



Caregiver News

Dear Caregivers,

Much has happened for us since our Spring newsletter. Most notably for me were my recent trips to the communities of Wrangell and Petersburg. Although I have lived in Juneau, Alaska for 25 years, I admit I am not well familiar with many of our southeast communities. My position with the Senior and Caregiver Resource Center will surely change that. One of the most important components of my job is to reach out to all our southeast communities and connect with caregivers. And I am learning this is not quite as easy as it sounds. I've discovered some challenges—one of which is learning that many people who are doing the work of a caregiver do not identify themselves as caregivers. I have heard people say that “oh, I just go by and make sure my mother is ok and cook her dinner” or

“I am not a caregiver, I just give my dad a call each day to make sure he is taking his medication” and “I take her to her appointments and make sure she has groceries in the house, that’s all” and “well, she needs help with getting ready for bed and bathing and sometimes I do the chores around the house, if I have the time.” And, my response to all of these comments is, **“you are a caregiver!”**

One of the reasons many people do not identify themselves as caregivers is because they think they are just doing what they are supposed to be doing. It's tradition to care for our elders. We care for the people we love who have cared for us. But here's the thing: this tradition we hold dear was also a part of other traditions, like having many generations living in the same home sharing family

responsibilities. Earning a living and raising children and preparing meals and doing the household chores and all the other many things we do were shared by many. This was also tradition.

Some traditions have changed! In our modern culture, most of us no longer have large families living under one roof sharing life's burdens and joys. Our families are smaller and we often live farther apart. Now, we find that all these same responsibilities are often done by one or two people. Many of us have children and full time jobs and our homes to care for. And, with our ever growing population of elders, we care for them, too. Caregiving, in whatever form it takes, can be challenging and stressful and we are not meant to do it alone.

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Here are some interesting statistics: 1 in 4 households are caring for persons age 50 years and older; 78% of adults living in the community and in need of long-term care depend on family and friends as their only source of help; 1 in 8 caregivers are also a parent(s) raising their own children. We have become what is known as the “Sandwich Generation”. We are the generation of people who are tasked with caring for both children and elders. And, as we baby boomers continue to grow older (those of us born between 1946 thru 1964), these numbers will continue to grow. Our State of Alaska has the fastest growing population of elders than any other state in the nation. WOW!

So what do we do? There are many things we can do. We can help people identify themselves as caregivers. We can help caregivers to know there are services in place to support them. We can urge caregivers to ask for help, when they need it. And, we can help caregivers know about the Senior and Caregiver Resource Center. That’s us! And, it’s our role to connect with our region’s caregivers and help them to get the support and services they need. We are the people who help care for caregivers. Please call us and let us know how we can support you!

To our collective well-being,

Shelly Smith, Family Caregiver Resource Specialist



Call-in Caregiver Support Group

While relaxing in the comfort of your home, we are connecting caregivers to other caregivers by a call-in support group. Telephone support groups are a time of laughter and tears, sharing helpful tips, encouragement, and peer support. ***To participate in the support group and for more information, call the Senior and Caregiver Resource Center in Juneau 463-6177 and toll-free 866-746-6177.***

Who can participate? Family caregivers who live in Southeast Alaska

When does the group meet? The group meets once per month for one approximately an hour. The group will begin meeting in September.

What does it cost? It’s free!

Where do I go? You don’t have to go anywhere. You can call from the comfort of your home.

How does it work? It’s easy! You call the phone number at the appointed time, enter the code and you are connected with fellow caregivers.

What do I do when the meeting starts? You can just listen or you can join in with comments and questions or in response to other caregivers.

Counselor's Corner

Upholding elders and those who love them.

Individual Support and Private Counseling are available for Seniors or their Family Caregivers who may need someone to talk to.

Do I qualify? If you are 60 years of age or older or you are caring for a person 60 years of age or older, you qualify for free counseling.

In Juneau call (907) 463-6163 or toll free 866-746-6177

Caregiver Self Care Menu

Enjoy your life: Take time away from your caregiving responsibilities to care for yourself, enjoy the people in your life, get exercise and socialize.

Don't try to do it all yourself: It's hard to accept help when it's offered, but please do. It's important to your health and you will be a better caregiver.

Reduce Stress: Take a walk, visit with friends and family, listen to your favorite music, practice yoga and mindfulness, enjoy a cup of tea.

Set Boundaries: Detaching with love can make all the difference in your relationship with your elder. Try to understand that you can not control their behavior. Affirm your love for them but do not tolerate meanness or disrespect. Find alternate care if you need to take a break.

Talk to People: Talk with friends, family and other caregivers. Putting words to experience and sharing your story can be very therapeutic.

Join a Caregiver Support Group: Getting together with other people, either in person or via a call-in group, who are on a similar journey can be very helpful. You benefit from peer acceptance and recognition for common concerns and you may just be grateful for the wisdom, insight and humor of fellow caregivers.

Learn to ask for help: There are many agencies and services your community has put in place to support you. Please communicate your needs and let people know how they can support you.

Contact the Senior and Caregiver Resource Center: We are here to support you on your journey, call 463-6177 (Juneau) or 866-746-6177 toll free. We support caregivers throughout the Southeast Region.





*Southeast Senior Service
Catholic Community Service
419 Sixth Street
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 463-6177
www.ccsjuneau.org
Serving All of Southeast
Call toll free at (866) 746-6177*

To all our caregivers

It's time to renew your registration!

At the beginning of each new fiscal period, we ask you to contact our office to renew your registration with the Senior and Caregiver Resource Center so that you remain eligible to receive our services and mini-grants. July 1, 2017 begins our new fiscal period.

Please contact us soon in Juneau at 463-6177, and toll free throughout Southeast at 866-746-6177

What is Tele-support?

It can be difficult to get the support you need when you live in a remote Alaska community. If you would like to speak with someone about your caregiving experience or need assistance, we offer tele-support to our caregivers region wide.

call toll free 866-746-6177



Film Review

The Sandwich Generation

A Film by Julie Winokur

Julie Winokur and her family lived in California. When Julie's father's health began to decline, she moved her family to New Jersey so they could care for him. This is where their journey begins. Known as the "Sandwich Generation" this film is the story of Julie and her husband and how they take on the care of their aging father along with raising their own children. The film is honest and moving. It provides a family care giving perspective from both the children's point of view as well as from the parents. There are 20 million American families who belong to this demographic

and the numbers are increasing. The Winokur family tells it like it really was for them - care giving is both challenging and rewarding work.

Our Lending Library

The Senior and Caregiver Resource Center has this film and others available for loan to our caregivers. We also offer a variety of books and educational materials on caregiving skills and self-care. If we don't own the resource you are looking for, we will help you find it. Feel free to stop by our lending library in Juneau or give us a call and we will gladly ship items to you where ever you live in Southeast Alaska.

"The Senior and Caregiver Resource Center receives funding from the City and Borough of Juneau and the State of Alaska, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services."