DECEMBER 2025 E-NEWSLETTER

caring for the caregiver

We wish you and your family a peaceful and restful holiday season, sending strength and support to you and your loved one.

May your holidays be filled with laughter, love, and happiness.

With caring thoughts and warm wishes,
Your CarePartners Initiative Family

National Contest Entry
Our Memory Cafe Video with Original Song

In our last newsletter we shared that CarePartners Initiative entered a nationwide contest to raise awareness about Memory Cafes. Alyssa Bonfigli, daugher of Memory Cafe Director Heidi Lage, created a video about our Memory Cafe that incorporates an original song written and performed by our very own music volunteer Brady Hoff!

We are thrilled and honored to win for Most Creative!
Please click HERE to watch and share with your friends.

Memory Cafe - Two Year Anniversary

November marks the 2nd Anniversary of our Memory Cafe program!

We will be celebrating our 2nd Anniversary at our **December 8th** Memory Cafe. Please join us in celebrating this milestone that you helped us achieve! We will present our winning video, along with a few other videos winning in different categories. We will also have a tribute table to honor our participants who have passed away this year. And, as usual, we will have snacks, coffee and tea.

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, December 8
Monday, December 22

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!

Our final Memory Cafe for 2025 will be on **December 22nd**. This is our very festive and fun holiday *Christmas Carol Sing Along* Memory Cafe. We will have Santa hats, elf hats, and reindeer antlers if you so choose. And, back by popular demand will be our resident college student volunteers, Charlie Giller on piano and Heidi's son Andrew Bonfigli providing vocals. You won't want to miss it. Two years in a row it has been our most popular Memory Cafe of the year!

Our "Thankful"-themed Memory Cafe was held on November 24th. The question of the day was **"What is one thing you are most thankful for?"** There were so many touching answers, and many participants were thankful for their loved one. We created beautiful centerpieces for our holiday tables out of pumpkins. We have some very talented members in our CarePartners community! The end result was impressive - just take a look at the cheerful photos below!

Memory Cafe Adventures

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.

On November 20th we had our Memory Cafe Adventure Program at Pets Lifeline. They brought in therapy dogs from LAPS (Loving Animals Providing Smiles). We are so grateful to Pets Lifeline for their enthusiastic support of our program and partnership. There were many smiles and lots of animal love shared during our time there! We even got to go upstairs and visit all the cats and kittens as well.

★ Upcoming Memory Cafe Adventures Date: **Wednesday, December 10**
(For December ONLY due to holiday scheduling our adventure will be on Wednesday rather than Thursday.)

We will be meeting at the Sonoma Charter School (17202 Sonoma Hwy) from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm to work with their 8th grade leadership class in the art room painting winter landscapes. RSVP is required as there is a limit to participants. Please RSVP HERE.

PLEASE NOTE: **Starting in 2026 Memory Cafe Adventures will be on the 3rd Wednesday instead of the 3rd Thursday.** We heard from many participants that they couldn't attend Thursdays because they attend the Senior Social Club at Vintage House. We are here to serve you, heard your suggestion, and we listened!

Support Groups for Caregivers (in-person and Zoom)

CarePartners offers a free in-person support group each month.
Location:
Sonoma United Methodist Church Community Room,109 Patten St., Sonoma

4th Wednesday, 11:00am - 12:30pm | Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
★ **Upcoming: Wednesday, December 17** (Due to holiday scheduling this is the 3rd Wednesday rather than the regular 4th Wednesday.)

Please consider joining us. It is a confidential space to share challenges and successes with other caregivers. It is truly validating to be in the company of others who intimately understand the journey of a caregiver.

Please **RSVP** here to let us know if you plan to attend. We are limiting the support groups to 10 people to be sure everyone has adequate time and space to share.

CarePartners offers a free ZOOM caregiver support group each month.

2nd Tuesday, 12:00-1:30 pm | Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
★ **Upcoming: Tuesday, December 9**

Please **RSVP** here to let us know if you plan to attend. We are limiting the support groups to 10 people to be sure everyone has adequate time and space to share. You may attend both our two monthly caregiver support groups (one in-person and one via Zoom) as space allows.

Please contact Heidi for a short intake and the Zoom link. Telephone (707) 640-3734 or email here.

CarePartners offers a free in-person grief support group.

4th Wednesday, 2:30 - 4:00 pm | Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
Location:
Sonoma United Methodist Church Community Room, 109 Patten St., Sonoma

Our grief support group has been well received and this inaugural 4-session series is full. We are already receiving requests to attend the next session which will be in 2026. If you are interested in attending the grief support group in the new year, please let us know by sending us an email here. Dates TBD.

The grief support group is for those who have lost their loved one due to dementia. It is a closed group. The grief support group is the same group of people for the entire series and includes a psychoeducation component. Each session builds on the previous session.

Social Activities Group

December Social Activity

Please join us on **Sunday, December 7**, 1:00 - 3:00 pm for a special treat! The **Sonoma Conservatory of Dance** has graciously invited us to a dress rehearsal of *The Snow Maiden*. The Conservatory of Dance is located at 561 Broadway, Suite B, across the street from Peet's Coffee. If you plan to attend, please RSVP by December 5th to Susanne at sippelsusanne@gmail.com. Thank you to Patty for your gracious invitation!

November Social Activity

A joyous time was had by all in attendance at our November social activity!

Our very gifted local florist, Anne Appleman, brought supplies and helped us make lovely fall arrangements to bring home.

Thank you to Anne for a wonderful activity and your continued support of CarePartners Initiative. We are so blessed by her time and talent!

Anne Appleman
flowers

Please Consider Donating

We need your help as we expand our **no cost 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

Resource Corner

Redwood caregiver resource center

Caregiver 101 Class via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, December 16 | 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
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

Home and Community Based Alternatives Waiver Program (Medi-Cal Program Series)
Date: Friday, December 5 | Via Zoom
Time: 1:00 - 2:00 pm
Join us for a presentation with Community Legal Aid SoCal to learn about the Home and Community Based Alternatives Waiver Program including program benefits, eligibility and how to get connect to services.
Click here to register. Phone: (800) 543-8312

Coping with Emotions of Caregiving
Date: Tuesday, December 16 | Via Zoom
Time: 10:00 - 11:30 am
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

Caregiver's Holiday Toolkit: Tips for Thriving, Not Just Surviving
Date: Monday, December 22 | Via YouTube Livestream
Time: 3:00 - 3:30 pm
Click here to watch.

The Gift of Presence: Joy in Small Moments
Date: Tuesday, December 9 | Via Zoom
Time: 10:30 - 11:30 am
Discover how mindfulness can help you slow down, reduce stress, and find joy in simple holiday traditions. This session offers practical tools to stay present and create meaningful moments with your loved ones, even during a busy season. Caregivers will leave with easy strategies to nurture both themselves and those they care for.
Click here to register. Phone: (916) 728-9333

Champions of Chaos Supportive Peer Weekly Meeting
Date: Weekly on Wednesdays | Via Zoom
Time: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
The virtual gatherings are always free and always optional. 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. Everyone is encouraged to participate to whatever extent comfortable whether you need to vent, need to brainstorm resources or solutions, or just know that you are not alone

How meeting works: Complete the registration form. Receive a link to the one-hour weekly call. Join as you can/need to. Click here to learn more or to register.
Phone: (415) 828-3733

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 Sipple 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.

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 here or call our Helpline (707) 732-9436. We look forward to hearing from you!

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 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

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

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