



# Caregiver News

April 2016, #2

## Tips for Caregivers

- Take one day at a time.
- Accept help others offer and trust their willingness to help.
- Make time for yourself by reading a magazine, taking a walk, watching a movie, visiting a friend or other activities.
- Every Caregiver needs someone to talk to or share their feelings- social support may help you stay healthy.
- Find or start a support group to help feel connected to others providing care, just like yourself.
- Rest, exercise and eat properly.
- And remember...You are not alone!
- 1 in 4 Americans are Caregivers.
- Family members and/or friends provide 85% of all home care.
- When you are dealing with this rewarding but demanding job TLC may be able to help.



### Suggested Donations

Respite \$1 per hour  
 Access to Assistance \$2 per contact  
 Information Services \$2 per event

Contributions are voluntary and no otherwise eligible person is denied services because he or she chooses not to or cannot contribute to cost of services.

## It's All About Balance

Balancing the multiple roles and responsibilities of our lives is a constant challenge. We must manage our personal needs, marriage, family, career, friendships, health issues, social and physical activities and finances on a daily basis. When you become a Caregiver you begin to add even more responsibilities to your life like medical care, transportation, supervision of safety needs, emotional support, companionship, financial oversight and decision-making for the well-being of a loved one.

Caregiving for a loved one may last for months or many years. Finding a healthy balance between caring for our loved ones and ourselves can be exhausting. Caregiving support can be received in many ways: attend a support group or personal counseling session to gain a perspective of the caregiving situation, build a support network

to include family, friends, medical personnel, clergy and a social worker/care manager, accept assistance with personal care needs from family members and friends to lighten the load, hire private help even a few hours a week for household and chore services, accept respite care opportunities to allow a break from caregiving and find ways to renew one's own body, mind and spirit..

Although we want to avoid losing our momentum, an unexpected personal emergency can be a time of awakening. It can also be a call to reprioritize as we evaluate the results of this life changing event. Sometimes we even have to stop and ask ourselves if we need to ask for help. Keeping an eye on our ever growing To-Do lists is important to assess our capabilities and the challenges we are facing. If we live in a continuous scramble between this commitment and that commitment, we may lose our

focus on what is truly important and jeopardize our own health and safety, not to mention the well-being of those we care about.

We can use our own inner resources and the help from others to attain steadiness in our lives. Providing care to someone in need may be one of the most important roles one will ever fill in a lifetime, yet it does not have to be done alone.

The first step is to recognize that we are in need of a break to gather our own strength and to get back to a balanced life. The second step is to ask for help. This is a sign of strength, not weakness, and is the surest way to keep our lives balanced.

When you find yourself ready to ask for help OEDA may be able to help with your respite needs. Contact Kelsey Short, OEDA AAA Caregiver Specialist, at 580-625-4531.

## Raising This Generation After You Raised the Last

Stepping into the role of parent after you raised your children can be a rewarding experience. Being able to provide a secure home and developing a close relationship with your grandchildren can leave you feeling fulfilled.

You may also feel overwhelmed, worried, and stressed by the prospect of picking up more responsibilities when you thought you were at a point in your life where you would be setting more responsibilities down.

It's important for you to take

care of the children you now find yourself raising but it's also vital to take care of yourself and get the support you need. In order to keep up with your grandchildren you need to be calm, centered and focused. Sometimes taking a break is the best option for you.

OEDA has a Respite Care Program that serves individuals 55 years of age or older who care for grandchildren, step-grandchildren, or children related by blood or marriage and who live with the child, serve as primary caregiver, and have a legal relationship with the child (custody, guardianship, or raising

child informally). The child must be no older than eighteen years.

If you or someone you know would benefit from this program please contact Kelsey Short at the OEDA office by phone 580-625-4531 or by e-mail kshort@oeda.org.



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## Our Mission Statement

The mission of the OEDA Area Agency on Aging is to provide services that make it possible for older persons to remain in their home, maintaining their way of life with independence and dignity as long as possible.

Established under the Older Americans Act, the Family Caregiver Support program provides a system of support services to help informal caregivers of older adults and grandparents raising grandchildren.

Caregivers who do not have access to a support system often experience burnout, which leads to increased stress and stress related problems. The TLC caregiver program helps to address these and other Caregiver challenges.

The OEDA does not discriminate in its programs or activities on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, age, ancestry, national origin, religion or disability.

## Caregiver Bill of Rights

“To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors.” —Tia Walker

- ⇒ I have the right to take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. Meeting my own needs will help me take better care of my loved one.
- ⇒ I have the right to seek help from others. Even though my loved one may object to accepting outside help, I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- ⇒ I have the right to protect my individuality. I need to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my relative no longer needs my full-time help.
- ⇒ I have the right to maintain my own interests. I deserve to nurture the facets of my own life that do not include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can for this person, and I have the right to do some things just for myself.
- ⇒ I have the right to get angry, be depressed and express other difficult feelings occasionally.
- ⇒ I have the right to reject any attempts by my relative (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt and/or depression.
- ⇒ I have the right to receive consideration, affection, forgiveness and acceptance from my loved one for what I do, for as long as I offer these qualities in return.
- ⇒ I have the right to expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, similar strides will be made towards aiding and supporting caregivers.
- ⇒ I have the right to take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my relative.

Adapted from the Book *Caregiving: Helping an Aging Loved One* by Jo Horne, published in 1985 by the American Association of Retired Persons.

