

ELDER CARE OF WISCONSIN

Partnering for Independence

FALL 2004

Caregivers Get Support from Partnership

Every day, hundreds of caregivers in Dane County have peace of mind knowing they can depend on Elder Care Partnership for support.

Although their situations are different, they share a common thread: a strong commitment to caring for an older loved one and maintaining his or her independence.

“Our care teams focus on the health needs of the individual, while at the same time lend a helping hand to his or her caregiver,” says Rachel Knauss, social worker on a Partnership care team.

By partnering with the individual, his or her caregiver and physician, the care team develops an individualized care plan that includes health and long-term care support. The care team also coordinates all services.

“Not only does this approach lead to continuity in care,” points out Rachel, “it also helps decrease the stress and demands of caregiving.”



Pete Crear picks up his mother, Tinsie, at the Gathering Place.

“It’s a masterful program because everything we need is provided and the assistance is there,” says Pete. “Respite has been a godsend for both of us.”

The Crears are empty nesters and juggle caregiving with hectic full-time jobs. Although Pete’s employer, CUNA, has a flexible work policy, Tinsie still needs somewhere safe to go

during the workday. The Gathering Place, Elder Care’s adult day center for individuals with Alzheimer’s or other memory loss conditions, is the solution.

“We owe her,” says Pete about his mother. “With the help of the Partnership program, we’re able to repay her in a way that neither one of us thought would be necessary at this stage in our lives.”



Eugenia Beecher and her mother, Barbara, do prepwork for Thanksgiving dinner.

Eugenia and Barbara

Eugenia Beecher, a marketing consultant, would like to travel and spend more time visiting her children and grandsons.

Caregiving, however, allows little flexibility. Her main focus is making sure that her mother, Barbara, eats balanced meals, doesn’t become dehydrated, exercises regularly and stays engaged in meaningful activities.

“There are days you just want to walk out the door and never come back,” admits Eugenia. Despite the challenges, she enjoys having her mother a part of her life. She’s also comforted knowing that the care team is just a phone call away.

Before Partnership, Barbara was seeing six different physicians and taking up to 15 medications. She was in and out of the hospital with recurring health problems.

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Caregivers Get Support from Partnership continued...

Now, Barbara is taking only a handful of medications, and her diabetes is under control. She hasn't been hospitalized since entering the program almost two years ago. She also enjoys being at the adult day center four days a week.

Without Partnership, Eugenia believes her mother would be in a nursing home. The care team has put her mother "back on her feet, back to being a whole person—physically and mentally," says Eugenia.

Gerry and Gil

They met over 57 years ago when Gil's college buddies egged him into taking dance lessons at the Arthur Miller School of Dance, where Gerry was an instructor.



Gerry Gapp enjoys spending time with her husband, Gil, after work.

Although they are no longer doing the two-step, the Gapps are still a team. Over the last several years, Gil's battle with Parkinson's has steadily become more challenging. Frequent falls eventually led to him breaking a hip.

With help from his care team, Gil recently made the hard decision to move into an assisted living facility. Gerry says that Gil thought things were getting too tough for her and he was afraid of having more falls.

The care team continues to manage Gil's health and coordinate all medical and support services. Gerry visits Gil every day, takes him on scenic drives and hopes to bring him back home for overnight stays once he's more stable.

"I owe so much to Elder Care," says Gerry. The care team has helped her and Gil through some major milestones. But, Gerry also deserves a lot of the credit. At age 81, she's as active as ever and committed to doing what she enjoys—being there for Gil and working full-time doing probate research.

Linda and Ken

"It's important people understand what options are available to them," says Linda Monson. Before her father, Ken, joined Partnership this past summer, she and her four siblings didn't know where to turn for help.



Linda Monson and her father, Ken, take a stroll on a brisk, sunny fall day.

She feels comfortable cutting back on her visits to make sure things are OK.

With home care, Ken gets the extra assistance—bathing, dressing, medication—he needs in order to remain independent and in his own apartment. He also goes to physical therapy and the adult day center one day a week.

Linda describes her father as a very charming, proud man who at first was hesitant about being around so many "old people." As soon as he started seeing improvements from physical therapy, he changed his mind.

"The socialization is an added benefit," says Linda, who goes on to explain her father responds well to the personalized attention of his care team.

"Elder Care has been a blessing for all of us," says Linda.

To learn more about Partnership eligibility requirements and benefits, call 245-3075.

Forum Focuses on Caregiving

Elder Care was part of a forum in November, presented by the Area Agency on Aging's Caregiver Alliance, to educate local employers on the challenges and stress of caregiving. It's not surprising that caregiving responsibilities, which average 18 hours per week, impact productivity. And the demand for caregivers is expected to grow in the next decade. Employers received tools for creating caregiver-friendly work environments.

Ken's health began to decline after a stroke almost 10 years ago. He has drained his finances, and his children have been supplementing the costs of his care.

Since Ken has been in Partnership, Linda no longer needs to deal with the stress of confusing medical bills, dividing his medication, or arranging transportation to and from physician appointments.

Elder Care Connects Participants with Community

Oprah Winfrey, are you ever going to reply? Hortense Cranshaw has been emailing Oprah about a topic for her talk show: Elder Care.

Hortense, 72, wants to tell the world about how Elder Care's East Adult Day Center has changed her life. She's been coming to the day center two days a week for the past three years.

"I've learned a whole lot since I've been coming here," says Hortense, referring to her improved self-esteem, ability to express her feelings and interact with others. For the first time, she feels that people care and value her opinions.

Elder Care's adult day centers provide a safe, supportive place for older adults, who have medical, physical or cognitive concerns, to spend the day. Services include health monitoring, assistance with medications, personal care and nutritionally balanced meals.

For Hortense and others, the biggest benefit is socialization. Elder Care's therapeutic recreation specialists develop, plan and coordinate activities that connect participants to the community and foster relationships, both peer-to-peer and intergenerational.



Terri Ohmen, therapeutic recreation specialist, helps Hortense Cranshaw navigate the Web.

Group and individual activities are adapted to accommodate the special requirements of participants. Activities—arts and crafts, games, music, dancing, baking and adapted sports—are planned daily and repeated throughout the week.

"We're able to provide a variety of activities and choices for participants, thanks to our strong community connections," says Carmen Kophamer, day center supervisor for Elder Care's two adult day centers in Madison, the East Adult Day Center and the Gathering Place.



Participant Greg Ehr putts during Edgewood High School's annual service day when students led games and conducted a concert.

Community Connections

Elder Care collaborates with local businesses, organizations, churches and clubs to keep participants connected to the community and strengthen intergenerational relationships.

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Home for the Holidays

Many of us come home for the holidays to spend time with parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and other family members. Some are returning to hometowns or childhood homes from far away. Others still live in the same community and are simply gathering for more family celebrations during this time of year.

When we're home, we tend to notice more and listen more. We may see that our parents' house is cluttered and chores have piled up. We may realize that mom and dad just aren't quite themselves and seem more frail or forgetful. We may hear the loneliness between the lines of what they're saying.

I encourage you to make the most of your homecoming. Here at Elder Care, we always experience a surge in calls after the holidays. People are turning to us to find out the next steps in getting help for older family members.

Over the holidays, they've talked with their parents, their siblings and other family. They're often worried and concerned about what the future holds for their loved ones. They recognize that they cannot do it all. And they're ready to look for local partners in providing the care that's needed.

So when you go home for the holidays, please keep your eyes and ears open. You may be able to give your older family member the best gift of all: the embrace of a caring plan of support to keep them as independent as possible in their own home in the year to come.



Respectfully,

Karen Musser
Chief Executive Officer

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When considering your charitable giving plans, please think about giving the *gift that matters* through Elder Care: Join us in offering *peace of mind...*

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...For seniors who must deal daily with chronic illnesses and disabilities;
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Wehrmann's Tree Shines for Elder Care

For the second year, Carol Wehrmann, owner of Wehrmann's of Madison, chose Elder Care of Wisconsin as the store's charity in the 2004 Hilldale Holiday Tree Walk. Wehrmann's employee Linda Hartay (pictured) designed the colorful peacock-inspired tree, which was voted the third best decorated tree by shoppers. As a result, the Hilldale Merchants Association will make a \$200 donation to Elder Care. Shoppers also can place gifts, or "wish list" items, under the tree for Elder Care participants. The 24 lavishly decorated trees will remain up at Hilldale Mall in Madison until Jan. 1.



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