



Please Note: The article below uses a metaphor of a tsunami. The recent tsunami in Japan was entirely a coincidence since this newsletter was written and published before the tsunami hit Japan. Our hearts go out to the people of Japan.

# *In Support of Caregivers*

*A Publication of the Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging*

Vol. 23, Number

Spring 2011

1

## *In this issue:*

- ⇒ **Spring Caregiver Workshops**      ⇒ **Recognizing Financial Abuse**
- ⇒ **Powerful Tools for Caregivers**      ⇒ **Sharing the Caring**
- ⇒ **Mental Caregiving Challenges**      ⇒ **Alzheimer's Notes**

## **The Age Wave Starts to Hit Shore**

Have you watched scenes of people standing by the seashore fascinated at seeing unexpectedly large waves hitting shore? If they were not aware (or taking seriously) that the waves were just the beginning of a tsunami, their fascination may have turned to horror as they got engulfed by the massive surge that followed those first impressive waves.

For years, we have been warned that a tsunami-like wave of baby boomers would be swelling the ranks of older adults needing services. Well, the first wave of baby boomers is hitting 65 this year and the phones have been ringing here at our office and at Lifelong as people seek help trying to understand the maze of Medicare options from which they have to choose.

<b>U.S. Population</b>	<b>From 2000 to 2010</b>	<b>From 2010 to 2020</b>
<b>Age 65+</b>	<b>+15%</b>	<b>+36%</b>
<b>Age 85+</b>	<b>+36%</b>	<b>+15%</b>

In the past decade, there was a 36% increase in the number of those who were 85 and older. The population of those 65 and older grew 15%. In this decade (2010-2020), those percentages will be reversed. We expect that the population of 65 and older will grow 36% while the population of those 85 and older increases by 15%. We will also now see the numbers of people with dementia start to increase. The chances of getting Alzheimer's or related dementia doubles every five years starting at age 65. Those in the 85+ age cohort have a 50-50 chance of developing a dementing illness.

As our state and federal governments try to deal with large deficits, no one wants to hear about another costly expense for our society coming down the road. As in the past, we expect that most long-term care will be provided by family members, so-called "informal caregivers." We will each need to be doing some family planning for that eventuality. But we are still in dire need of a national strategy for financing paid long-term care. We will need strong safety nets as well because we as a society will not

want to stand by and watch the poor and vulnerable drown if the dikes break and our long-term care safety net is unprepared and overwhelmed.

## Spring Support Groups

The Caregivers' Resource Center facilitates the following groups. Call 274-5492 for details.



### Caregiver Conversations

- Open to those caring for parents or other elderly relatives or friends.
- Meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month:  
(March 16, April 20, May 18)  
7:00 – 8:30 PM at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St.
- Sponsored in cooperation with Lifelong

### Alzheimer's & Other Dementia Caregiver Support Group

- Open to those caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's or other cognitive impairments
- Meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month:  
(March 22, April 26, May 24)
- 1:00 - 2:30 PM in the Office for the Aging Conference Room (320 N. Tioga St., Ithaca)

### Parkinson's Support Group

- Open to Parkinsonians and their Caregivers.
- Meets Quarterly:  
Next Meeting: April 20, 2011
- 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM at Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca
- Sponsored in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County

### Other Alzheimer's Groups

In addition to the daytime group (above), these meetings may be convenient for some caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's or a related disorder:

**1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 5:30 PM**  
at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca. For info., call the Alzheimer's Association at 330-1647.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the Month, 1:00-2:00 PM**  
at Walden Place, Cortlandville. Call 756-8101.

## Local Caregiver Services

### Caregivers' Resource Center & Project CARE Services

#### *Tompkins County Office for the Aging*

David Stoyell, Katrina Schickel, and Marilyn Roberts (274-5482)

*The Caregivers' Resource Center &*

*Alzheimer's Support Unit* offers family caregivers information and consultation services, support groups, workshops, this newsletter, and a lending library of books and videos on caregiving topics. Stop by or call for an appointment.

Volunteers from *Project CARE* give caregivers a needed break and help out in other ways as needed. We may also be able to arrange for paid home care services or short-term respite for stressed caregivers having difficulty paying for those services. Call Katrina to discuss your needs.

**Discover the Resource Center**

### In-Home Counseling & Respite Service

#### *Family and Children's Service*

Jessica Gosa (273-7495)



A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers at their home, her office, or elsewhere and help them work through complex caregiving issues or for emotional support. This program also offers grant-funded respite aide service to give caregivers a needed break.

### Adult Day Program

#### *Longview Adult Day Community*

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays,  
9 AM- 3 PM

Pamela Nardi (375-6323)



Adult day programs offer older adults companionship along with planned social and

recreational activities. It often provides a break from caregiving and time for other matters.

Includes lunch and snacks.

## Spring Workshop Opportunities for Caregivers

### Workshops offered by the Caregivers' Resource Center:

*The following workshops are offered free of charge at the Cooperative Extension Education Center (615 Willow Avenue, Ithaca). Call the Office for the Aging to register or for details (274-5492). **Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required.***

### ***Alzheimer's: Managing Challenging Behaviors*** **Friday, April 15, Noon-1:30 PM**

Michael Massurin, Director of Programs and Services for the CNY, Director of Programs and Services for the Alzheimer's of Central New York, will discuss what causes dementia-related behaviors like suspicion, repetition, sundowning, agitation and aggression and how to respond to these behaviors.

Bring your brown bag lunch if you wish. Beverages provided.



### ***Caregiving from a Distance*** **Tuesday, May 10, Noon-1:30 PM**

Jessica Gosa, MSW, Senior Services Coordinator at Family and Children's Service, will address concerns of those who live a short distance or many miles away from a relative with long term care needs. Issues to be addressed include assessment of needs, communications issues, coordinating care, and other issues of concern to those in attendance. Bring your brown bag lunch, if you wish. Beverages provided.



### ***Legal and Financial Concerns for Caregivers*** **Wednesday, June 15, Noon – 1:30 PM**

Joy Blumkin, a local elder law attorney, will address common legal and financial concerns of the elderly and their caregivers such as planning for the expense of long-term care and planning for incapacity (advance directives, guardianship,



trusts). Bring your brown bag lunch if you wish. Beverages provided.

## Feeling Stretched?

### Let's Face It...

Caring for someone with a chronic illness such as dementia, heart disease, Parkinson's Disease or stroke can be stressful physically, emotionally and financially.



## Balance Your Life

# Powerful Tools for Caregivers

A Legacy Health System Program

## Spring 2011

# Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week educational program designed to provide you with the tools you need to take care of *yourself*.

You will learn to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate your feelings
- Balance your life
- Increase your ability to make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources

The program consists of six - 90 minutes class sessions held weekly and is offered free of charge to caregivers.

### Not intended for professional caregivers

March 29 - May 3, Tuesdays: 10:30 AM - Noon  
Kendal at Ithaca, 2230 Triphammer Road, Classroom C

March 29 - May 3, Tuesdays 5:00-6:30 PM  
20 Thornwood Drive, Suite 101  
(off Brown Rd near the airport)

### Pre-registration is Required

To register or inquire about the program, Call:  
Tompkins County Office for the Aging, 274-5482

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is offered by the Caregivers Resource Center of the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, with support from the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, Kendal at Ithaca, Lifelong, Cornell University, Tompkins County Department of Social Services, Long Term Care

# Mental Health Challenges of Family Caregivers

**F**amily caregivers face mental and emotional challenges as well as demands on their time and physical energy. Your #1 priority as a caregiver is to *believe in yourself*. Trust your instincts. Let your inner voice guide you.

Self-confidence does not mean having all the answers. But it does mean that you have the right to ask questions; to speak confidently, and not let stress or anger get in the way of good communication. A woman who believes in herself is not constantly questioning whether she is doing enough. A man's belief in himself flows from both his sense of self-esteem and the knowledge that he sincerely desires the happiness and well-being of family members who need his help with some activities of daily living.

Here are some other "mental health" challenges that family caregivers may face that as identified by Karen Henderson, founder of the Long Term Care Planning Network. Which of the following speak to where you are at today?



## **Sense of Accomplishment vs. Hopelessness and Despair**

Generally we feel capable of the physical tasks of caregiving that we take on—perhaps even a sense of satisfaction. But then a setback occurs and caregivers may question themselves: “Who am I trying to kid. I can’t change things...” Feelings of helplessness can cause some to become hopeless.

## **Anger vs. Acceptance**

Why has my loved one fallen ill? Why us? We rail against fate. “Anger is a healthy part of an emotional life. It allows us to admit and put to words pain so deep it seems unbearable.” But anger that is allowed to fester can consume us. Our anger was justified and had to be felt, but we need to move on. We do this when we come to accept what we cannot change. Our expectations change. We are intent on making the best of our changed life.

## **Need to Control vs. Able to Accept Help**

Illness can cause caregivers to feel that life is spiraling out of control. The need to “do it all” may sometimes come from feeling a need to reassert control. We’ve learned to be independent and regard the need to lean on others as a sign of weakness. However, “if you learn to accept help, you teach the next generation how to give help.”

## **Relief vs. Guilt**

Caregivers feel relief when someone else helps for a time, or takes over, some of the caregiver tasks. But, without a quiet belief in one’s self, relief can turn to guilt: “How can I put my needs before those of my father, a helpless, frail shell of a human being?”

## **Loss vs. Gain**

“Some look back on their caregiving journey and see only pain and suffering...lost companionship, lost time, loss of self. Others come to even “rejoice in their huge capacity for love and forgiveness expressed through the selfless act of caring for another.” It is a gain to realize that I have made a unique difference in someone else’s life, a difference no one else could ever have made.

## **Self-sacrifice vs. Self-preservation**

Women are more likely than men to feel forced into sacrificing themselves. Some women may “rage silently at our self-sacrifice because we are powerless to stop it.” Surrendering to powerlessness, they become depressed. Depression may beget self-neglect. The health and well-being of both caregiver and care receiver are at risk until she reclaims her power to assert her own needs and balance self-care with caregiving.

*(You can read Karen Henderson’s article online in the May 2010 issue of the Society of Actuaries’ Long Term Care News at <http://www.soa.org/library/newsletters/long-term-care/2010/may/ltc-2010-iss25-henderson-mental.pdf>.)*

## News and Notes

### On-Campus Caregiver Supports

Ithaca College and Cornell both have programs to support employees who are caring for older adults. **Ithaca College** has a Caregiver Support Group that meets at the Gerontology Institute (CHS, Room 413) on the third Friday of each month from Noon-1:00 PM. Contact Marilyn Kinner, 274-1967, or Penny Bianconi, 274-1193, to discuss the group or caregiver supports on campus. **Cornell** has "Caregiver Support & Education Network" meetings monthly generally from Noon-1:00 PM, in Room 354 of Duffield Hall. For more information on dates and topics, visit [http://hr.cornell.edu/life/support/worklife\\_workshops.html](http://hr.cornell.edu/life/support/worklife_workshops.html) or call contact Eileen Whang at 255-3976 ([emw76@cornell.edu](mailto:emw76@cornell.edu)).



### Chair Yoga

Lifelong is now sponsoring a "Chair Yoga" exercise program on Fridays at 10:30 AM at the Cayuga Ridge Extended Care Center, 1229 Trumansburg Rd., Ithaca. Led by occupational therapist, Eleanor Liebson. Suggested donation of \$3.00 per class. For further info., contact Lifelong, 273-1511.



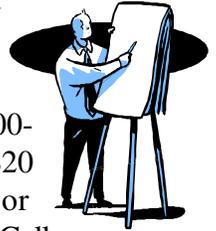
### Parkinson's Exercise Class

Range-of-motion and strength training exercised for people with Parkinson's or similar neurological disease. Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 AM at Kendal at Ithaca auditorium. Fee: \$35 for 9 classes, or \$5.00 per class. Before coming the first time, class the instructor, Debbie Bosanko, 229-5960.



## Gerontology Institute Workshops

The Ithaca College Gerontology Institute Spring Workshop Series will be held at Longview on Tuesday afternoons from 2:00-4:30 p.m. The registration fee is \$20 per workshop, \$12 for retirees, or \$50 for all three workshops. Call 274-1967 for more information/registration or visit [www.ithaca.edu/gps/gerontology/descriptions](http://www.ithaca.edu/gps/gerontology/descriptions)



### March 16 - *Dementia beyond Drugs: Changing the Culture of Care*

Presenter: G. Allen Power, MD Eden Mentor at St. John's Home, Rochester and Assoc. Prof. of Medicine at U. of Rochester Medical School. College

### April 6 - *Vision and Aging: Common Diagnoses and Adaptations for Aging Eyes*

Presenter: Julie Nastasi, OTD, Assistant Professor, IC Dept. of Occupational Therapy

### April 13 - *Using a Wheelchair to Enhance Life: Function Follows Fit*

Carol John, M.Ed, OT, Retired, IC Dept. of Occupational Therapy.

## Fall Prevention Gifts

The leading causes of injury-related hospitalization for New Yorkers are fall injuries. Here are some fall prevention items for the hard-to-buy-for older adults in your life:

- Night lights (for hallways, bathrooms, bedrooms)
- Carpet tape (to keep area rugs in place)
- Non-slip tub mats
- Shelf grabbers (to reach items without using a step stool)
- Tai Chi exercise DVD/ Tai Chi class gift certificates (Tai Chi has been shown to improve both strength and balance and reduce fall risk.)



# Recognizing Financial Exploitation

Any of the following changes—at home, in the person’s demeanor, in their financial transactions, and in their caregivers, can be signs of financial exploitation and should be treated seriously:



- A caregiver who speaks for the person in a silencing way.
- The person seems nervous around, or afraid of, a particular relative, friend or caregiver.
- Someone inexplicably gains control over the person’s finances.

## At home

- Collection notices for unpaid bills
- Lack of food in the home
- Evidence of physical neglect
- Missing valuables
- No bank statements

## Changes in a person’s demeanor

- New worry about their finances, especially missing funds
- Inability to remember making certain financial transactions
- Implausible explanations about what they are doing with their money
- Fears they will be institutionalized unless money is given to a particular person
- Afraid to answer questions in the presence of another

## Questionable Transactions

- More frequent ATM transactions
- Large withdrawals from bank account
- Signatures on withdrawal forms that are suspicious
- Amounts and signatures that seem to be written with different pens
- New bank loans or debts

## Suspicious Relationships with Caregivers

- New friends or relatives who are suddenly spending a lot of time with the person and appear too interested in their finances.
- The person is becoming increasingly isolated and overly dependent on a single relative, friend or professional caregiver.

**Think of some of the reasons that a victim of financial exploitation may not ask for help!**

**Denial-** unable to acknowledge it is occurring

**Loyalty-** feel they are treated well in other ways

**Self-blame-** abuse erodes a person’s self-esteem

**Shame-** that a trusted relative or caregiver is abusing them

**Dependency-** need their help for basic care

**Fear of Retaliation-** Fear that no one will protect them from worse forms of mistreatment if they complain.

**Inability-** May not be able to detect or report exploitation due to physical or mental incapacity.

## What should you do if you suspect abuse?



Get information to clarify the events and circumstances that prompted the suspicions. Review existing documents and collect missing information, especially in the areas of housing expenses, food purchase/preparation/management of financial assets/wages and other compensation paid to caregiver and method of payment. Clarify whether other people who live in the household contribute to household expenses.

Address any emergency situations without delay (e.g., to avoid eviction or disconnection of basic utilities for non-payment) or find an agency or person who can help. If you suspect criminal activity, alert local law enforcement. Take definitive steps to prevent subsequent financial exploitation.

# Sharing the Caring

The National Family Caregivers' Association has published the checklist below to help caregivers and their informal network of friends and family "share the caring."

**If you are a primary caregiver, use the checklist in the left column** to identify help you need and then make your needs known to those who might be able to help. **If you're concerned about someone else who is a primary caregiver, use the column at the right** to identify ways you can help a primary caregiver—either by offering the suggested help yourself or helping the caregiver find others who can.

<b>Help I need:</b>	<b>Help I can offer:</b>
A night out with friends	Dinner and movies on me
A ride to doctor appointments	A regular ride at a pre-assigned time
Someone to mow the lawn/shovel snow	A lawn mowed/ a driveway shoveled
Dinners prepared	A meal prepared [    ] times a week
Insurance forms filled out and filed	Help with insurance and other paperwork
A shoulder to cry on	A shoulder to cry on
The house cleaned	A maid brigade once a [    ]
The shopping done	Grocery shopping every [    ]
Help with paying the bills	A [\$    ] check
A weekend away	A prearranged weekend get away
A regular home care aide	Coordinating a volunteer team to help out with specific caregiving tasks
Someone to ask how I am	A weekly phone call
More information on available resources	Resource research
A neighbor I can call in an emergency	My availability to help out when necessary
Some quiet time alone at home	Taking [    ] out for a few hours
A handyman	A couple of hours of my tools and time
Someone to be with my spouse/parent/ child so I can go to [    ]	Some of my time to stay with [    ]
Understanding that we're the same people we used to be but our family's needs have changed	A real desire to be your friend, to stand by you and to understand as best I can how to participate in your changed life
Pick up prescriptions and other healthcare items	Run errands
Help with car repairs	A pick-up at the garage and an offer to be a chauffeur for a day or two
Other help I need:	Other help I can give:

# Alzheimer's Page

## Early-stage Alzheimer's

Medical advances have enabled Alzheimer's to be diagnosed at an early stage. In the coming years, diagnosis may be possible even earlier. The following books are new in the lending library of the Caregivers' Resource Center (at the Office for the Aging). They are all of interest to those caring for loved ones who are in to the early stages of Alzheimer's or a related type of dementia.



***Living Your Best with Early-Stage Alzheimer's***, Lisa Snyder, MSW, Sunrise River Press. 2010.

A guide is actually written for those experiencing early stage Alzheimer's that includes strategies for managing memory loss, practical suggestions for moving forward with life, resources that can help and messages from other people with Alzheimer's.

***Alzheimer's Early Stage: First Steps for Family, Friends and Caregivers***, Daniel Kuhn, MSW, Hunter House Publishers, 1999, 2003.

How Alzheimer's begins, what you should do immediately, what you should plan for, how to take care of yourself.

***The Alzheimer's Action Plan***, P. Mural Doraiswamy, MD and Lisa P. Gwyther, MSW., St. Martin's Press, 2008.

Best tests to determine if this is Alzheimer's or not. Most (and least) effective treatments, coping with behavioral and emotional changes throughout the early and middle stages, gaining access to clinical trials.

## Use Your Noodle

Walden Place (839 Bennie Rd., Cortlandville) will host an educational program for Alzheimer's caregivers and their loved ones on Tuesday, March 29 at 1:30 PM.



Everyday household items can be used in a unique way to enhance exercise programs for persons with memory loss. Program director Jessica Daily will lead the group through various seated exercises using props such as balloons, pool noodles, chopsticks, etc. Each registered participant will take home a goody bag with his or her own props.

RSVP by March 25 to reserve your seats at 607-756-8101.

## Alzheimer's Training Series

Wednesdays, 3/16-3/30, 10 AM – 12 Noon  
(3 sessions) Presented by Michael Massurin  
At Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca

Part 1: Basics of Alzheimer's and Communication

Part 2: Managing Challenging Behaviors

Part 3: Caregiver Tips

Question and answer period will follow each presentation. Free. For more information, call Lifelong, 273-1511.



# The Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit

Please call or visit us at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging in the County Courthouse basement, 320 North Tioga St., Ithaca. Open weekdays, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM.

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## Websites of Interest to Family Caregivers:

**Tompkins County Office for the Aging:** [www.tompkins-co.org/cofa](http://www.tompkins-co.org/cofa)

*(Click on "Gateway to Senior Seniors" at the top of the home page to access our resource guides and back issues of this newsletter.)*

**Family Caregiver Coalition:** [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

**H.E.L.P (legal and financial issues, California-based):** <http://www.help4srs.org>

**National Alzheimer's Association:** [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

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This newsletter is made possible in part by a grant from the NYS Office for the Aging.