



CAREGIVERS

VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING THE ELDERLY

Summer 1996

Volume 13, Number 3

Helping Caregivers Cope

When One is Sick, Two Need Care

by Laine Waggoner

The endless hardships and obstacles often fill caregivers with emotions of sadness, frustration, guilt, anger, grief, fear, isolation, helplessness, depression, hopelessness and feeling invisible. So say many of this country's millions of family caregivers who are providing care for aged, chronically ill or disabled loved ones.

Their overwhelming emotion is a sense of dismal, unbearable loss, says Maggie Strong, 62, who has been caring for her husband who has multiple sclerosis since 1977. She is the founder of the Well Spouse Foundation. Strong says that the initial reaction to learning of major illness or disability is shock and disbelief.

Then comes a period of mourning, and finally the bleak reality of facing a responsibility that may last endless years. There is also the need to learn about the course of a loved one's serious illness and how much money it will take. "It's as if someone taps



you on the shoulder and says, 'Hey buddy, your future is over,'" she said.

Caregivers mourn the loss of their independence. Their friendships wither. And, the workload can be staggering. As the Well Spouse motto says, "When one is sick, two need care."

Caregivers need not go it alone. Until a few years ago, the needs of caregivers were not generally

recognized. But now there are dozens of resources in Ventura County, plus two national membership organizations which were formed to help caregivers cope. (See the list at the end of this article.)

The national organizations are the National Family Caregivers Association and Well Spouse Foundation. They provide caregivers with information, educational materials, support, validation of feelings, access to respite opportunities and an organization to stand up for their rights.

Over the years, the attention of most medical professionals and caregivers has been on the patient and his/her disease or disability. But, caregivers have tremendous needs, too.

Terrible strain is created by the pressure on the caregiver to be "emotionally correct," writes Janet Belsky, a clinical psychologist who specializes in aging issues. Caregivers are most likely to feel resentful and overwhelmed when they see no end in sight and when family and friends are unsupportive.

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Dedicated Volunteer: Ardelle Faue

by Carol Basralian

Ardelle Faue has been a dedicated CAREGIVERS volunteer for five years. She has taken care of people with Alzheimer's Disease in her home. Thus, their spouses could get some rest or do much-needed chores with the confidence that their loved ones were safe and being lovingly cared for.

A member of Assumption Church, Ardelle takes her faith very seriously as she ministers to these families. Her cases have not

been easy but she explains, "I love working with them and I really enjoy the challenge."

Coming to Ventura from Minneapolis, MN, 20 years ago, Ardelle was an X-ray technician before she married Warren and raised eight children.

Ardelle is but one of our many valuable volunteers. By giving their precious time and energy to our program, they are making our part of the world a better place to live!

Thanks, Ardelle—you are a gem!



Caregivers tend to blame themselves for anything and everything, according to the Well Spouse Foundation, which holds an annual conference and has recently published a variety of pamphlets on topics of interest to caregivers.

Family caregivers frequently have to remind themselves that they should feel affectionate and not be resentful about the demands placed upon them. Feelings of stress are less if there was a lengthy loving relationship before the illness.

Belsky suggests some ways that caregivers can shape their own destinies: Do the most you can but be clear about your limits. Assess your own needs. Assess the effect of your help. Are you doing so much that you are contributing to a reduction in what the patient can accomplish, thus creating what she calls "excess disability."

"Guilt happens. Anger happens. Frustration happens. De-

pression happens. Weariness happens. But you have to make the most of the good moments," writes Claire Berman, a New Yorker who is caring for her mother and her mother-in-law, both in their 90s (the most rapidly growing age group in America).

She adds that information is the most important coping mechanism you can have in the battle against destructive emotions. It is like a life preserver to the drowning.

Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter agrees. She says it's important for caregivers to gather information about their loved one's disease or condition: the symptoms, its course and the kind of care that is needed.

Caregivers in the know keep healthy by acting and reacting in ways to make their lives more pleasant. Different people respond to the challenge in different ways.

Some take advantage of

community resources: visiting nurses, respite care, senior day care centers, home health-care workers and such volunteer organizations as our own CARE-GIVERS. They join support groups. They give themselves a treat. They ask for help from family and friends.

An enormous amount of psychological security is gained when you know that you are not bearing the burden alone.



A Few Good Publications for Caregivers:

Caring Magazine

Belsky, Janet- *Here Tomorrow: Making the Most of Life after 50.*

Berman, Claire- *Caring for Yourself while Caring for Your Aging Parents.*

Brody, Elaine- *Women in the Middle: their parent-care years.*

Carter, Rosalynn- *Helping Yourself Help Others, a book for caregivers.*

Horne, Jo- *Caregiving: Helping an Aged Loved One* (AARP books)

Mall, E. Jane- *How to Care for Your Elderly Mother and Stay Sane*

Local and national resources for information about support groups, adult day care, in-home companions, counseling services and more:

Alzheimer's & Related Diseases Assn. 643-2614

Camarillo Health Care District (also LIFELINE Systems) 388-1952

Family Caregiver Alliance for free information 1-800-445-8106

Handicapables 643-4694

Hospices:

Camarillo 389-5897, Livingston Memorial 656-2005, Ventura 648-7811,

Santa Clara Valley (Santa Paula) 525-1333

Long-term Care Ombudsman Program 656-1986

National Family Caregivers Assn. 1-800-896-3650 for membership information

National Institute on Aging 1-800-222-2225 for list of free publications.

NIA Alzheimer's Disease information 1-800-438-4380

Ventura County Area Agency on Aging, Karen Mondragon 652-7560

Well Spouse Foundation 1-800-838-0879 for membership information.

Executive Director's Message



Pat Meredith, Executive Director

I just ran across another one of those essays about "If I had my life to live over, I'd..." with a laundry list of lost opportunities like planting more flowers, eating more ice cream, climbing more mountains, and swimming more rivers. I have to tell you—these things make me tired. Who needs to waste time cataloguing their regrets? Though I have to admit I have occasionally succumbed to the temptation to beat myself up about past failures, I realize what a ridiculously futile activity this is. What does it solve? What can it

change? How does it improve my life now?

Far better, I think, to live in the moment, paying attention, being open to new opportunities (and taking them when they are offered). Instead of regretting the past I'd rather look to the future and make a commitment to take a few more risks, listen to more music, read more poetry, give more to charity, fly kites with my grandsons (or learn to fly a plane?). I can go to more book fairs and art galleries, let my friends know I love them, be more patient, be of help to someone. I can (don't stop me—I'm on a roll here) learn to do calligraphy, get up earlier, eat less ice cream, get regular exercise, write more letters. Go bird-watching, sunset-watching, and stargazing. Go to Machu Picchu. Learn Italian and watch "Cinema Paradiso" without subtitles. Learn to let go of regrets.

Who wants to live life over again? Instead, let's just do a little attitude adjustment and begin living it now. It's never too late to start.

"Special Drivers" Needed

Transportation is probably the biggest need of the elders who call CAREGIVERS for help. They need to go to the doctor or dentist, but have no way to get there. They need to get to the supermarket for groceries or the pharmacy for medicine. Sometimes they need to go to the hospital for an outpatient procedure or to visit a spouse who is ill.

We need you to join our roster

of "special drivers." Perhaps you have wanted to help us in some way but don't want to get involved in a one-on-one relationship. As a "special driver" you could provide a less-demanding, yet invaluable service to a homebound senior. Tell us whether you are available once a month, twice a month, or weekly. Please call Carol Basralian at 652-0566, to learn more.

Become a Volunteer or Join "Friends of CAREGIVERS"

We always need volunteers to help elders in need.

If you cannot volunteer as a one-on-one caregiver, but would still like to help the program in other ways, join "Friends of CAREGIVERS," an auxiliary group which provides support for community awareness and fund-raising events. To find out more or to join, please call the office at 652-0566.



The Medicine Shoppe
1842 East Main Street
Ventura; phone 648-2724

Great Savings and Good Works
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Save up to 50% on over 100 products at The Medicine Shoppe® during August. They will donate 10 cents of every dollar you spend on non-prescription medications to the Muscular Dystrophy Association. A portion of your contribution will help send a child in your community to MDA camp. So stop by today and send a neighborhood child fishing, camping, and swimming by supporting the MDA.



The Circle of Responsibility is a way for us to bring local businesses into the CAREGIVERS family and show our gratitude for their assistance. When you visit a participating business, please introduce yourself and mention that you read about them in the CAREGIVERS newsletter. Then make a point of going back again. With everyone's help, this can be a mutually beneficial program for CAREGIVERS and for our Circle members.

*Have you remembered
CAREGIVERS
in your will?*

YOUR DONATIONS MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO GIVE A HELPING HAND TO THOSE WHO NEED IT. THANK YOU! (April - June 1996)

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 Amgen Foundation Inc.
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Thank you

We are pleased to announce the receipt of the following grants:

For 1995-96—

PacifiCare Foundation, \$6,000.
 Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation, \$5,000
 Livingston Memorial Foundation, \$5,000
 Amgen Foundation, \$2,500

For 1996-97—

City of San Buenaventura, \$3,774
 Swift Memorial Healthcare Foundation, \$3,000
 United Way of Ventura County, \$14,960

We are so grateful to these organizations for their confidence in our program and for their interest in providing support for frail seniors.

A special heartfelt thank you goes to some special people who helped out in the CAREGIVERS booth at the festive Ventura Police Department Block Party in May.



These special volunteers helped to spread the word about CAREGIVERS services: Norm

Weitzel, Judy
 Frazier, Sister
 Barbara Dugan,
 Rod Brown,
 Lillian Pressel,
 Carol Basralian,
 Luther Tolo,
 Travis Jaedtke,
 Jason Henry and
 Susie Longwill.
 Bouquets to all of you!

Meet New Board Members

CAREGIVERS is pleased to welcome two outstanding new Board members.
Sister Carmen Rodriguez, RSM



Sr. Carmen is Director of St. John's Health Ministries, which addresses the basic unmet needs of the poor as well as establishes health ministry programs in parishes of all faiths.

A Sister of Mercy, Sr. Carmen earned degrees from the University of San Francisco and Russell College. She has served in a variety of nursing staff and supervisory positions and 17 years as a hospital Trustee. She is a member of the Board of Directors of El Centrito de la Colonia, the Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation, Mercy Charities Senior Housing, the Healthy Families Advisory Board and the Salvation Army Youth Group Committee. In spite of her busy schedule, Sr. Carmen finds time for recreation, exercise, gardening, and reading.

Welcome, Pat Ogg



Jack Tingstrom



Jack Tingstrom was appointed Mayor of the City of San Buenaventura on December 4, 1995, after being re-elected to the City Council. He has served on many City committees and is presently its representative on the Association of Water Agencies and the Point Mugu Regional Airport Joint Powers Authority. He is a native Californian and a resident of Ventura for 27 years.

Other community involvements include the Rotary Club, Save our Youth, the Special Olympics Governing Board and the Ventura County Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse. An avid golfer, Jack has served on the CAREGIVERS Golf Tournament Committee for the past two years.

Jack was employed with GTE of California for 30 years. He and his wife, Luana, have two daughters, LeAnn and Catherine, and two grandchildren, Stephen and Kimberly.

We are pleased to welcome Pat Ogg, a new part-time staff member to our CAREGIVERS family who will be working as receptionist in our office on Thursdays.

Pat has many years of experience in supervisory positions in the admissions and records office at Santa Monica City College. She also has worked as secretary at Santa Paula's First Presbyterian Church.

Former residents of Santa Paula, Pat and husband Harry

Volunteers to be Recognized November 3

All our valued CAREGIVERS volunteers are invited to the annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner to be held on Sunday, November 3, at Ventura's Poinsettia Pavilion. The festivities will begin at 4 p.m. with entertainment by the Harmony Channel barbershop quartet.

A delicious barbecue dinner will again be served by the Ventura Marina Rotary Club. All of you volunteers—caregivers, drivers, bulk mailers and office helpers—are invited to join in this afternoon of friendship. It's our humble way of letting you know how much we appreciate you.

We Need Treasures

Clean out your closets! Tidy up your cupboards! Groom your garage! We need your usable "stuff" that you don't need anymore.

Our third annual "Treasure Sale" will take place on October 4th and 5th. We



would like to have your discarded household goods, small appliances, toys, books, bric-a-brac, etc. Everything should be working and in sellable condition.

Please call us at 652-0566 if you have items to donate.

have lived in Ventura for two years. They have three grown children, three grandchildren and a two-month old great-granddaughter.

In her spare time, Pat enjoys quilting and gardening.

A client writes:

"It's a great program! Makes me feel there's someone I can call on at any time."

Coming Events:

Board Meetings
Thursdays 7:00 A.M.
Aug. 15, Oct. 17

Rummage Sale
Oct. 4 and 5
Save your usable discards for us!
Call for pick-up: 652-0566

Save the Date!
Golf Tournament
Friday, March 14, 1997

Labor Day
Sept. 2
Office closed

Volunteer Recognition
Sun. Nov. 3, 4:00 P.M.
Poinsettia Pavilion



Buenaventura Interfaith Volunteer CAREGIVERS

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CAREGIVERS' MISSION – To provide a reliable personal relationship between one volunteer and one elder in need of assistance. Without the kind of services we offer, frail elders may find themselves living in unfamiliar, impersonal institutions, with a debilitating sense of having lost both independence and dignity. By matching volunteers with elders who need assistance, CAREGIVERS permits many of them to remain in the familiar and cherished surroundings of their own homes.

CAREGIVERS, an interfaith effort, is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and is grateful for the financial assistance of Trinity Lutheran Church, Ventura; First United Methodist Church, Ventura; Ventura County Church of Religious Science, Ventura; Sisters of the Holy Cross; National Council of Jewish Women; First United Methodist Women; and St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Santa Paula.

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