CarePartners INITIATIVE

AUGUST 2025 E-NEWSLETTER

caring for the caregiver

We are excited to bring an **Informative and Fun** Movie Forum to our Sonoma community.

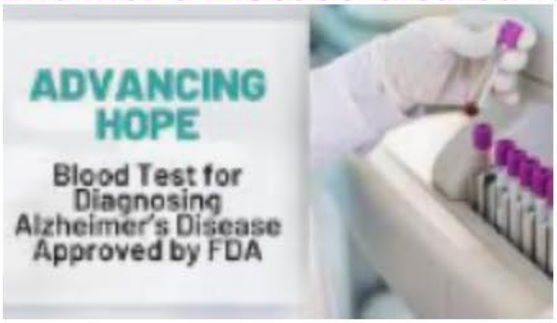
The documentary feature "**Wine, Women, & Dementia**" exposes the isolation, financial stress, physical and emotional toll these family caregivers shoulder for their dementia loved ones and themselves. And in a system that offers few resources or support, they build community, champion each other, and learn to celebrate LIFE on the long road to death.

See the section below to find out more details.

We hope you can join us!

Alzheimer's Test in the News

Alzheimer's Association Statement on First Blood Test Used in Diagnosing Alzheimer's Disease Cleared for Use by FDA



CHICAGO, May 16, 2025 — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has cleared the first blood test to aid in diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. The test detects amyloid plaques, a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease, through a blood draw, making it less invasive than other more commonly used diagnostic tools.

"Today marks another important step in Alzheimer's disease diagnosis," said Maria C. Carrillo, Ph.D., Alzheimer's Association chief science officer and medical affairs lead. "For too long Americans have struggled to get a simple and accurate diagnosis; with today's action by the FDA we are hopeful it will be easier for more individuals to receive an accurate diagnosis earlier."

While there is no single, stand-alone test to diagnose Alzheimer's disease today — including this newly approved test — blood testing can be an important piece of the diagnostic process. Currently, physicians primarily use other, more well-established diagnostic tools combined with medical history, neurological exams, cognitive and functional assessments, brain imaging, spinal fluid analysis — and, increasingly, blood tests — to make an accurate diagnosis and to understand which patients are eligible for approved treatments. Click here to read the article in its entirety.

Caring.com Article

Article by: Alissa Sauer

The Difference Between Normal Memory Loss vs. Dementia

Understanding the difference between normal memory loss vs. dementia is an important part of health and wellness in aging. Forgetfulness happens to people of all ages and can become a more common experience for older adults. We have all forgotten where we placed our car keys, why we walked into a room, or even the name of someone we just met. Small lapses in memory are a natural part of life and aging.

However, when memory loss becomes more severe, interferes with daily life, and impacts our ability to perform everyday tasks, it may be something more serious. Unlike age-related cognitive decline, dementia is marked by more consistent memory problems. **Signs of dementia:**

In contrast to normal aging memory loss, the signs of dementia are longer lasting, more serious, and interfere with everyday life. Recognizing the signs of dementia can be crucial in getting timely support and treatment. Here are some common indicators to watch for:

- Memory Problems Affecting Everyday Activities: Forgetting recently learned information, important events, or repeatedly asking for the same details.
- Challenges with Routine Tasks: Having trouble completing everyday tasks like cooking, paying bills, or navigating familiar routes.
- Disorientation with Time and Place: Losing track of dates, seasons, or locations or forgetting how they arrived somewhere.
- Difficulty with Visual and Spatial Understanding: Struggling with reading, judging distances, or recognizing colors, which can impact activities like driving.
- Frequently Misplacing Items and Difficulty Retracing Steps: Putting items in unusual places and being unable to retrace steps to locate them.
- Mood and Personality Shifts: Experiencing mood swings, confusion, fear, or becoming more withdrawn than usual.

Click here to read the entire article and explore their website.

Forum

Wine, Women, & Dementia

SAVE THE DATE

What:
- **Opening Speaker**
- **Documentary feature film "Wine, Women, & Dementia"**
- **Closing Q & A session**

Where: Sonoma Community Center, 276 E. Napa Street, Sonoma
When: Saturday, October 25 | Time: 3:00 - 5:30 pm

The world is facing a crisis as baby boomers age into dementia. The U.S. is no exception with an estimated 16 million unpaid dementia family caregivers currently punching dementia in the face every damn day while trying to keep our dementia loved ones and ourselves afloat emotionally, physically, financially.

It's a roadtrip connecting the disconnected - because until there's a cure, there's community.

SYNOPSIS

Seeking healing and comfort in community, a dementia family caregiver roadtrips the U.S. to swap caregiver stories of love, humor, devotion, and death with other dementia caregivers who share this hilariously heartbreaking end-of-life journey.

"Wine, Women, & Dementia" tells the tale of dementia life through the lens of the family caregivers who strive to accept the beauty and the brutality, the hilarious and the horrific - for themselves and their dementia person. It a celebrates family caregivers while exploring themes of familial duty, perseverance, the power of surrender, the aftermath of healing, and most importantly, how to honor LIFE on the long road to death.

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.

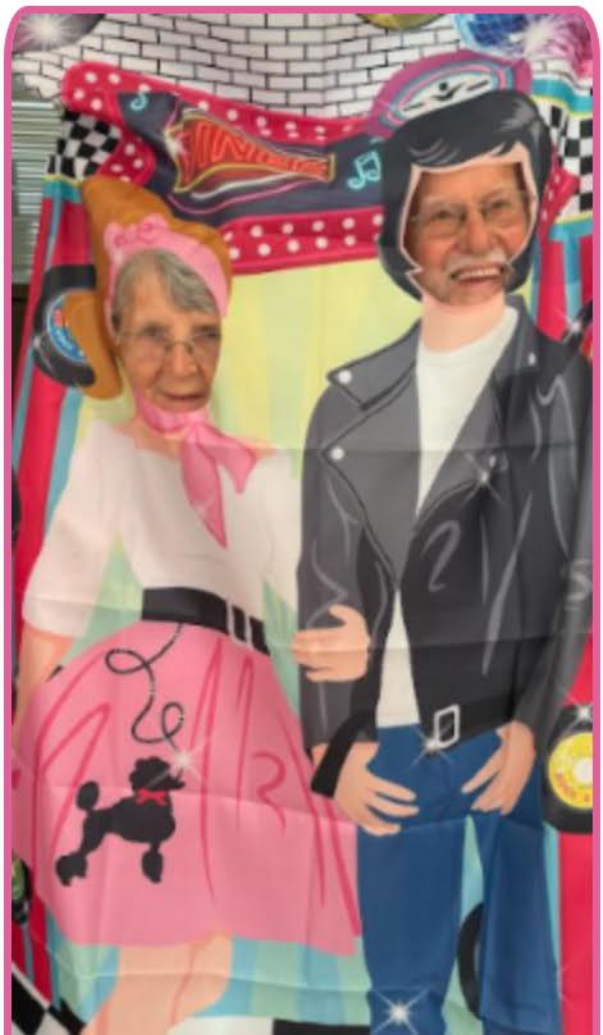
Upcoming Memory Cafe dates: Monday, August 11 and Monday, August 25

Our August 11th Memory Cafe will have our featured guest artist Alana Tillman guide us in painting grapes and grape leaves. This was a very popular event last year. **Please RSVP here** for this Memory Cafe so we can have enough supplies. Here is an article in the Sonoma Index Tribune about her last visit to the Memory Cafe: Memory café features unique painting session - The Sonoma Index-Tribune.

CarePartners Initiative also offers a free Memory Cafe Adventures program once a month on the 3rd Thursday, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, meeting at a different location in Sonoma each month.

Upcoming Memory Cafe Adventure date: Thursday, August 21

On Thursday, August 21st, we will have our Inaugural Memory Cafe Adventures 10:00 am -12:00 pm at The Sonoma Community Center. They will host a tour and history of the historic building, and the pottery instructor will be leading us in a pottery project. **Please RSVP here** as space is limited. Here is a recent article in the Sonoma Index Tribune about our new Memory Cafe Adventures Program: Sonoma's CarePartners Initiative expands memory support offerings - The Sonoma Index-Tribune.



We enjoyed two Memory Cafes in the month of July. On July 14th we enjoyed a 4th of July themed Memory Cafe. We were blessed to have Sunshine Preschool join us to sing some songs. It is always an extra special time when the generations come together for joy!

On July 28th we had a 50's themed Memory Cafe. We enjoyed performances including piano by 19-year-old Charlie Giller and 19-year-old Andrew Bonfigli singing Frank Sinatra songs. Participants brought in photos from the decade, we played famous faces bingo and ended the day with banana split sundaes! The photo above is of Dorothy and Jim Keck, dedicated CarePartners Initiative program attendees.

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.

4th Wednesday, 11:00am - 12:30pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT

- **Upcoming: Wednesday, August 27**

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.

Starting in August, PLEASE NOTE CHANGE from the 1st Tuesday of the month to the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

2nd Tuesday, 12:00-1:30 pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT

- **Upcoming: Tuesday, August 12**

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:
Telephone (707) 640-3734 or email here.

NEW!

CarePartners will offer a free in-person grief support group on the 4th Wednesday of the month beginning September 24, 2:30 - 4:00 pm.

4th Wednesday, 2:30 - 4:00 pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT

- **Upcoming: Wednesday, August 27**

Space is limited to eight (8) people to be sure everyone has enough time to share and receive support. Please contact Heidi for more information: (707) 640-3734 or email here.

Social Activities Group

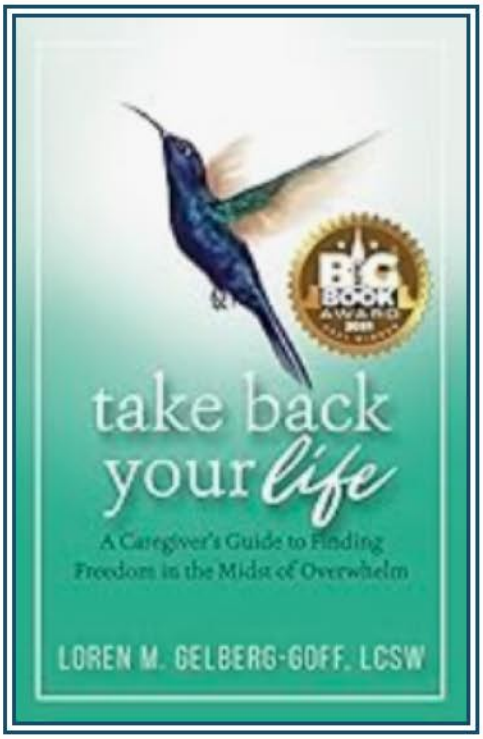
A lovely time was had by all who attended our gathering at the Sonoma Garden Park. The weather was gorgeous and the music (by our wonderful volunteer Brady Hoff) a delight to listen to! Thank you to all who attended to make it enjoyable.

August Social Activity

We are still coordinating with Transcendence Theatre to attend a dress rehearsal for their upcoming September production of "Ladies of Broadway." It will take place towards the end of August. Please watch your email for finalized details and thank you for your patience as we work through the **TBD** details.

TRANSCENDENCE
THEATRE COMPANY

Book Report



Take Back Your Life: A Caregiver's Guide to Finding Freedom in the Midst of Overwhelm
by Loren M. Gelberg-Goff (Author)

What starts as loving, compassionate care becomes an isolating, stressful, never-ending race to get everything done. Inevitably, anger and resentment creep in toward the person being cared for and other family members who don't pitch in or to both.

Guilt and shame for not feeling loving all the time get added to the mix. Worst of all, most caregivers have no support system and no plan for taking good care of themselves first so they can keep going without falling apart. Is there hope for a better life?

Yes! In Take Back Your Life: A Caregiver's Guide to Finding Freedom in the Midst of Overwhelm, psychotherapist, hypnotherapist and experienced family caregiver Loren Gelberg-Goff shows you exactly how to have a life, feel that loving connection you thought was gone, stop arguing and get cooperation from your siblings and others to find other resources to guarantee that much-needed you time.

Resource Corner

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, August 19
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 | via Zoom
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 | Phone: (707) 582-2329

Evening Caregiver Support Group | via Zoom
(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 | Phone: (707) 582-2329

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

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

Restoring Balance: Meditation and Mindfulness for Caregivers | via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, August 12
Time: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
A 90-minute workshop presented by Valley Caregiver Resource Center. This workshop is designed to support caregivers in exploring the powerful benefits of mindfulness and meditation. This session will highlight how these practices can positively impact your well-being while navigating the challenges of caregiving. We're excited to welcome Heather Youpel, who will share practical tips for staying present and incorporating simple meditation techniques into your daily routine. Join us for this insightful workshop and discover how small moments of mindfulness can make a big difference.
Click here to register. Phone: (800) 541-8614

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 email Susanne here.

We hope you have an opportunity to stop by the Vintage House library to delve into all our resource shelf has to offer.

Vintage House Senior Center is located at 264 1st St. East, Sonoma.

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.

Help Us Make a Difference!

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!

"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

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

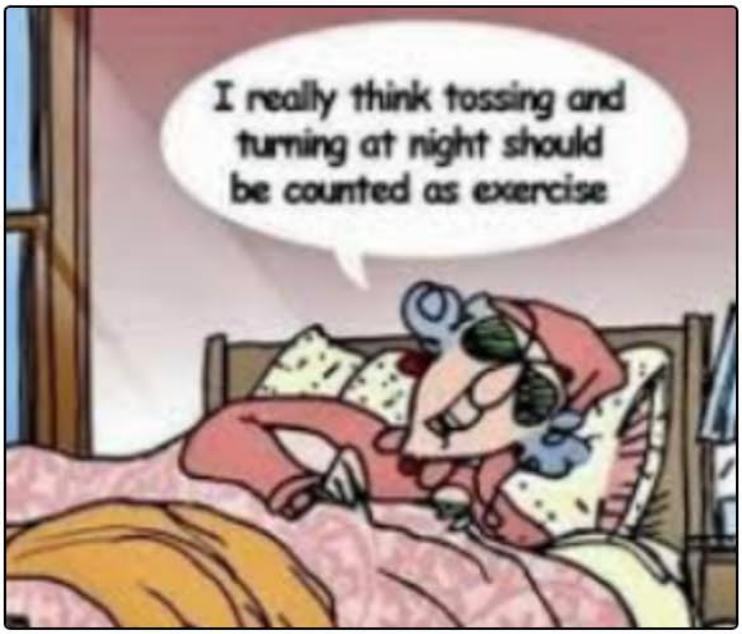
Click here to
Donate Now

Monthly Quote

"Release in your mind who your loved one used to be and accept who they are today."

-- J. Rusnakub

A Bit of Humor



Don't forget to visit our website for more information about us and our no cost programs!
carepartnersinitiative.org

CarePartners Initiative
P.O. Box 101
Sonoma, CA 95476

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

Copyright © 2025 CarePartners Initiative, All rights reserved.