

# Family Caregiver Newsletter

Newsletter Date July 2014

## 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.

### "Home of the Brave": Courageous Caregivers

*As our nation celebrates bravery this month, I salute caregiving families, and the courage you bring to everyday life. A simple definition of courage is "acting in spite of fear" or, in the words of John Wayne, "being scared to death and saddling up anyway."*

This month, compose your own story of the courage it takes to do what you do. Then celebrate yourself for your bravery. Here is some material to get started.

### Courage is Needed for you to:

- Ask for help.
- Set limits.
- Use skillful communication techniques (e.g. "I" messages, and assertiveness).
- Let other people's unskillful remarks "roll off your back".
- Take care of yourself in the face of overwhelming caregiving responsibilities.
- Be with your loved one when death is near.
- Just get out of bed and put one foot in front of the other some days.
- Advocate for yourself and your care partner in the medical world.
- Make tough decisions.
- Be flexible enough to change your expectations, plans, and routines.
- Allow yourself to have



Recall the old Expression- sometimes when a door closes another one opens.

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“ Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.”  
- Mark Twain

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“Courage is grace under pressure.”  
- Ernest Hemingway

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conflicting emotions.

- Replace worrying about the future with planning ahead.
- Let go – of the past; of the quest for perfection and permanence; and, eventually, of your loved one’s earthly life.

### Looking Fear in the Eye

Fear is an emotional response to danger. It activates the fight-or-flight response which could help us run like a gazelle or lift a car. In humans, however, it extends way beyond the immediate danger of being harmed. Our fear is often rooted in worry about the unknown future. Mark Twain said that he had been affected by many frightening things in his life, most of which never happened!

### Fear Fighters:

Stan Goldberg, who writes about support for caregivers, says: “Being a primary caregiver for a loved one is analogous to being tossed into a riptide...Swimming against the outgoing flow just takes you further out to sea., but swimming across the current, modifying what you would normally do in a calm ocean, can allow a return back to shore. Adapting to the situation will do the same for caregivers.”

So remember that flexibility is a Fear Fighter. Here are some

others:

- Reliable information
- Plans for the future that can or may change if necessary
- Relaxation Techniques like deep, slow breathing and focusing on the present moment
- Practicing gratitude and forgiveness
- And the greatest of all: love

### Courage Activators:

In order to “saddle up” or just put one foot in front of the other despite fear, we need to remember our own strength and resilience. Engage in:

- Letting go of expectations; of yourself and others
- Getting the information you need
- Healthy habits of eating well, getting enough rest, and exercising as much as possible.
- Expressing fears and hopes, joy and grief to people who understand by attending a support group, chatting with a friend, or contacting a Caregiver Support Specialist.
- Meditation, prayer, or other centering practices.

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*“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes it’s the small voice at the end of the day that says, ‘I will try again tomorrow.’”*

says MaryAnn Rademacher

YOU have more strength, wisdom, and courage than you may know. Now compose your own heroic story! And TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF!

*“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, ‘I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.’”*

- Eleanor Roosevelt



## 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 (262-833-8777) or [www.adrc.racineco.com](http://www.adrc.racineco.com).

July is “Beat the Heat” month at the ADRC. Call us if you are interested in information or material on this topic. 262-833-8777. You can also check the website calendar for places we will be in the community.

Summer often brings travel. Check out resources for Respite Care in our Community Resource Directory on page 78, or some travel ideas on page 87. You may also want to check the newsletter archives on the Caregiver Support page of the ADRC website at:

[http://www.adrc.racineco.com/site/459/caregiver\\_support.aspx](http://www.adrc.racineco.com/site/459/caregiver_support.aspx). See June of 2012 “Tips for Caregiving Trips” or July’s “Find Your Summer Escape”,

and you may want to check out “A Caregivers Journey” in the September issue of 2012

For caregivers of those who have a dementia, like Alzheimer’s disease there is a blog on travel at Alzheimer’s Compendium: <http://www.alzcompend.info/?p=133>

You can also look for tips and behavior management at the Alzheimer’s Association website, or you can call them 24/7 at 800-272-3900.

*May I have...  
Serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can, and  
Wisdom to know the difference.*





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## Caregiver Opportunities

### Newsletter News

Update your information by contacting Marilyn at 262-833-8764 or email her at [Marilyn.Joyce@goRacine.org](mailto:Marilyn.Joyce@goRacine.org).

We encourage people to sign up for email delivery of the newsletter, and if you would like to refer a friend or family member we would be happy to sign them up as well.

Beginning in late summer the Caregiver Newsletter will be seeing some changes. If you have comments or ideas of what you would like to see in future editions please let us know. You are also welcome to email [adrc@goRacine.org](mailto:adrc@goRacine.org)

## Support Groups for Family Caregivers

**First Friday 12 Noon-1pm “Caregiver Connection” Telephone Group - \*MOVED due to Holiday** July 11th  
Call 262-833-8762 to pre-register

**Second Tuesday 1:30-3:00 pm** July 8th  
Yorkville United Methodist Church  
17645 Old Yorkville Rd. (3 Miles West of I-94, Just N. of Highway 20)

**Second Saturday 10:30 am-12 Noon** July 12th  
Atonement Lutheran Church,  
2915 Wright Ave  
Park and enter in back of building (on South side).

**Third Wednesday 1:30-3:00 pm** July 16th  
Burlington Senior Center, Eppers Room,  
209 N. Main St

**Third Thursday 6:00-7:30 pm** July 17th  
**Alzheimer’s Association Group**  
For Families Dealing with Alzheimer’s and other Dementias  
Atonement Lutheran Church, 2915 Wright Ave  
Park and enter in back of building (on South side)

**First Thursday 10:30 am-12 Noon** August 7th  
**Alzheimer’s Association Group**  
For Families Dealing with Alzheimer’s and other Dementias  
Lincoln Lutheran Office Bldg, 2000 Domanik Drive, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor