



FAMILY CAREGIVER NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2012

Support Group and Event Information Inside

THE POWERFUL CAREGIVER

This column is named after the class "Powerful Tools for Caregivers", a six-session workshop on helping caregiving families thrive (not just survive). It is offered in Racine County several times a year

"Happy Trails" – Traveling as a Caregiver

This article was distributed by the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, which provides oversight to County National Caregiver Support Programs. Of course, not all of these suggestions are appropriate to every caregiving situation. However, this is a collection of good information on traveling with a care receiver. I have starred () some of the points for further comments on what I have learned from caregivers here in Racine County.*

Summer is a great time to get out and do things. Traveling out of town gives you something to look forward to and can be a very rewarding and fun experience. If you are a caregiver for a loved one, you may wonder if you should just stay home, but with careful planning you can still get away. You just need to be a little more prepared for the unexpected. Nancy Abrahamson, Caregiver Support Coordinator from the St. Croix County ADRC, gives these tips to consider when planning a trip.

- ***Gather important documents:** insurance cards, passports, physician’s phone numbers, medication list, a recent photo, and a summary of medical records. Carry them with you. Do not check them with your luggage, in the event it doesn’t arrive with you.
- **Gather medications,** noting if refills will be needed on any of them during the trip. Ask for refills in advance. Never travel with just enough, as you may be delayed if flights or other transportation schedules change.
- **Carry a list of emergency contacts.** You may want to purchase a wallet on-a-string so your loved one can wear it.
- **** Purchase an identity bracelet** or necklace for your loved one with his or her name on it. Safe Return provides excellent tracking, should someone wander away. This will help even with international travel.
- **Ask your physician to write a letter** for use with hotel or airlines should an emergency cause a sudden change in plans. Consider travel insurance should you need to change tickets or accommodations.
- **Make up several cards with the name, address and phone number of where you are staying each night.** Place one of these in the pocket of your loved one daily.
- **Never leave your loved one alone** in a car, restaurant booth, etc., as wandering may become a problem in a strange location.

- ***** Carry an “OCCUPIED” sign for the bathroom door** as the process sometimes takes extra time. You may need to bring your care receiver into the bathroom with you even if he or she is of the opposite sex.
- **Stop every two hours when driving** to stretch legs, reduce anxiety, and take a loved one to the bathroom. Carry a change of clothes in your bag or car.
- ****** When possible, bring someone along to help manage things**, especially when you need to be away from your loved one.
- ******* When flying, notify the attendants of your loved one’s dementia diagnosis** and plan plenty of time between connecting flights.
- **Try to maintain a schedule** close to what you did at home to minimize disruption for your loved one.
- **Leave an itinerary with family members** and keep a copy with you at all times.

* A “File of Life” kit is an excellent place to keep a summary of medical history and a current list of medications. See *Community Resources below*.

** You can enroll in the Safe Return program through the Alzheimer’s Assn. This is an excellent investment for any family dealing with dementia. A related resource is the Safe Assured ID program (see below). Care receivers with dementia are more likely to wander in an unfamiliar environment.

*** At some rest stops and other facilities staff members will put a “Closed for Cleaning” sign near a rest room to allow for a family to use the facilities. You need to ask if there is a way for you to take care of your care receiver in private.

**** An extra person is a MUST in most cases of caregiver traveling!

***** Wallet cards, alerting people to the fact that your loved one has a condition that affects his or her behavior and/or ability to communicate, are available through the ADRC by call **262-638-8764**.

Community Resources

This column highlights some of the many resources in our community. For more, see the Community Resource Directory available from the Aging and Disability Resource Center (638-6800 or www.adrc.racineco.com)

Safe Return Log onto www.alz.org or call 638-8764 for an application. There is an enrollment and an annual fee for this program.

“Please Be Patient” Wallet Cards alert people to the fact that your care receiver has a medical condition that affects his or her behavior and/or ability to communicate. You can get one by calling **262-638-8764**.

File of Life is a magnetic packet in which to keep medical information on your refrigerator, and emergency responders are trained to look for it there. You can also take it with you to medical appointments, to be sure each doctor has a current list of all medications your loved one is receiving. Call **Felicia Elias at 262-833-8761** to receive one by mail. Request an extra information sheet for your kit so you can keep your OWN information handy.

Safe Assured ID –This is a program that makes important information about your loved one available to law enforcement in the event that he or she is missing. You can enroll at a group event or call 262-886-9612 for a special appointment. Here are the next scheduled group events:

- **Sunday August 5th - Waterford Fire & Rescue Safety Day 11am-2pm Whitford Park 625 S. First Street**
- **Saturday Aug 25th Caledonia Safety Fair - K-Mart parking lot 10AM-3PM**
- **Wednesday September 19th 9:00 Senior Health Fair Fountain Hills**
- **Sunday September 16th 10am Wind Lake Street Fair**
- **Saturday September 22nd 8:30 - Noon St. Rita's Health Fair**
- **Wednesday September 26th (time to be determined) LOVE Inc, Burlington, Senior Box Day**
- **Saturday October 6th Rochester Fire Department Open House/Safety Day 9AM - 3 PM**
- **CALL to schedule an event - DAVE AT 886-9612**

Support Groups for Family Caregivers

First THURSDAY 10:30AM-12Noon

Alzheimer's Association Group – **AUG. 2**
For Families Dealing with Alzheimer's and other Dementias
Lincoln Lutheran Office Building, 2000 Domanik Drive, 4th Floor

Second Tuesday 1:30-3:00 pm

****AUG. 14****

Yorkville United Methodist Church
17645 Old Yorkville Rd. (3 Miles West of I-94, Just N. of Highway 20)

Second Saturday 10:30AM–12N

****AUG. 11****

Mount Pleasant Lutheran Church, 1700 S. Green Bay Road

Third Wednesday 1:30-3:00 PM

****AUG. 15****

Burlington Senior Center, Eppers Room, 209 N. Main Street

Third Thursday 6:00-7:30 PM

Alzheimer's Association Group **AUG. 16**

For Families Dealing with Alzheimer's and other Dementias
Mount Pleasant Lutheran Church, 1700 S. Green Bay Road
1700 S. Green Bay Road

NEW!!! The second telephone Caregiver Support Group for Racine County will be held on Aug. 21 from 12 N-1 PM. Call 262-833-8762 or 833-8764 to register. (Registration requested for each session.)

Other Events for Caregiving Families

Paulette Kisse, Outreach Specialist, will be available for two **family consultations** on Wednesday **August 22nd**, between 2 and 4 pm. at the Ives Grove County Building, 14200 Washington Avenue. Sturtevant
For an appointment call **Felicia Elias, 833-8761**

Caring for Ourselves and Others

A workshop and retreat for family caregivers
Tuesday, August 14, 10 AM- 3 PM
Yorkville United Methodist Church
Contact Marilyn Joyce (see below) to register.

LOOKING AHEAD ⇌⇌

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Mondays, September 10th – October 15, 2012 1:15-3:15 PM
Racine County Public Works Building
14200 Washington Avenue (Just West of I-94)
Sturtevant, WI 53177

(See flyer on ADRC Website)

A six-week class empowering participants to care for themselves and minimize the effects of stress during their caregiving journey. Designed to help caregiving families thrive, not just survive!

Stepping On

A Falls Prevention Workshop
Sept. 24-Nov. 5 1:30-3:30 PM
(See flyer on ADRC Website)

May you be lulled to sleep by a gentle chorus of August crickets, and may your sleep be pleasant, healing, and refreshing.

Marilyn Joyce, Caregiver Support Specialist,
Aging and Disability Resource Center of Racine County
262- 833-8764 marilyn.joyce@goracine.org