

## 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 serves because he or she chooses not to or cannot contribute to cost of services.

# Caregiver News

February 2016, #1

## Give Yourself a Break, Right Now

Doctor appointments that must be scheduled; the constant care and attention your loved one needs, both physically and emotionally; the back and forth to grocery stores, drug stores, physical therapy sessions and, most of all, the need to know your loved one is getting the proper care. Caregivers face daily challenges and seldom take time to care for themselves.

Caregivers need time –time to reflect, relax and rejuvenate for at least a few hours each week. This "private time" gives a renewed strength to carry on. It's important to take that time. If you are a Caregiver, you deserve time to yourself AND should not feel guilty about it.

There are ways to allow yourself time away. For an hour a day, a whole day or even a weekend to collect your thoughts and get back on track. It's okay to do that. If you do not care for yourself, who will step in to care for you AND your loved one.

Accept the help others offer. Suggest specific things they can

do for you and your loved one. This is rule #1 for a reason. No one is a Super Hero. Don't feel like you're the only one that can take dad to the doctor or your wife to her physical therapist. REACH OUT and ask another family member -- or close family friend -- to assist you occasionally so you have time to yourself. Trust in their willingness to help. Many times they do not know how to reach out and help unless you are able to communicate your needs.

Ask for and accept favors such as; a friend staying with your loved one while you are able to get out of the house for a while, a dinner being cooked for you and your loved one once a week, an offer to go to the supermarket or drugstore in your place. Respite can be achieved on a daily basis with the smallest of kindnesses.

Know your limits! If you wear yourself out caring for your loved one, who will step in to care for the both of you? Remember, caring for yourself is not selfish, it's the greatest gift you can give your loved one.

Recently the Oklahoma Economic Development Authority (OEDA) began a Respite Care Program that is intended to provide caregivers with a break. This program provides vouchers to qualified caregivers so that they can hire someone while they take a break. For more information on this program, contact Kelsey Short, OEDA Caregiver Specialist, at 580-625-4531.

OEDA is one of 11 Councils of Government in the state. OEDA's region of service includes municipalities, counties and conservation districts in Beaver, Cimarron, Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Texas, Woods, and Woodward counties.

These services are funded in part by state and Older Americans Act funds from OEDA AAA and DHS Aging Services.

It is the policy of OEDA AAA to serve all individuals who are eligible for its programs without regard of race, national origin, ancestry, color, religion, gender, age or disability.

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Numbers Are Rising

There are currently over 2.5 million grandparents raising their grandchildren in the United States. Oklahoma ranks second in the nation for the number of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

Raising grandchildren can be a tremendous challenge. Grandparent caregivers need to develop a support system to help them with the many tasks at hand. It's also important for

grandparents to take good care of themselves so they can stay mentally and physically healthy enough to do the job. Studies have shown if they can get away from the responsibilities of providing care even if for only a few hours that will provide better care. Respite does just that.

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 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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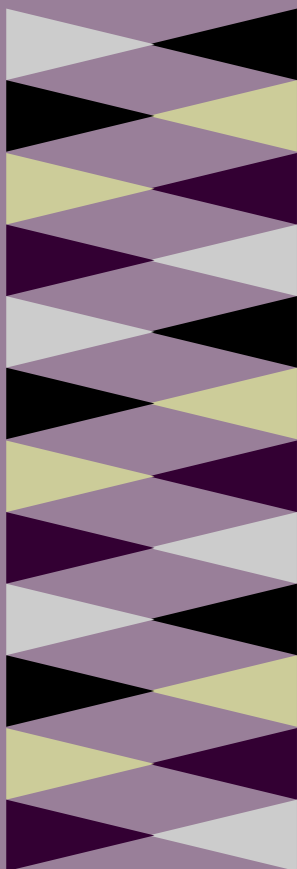
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## ***Our Mission Statement***

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.

**Attention Caregivers! Are you feeling anxious, depressed, exhausted or irritable? TLC may be able to help.**

## **What's Happening Now...**

Caregivers come in all shapes and sizes. More specifically Caregivers come in all ages. While researching Oklahoma's needs for Caregiver Respite I stumbled upon a wonderful video of a spunky 9-year old girl who was being raised by her great-grandmother.

Being a Caregiver is all about relationships. The relationship between the caregiver and the care receiver is precious and important.

The video is titled "Abbey Brave and Tall".

Abbey and her great-grandmother Carolyn live in Peoria, Oklahoma. Together they make a family.

Their relationship began when Carolyn took Abbey in at the age of six weeks. Abbey has survived the loss of her grandmother, a tornado, and never truly knowing a father.

Carolyn fostered Abbey for years and when she decided to adopt Abbey legally the courts denied her petition due to her age. That wouldn't stop Carolyn who then

filed for an appeal and was eventually granted custody of Abbey.

Abbey still fears the weather changes that are prevalent in Oklahoma but she knows that she can rely on Carolyn to keep her safe. The beauty of their relationship is testament to how important it is to be someone's caregiver.

To watch the lovely tribute to Abbey and Carolyn go to <http://www.reddirtchronicles.com/2016/01/abbey-brave-and-tall-epotm-peoria-ok/>

*K.Short*