CarePartners
INITIATIVE
Learning to Live with Memory Loss

MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER

caring for the caregiver

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Dear Friends,

The weather is finally warming up and our thoughts turn to activities outdoors. I have been exploring the area around my soon to be new apartment in the Cogir development south and behind the library. I will tell you more about Cogir next month.

What I discovered was a very pleasant, paved, wide path along the east side of Sonoma Creek. Park at or near the library and walk south on Studley Street and the path starts just before the Napa Road bridge across the river.

Suggestions are:
- walk side by side to provide stability and support for your partner
- wear sunscreen or a hat
- as an fyi there are not many seating areas

Whitney Evans
Co-Founder, Board Member
and Caregiver

Memory Cafes

Our **February14th** Memory Cafe was in partnership with our Social Activities group. It was Valentine's themed, and we celebrated LOVE. Participants brought in wedding photos to share, we decorated heart shaped cookies and exchanged Valentine's. Everyone enjoyed the special time.

Our **February 24th** Memory Cafe theme was "Wellness and Self-Care." We shared informative ways for care partners to take care of themselves while caregiving.

Our next Memory Cafe will be on March 10th and will include a reading by a local author and another visit from Prestwood Elementary School's 5th grade class. You won't want to miss it!

CarePartners offers a free Memory Cafe twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Monday, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, at the Sonoma United Methodist Church (Community Room), located at 109 Patten Street, Sonoma.

Upcoming Memory Cafe dates:

Monday, March 10

Monday, March 24

Attending a Memory Cafe is a very important time for loved ones and caregivers to socialize and enjoy fun activities. Loved ones must be accompanied by a caregiver, however, a friend or family member may bring the loved one in place of the primary caregiver. It's free to attend.

We hope to see you!

Support Groups for Caregivers (In person and Zoom)

CarePartners offers a free in-person support group each month at the Sonoma United Methodist Church (Community Room), located at 109 Patten Street, Sonoma.
4th Wednesday, 11:00am - 12:30pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
- **Upcoming: March 26**

Please consider joining us. It is a confidential space to share difficulties and wins with other caregivers. It is truly validating to be in the company of others who intimately understand the journey of a care partner of a loved one with memory decline.

Our next in-person support group will be on Wednesday, March 26th. Please RSVP to let us know if you plan to attend. We are planning to limit the support groups to 10 people to be sure everyone has adequate time and space to share.

Testimonial: "*Having support groups to connect with has been great because you can talk about what you've been going through and everyone can relate. We talk about situations that have been challenging or tactics to use when actually caregiving. There is no judgment and knowing you are not alone in this journey is comforting.*"

NEW PROGRAM OFFERING!

CarePartners now offers a free once a month ZOOM caregiver support group.
1st Tuesday, 12:00-1:30 pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
- **Upcoming: March 4**

Have you been hesitant to join our caregiver group because it was only offered in-person? Are you unable to leave your loved one to attend a support group? Do you work and only have a lunch break to attend a support group? Or do you want to attend two caregiver support groups a month (once in-person and one via Zoom)? Then this group is for you! You can join via video teleconferencing or simply dial in.

Our Zoom sessions have been well attended. We would like to build participation so please let us know if Zoom is a good fit for you. You don't need to do this alone.

Please contact Heidi for a short intake and the Zoom link: (707) 640-3734
or heidilagelmft@gmail.com

Social Activities Group

March Social Activity
Date: Sunday, March 23
Time: 1:00 - 3:00 pm
Location: Sonoma Conservatory of Dance

We have been invited to attend a dress rehearsal of the ballet performance of *The Magic Toy Shop* at the Sonoma Conservatory of Dance.

If you have never attended a ballet performance at the Conservatory of Dance, treat yourself and go. The children will melt your hearts! It is a wonderful event. The Conservatory of Dance is located at 561 Broadway, Suite B, across the street from Peet's Coffee.

If you plan on attending, please email Susanne: sippelsusanne@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE! Monday, April 21
We will meet at Sonoma Garden Park at 11:30 am for a brown bag lunch with musical entertainment provided by Brady Hoff. We hope you can join us.

SAVE THE DATE! May, date to be determined
We are invited to lunch at Vintage Kennels in Sonoma. More information to come in our April newsletter.

Volunteer Profile

Matt Lage was born and raised in Sonoma. He would never want to live anywhere other than the great town of Sonoma. He is a former battalion chief for the City of Vacaville Fire Department and recently retired after over 30 years of service.

Matt is one of our most dedicated, reliable and hardworking volunteers. His grandmother had Alzheimer's disease for many years, and he is honored to give back to this population. No job is too big or small for him to tackle. In his free time he enjoys fishing, hiking and hunting. He also enjoys spending time with his six kids and wife and just so happens to be married to our Memory Cafe Director Heidi Lage.

Matt doesn't like a lot of attention and often flies under the radar, however we want to recognize and thank him for all his commitment to our program!

Volunteers Needed!

Want A New Sense of Purpose in Your Life?

CarePartners Initiative is looking for volunteers with experience in fundraising, program management and hands-on help executing our many programs. If you are looking for a rewarding volunteer experience, please consider contacting us at info@carepartnersinitiative.org or call our Helpline at (707) 732-9436. We look forward to hearing from you!

We would also love to welcome you as a volunteer at one of our hosted Memory Cafes - a safe and supported place for individuals with memory decline and their care partner.

It's a comfortable atmosphere where everyone can come together for shared experiences doing craft activities, interacting with guest artists, musicians, therapy pets, and all sorts of fun socializing while making friends! We hope you can contribute some of your time by lending a helping hand or a listening ear. We know that those in attendance will appreciate your time.
For more information, please call or email Heidi Lage, (707) 640-3734 | heidilagelmft@gmail.com

"Volunteers are America's silent strength. Those who give of themselves in a spirit of unselfish devotion to the needs of others are truly this nation's most generous, unsung heroes."
William Arthur Ward, Who's Who in American Education

Dementia Friendly Sonoma Valley

Sonoma is a Dementia Friendly Community

Dementia Friendly America: https://dfamerica.org/
Part of our mission is to deepen awareness of the symptoms and signs of dementia. As a community, we can enhance the safety and quality of life for the estimated 1,000 people in Sonoma Valley with dementia and their caregivers.
Dementia is complex. Here's a short video that summarizes it well.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KlRpFu1Ub8
If you would like more information on Sonoma's program, please visit the Dementia Friendly Sonoma Valley information page on our website here.

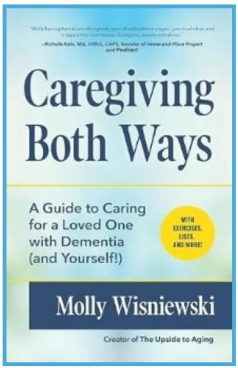
Dementia Friends Milestones
There are currently 188,262 Dementia Friends throughout the United States.

CarePartners' Library at Vintage House

CarePartners Initiative has a collection of books and DVDs relating to caregiving of loved ones with dementia in the library at Vintage House. The above photo on the left shows the location of the shelf on the right-hand wall next to the clock, just inside the Vintage House library, and the photo on the right shows the shelf itself. The books must be checked out at the front desk and returned ASAP. If you have library donations, please contact Susanne: sippelsusanne@gmail.com

Vintage House Senior Center is located at 264 1st St. East, Sonoma.
We hope you have an opportunity to stop by the Vintage House library to delve into all our resource shelf has to offer.

Book Report



Caregiving Both Ways
by Molly Wisniewski (Author)

Readers who turned to Alzheimer's books like The 36-Hour Day, When Reasoning No Longer Works, and Creating Moments of Joy Along the Alzheimer's Journey will love the compassionate approach of Caregiving Both Ways.

When a parent, spouse, sibling, or loved one is diagnosed with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, it can be difficult to know what to do. Your day can spiral into a never-ending series of tasks and attempts to communicate that leave you both frustrated. Instead of burning out, discover a new approach. When your loved one behaves differently than they used to, they're just communicating in a new way. As caregivers, the most important thing we can do is learn that new language.

Navigate the caregiving relationship: this book offers essential advice for getting to know your loved one and yourself during this new phase of life. Learn to balance your priorities, avoid burning out, and honor self-care. Molly will teach you how to navigate the difficult moments with techniques she's mastered from years of experience working with people with dementia.

Prepare for each stage of care: Caregiving Both Ways is divided into two parts. First, learn how to care for your loved one with dementia and prioritize your new role as caregiver. Next, discover how to build a strong support system with help from professional caregivers and how to prepare for end-of-life care. You will find worksheets, exercises, and essential tips for smart, empathetic caregiving. You'll learn how to:

• Use non-medical interventions to reduce anxiety
• Prioritize and make time for your own care and mental health
• Identify triggers that may cause confusion in your loved one
• Handle difficult medical decisions
• Provide support and validation through all stages of Alzheimer's disease or dementia

Resource Corner

Hanna Center
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS IN SONOMA

• Compassionate Grief Support in Sonoma Valley
In partnership with the Sonoma Valley Interfaith Ministerial Association (SVIMA), the Community Mental Health Hub at Hanna now offers bereavement services to support the Sonoma Valley community.

• Workshops on Managing Grief and Loss
Workshops on grief and loss would provide an initial opportunity for the bereaved to learn about the process of grief and loss, to share their story of loss with others who have lost loved ones and offer resources for those who would like additional support. These workshops might provide individuals with the support they need to move forward in mourning their loss or they might be an avenue for accessing additional support.

• Peer Support for Mourners
Individuals who have personally experienced the loss of a loved one and volunteer their time to provide companionship and accompaniment to mourners during the first year after loss. These individuals would be provided with training in grief and loss, active listening, and the art of companioning the bereaved and support to check in with questions or concerns. They would commit to volunteering their time for a minimum of one year of service and agree to provide peer support to the bereaved during that time. Peer support could be offered to individuals who attend a workshop or reach out to join a grief group, which would provide support during a difficult time. It would address the desire to be responsive to those who are grieving and might not be able to join a group right away.

• Grief Groups
The grief groups were created to support those who are grieving the loss of a loved one by providing information on the grieving process, a safe space to process grief, and offering companionship with other mourners. The grief groups will be for adults in their first year of loss but no earlier than three months after the death of a loved one. Participants will be asked to commit to attending all eight sessions and keeping what they heard in the group sessions confidential. To facilitate group cohesion, each quarterly cohort of eight sessions will be closed. Whenever possible, two clinicians will facilitate each session.

2025 Schedule: Tuesdays, 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
Winter: 1/14/25 - 3/11/25
Spring: 4/15/25 - 6/10/25
Summer: 7/1/25 - 9/9/25
To learn more or inquire about grief groups, please call the Hub at (707) 933-4482.

The mission of Redwood Caregiver Resource Center is to help families and communities master the challenges of caring for adults with brain disorders through programs and services that address the emotional, physical, and financial needs of family caregivers. All services are free or low cost. Throughout the year they offer a variety of classes.
Telephone: Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm (707) 542-0282 | (800) 834-1636

Respite Care If needed: Redwood CRC helps families locate appropriate respite care for a loved one. Limited financial assistance may be offered to help with the expense of in-home aids, daycare, overnight care, weekend respite or transportation for a family member with brain impairment.

Caregiver 101 Class | via Zoom
For the family members or caregivers of loved ones with dementia.
Discussion: Strategies for dealing with dementia associated symptoms and the importance of advance planning. Who should attend: Family members or caregivers of patients who have a diagnosis of dementia. It is recommended that patients with dementia should not attend this class.
Tuesday, March 18
Time: 1:30 - 3:30 pm
Phone: (707) 582-2329
Click here to register.

Communicating with Moderately and Severely Confused Older Adults | Via Zoom
These video clips demonstrate specific communication strategies and techniques that allow for connection with a cognitively impaired person, regardless of the content of the conversation.
Discussion: Adjusting the way we approach communication in the context of a dementia diagnosis, why logic and reasoning won't work, how to get "a foot in the door."
Tuesday, March 4
Time: 1:30 - 3:30 pm
Phone: (707) 582-2329
Click here to register.

Share & Care Support Group
2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
ZOOM video teleconferencing or call-in
Evening Caregiver Support Group
(in partnership with First Presbyterian, Santa Rosa Care Ministries)
2nd Thursday of each month, 6:00 - 7:30 pm
ZOOM video teleconferencing or call-in
• To receive Zoom information please contact
Amie at axh@redwoodcrc.org | Telephone: (707) 582-2329

Finding Joy: Navigating Happiness and Depression as a Caregiver | Via Zoom
Join Dr. Jeremy Gomer, an independent provider with Optum Care Network-Southwestern Valley, for an empowering virtual talk on how caregivers can navigate the challenges of happiness and depression. Learn practical strategies to boost your mental well-being, manage stress, and find joy in your caregiving journey. Prioritizing your emotional health helps you care for both you and your loved one.
Hosted By: Inland Caregiver Resource Center
Date: Wednesday, March 12
Time: 1:00 - 2:30 pm
Phone: (909) 514-835-6807
Click here to register.

Empowered Caregiver: Building Foundations of Caregiving | via Zoom
The Empowered Caregiver education class teaches caregivers how to navigate the responsibilities of caring for someone living with dementia.
Class topic: Exploring Care and Support Services
Date: Wednesday, March 5
Time: 5:30 - 6:30 pm
Phone: (800) 543-8312
Click here to register.

Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body (with Alzheimer's Association) | Via Zoom
For centuries, we've known that the health of the brain and the body are connected. But now, science is able to provide insights into how to make lifestyle choices that may help you keep your brain and body healthy as you age. Join us to learn about research in the areas of diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity and social engagement, and use hands-on tools to help you incorporate these recommendations into a plan for healthy aging.
Date: Wednesday, March 19
Time: 1:30 - 2:30 pm
Phone: (800) 543-8312
Click here to register.

USC | FCSC + LACRC

Understanding the Grief of Caregiving: Coping with Change and Loss | Via Zoom
Caregiving involves experiencing different types of grief. This webinar provides insight into those emotional journeys and offers essential strategies for coping with the loss and change that caregivers often face. Join us as part of the LACRC continuation of the 2024 C.A.L.M. (Caregivers Are Learning More) series.
Date: Thursday, March 20
Time: 11:00 am - 12:30 pm
Phone: (800) 540-4442
Click here to register.

Alzheimer's Foundation of America Fireside Chat (educational and informational web series)
The Caregiver Trifecta—Personhood, Dignity, and Connection
Date: Friday, March 21
Time: 10:00 - 11:00 am Pacific
Click here to register.

Guest Speaker: Katie Brandt, MM, Caregiver, Educator, & Advocate
Director of Caregiver Support Services & Public Relations, Frontotemporal Disorders Unit, Massachusetts General Hospital

"Just because dementia has come into your life doesn't mean that joy has to go out." This episode will discuss the importance of developing a person-centered care plan which incorporates the values of personhood, dignity, and connection, and finding ways to create meaningful moments with a loved one despite dementia's impact.

View past and upcoming episodes here.

Listen: Powerful Tools for Caregivers Relaxation Recordings
Click here to get relaxed and focused with the free Powerful Tools Relaxation recordings:
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- A Walk to the Beach with Guided Imagery.

Monthly Quote

"Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyway."

EMORY AUSTIN

Humor

PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION

We are planning big things in 2025. We're excited and know there is so much more we can do. We need your help as we expand our programs to support caregivers and their loved ones impacted by memory decline. Our programs touch lives and make a difference, and you can too.

Please consider a tax-deductible donation. It will help drive our efforts to expand our free programs and reach many more people whose lives can be transformed. We appreciate that you have many choices when it comes to your charitable giving, and we would be grateful for any amount you choose to give,
501 (c) (3) Tax ID: 94-2524840

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Add us to your address book
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