

one source Empowering Caregivers

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021



National Family Caregivers Month

National Family Caregivers Month – celebrated each November -- is a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country.

National Family Caregivers Month raises awareness of family caregiver issues, celebrates the efforts of family caregivers, educates family caregivers about self-identification, and increases support for family caregivers.

Caregiver Action Network is the organization that chooses how to celebrate National Family Caregivers Month annually and spearheads the celebration of NFC Month nationally. Each year, Caregiver Action Network makes materials available for general use, including the theme, a media kit, posters, sample proclamations, etc.

Caregiver Action Network (the National Family Caregivers Association) began promoting national recognition of family caregivers in 1994. President Clinton signed the first NFC Month Presidential Proclamation in 1997 and every president since has followed suit by issuing an annual proclamation recognizing and honoring family caregivers each November.

Far too often the role of family caregiver overshadows the identity of those caring for their loved ones. As family caregivers juggle their many responsibilities, they may lose sight of who they are beyond the caregiver role. This campaign aims to change that. A person's sense of self makes their life complete. This is an essential component of self-care that can ultimately prevent caregiver burnout and depression.

"We believe that #CaregiverAnd will help family caregivers recognize that there is more to their life than their caregiving responsibilities," said John Schall, CAN CEO. "People will see themselves as a caregiver, but also who they are and what the passions that drive them. It is critical not to lose sight of who you are. Your sense of self makes your life complete."

Visit caregiveraction.org for information, tips, tools and more.



On November 30, 2021, we'll unite for a worldwide celebration of generosity. GivingTuesday is an opportunity for people around the world to come together through generosity in all its forms by sharing acts of kindness and giving their voice, time, money, goods, and advocacy to support communities and causes.

10 TIPS for Family Caregivers

1. Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
2. Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
3. Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
4. Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
5. Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.
6. Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.
7. Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
8. Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
9. Make sure legal documents are in order.
10. Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!

OSEC Volunteer Spotlight

Why OSEC?

MARIA PLEADWELL
Administrative
Support



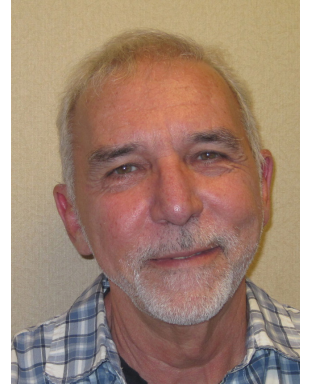
"I chose to volunteer for OSEC as its mission aligns well with my desire to assist our community seniors in their Continuum of Life path. OSEC support for people caring for loved ones at home is most remarkable. I want to be of service for those who walk this lonely path and to develop a community that can accompany the caregivers who often find themselves walking this path very much alone."

JUDY STEFFENS
In Home Resource
Enrollment Liaison



"I have worked with other nonprofit organizations and find that my heart is passionate about caregiving. Having worked with Hospice of the Foothills, I want to use my skills and give back to our community caregivers the support that they need and do not ask for. I am a caregiver, myself, and know the life changing daily burden that caregivers carry."

Rafael Diaz
In Home
Respite Volunteer



"During my retirement years, I want to give some of my time and energy to a worthy cause, as a way to serve and give back in response to multiple blessings I have received in my life.

I cannot think of a more deserving cause than OSEC's mission to empower and support in-home caregivers in their difficult task of tending to loved ones who are sick or disabled. These caregivers, whose efforts are often neglected and forgotten, carry on their shoulders a big share of much of the healthcare needed in our country. I am grateful to OSEC for giving me the opportunity and the specific ways to be of some service."

JOAN GIRDLER-GOOD
Community
Outreach



"I believe One Source is run by innovative people with integrity and for the benefit of the *entire community*. I was a volunteer in the homes. I was the caretaker for my late husband. My heart goes out to any caretaker as I know the energy that is required."

How old is your immune system?

By Carole Carson

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You know your calendar age — the time measured by a clock — but do you know the age of your immune system?

The study of immunosenescence attempts to understand why our immune systems weaken beginning around age 60. The older we get, the weaker our immune systems get. That's why people over 70 are the most vulnerable to contagious diseases, especially the coronavirus.

Besides attempting to understand the overall process of immunosenescence, researchers are also trying to figure out why the decline is so variable between individuals.

Their task isn't easy. The immune system "is the second-most complicated system in your body after your brain," says Shai Shen-Orr, a professor from the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology.

Besides this daunting complexity, considerable differences exist between individuals. When it comes to the age of our immune systems, age really is just a number. A 60 year old can have the immune system of a 40 year old or an 80 year old.

Researchers have already found a way to calculate biological age, which measures how well one's body is functioning relative to one's calendar age. They use chemical tags added to genes over a period of time to compute the trajectory of a body's aging.

Scientists have also discovered that lifestyle has a profound impact on our biological age. Smoking, a faulty diet leading to obesity, lack of exercise, social isolation, and excessive consumption of alcohol can all accelerate the aging process.

On a positive note, deliberate improvements in daily habits can reverse or slow biological decline.

The same appears to be true for the aging of our immune systems. Commercial tests measuring the decline of the immune system are not yet available. However, researchers at Stanford University and the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology are developing a prototype.

So far, they've found that the same lifestyle factors that slow the rate of biological decline also delay the aging of the immune system. A healthy lifestyle may even restore the immune system.

CAREGIVER SYNDROME

Apparently, I conducted my own unscientific experiment to confirm these findings. During the final months of caring for my husband, I ignored all of the healthy recommendations mentioned above. I ate whatever was quick and convenient, and I was too tired to exercise — even to take a short walk. I was stressed to the breaking point most days, and I slept fitfully because I was listening to make sure my husband was still breathing. Cultivating relationships required time, which I was desperately short of.

Although I didn't know it at the time, my condition is referred to as caregiver syndrome, and explains why a whopping 70% of caregivers over the age of 70 die before their patient does. I was fortunate to be part of the 30% who survive.

After I arrived in France in July, I experienced one infection after the other. During the three-month siege, I despaired of ever getting back on my feet. I decided to return to the healthier lifestyle I followed before I became a caregiver.

That made all the difference.

I've since regained my old energy level, and I'm finding time to exercise — mostly walking with some stretching and floor work. I'm also making new friends while staying in touch with my former friends via email, text, Zoom, and phone. I'm dropping the extra pounds I gained from my faulty diet and sleeping soundly. My high spirits have returned.

I'm encouraged — and I hope you will be too — by the research that underscores our ability to lower our biological and immunological age by the lifestyle choices we make on a daily basis.

Genetics play a role, of course, but I like the perspective of Malcolm Turnbull, the former prime minister of Australia, who said, "What you've got to do is recognize that you don't control everything for a start, you've got to play the cards you're dealt, the hand of cards you're dealt, as best you can, and that's what I always seek to do."

As we age, you and I have the opportunity to play our lifestyle cards well — and maybe beat the house.

Carole Carson, Montpellier, France, is an author, former AARP website contributor, and leader of the 1994 Nevada County Meltdown. Contact her at carolecarson41@gmail.com

DONATE NOW

NOVEMBER is National Family Caregiver Month. In-home family caregivers have been on a journey of amazing love, loyalty, resilience, and perseverance and in the fight against isolation, loss, depression, and grief. It is scary to think about what we would have done without your ongoing financial support, volunteer dedicated hours of giving, and absolute recognition of caregiver needs. Our Nevada County community has stepped up in a big way, and we are so grateful for the outpouring of support.

BUT, we are up against ever growing numbers of in-home caregivers needing help. And there is still much more work to do. The situation is truly critical. As you know, we are a small team. Would you join in and help us battle against the heartbreaking toll that caregivers suffer? If you give today, we will take the lead to accelerate the reduction of risks and maximize quality of care and support to in-home caregivers and their loved ones.

PLEASE SEND YOUR BEST GIFT POSSIBLE for those caregivers that we serve today and for all caregivers who will need our help tomorrow. Based upon your interest that you have taken in our work, put your compassion, interest, and understanding into action by making a generous gift now. Now more than ever, your gift will support and address respite needs of in-home caregivers, promote caregiver and volunteer education, and increase peer support with resources and referrals.

PLEASE HELP US TO REACH OUR \$25,000 GOAL. We are counting on you to help us meet this goal. If you would like to offer a MATCHING GIFT OPPORTUNITY, we would deeply appreciate your support. A donation by check may be mailed in the enclosed envelope or at the DONATE site through our website: empoweringcaregivers.org.

With deepest appreciation,

Carolyn Seyler

Executive Director



Thank you to
PURDEN'S CROSSING BAND
for their fundraiser at Wildeye Pub
benefitting OSEC

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