

# Family Caregiver Newsletter

Newsletter Date July 2013

## The Powerful Caregiver

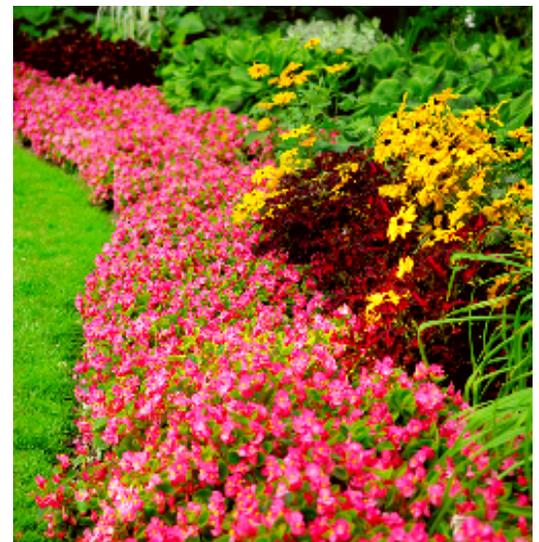
This column is named after the class “Powerful Tools for Caregivers,” a six-session workshop on helping caregiving families *thrive* (not just survive). It is offered in Racine County several times a year.

## Find Your Summer Escape

*Carrie and Carl are both family caregivers. The summer weather finds them wistfully remembering vacations in the mountains or camping at Devil’s Lake. “Too bad I can’t have a getaway this year, and maybe never again,” they both think. “But trips are out of the question with these caregiving responsibilities.” Carrie and Carl might cheer up after reading the following article by Erin Johnson, Caregiver Support Coordinator for the ADRC of Central Wisconsin:*

July marks the middle of summer in Wisconsin. Like me, you’re probably wondering where the time has gone. As a caregiver, you’ve been busy juggling many different tasks – work, family, relationships, finances, caring for your loved one, and so much more. If you haven’t had time to relax and enjoy all that summer has to offer, don’t worry! There are many summertime activities that are both relaxing and easy to fit into a busy schedule.

- **Take a walk** – a short walk around the block or through your neighborhood will be refreshing and provides a great opportunity for some exercise.



Walking in a park can add beauty and calm to an ordinary day.

- **Start a garden** – not only is planting and tending a garden relaxing, it can be incredibly rewarding and enjoyable to watch the plants grow. If you don’t have a yard or don’t want to bend down to the ground, consider a few container gardens that can be placed on a bench or

### Inside this issue:

Find Your Summer Escape	1
Community Resources	3
Reflections on Summer Escapes	3
Support Groups for Family	4
Caregiving	4



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## Find Your Summer Escape - continued from front page

table, making them easier to reach.

- **Try bird watching** – an activity that can be done from your front porch, your back yard, or in a park, bird watching is an easy way to connect with nature. To make this activity more fun, consider purchasing a pair of binoculars or a reference book about birds and placing a birdfeeder in your yard.
- **Visit a local farmer’s market** – to enjoy fresh produce, unique flowers and novelty items, a farmer’s market is the place to go! Offered throughout the summer and into the fall, these markets provide locally grown fresh produce at reasonable prices...and, it’s fun to see the wide variety of items available!
- **Plan a picnic** – whether on your porch, in your back yard, or in a park, a picnic can be a refreshing change from dining inside, and may even lead to fun outdoor activities after the meal is over.
- **Take your favorite activity outside** – rather than reading your book inside, take it out to your porch or a shady spot in the yard! In addition, you could also listen to a ball game or your favorite radio station while enjoying the fresh air and sipping a cold iced tea.
- **Enjoy an outdoor concert** – many communities or even businesses host outdoor concerts during the summer at a local park or gathering place. These concerts pair balmy summer evenings with good music for a night of relaxation and entertainment.
- **Take a drive** - with or without a planned destination, a car ride with the windows rolled down can be a nice way to enjoy the sights and sounds of summer. You never know what you’ll find along the way – a great park or maybe even an ice cream stand!
- **Plan a day trip** – consider treating yourself to a day away. Visit a botanical garden, relax on a boat cruise, go fishing alone or with friends, take a trip to the local zoo, or set a day aside for an activity you enjoyed doing before your schedule became so busy. Ask a family member or a friend to stay with your loved one, if needed, so you can take a well-deserved break.

*Maybe Carrie will relax in her back yard or take a walk along the lake while her mother naps. Perhaps Carl will decide to go fishing while his partner attends Adult Day Services. If they engage in such “time-outs” at least once a day, they can control some ill effects of chronic stress on body, mind, and spirit. An escape doesn’t have to be far away from home!*

Source: Oppenheimer-Marks, N. (2011). Sunny weather in Dallas encourages seniors to spend time outside. Retrieved May 9, 2012 from <http://centraldallas.myhomecareblog.com/2011/05/it%E2%80%99s-time-to-get-out-and-enjoy-the-sunshine/>

## Reflections on “Summer Escapes”

If you decide to “Start a Garden,” please start small! Many of us have a hard time stopping when we’re in the planning stages of this “relaxing” summer activity. Soon we realize that garden chores can be added to our list of overwhelming responsibilities! That’s not the idea! Your gardening might be just one pot of flowers or herbs that you enjoy and love caring for.

Summer is also a good season to spend some fun time with your care receiver. I have seen pairs of caregivers/receivers at local farmers’ markets. They seem to enjoy the outdoor, upbeat social atmosphere, shopping together for healthy food

items, and undoubtedly enjoying some long-term memories.

Remember to take precautions for heat and sun exposure. Make sure you and your loved one are well hydrated. Wear hats and light colored clothing and/or use sun-screen. Plan your outdoor activities for the cooler parts of the day. Slow down – a healthy habit most anytime!

Going to one of our many parks can also be a good shared experience, perhaps just watching people of all ages play and listening to sounds of delight and laughter.



## 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).

Check out the Community Resource Directory beginning on page 65 for ideas for Leisure Activities, but don’t be afraid to come up with your own list of enjoyable things to do. Check out the list on the right for ideas that came out of support groups.

Consider giving yourself the gift of **Respite** this summer. See page 78.

A friendly visitor for your care receiver provides a friend for them and time for you. Call the **Senior Companion Program** at 262-639-4100.

Consider a local day program or check assisted living for respite availability.

Check out the **Respite Care Association of Wisconsin** <http://respitewi.org/> They offer information and training for anyone who cares for others.

### Ideas for relaxation from some caregivers at support groups

- Take a bus trip. “They take you. You don’t have to think!”
- Go to coffee shops. Enjoy a beverage. Read or just people watch!
- Have a massage.
- Exercise for a few minutes, any way you like.
- Sit on your porch and enjoy the simple things of life (perhaps with a relaxing beverage).
- Read an entertaining book and laugh out loud!
- Take slow, deep breaths as often as you think to do so.
- Appreciate what’s good.
- Listen to uplifting music.

What are your ideas? Call or email Marilyn to share. (see box page 2)

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



**Aging and  
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**Follow us on Facebook!** There is a link on the bottom of our webpage at: [www.adrc.racineco.com](http://www.adrc.racineco.com). You can also search for us as Aging and Disability Resource Center of Racine County. “Like” us to get updates and information almost daily. Call if you need further information about this.

## Caregiving

“Caregiving is a task that can be mentally, physically and emotionally challenging. To provide the best care for your loved one, it is imperative that you take care of yourself. This includes taking a break to relax and recharge your batteries. Spending time outside taking in the warm air and bright sunshine will help you feel refreshed, which in turn will help you be the best caregiver possible.”

*Erin Johnson, Caregiver Support Coordinator for the ADRC of Central Wisconsin*

For more information on balancing the responsibilities of caregiving, please contact the ADRC and ask for a Caregiver Support Specialist.

## Support Groups for Family Caregivers

**First Thursday 10:30 am-12 Noon**

**July 3rd** - due to Holiday

**Alzheimer’s Association Group**

For Families Dealing with Alzheimer’s and other Dementias  
Lincoln Lutheran Office Bldg, 2000 Domanik Dr, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor.

**First Friday 12 Noon-1pm**

**“Caregiver Connection” Telephone Group**

**No Call in this Month**

Call 833-8762 or 833-8764 for caregiver support if needed.

**Second Tuesday 1:30-3:00 pm**

**July 9th**

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 13th**

Atonement Lutheran Church,

2915 Wright Ave.

Park and enter in back of building (on South side).

**Third Wednesday 1:30-3:00 pm**

**July 17th**

Burlington Senior Center, Eppers Room

209 N Main St

**Third Thursday 6:00-7:30 pm**

**July 18th**

**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).