CarePartners INITIATIVE

JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER

caring for the caregiver

CONTENTS IN THIS ISSUE

1 Contents Listing

2 Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month

3 Sonoma Valley Star Volunteer Award Winner

4 Featured Resource

5 Memory Cafes

6 Memory Cafe Adventures

7 Memory Cafes in the News

8 Support Groups

9 Social Activities Group

10 Book Report

11 Resource Corner

12 Library at Vintage House

13 Dementia Friendly SV

14 Volunteers Needed!

15 Monthly Quote

16 A Bit of Humor

17 Please Consider Donating

18 Visit Our Website

ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN awareness month

Go **purple** this June! Why? Because June is Alzheimer's and Brain Health Awareness Month and **purple** is the official color of the Alzheimer's movement. Wear and share **purple** throughout June to spread awareness and invite others to join the fight to end Alzheimer's. June is an opportunity to hold a conversation about the brain and share the fact that Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are a major public health issue.

Worldwide, more than 55 million people are living with Alzheimer's or another dementia. Take action now — for yourself, your loved ones and for the fight to end Alzheimer's. What actions can you take this month? Positive, everyday actions can make a difference in brain health, even lowering the risk of cognitive decline and possibly Alzheimer's and dementia. Incorporate some or all of these habits into your life to help maintain a healthy brain.

See the below Resource Corner to find 10 Healthy Habits for Your Brain and a list of Steps to Approach Memory Concerns in Others.

Sonoma Valley Star Volunteer Award Winner

Sonoma Valley Star Volunteer Awards

The Star Awards honor “Star Volunteers” of nonprofits who serve Sonoma Valley.
The founder of the event, Whitney Evans, said “Volunteerism is at the heart of what makes Sonoma Valley such a wonderful place to live.”

We are proud to honor our valley volunteers! CarePartners Initiative nominated our Governing Board President, John Randazzo. A huge Congratulations to John! We are grateful to him for volunteering for the position when the need arose and we appreciate the many hours involved in such a role. Thank you!

The Star Volunteer Awards is a chance for non-profits that serve Sonoma Valley to recognize a volunteer who has made a significant contribution to their organization and the Valley. At the awards ceremony each participating non-profit organization presents their Star Volunteer with a trophy provided by Catalyst Fund.

John Randazzo with his Star Award!
Photo by Daniel Perales

Featured Resource

Introducing In-Home Care When Your Loved One Says 'No'

Desperate though caregivers may be for a temporary respite from their care responsibilities, many care recipients are resistant to strangers coming into their home to help. The help may be perceived as an invasion of privacy, a loss of independence, or a waste of money. Yet in-home assistance is often critical in offering caregivers a break and time to relax and rejuvenate.

There are ways to make this transition easier. Here are some tips for making your loved one feel more comfortable with in-home help:

1. Start gradually.
Begin by having the aide come only a couple of hours each week, then add hours as your loved one builds a relationship with the helper. If you feel comfortable with the attendant running errands or preparing meals that can be brought to the house, you can start with those services which can be done outside the home.

2. Listen to your loved one's fears and reasons for not wanting in-home care.
Express your understanding of those feelings. If possible, get your loved one involved in choosing the aide. He or she will feel more invested and comfortable with the decision.

3. "This is for me. I know you don't need help."
Expressing the need as yours, rather than your loved one's, helps maintain her sense of dignity and independence. You can also add that having someone stay at home allows you not to worry while you are gone. Make it clear that you will be coming back.

4. "This is prescribed by the doctor."
Doctors are often seen as authority figures and your loved one may be more willing to accept help if she feels that she is required to do so.

5. "I need someone to help clean."
Even if this is not the real reason, often people will allow someone in to clean when they "don't need" care for themselves.

6. "This is a free service."
This strategy may work if other family members are paying for the home care or if it is, in fact, provided without charge. Your loved one may be more open to using the service since she does not feel that she is spending money for it.

7. "This is my friend."
By pretending that the attendant is a friend of yours you are relating the home care worker to the family. This can help with establishing trust and rapport. You can also say that your "friend" is the one who needs company and that by having him or her over your loved one is helping him out.

8. "This is only temporary."
This strategy depends on the condition of your loved one's memory. If she often forgets what you say, then she may also forget that you said this. By presenting the situation as short-term, you will give some time for your loved one to form a relationship or become comfortable with home care as part of her daily routine and give you a chance for a well-deserved break.

Click here to view the wide range of caregiver resources on the FCA website.

Memory Cafe

CarePartners Initiative 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, June 9
Monday, June 23

Our June 9th Memory Cafe will have a safety theme. We will have retired firefighter Matt Lage discuss tips and checklists to prepare for an emergency. In addition, we will have our Memory Cafe participant Ken Cavalli share about his collection of real firetrucks.
Our June 23rd Memory Cafe will include art and poetry.

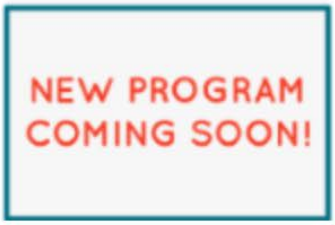
On May 12th we had a very memorable Memory Cafe. We had two ponies from the non-profit Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center visit us. Our participants were able to visit and interact with these gentle giants. It was heartwarming to watch our participants pet and brush the horses. The smiles were abundant. A grateful thank you to Giant Steps for providing Sonoma Valley Memory Cafe with equine therapy. Click here to visit their website.

We also made our own Kentucky Derby hats!

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!

Memory Cafe Adventures - NEW Program!



We have very exciting news to share! Starting in August, we will be launching a THIRD Memory Cafe!!!! Many of you have asked for more Memory Cafes and we listened.

This additional Memory Cafe is called **Memory Cafe Adventures** and will be held 10:00 am – 12:00 pm on the third Thursday of the month. We will be meeting in a different location in our community each month.

The inaugural Memory Cafe Adventures will be on Thursday, August 21. We will be meeting at the Sonoma Valley Community Center and will get a tour of the Community Center and then make clay pots in the pottery center.

We already have plans for the rest of the year to meet at different locations such as the Sonoma Valley Museum, the Sebastiani Theater, the Sonoma Valley Library, etc. Our Sonoma community has been very supportive and eager to work in collaboration with our Memory Cafes.

CarePartners Initiative is honored to continue adding more support for those care partners in our community caring for their loved one living with memory decline.

Memory Cafes in the News

Memory cafes offer camaraderie and fun for people with dementia — and their caregivers

Attendees colored on worksheets with an underwater theme. They drank coffee and returned to the breakfast bar for seconds on pastries. A quick round of trivia gets everyone's minds working. "We start out with just little trivia, many of us cannot answer any of the questions," Kennedy said with a laugh. "We all have a good time going around," he added. "You know, we all try to make it fun."

Kennedy comes to this memory cafe twice a month since being diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's disease in his late 50s. Everyone here has a degree of memory loss or is a caregiver for someone with memory loss.

The room, decorated with an under-the-sea theme, had a balloon arch decked out with streamers meant to look like jellyfish and a cloud of clear balloons mimicking ocean bubbles.

Rob Kennedy mingled with about a dozen other people in a community space in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania.

This memory cafe in northeast Pennsylvania is one of more than 600 across the country. These gatherings for people with cognitive impairment and their caregivers are relatively cheap and easy to run — often the only expense is a small rental fee for the space.

As state and local health departments nationwide try to make sense of what the potential loss of $11 billion of federal health funding will mean for the services they can offer their communities, memory cafe organizers believe their work may become even more important.

Kennedy's diagnosis forced him to retire, ending a decades long career as a software engineer at the University of Scranton. He recommends memory cafes to other people with dementia and their families.

"If they're not coming to a place like this, they're doing themselves a disservice. You got to get out there and see people that are laughing."

The memory cafes happen twice a month. They have given him purpose, Kennedy said, and help him cope with negative emotions around his diagnosis.

"I came in and I was miserable," Kennedy said. "I come in now and it's like, it's family, it's a big, extended family. I get to meet them. I get to meet their partners. I get to meet their children. So, it's really nice."

Click **here** to read the full article.

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: Wednesday, June 18** (moved from the 4th Wednesday to the 3rd Wednesday for June only)

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.

Please **RSVP** here 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 ZOOM caregiver support group each month.
1st Tuesday of the month, 12:00-1:30 pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
- **Upcoming: July 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.

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

Social Activities Group

May Social Activity

We had a wonderful time at our private farm tour, hosted by Brian, owner of Vintage Kennels! The above photo is of a 10-day old foal. There were also baby swans, baby guinea hens and a super-cute baby dwarf cow. Everyone enjoyed their hands-on pet therapy. Hats off to owners Brian and Mike for their continued support of CarePartners!

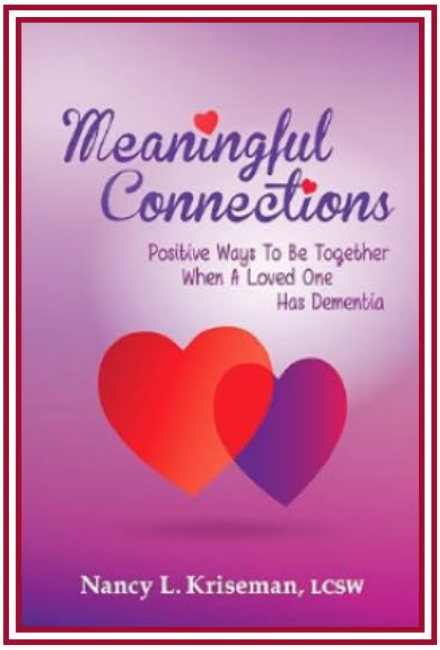
Please note there will be no Social Activity in June.

SAVE THE DATE!

July Social Activity
Date: Monday, July 21
Time: 11:30 am
Location: Sonoma Garden Park
19996 7th Street E, Sonoma

Please join us for a bring your lunch gathering at The Sonoma Garden Park. A good time is had by all while enjoying the outdoors, socializing, and listening to live music.

Book Report



Meaningful Connections: Positive Ways To Be Together When A Loved One Has Dementia
by Nancy L Kriseman (Author)

This book helps family caregivers and other care partners find new ways to engage and have meaningful connections with loved ones who have Alzheimer's or other types of dementia.

Suggestions, ideas, and case examples and presented throughout the book to help caregivers have more positive visits. Chapters and content include:

- Description of the dementia abilities continuum, a simple tool which helps caregivers assess their loved one's cognitive abilities in order to determine the best ways to engage in more meaningful ways.
- Tips to create 'person-centered' ways of engaging using past hobbies, interests, and passions, which can stimulate memory and positive emotions. Each category contains different types of activities, ideas, and items that can be used when visiting.
- How to create 'Grab & Go Activity Boxes,' which are a collection of items based upon a loved one's interests and can be a great way to connect with a loved one.
- Practical tips on the best ways to visit, and on how to handle challenging situations, such as when a loved one is agitated, restless, distracted or asks to go home.
- Recommendations on how to adapt activities as your loved one's cognitive abilities decline.
- Suggestions on how to cope with the difficult feelings, such as guilt, anger and sadness, as well as how to be with your loved one at the end of life.

Resource Corner

Dementia Action Alliance
An Outreach Initiative Of The Eden Alternative

Drop in with DAA | via Zoom
Date: Weekly on Tuesdays
Time: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
An open, welcoming space to share, connect and support one another. In these casual conversations, we navigate the ups and downs of dementia life together, celebrating our successes, while offering encouragement, insight and strength through our shared experiences and strategies.
If this is your first time participating, please click here to register.

Caring Connections | via Zoom
Date: Wednesday, June 11 (2nd Wednesday of each month)
Time: 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm
For Care Partners Only. Together, we navigate the challenges of dementia care partnering, exchange practical advice, and foster connections that help lighten the journey. With open conversation and open hearts, we learn, share, and support each other on this path of caring for our loved ones.
If this is your first time participating, please click here to register.

Dementia Discussions | via Zoom
Date: Weekly on Thursdays
Time: 9:30 am - 10:30 am
An educational platform where individuals gather to learn, share and support each other through the dementia journey. Each session features an informative presentation on a dementia-related topic, followed by an open, caring conversation. Together we explore practical strategies for living well and creating a compassionate community.
If this is your first time participating, please click here to register.

Redwood caregiver resource center

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
Date: Tuesday, June 17
Time: 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
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.
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
• To receive Zoom information please contact
Amie at axh@redwoodcrc.org | Telephone: (707) 582-2329

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

The Empowered Caregiver: Supporting Independence | via Zoom
Date: Wednesday, June 4
Time: 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
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.
Supporting Independence focuses on helping the person living with dementia take part in daily activities, providing the right amount of support and balancing safety and independence while managing expectations.
Click here to register. Phone: (800) 543-8312

Coping with Emotions of Caregiving | via Zoom
Date: Wednesday, June 18
Time: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Caring for others is filled with many mixed and varied emotions such as feelings of love, loss, anger, affection, sadness, frustration, and guilt. It's not uncommon for family caregivers to feel lonely and isolated. It takes a lot of physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional energy to care for a loved one. Caregivers often experience a higher rate of stress, anxiety, and depression than those who aren't caregivers. In this class, we will share these emotions and learn about ways to help cope and manage difficult emotions.
Click here to register. Phone: (800) 543-8312

Challenging Dementia Behaviors | via Zoom
Date: Thursday, June 12
Time: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
A 90-minute workshop presented by Valley Caregiver Resource Center. This workshop is designed to help caregivers understand common dementia-related behaviors, learn effective communication strategies, positive ways to respond to troubling dementia-related behaviors, maintain a positive attitude, and have an opportunity to offer and receive support from others.
Click here to register. Phone: (800) 541-8614

Champions of Chaos Supportive Peer Weekly Meeting | via Zoom
Date: Weekly on Wednesdays
Time: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Champions of Chaos is hosted once a week and offered by enABLE Care ManagementSM. The virtual gatherings are always free and always optional. It is a supportive peer weekly meeting for individuals navigating the aging process for someone else. This is a mutual self-help group, not a therapy group. Hopefully, this group will provide emotional, psychological, and moral support for its members. Each of us is encouraged to participate to whatever extent we feel comfortable.

How the Free Champions of Chaos Group Works:
Complete the registration form.
Receive a link to the one-hour weekly call.
Join as you can/need to.

Whether you need to vent, need to brainstorm resources or solutions, or just know that you are not alone in the chaos of helping someone through the challenging chapters of their lives, enABLE invites you to join whenever you can.

Types of Chaos you might be Championing for someone in decline:

- Worries about COVID-19
- Fall worries or issues
- Concerns about finances
- Wondering am I doing enough?
- Resources or tips to help
- Guilt
- Frustration
- Little wins or magical moments!
- Gratitude
- Hope

Click here to learn more or to register. Phone: (415) 828-3733

Calming Your Worried Mind: Understanding Anxiety & Reducing Stress | via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, June 10
Time: 10:30 am - 11:30 am
Join us as the Insights Program from Independence at Home (A SCAN Community Service), provides a detailed overview about anxiety and stress, engages participants in guided imagery and mindfulness exercises.
Click here to register. Phone: (916) 728-9333

Caregiver Self-Care: Essential Brain Health Tips | via Zoom
Date: Wednesday, June 11
Time: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
"Living Healthier with Brain Builders" presented by Dr. Arvinder Bir, provider affiliated with Optum Care Network- Desert Cities, focuses on promoting brain health through various lifestyle habits. It includes six key tips for maintaining brain health: exercising the brain, continuous learning, getting enough sleep, eating healthily, staying physically active, and being social. Dr. Bir also emphasizes the importance of a holistic, team-based approach to healthcare, aiming to support both patients and caregivers in achieving their health goals and maintaining overall well-being.
Click here to register. Phone: (800) 675-6694

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

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.

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. Click here for a short video that summarizes it well.

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.

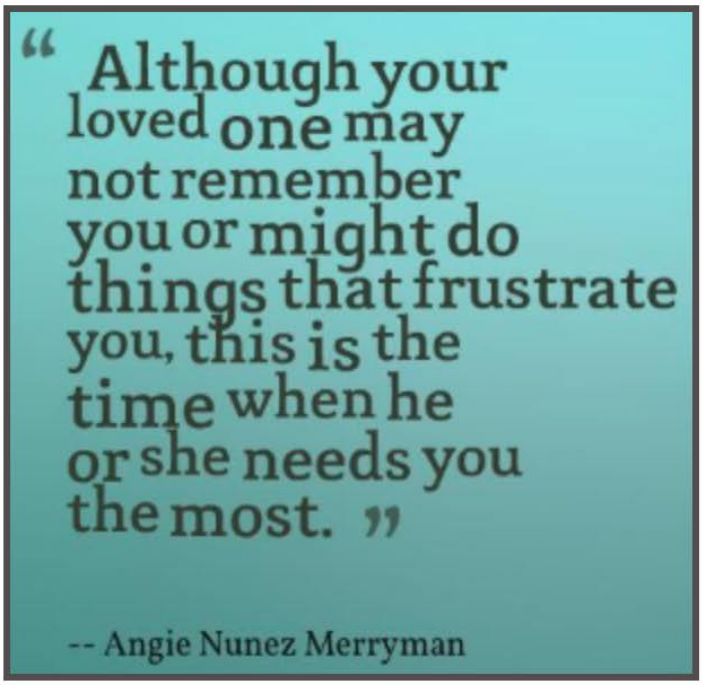
Volunteers Needed!

Looking for 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 cost-free programs. If you are looking for a rewarding volunteer experience, please contact us at info@carepartnersinitiative.org or call our Helpline (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. 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 and attention.
For more information, please call or email Heidi Lage, LMFT (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

Monthly Quote



A Bit of Humor

Please Consider Donating

We are excited how 2025 is taking shape! We know there is so much more we can do though. We need your help as we expand our cost-free 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 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. Thank you.

501 (c) (3) Tax ID: 94-2524840

Click here to *Donate Now*

Don't forget to visit our website for more information about us and our cost free programs!

carepartnersinitiative.org

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Add us to your address book
Helpline: (707) 732-9436

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