FEBRUARY 2026 E-NEWSLETTER

The CarePartners Initiative team held our annual **Volunteer Appreciation Party** at our January 26th Memory Cafe. We are so grateful to our volunteers for their continued support and precious gift of time. They enable us to bring our important programs to Sonoma Valley. We could not do it without **YOU**!

We celebrated all our invaluable volunteers and, our dedicated music volunteer, **Brady Hoff**, was selected as our "**2025 Volunteer of the Year**." It is a well-deserved award - **Congratulations Brady!**

Volunteers pictured with Brady above left to right, Pat Severson and Susan Murray.

Why We Volunteer

Pat Severson shares how Memory Cafe became a place of healing and renewal. "It began when Kathy C. suggested this might be a healing place for my husband, Richard, because he had really grieved the loss of volunteering. This would be something he could do. He came home so excited and told me I had to go too." She discovered that "When I went, I could see the life being recreated there for so many people. My heart has grown because of the people there and what has happened there. It is so fulfilling. It warms my heart to see it — the rebirth of life for so many people."

Brady Hoff, who donates through his music, passionately states, "Everybody likes a little music — and live music is better than a speaker. It is here with CarePartners Initiative where I saw I could fit in with what was needed. This may be some of the last times folks have to be around people, outside of their homes or only with their caregiver. They need to know the joy of human connection."

Susan Murray reflects on the joy and dignity that a Memory Cafe creates. "One of the things that I think is wonderful about the folks with memory loss who come with their caregivers is that it is a time to have so much fun with regular folks — and often with children — which I don't think happens very often in the real world. Being out and having fun together really matters. People with these issues can have a lot of fun. It's not doom and gloom for them, when isolated at home. They can get out and have a fun life with joy." About what volunteering gives back, she says "I get more than I give — it comes back. I see what programs like this can do for people, and I wish that there could be many more."

Volunteer Appreciation Party participants pictured above are Barbara and Greg Hughes (on the left) and Jeanie and Richard Schram.

The 5th grade class from Prestwood Elementary School came to help us serve brunch for Kindness Week. Our *question of the week* was "What is your favorite thing about volunteering?" It was a win-win for all involved as all the adults enjoyed the kiddos and the kiddos learned from the adults about why they volunteer. Thank you, 5th graders, from Prestwood!

Volunteer - 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!

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, February 9
Monday, February 23

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. They are free to attend. We hope to see you!

For the Memory Cafe on January 12th, we welcomed in the New Year with music, singing and vision boards!

CarePartners Initiative has creative Memory Cafes planned for February.

Our first Memory Cafe in February is scheduled for Monday, **February 9th**. It is our annual Valentine's themed Memory Cafe. Please join us in wearing pink and red and bring a photo of your sweetheart (spouse, partner, child, grandchild, pet) to share with the group. Last year we had so much fun figuring out who was who in the wedding photos from so long ago.

Our second Memory Cafe takes place on **February 23rd** and will have an art/poetry theme.

Memory Cafe Adventures

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

Our January Memory Cafe Adventure was held at the **Black Bear Diner** on January 21st and was so much fun!

We had our own special menu, and we played old fashioned BINGO with prizes.

Thank you to the Black Bear Diner for your partnership and making us feel so welcomed.

★ Upcoming Memory Cafe Adventures Date: **Wednesday, February 18**

We will be meeting at the **Sonoma Community Center** from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm to have fun doing a textile art project with Jill Valavanis, their Visual Arts Director. RSVP is required as there is a participant limit. Please RSVP HERE. The Community Center is located at 276 E Napa St., Sonoma

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Reminder: Starting in 2026, our Memory Cafe Adventures are held 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

★ CarePartners Initiative 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, February 25

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 Initiative offers a free Zoom caregiver support group each month.

2nd Tuesday, 12:00 - 1:30 pm | Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
Upcoming: Tuesday, February 10

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 Initiative offers a free in-person GRIEF support group series.

Weekly Thursdays in April: **4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23** | Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Location: Sonoma United Methodist Church Community Room, 109 Patten Street

The grief support group is a closed group (same people for the series) for those who have lost their loved one due to dementia. Participation in the entire series is required as each session builds on the last. The series will include psychoeducation on grief and loss, journaling, how to incorporate ritual, and traditional support from peers who understand the unique pain of losing someone you love to dementia. The group size is limited to six people. We have four spots remaining. Please **RSVP** here by March 15 to reserve your spot.

Our Monthly Program Flyer

CarePartners INITIATIVE

CarePartners Initiative supports caregivers and their loved ones living with dementia and other forms of memory decline. We provide transformative programs that offer relief, connection and confidence at no cost. Listed below are the programs we offer this month.

Monthly Schedule of Programs – FEBRUARY 2026

ALL ARE FREE TO ATTEND

❖ **Memory Cafe**
Monday, February 9, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Valentine's themed
Address: 109 Patten Street, Sonoma. No RSVP necessary.

❖ **Zoom Support Group**
Tuesday, February 10, 12:00 - 1:30 pm
Space is limited. Please RSVP by 2/7 to Heidi at heidilagelmft@gmail.com to register and receive a Zoom link.

❖ **Memory Cafe Adventures**
Wednesday, February 18, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Sonoma Community Center, 276 E. Napa St., Sonoma
Textile art project with Jill Valavanis, Visual Arts Director.
RSVP by 2/15 to Heidi at heidilagelmft@gmail.com.

❖ **Memory Cafe**
Monday, February 23, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Poetry/art themed
Address: 109 Patten Street, Sonoma. No RSVP necessary.

❖ **In-Person Support Group**
Wednesday, February 25, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm
Address: 109 Patten Street, Sonoma. Space is limited.
Please RSVP by 2/23 to Heidi at heidilagelmft@gmail.com.

Helpline: 707-732-9436 www.carepartnersinitiative.org

Click on the above image to print a copy.

Please Consider Making a Donation

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 helps 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 are grateful for any amount you choose to give. Thank you.

Inquiring Systems Inc. (ISI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit fiscal sponsor of CarePartners Initiative. ISI 's Tax ID: 94-2524840

Featured Resource

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

Savvy Caregiver (6-Week Webinar/Phone Training)

Tuesdays - March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and April 7 | Time: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

This free six-week class is designed to equip family members and caregivers of people living with Alzheimer's or other dementia gain a better understanding of the disease, develop skills to assess abilities and manage the day-to-day care of the person living with dementia and more. This is an opportunity. Improve your knowledge, approach, skills and outlook. Gain the confidence to set and achieve caregiving goals. The Savvy Caregiver Training Program provides over 12-hours of training and a caregiver manual.

This program goes beyond introductory education offerings. Based on research by experts in caregiving techniques, this six-week course from the Alzheimer's Association will provide clinical-level training for family caregivers. Participants will graduate with:

- Enhanced knowledge, skills and caregiving outlook
- Skills to assess the abilities of your loved one with dementia
- Confidence to set and alter caregiving goals
- Strategies to manage activities of daily living
- Perspective on the course of Alzheimer's and related disorders

Requires pre-registration and screening prior to participation.
Savvy Caregiver Trainings are designed for family caregivers only.
Contact: Ms. Rachel E Main, BS. Phone: (415) 463-8505
Click HERE **for pre-registration form.** 24/7 Helpline: (800) 272-3900

Resource Corner

Mindful Caregiving with Roy Remer from the Zen Caregiving Project
Date: Friday, February 6 | Time: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Location: Vintage House Senior Center (Room 105), 264 First St., Sonoma
Zen Caregiving Project's Executive Director, Roy Remer, will deliver a presentation to the Vintage House audience introducing the Mindful Caregiving Education (MCE) program. This interactive presentation will detail how MCE, which integrates mindfulness practices with caregiving skills, can significantly reduce stress and enhance the emotional well-being of caregivers. Roy will cover the core principles of the program, including tools for self-compassion, managing challenging emotions, and maintaining presence in the face of suffering. The goal is to provide Vintage House Sonoma attendees with a clear understanding of the MCE approach and demonstrate its practical benefits for those supporting family members or friends. Roy has been an end-of-life caregiver and educator since 1997. Free and open to the community. Click here to register.

Caregiver 101 Class via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, February 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.

Understanding Alzheimer's & Dementia
Date: Wednesday, February 4 | Via Zoom
Time: 9:00 - 10:00 am
Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging. Join us to learn about the impact of Alzheimer's; the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia; stages and risk factors; current research and treatments available for some symptoms; and Alzheimer's Association resources.
Click here to register. Phone: (800) 543-8312

Types of Dementia: Not Just Alzheimer's
Date: Tuesday, February 24 | Via Zoom
Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Alzheimer's is the most well-known, but there are many different types of dementia. Learn about the unique symptoms, progression, and care considerations for conditions such as Lewy body, vascular, and frontotemporal dementia.
Click **here** to register. Phone: (800) 543-8312

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 the 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 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.

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.

Please visit our website to learn more!
carepartnersinitiative.org

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

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