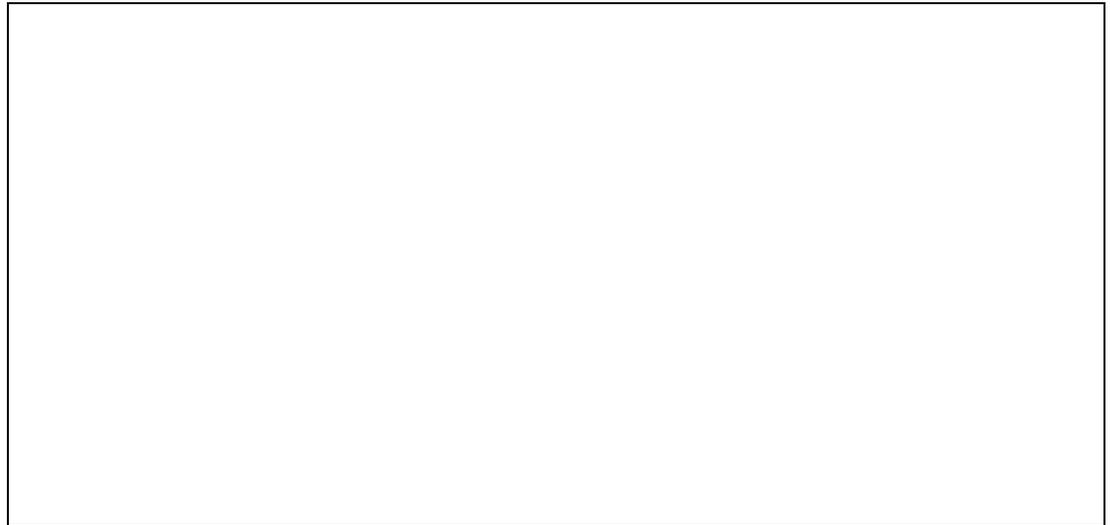
The family of a woman diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's captures the progression of the disease on film. One of her sons records conversations that he has with his mother where they talk about the past. He talks with Marian about her own mother and experiences growing up. This movie is an interesting look at the progression of Alzheimer's disease. It shows that patients with Alzheimer's can still remember events that happened years ago and it helps them to reminisce on things they remember.

For more information go to: geniusofmarian.com



La Crosse County Aging Unit
County of La Crosse, Wisconsin
Administrative Center • Room 2260
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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The **La Crosse County Aging Unit** provides information and services that promote independence, and support the dignity of Seniors by allowing choices for living in and giving to their community.

Programs & Services include:

- Home-delivered Meals
- Meal Sites
- Elder Benefit Specialist
- Transportation
- Caregiver Coach Program
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Gifted Hands
- Senior Farmers' Market
- Nutritional Supplements
- Wellness & Prevention
- Senior Life Newsletter

