

one source Empowering Caregivers

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2022



OSEC Welcomes New Administrative Assistant

OSEC would like to welcome Cody Rice, our new administrative assistant to the organization.



Cody was introduced to OSEC only months ago by the wonderful team at Connecting

Point. After graduating the employment

services training program the staff had encouraged him to pursue his rekindled love of giving with a career in the nonprofit sector. Cody would like to thank the staff at Connecting Point for helping to facilitate this opportunity.

Cody first experienced the joy of altruism in the 6th grade when he joined a youth ministries mission to prepare and serve Thanksgiving dinner for underprivileged members of their local community.

In 2021 with the help and support from his loving family. Cody successfully planned and hosted The Annual Fireline Coat Drive of Nevada County. Now in its second year the drive has collected over

[continued page 3](#)

Life at KAIP: An OSEC Community Partner

KAI Partners Inc. provides management consulting services to public and private sector clients. Their primary goal is to find, engineer, and implement solutions that will produce the best outcome for our clients and their constituents or customers.

KAI has provided software development for OSEC, allowing us to streamline our caregiver, volunteer, and donor data and statistics. OSEC acknowledges and thanks the KAI team for the many hours they have donated to our organization.

As a small business with a highly dynamic leadership team that practices a “service before self” philosophy, employees’ voices and efforts impact every facet of KAI’s operations. With that in mind, they invest in and develop our staff through training, mentoring, and experiences to help them grow.

For more information about KAI Partners visit kaipartners.com.



Caregiving: The First Two Years

by Scottie Hart

Well, a person paying any attention at all, should know a lifetime marriage could, theoretically, lead to caregiving. Nevertheless, it was a profound shock when I realized in early 2021 that “This Means You!”

Starting just before Christmas 2020, Beloved Husband encountered a cascade of serious, chronic medical issues, and it fell to me to keep it all straight – the pills, the doctors, the diagnoses, the scheduling, the communicating, the coordination between two major medical bureaucracies, the endless time on hold, the kinwork... Not to mention the emotional support he needed. Not to mention the emotional support I needed.

The awful reality: I'd been abruptly promoted to “Primary Caregiver.” The only available training was OJT. Apparently “no experience necessary,” no mentor to help me make sense of it all. Nights of despair, days of overwhelm, frantic confusion, exhaustion. And eight months later we added “mixed vascular dementia and Alzheimers” to the dismaying load.

It was a steep learning curve. But from the beginning, I had two essential life lessons to fall back on. One, don't pretend you're okay when you aren't and two, don't do hard things alone. So, rather than just drown, I started screaming for help.

Anyone who cared at all about me got the stark truth. I was angry, scared, and disoriented. (A reminder to family members, neighbors, grocery clerks, and medical providers of many kinds, don't ask “how goes it?” if you don't want to know.) I let go of trying to look good and told the rugged truth.

Resolutely, frantically, with the pandemic swirling around me, I set about finding information and support. Relentlessly, I thanked each contact for trying to help, and reached out to the next possible source.

I know the “folks with lived experience” (other caregivers) are the Gold Standard in practical wisdom. Also, professionals understand how medical systems work, and many will explain it to me bit by bit if I keep asking. I wish I could thank the endless parade of people with whom I pleaded for information, for help, for hugs. And then asked again. And again. Therapists, doctors, medical assistants, receptionists, social workers, call center workers, savvy friends, relevant books and websites, always digging for the next link. I just knew it would be hopeless to try to figure it out all by myself. I needed a village.

A scant two years into my journey as a caregiver, I'm still daunted, but now I'm firmer ground. I am usually hopeful that this project, though very hard, is doable. What's different today? I'm serious about self-care. I regularly attend a solid caregiver's support group (tried out four, before finding my “home group”), and I schedule and take regular respite breaks. I've taken several Zoom-based classes for caregivers, read useful books. Beloved and I now have a caring, experienced social worker. Regular conversations with “his,” “hers,” and “ours” psychotherapists are soooo valuable. I've identified personal and medical resources: I know who I can call at any hour for physical or emotional emergencies. And if the first call doesn't answer the need, I make another. Friends listen endlessly. (One, now a widow, survived the journey and knows this turf first-hand.) I've learned that many caregivers look back afterward with deep gratitude for the unanticipated closeness that is possible as this experience unrolls.

What's next? Well, the real answer is “who knows.” But my scouts say that as things progress, isolation becomes an increasingly serious possibility – for me and for my Beloved. So, I'm actively maintaining and expanding the network of people who can hear my struggle without panicking. I need folks of all kinds who can tolerate it when I'm in afraid and/or overwhelmed without pulling away or urgently needing to “fix” things. I nurture relationships with steady, caring folks who are comfortable accompanying me while I find my path.

All this is really hard; it's far and away the toughest thing I've ever done. But I gotta admit, I'm really growing. Most of the time I'm pretty sure it isn't about pointless misery. With lots and lots of help, I can end up proud of myself.

One final thought: If you're a caregiver, may I repeat some advice, grounded in my experiences over the last two years? Don't pretend you're okay when you aren't and don't do hard things alone.

OSEC Spotlight

CELEBRATING VOLUNTEER MAGGIE CULL

Maggie joined OSEC in its beginnings, working with our founder Donna Raibley in creating the caregiver assessment tool.

Maggie is celebrating her 90th birthday, this month, and her 7th year as a volunteer with OSEC.

Feel free to send her a card of best wishes to the office at 524 Brunswick Road, GV, 95945. We will make sure that Maggie gets it!



New Assistant... continued from page 1

300 physical donations redistributed across Nevada County.

Cody has over 15 years of marketing experience as an event coordinator and talent buyer in the Northwest region.

He has experienced the challenges of in home caregivers first hand and truly believes in the mission and vision of OSEC.

Please keep an eye out for the many changes coming our way.

President Biden Proclaims November National Family Caregivers Month

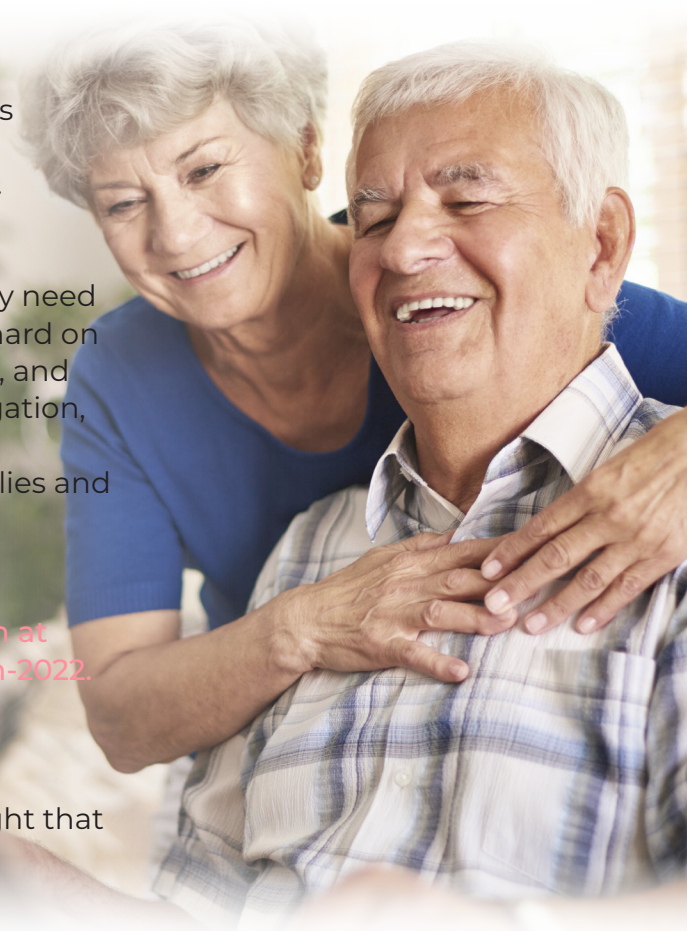
Reprinted with permission of *National Community Care Corps*

It's November, which means it's National Family Caregivers Month! Today the President honored family caregivers for all they do for the nation with a Presidential Proclamation. The President said:

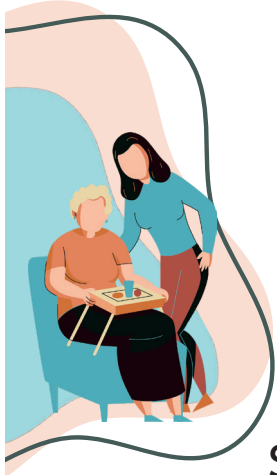
"The truth is, at some point in our lives, each of us will likely need to be a family caregiver — but the burden falls especially hard on those who cannot afford support. Women, people of color, and immigrants shoulder a disproportionate share of the obligation, sometimes forced to leave good jobs to instead provide care. Their work is a profound service to their families and to our Nation, but they are still too often unseen, undervalued, and unpaid."

You can read the full text of the Presidential Proclamation at <https://www.caregiveraction.org/presidential-proclamation-2022>.

The #CaregivingHappens Campaign For National Family Caregivers Month reflects a caregiver's reality that often caregiving just happens. This digital campaign will highlight that caregiving happens when you have plans, other obligations, or when you least expect it.



GIVING TUESDAY 11/29

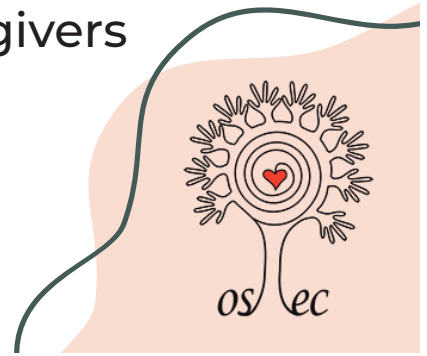


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