CarePartners
INITIATIVE
Learning to Live with Memory Loss

APRIL 2025 NEWSLETTER

caring for the caregiver

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Dear Friends,

As promised in our March newsletter, here is my update on Cogir. My decision to move to Cogir, an independent living apartment on Oregon Street behind the Sonoma library, has been very positive. It seems to be the best option for independent or assisted living—with priority to move up or down in level of service as needed.

Costs? Yes, but the monthly cost includes:

- three meals a day
- housekeeping and laundry
- transportation
- Wi-Fi
- no monthly HOA fee or proper taxes

There is also the additional benefit of very friendly staff and residents, plus many activities. I have been delighted.

Whitney Evans
Founder
Board Member
Caregiver

National Volunteer Month in the United States takes place in the month of April. This month is dedicated to honoring all the volunteers in our communities as well as encouraging volunteerism throughout the month. It began in April 1991 as part of President George H.W. Bush's Thousand Points of Light campaign. The initiative was created to recognize the value of volunteerism and inspire individuals to make a difference in their communities.

HOW TO OBSERVE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH
• Thank a volunteer.
• Volunteer! Many volunteers will tell you it is a rewarding experience.
• You don't have to have a ton of time.
• Do you have a special talent or skill that may benefit a charity or organization? Offer your services or ask how you can be of help.

CarePartners Initiative profiles one of our amazing volunteers in most of our monthly newsletters. This month we have a special volunteer to recognize, Linda Piller. She lost her husband to dementia which motivated her to volunteer at our Memory Cafes. She lived first-hand the dementia journey and hopes her experience can help others in similar situations. For her it is a meaningful way to give back and honor her husband. To learn more about her, read her bio in Section 6 below. We THANK YOU Linda!

We are grateful to all our wonderful volunteers and cannot do what we do without them!

Memory Cafes

Our March 10th Memory Cafe was so much fun. We were lucky enough to have local author Michael Heffler read from one of his books. In addition, we had the 5th grade class from Prestwood join us to share their favorite book and play bingo and charades with us. The children were so respectful, engaged and adorable.

Our March 24th Memory Cafe was pet themed. We each shared our favorite pet(s) with stories and photos. We were blessed to have an amazing 12-year old girl, Molly Fabian, share her experience with 4-H. She brought her bunny Captain in for all of us to admire and pet. We played games and decorated vases for Spring.

In April, our Memory Cafes will be on April 14 and April 28! Mark your calendars now as we have a lot of great things planned you won't want to miss.

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, April 14
Monday, April 28

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: April 23**

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, April 23.
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.*"

CarePartners offers a free once a month ZOOM caregiver support group.

1st Tuesday, 12:00-1:30 pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT

- **Upcoming: April 1**

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
We enjoyed the dress rehearsal of *The Magic Toy Shop* at the Sonoma Conservatory of Dance. It was spectacular and the children were adorable!

April Social Activity
Date: Monday, April 21
Time: 11:30 am
Location: Sonoma Garden Park

For April we will have a brown bag lunch at the Sonoma Garden Park. Our wonderful volunteer Brady will be playing tunes on his guitar. Sonoma Garden Park is located at 19996 Seventh Street East. Pack a lunch and join us for a lovely time.

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

May Social Activity - SAVE THE DATE!
Monday May 19th 1:00 - 2:30 pm
We are invited to Vintage Kennels in Sonoma for a farm tour and a visit with all the many different animals living on the farm!

Volunteer Profile

Linda Piller grew up in Marin, went to Fresno State and then graduated from UCSF with a B.S. in Dental Hygiene. She came to Sonoma in 1979 where she raised four children and worked for 39 years (out of 47 years of clinical practice) for Dr. Kristin DeVincenzi.

Her husband passed away one year ago with vascular dementia which was her motivation to volunteer at Memory Cafe. Matt Lage told her about CarePartners and since she had firsthand experience caregiving and dealing with dementia related issues, she thought she could help others going through the same situation. Over the years of clinical practice, she saw many patients with dementia, but her outlook changed completely after living with it 24 hours a day rather than only seeing it in a one-hour appointment. It was quite an eye-opening experience.

She is also volunteer at FISH working in the medical equipment shed. Most of the medical equipment loaned out is for people with mobility issues. Since mobility is a problem for patients with dementia, this is another way for her to give back and honor her husband. You also might see her at St Leo's where she helps in the food pantry.

In her free time, she babysits her twin three-year-old grandkids, goes to exercise classes at Parkpoint and plays Mahjong with a great group of women. Her family and friends live close by, so she spends a lot of time with all of them. Disneyland is one of her favorite places to be and luckily her family loves Disney as much as she does.

With nothing holding her back now, she has many other things she wants to do…. learning Spanish again, taking piano lessons and getting a personal trainer. "Got to keep that body moving! Who knows what the future holds!"

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.

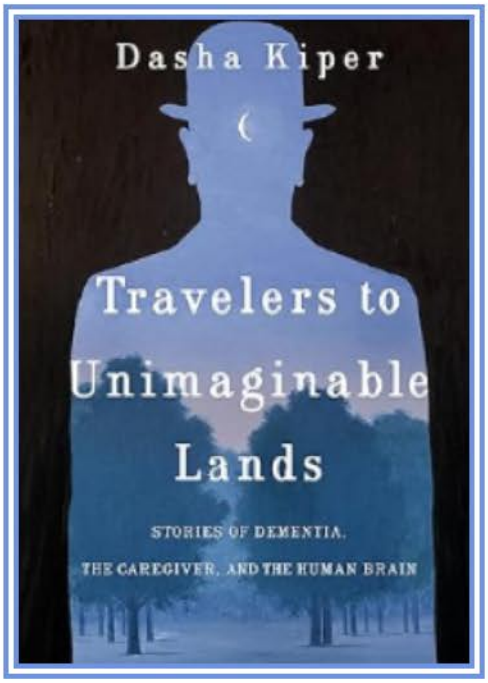
Dementia Friends Milestones
There are currently 188,262 Dementia Friends throughout the United States.

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



Travelers to Unimaginable Lands: Stories of Dementia, the Caregiver, and the Human Brain
by Dasha Kiper (Author)

The Wall Street Journal: *These "moving and often surprising" case histories meld science and storytelling to show that caregivers don't just witness cognitive decline in their loved ones with dementia—they are its invisible victims.*

Inspired by Dasha Kiper's experience as a caregiver and counselor and informed by a breadth of cognitive and neurological research, this book dispels the myth of the perfect caregiver. In these compassionate, nonjudgmental stories of parents and children, husbands and wives, contending with dementia disorders, Kiper explores the existential dilemmas created by this disease: a man believes his wife is an impostor; a woman's imaginary friendships with famous authors drive a wedge between her and her devoted husband; another woman's childhood trauma emerges to torment her son; a man's sudden, intense Catholic piety provokes his wife.

Kiper explains why the caregivers are maddened by these behaviors, mirroring their patients' irrationality, even though they've been told it's the disease at work. By demystifying the neurological obstacles to caregiving, Kiper illuminates the terrible pressure dementia disorders exert on our closest relationships, offering caregivers the perspective they need to be gentler with themselves.

Featured Resource

Dementia Action Alliance

ENHANCING LIVES
CONNECTING PEOPLE
INCREASING UNDERSTANDING

Dementia Does Not Define A Person

The Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) is a diverse coalition of passionate people creating a better society in which to live with dementia. It is a non-profit organization that provides hope and help to individuals and families living with dementia and information about how to live proactively with dementia. They offer services and peer support including three weekly online discussion groups, two monthly podcasts, an online Resources Center, a national Speakers Bureau and other services. All DAA efforts and activities are shaped and informed by individuals living with dementia.

Dementia is a widely misunderstood condition, even by physicians. Society's stigmatized perception about living with dementia has profound negative effects on them. Rather than being understood as people with many aspects to their lives who have some changing abilities needing accommodations, they become reduced to their diagnosis. DAA provides help, hope and education about living with dementia.

Click here to browse their website.

Resource Corner

5th Annual Women's Health Symposium: Stress Less – Live Longer
Location: Hanna Center
Tuesday, May 6
11:00 am - 2:00 pm
Presented by the Sonoma Valley Hospital Foundation and UCSF Health. This year's theme, "Stress Less – Live Longer," will feature expert speakers sharing valuable insights on managing stress and its impact on overall health. Don't miss this opportunity to learn practical tips and strategies to reduce stress and improve your well-being. Click here to reserve your spot today.

- **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
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, April 15
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

Navigating Family Dynamics of Caregiving | via Zoom

Join Bernadette Abrea, ACSW, with Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center, as she discusses navigating caregiving with patience and compassion, covering topics like family meetings, seeking support, setting realistic expectations, and identifying helpful resources.
Hosted By: Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center
Date: Tuesday, April 8
Time: 10:30 - 11:30 am
Phone: (916) 728-9333
Click here to register.

Coping with Caregiver Stress (with Independence at Home) | via Zoom
Offers information about caregiver burnout and provides recommendations on how to improve coping skills. Participants will practice some relaxation techniques with a facilitator.
Date: Monday, April 7
Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Phone: (800) 543-8312
Click here to register.

Empowered Caregiver: Building Foundations of Caregiving | via Zoom
The Empowered Caregiver education series teaches caregivers how to navigate the responsibilities of caring for someone living with dementia. Caregivers can register for individual courses to meet their needs or complete the entire series. Building Foundations of Caregiving explores the role of caregiver and changes they may experience, building a support team and managing caregiver stress.
Date: Wednesday, April 16
Time: 5:30 - 6:30 pm
Phone: (800) 543-8312
Click here to register.

Dr. Rhee-Nutrition for Caregivers | via Zoom
Dr. Joon Rhee, an independently practicing provider affiliated with the Optum Care Network in Redlands, joins us to highlight the importance of nutrition for caregivers. He offers practical tips on how eating well can boost your energy and well-being, enabling you to provide the best care for your loved ones. Dr. Rhee encourages caregivers to prioritize their own health for the benefit of both themselves and those they care for.
Date: Wednesday, April 9
Time: 10:00 - 11:30 am
Phone: (909) 514-1404
Click here to register.

Stress Management | via Zoom
Caring for someone with a cognitive impairment is challenging enough but during the holidays, behaviors you haven't seen before may appear. Learn how to make the holidays pleasant for everyone especial for you as the caregiver and your care recipient.
Date: Monday, April 14
Time: 3:00 - 4:30 pm
Phone: (909) 514-1404
Click here to register.

Financial Empowerment for Family Caregivers | via Zoom
As family caregivers, you face unique financial challenges—challenges that are influenced by the latest governmental policies. We're here to help you navigate these changes and empower you with the knowledge you need to protect your financial health. This isn't just about managing money—it's about understanding the bigger picture and how decisions at the national level affect you. AND...learning what you can do about it to amplify your voice and advocate for the changes we need through community.
Date: Tuesday, April 29
Time: 1:00 - 2:00 pm
Phone: (800) 540-4442
Click here to register.

Alzheimer's Foundation of America Fireside Chat (educational and informational web series)
Topic: The Link Between Pain and Aggression in Dementia
Date: Wednesday, April 30
Time: 10:00 - 11:00 am Pacific
Click here to register.

Click here to view past and upcoming AFA Fireside Chats.

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

Humor

"Yes! That was very loud Sir, but
I said I wanted to hear your *HEART!*"

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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