APRIL 2026 E-NEWSLETTER

caring for the caregiver

Held in April every year, **National Volunteer Month** is a time to celebrate and recognize the profound impact volunteers have on communities and to encourage people to get involved. This month serves as a reminder that even small acts of service can create a significant positive effect in communities.

Key Aspects of National Volunteer Month:
• **Significance**: Officially established in 1990 to celebrate, recognize, and encourage community service.
• **Purpose**: To shine a spotlight on the millions of people who give their time to make a difference, and to inspire others to give back
• **Benefits**: Volunteering is shown to reduce stress, improve mental and physical health, and help individuals build new skills.
• **Spread the word**: Use the power of social media and other platforms to share your volunteering experiences and inspire others to join in. Your stories have the potential to ignite the passion of someone looking to make a difference.

Highlighted by **National Volunteer Week (April 19–25, 2026)**, it serves as a time to honor those who support nonprofits, schools, and local organizations. The week serves as a centerpiece for an amazing month of service.

Sonoma Valley Star Volunteer Awards

CONGRATULATIONS to one of our very own volunteers, **Brady Hoff,** who was honored as a “Star Volunteer” at Catalyst Fund’s annual Star Volunteer Awards Ceremony! Brady has been an integral part of our Memory Cafe program bringing music and songs since its beginning two years ago. He also brings his talents to our Memory Cafe Out & About program. He created an original song for our Memory Cafes called "Sunflower" which helped win an award for our video in national competition! Brady also performs for other senior facilities in our area. They often pay Brady a fee which he in turn donates to CarePartners. He has already donated over a thousand dollars to CarePartners Initiative. We are blessed and grateful to have Brady on our team!

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. This year's event took place on March 21 at Vintage House. At the awards ceremony each Star Volunteer received a trophy provided by Catalyst Fund, as well as certificates from Supervisor Rebecca Hermosillo and Representative Mike Thompson.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SONOMA COUNTY

Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund is a fund
of Community Foundation Sonoma County

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 – APRIL 2026

ALL ARE FREE TO ATTEND

- **Memory Cafe**
  Monday, April 13, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
  Spring theme
  Address: 109 Patten Street, Sonoma. No RSVP necessary.

- **Zoom Support Group**
  Tuesday, April 14, 12:00 - 1:30 pm
  Space is limited. RSVP by 4/11 to Heidi at heidilagelmft@gmail.com to register and receive a Zoom link.

- **Social Activities Group**
  Sunday, April 12, 1:00 – 3:00 pm
  Sonoma Conservatory of Dance, 561 Broadway, Suite B, Sonoma
  Dress rehearsal of Por la Luz de la Luna. Space is limited.
  RSVP by 4/10 to Susanne at sippelsusanne@gmail.com.

- **Memory Cafe Out & About** (formerly Memory Cafe Adventures)
  Wednesday, April 15, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
  Pets Lifeline, 19686 8th St. E, Sonoma
  Space is limited. RSVP by 4/12 to Heidi at heidilagelmft@gmail.com.

- **Memory Cafe**
  Monday, April 27, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
  Cinco de Mayo theme
  Address: 109 Patten Street, Sonoma. No RSVP necessary.

- **In-Person Support Group**
  Wednesday, April 22, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm
  Address: 109 Patten Street, Sonoma. Space is limited.
  RSVP by 4/19 to Heidi at heidilagelmft@gmail.com.

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

Memory Cafe

At the **March 9th** Memory Cafe we celebrated **St. Patrick's Day**. We shared limericks, enjoyed movement with Irish gig music and we even had a few participants come dressed as leprechauns! We love your spirit! Heidi's niece, Luella White, brought her rabbit "Cinnabun" for all of us to pet. We ended the day with old fashioned bingo with prizes.

The theme of our **March 23rd** Memory Cafe was **Hollywood/Oscars**. So many of our participants came dressed up in fancy outfits. We provided pearls for the ladies and bow ties and top hats for the men. Heidi's daughter, Alyssa Bonfigli, gave us some behind the scenes movie facts that she learned while running a production company in college. Brady Hoff gave us information on music for movies and sang famous movie songs for us. Ken Cavalli donated Ostrich eggs for us to decorate for Easter! We called them "Oscar" eggs to match our theme. A grand time was had by all!

★ Upcoming Memory Cafe Dates

Our Memory Cafe on **April 13** will be Spring themed. Feel free to wear bright colors and florals.

At the Memory Cafe on **April 27** we will celebrate Cinco De Mayo. We will be serving chips and salsa and non-alcoholic margaritas! Feel free to wear Mexican inspired clothing or the colors of the Mexican flag; red, green and white.

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.

Attending a Memory Cafe is a very important time for loved ones and caregivers to socialize and enjoy 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. We hope to see you!

Memory Cafe Out & About
(formerly Memory Cafe Adventures)

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

For our Memory Cafe Out & About event on **March 18th** we were so lucky to visit the Sonoma Valley Museum of Art. We had a docent led tour of the museum and learned about the art of Maija Peeples-Bright. We ended the tour by making our very own art inspired by the artist. It was a fantastic experience. We wished we could have taken more of our participants; however, the space could not accommodate a larger group. Be sure to RSVP early for our "Out & About" programs.

★ Upcoming Memory Cafe Out & About Date: Wednesday, April 15

Our next Memory Cafe Out & About will take place at **Pets Lifeline.** We will be interacting with therapy dogs and have a chance to visit with the cats. We are only able to bring 12 guests, so please RSVP early if you would like to attend. **RSPV here**.

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, April 22

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 support group each month.**

2nd Tuesday, 12:00 - 1:30 pm | Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
Upcoming: Tuesday, April 14

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 will once again offer 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.

Social Activities Group

April Social Activities Group Event

The Sonoma Conservatory of Dance has graciously invited us to attend a dress rehearsal of *Por la Luz de la Luna.* The Mexican ballet performance is free to attend, and we hope you can join us.

Date: Sunday, April 12 | Time: 1:00 - 3:00 pm
Sonoma Conservatory of Dance is located at 561 Broadway, Suite B, Sonoma.
Please RSVP to Susanne Sippel at sippelsusanne@gmail.com by April 10th.

Featured Article

***presented by* SONOMA VALLEY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION**

Grateful Patient Story: Whitney Evans - Sonoma Valley Hospital Foundation

One of the most remarkable things about Sonoma Valley is the people. They are visionaries. They are doers. They have heart. Whitney Evans is one of them.

Whitney's story is a powerful reminder that health care is at its best when it's rooted in humanity. It's a partnership between patients who believe things can be better, and professionals who have the passion and knowledge to make it so.

He and his wife moved to Sonoma to retire, drawn by the beauty of the valley and the warmth of its community. But instead of settling into a quiet retirement, Whitney became deeply involved— especially when his wife was diagnosed with dementia.

Rather than retreating, Whitney chose to lean in. He became a fierce advocate for caregivers and for those navigating memory loss, determined to show that life with dementia could still be rich, joyful, and full of meaning. Click here to read the entire article.

Resource Corner

Caregiver 101 Class via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, April 21 | Time: 1:30 - 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. Phone: (707) 582-2329

Managing and Understanding Behavior Problems in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, April 7 | Time: 1:30 - 3:30 pm
This video introduces coping strategies for accommodating challenging dementia-related behaviors, including The ABC approach. This approach identifies where caregivers have control and where they do not and can help frustrated caregivers gain a sense of empowerment.
Discussion: Shifting the goal from stopping challenging behaviors from starting to accommodating them, viewing all behavior as an attempt to fill an unmet need, becoming a "detective" to identify needs that difficult behaviors may be seeking to fill, noticing environmental triggers to behavior, practicing the ABC approach to managing difficult behaviors. Click here to register. Phone: (707) 582-2329

Respite Options via Zoom
Date: Wednesday, April 8 | Time: 2:00 - 3:00 pm
Learn about different respite options available to caregivers. It is important for caregivers to take breaks and have time for themselves. This class will provide information on how to access respite services, and how they can benefit family caregivers. Learn about what options are available for respite care, allowing you as a caregiver to take time for yourself to rest, recharge and take care of you. We will discuss:
• Veterans Affairs Benefits • Medicare • Medi-Cal • Grant programs & more
Click **here** to register. Phone: (800) 543-8312

Grief Along the Way: Coping with Ongoing Loss in the Caregiving Journey
Date: Tuesday, April 14 | Time: 10:30 - 11:30 am | via Zoom
The Insights Program from Independence at Home explores the often-overlooked grief caregivers experience as health changes unfold over time. This session helps participants recognize their emotions, understand the impact of ongoing loss, and learn healthy ways to cope. Practical tools and supportive strategies will be shared to promote resilience and healing throughout the caregiving journey. Click here to register. Phone: (916) 728-9333

Champions of Chaos Supportive Peer Weekly Meeting via Zoom
Date: Weekly on Wednesdays | Time: 12:00 - 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

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

Volunteer

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.

Please visit our website to learn more!
carepartnersinitiative.org

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