

# one source Empowering Caregivers

NEWSLETTER FALL 2024

HAPPY THANKSGIVING



## OSEC Says Goodbye to Carolyn Seyler

Carolyn Seyler is leaving the position of Executive Director at OSEC. Serving for more than 5 years, Carolyn led OSEC through new development during the strategic time of COVID and thereafter.

Carolyn arrived in Nevada County in 2001, planning on retirement with her husband, Bruce McCombs, in the beautiful foothills of Nevada City. A native of San Francisco, and a nurse educator, Carolyn retired from teaching at the College of San Mateo in the Bay Area, after 10+ years in the areas of nursing, and other allied health programs.



After only a few months in retirement, Carolyn found her way to Hospice of the Foothills in Grass Valley where she served for several years as the Director of Clinical Services. She served on the Board of Directors at Helping Hands Adult Day Services in Penn Valley and served as Co-Chair for the Board of Directors for Full Circle Living and Dying as a certified End-of-Life Doula. She has worked in the federally funded Western Sierra Medical Clinics and the Sierra Family Clinic in North San Juan. She is a member of the Elder Care Provider Coalition, The Falls Programs, and the American Association of University Women, Nevada County Chapter.

Carolyn said, *"It has been an honor to serve Nevada County family caregivers. I am grateful for the opportunity and enormous richness that this work has brought into my life. I know that Nevada County will continue to recognize the critical hidden needs of family caregivers in our community."*

OSEC's Board of Directors thanks Carolyn for her service, dedication, and vision.

## Participating in a Caregiver Support Group May Make You Happier

By Anne-Marie Botek, [agingcare.com](http://agingcare.com)

The Golden Rule, Karma, whatever you want to call it, "doing unto others as you would have done to you" is used so often it seems cliché. But, as it turns out, this advice goes beyond principle and may in fact be backed by science. Psychologists have dubbed it the "helper's high"—a blissful feeling that you get after you do something for someone else that is helpful or kind.

These euphoric emotions are attributed to mood-boosting chemicals, mainly dopamine and oxytocin, that are released in the brain after a person performs a good deed. While regular volunteering or random acts of kindness may not make it to the top of a busy caregiver's to-do list, there is a simple way of tapping into this mutually beneficial practice.

While helping even more people may seem like the last thing a busy caregiver needs on their plate, it doesn't mean they can't find joy in assisting their peers. The key is to approach this undertaking from a completely different angle; think moral support instead of hands-on care or face-to-face volunteering.

Caregiver support groups and forums give people in that community the opportunity to help others. There can be a lot of laughter and positive emotion when people are listening to and supporting one another."

Furthermore, caregiver support groups foster a valuable sense of connection that many caregivers are lacking. Caring for an aging loved one involves a great deal of responsibility and time commitment, which tends to socially isolate those who take on this role. Both deep emotional relationships and broader social relationships with coworkers, friends and extended family may suffer when one becomes a caregiver, often resulting in loneliness.

Among experts and policy makers, there is an ongoing search for better ways of helping people cope with the challenges of caregiving. In the meantime, by engaging with and assisting one another, family caregivers have an opportunity to take advantage of the scientifically proven cycle of well-being that can occur when people in a group decide to lift one another up. Even in caregiving, there can be flourishing and growth. It creates community and allows people to form deeper relationships.



**OSEC Family Support Group is held virtually on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month from 1:30-3:00 pm. Please call the office to sign up.**

[empoweringcaregivers.org](http://empoweringcaregivers.org)

## Steps to Help Seniors See the Need for Home Modifications

By Mary becker-Omwig, MS, [cargiver.com](http://cargiver.com)

There are questions caregivers face on a daily basis. How do we balance between too much and too little care? How do we balance what we think needs to be done with what might be most helpful?

Sadly, family members and other caregivers often sabotage well-intended efforts to help their loved ones simply because they haven't thought about answers to basic questions. When it comes to recommending changes in someone's home, the balancing act can be particularly acute. This is a place where someone has lived all his life, where she feels comfortable, where he feels safe. The fact is, that while most people say they want to live in their homes as long as possible, most are not designed to allow them to age successfully in place.

It's not just the ill, but the "well elderly" who experience the effects of aging. Aging affects vision, mobility, dexterity and endurance. Arthritis or other degenerative diseases may make it difficult to do the things one used to do. This usually translates into some very real and practical problems at home. The three most common problems are: getting in and out of the house; using the bathroom; and going up and down the stairs. Because most people are unaware that simple home modifications can alleviate these problems, many develop coping strategies to stay in their homes, but put them at risk for accidents or injury.

Because investigating resources can be the biggest obstacle a person faces when considering home modifications, becoming aware of different products and services can really help to facilitate this process. Community resources, like area agencies on aging, can be enormously helpful and are good places to start. These agencies may be knowledgeable about products and local services that can help with home modifications and offer referrals on aging resources – both subsidized and private.

While a professional who specializes in aging is the best person to provide a complete assessment, there certainly are things caregivers can begin to do that will be enormously helpful when a professional is brought in. There are things you can learn from observing. There are also things you can learn by asking. You might not always get a complete response, but you will have started the dialogue and reinforced your efforts in raising awareness.

It's important to problem-solve together. If you strongly impose your own ideas, they run the risk of being ignored. Approach the subject by letting your family members know that you are concerned about their health and safety and assure them that you don't assume that getting older means self-awareness and understanding are diminished.

It's essential to recognize and think about changes before they are needed rather than waiting for a crisis situation that may force a person to be removed from a home. Advanced planning empowers the person to make changes for themselves rather than have someone else step in. Often, it you wait until a crisis, individuals will resist even more.

In the planning stage, consider the Home Modification Strategies recently released from the American Occupational Therapy Association. This resource offers a room-by-room guide of things to look for and changes to consider in the home.

Through awareness, education, planning and action, you can help your loved ones fulfill their desire to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

## Appreciating an Intensified Focus on the Needs of Family Caregivers

By Jasmine DeGuzman Lacsamana, [archstone.org](http://archstone.org)

A significant step toward fulfilling Archstone Foundation's mission – improving the health and well-being of older Californians and their caregivers – was taken eight years ago, when we partnered with the AARP California Foundation to support the creation of the California Task Force on Family Caregiving.

One of its charges was developing policies to recommend to the State Legislature. Those proposals helped shape the California Master Plan on Aging, released in 2021 with goals including expanding training, support, and respite care for family caregivers.

The task force then turned its attention to launching the California Coalition on Family Caregiving (CaCFC) – a collaboration of the University of Southern California's Family Caregiver Support Center, Family Caregiver Alliance, and the Los Angeles Alliance for Community Health and Aging dedicated to helping the state's diverse population of 4.5 million unpaid family caregivers and the recipients of their care.

With Foundation support, the coalition is identifying new opportunities to advance caregiving support while also working to implement the recommendations of the California Task Force on Family Caregiving, the California Master Plan for Aging, and the 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers created under the federal RAISE Act. These recommendations to support caregivers include education and training, resources such as respite, financial assistance, and other strategies to strengthen our healthcare and social systems to support all of us as we continue to age.

To learn more visit [www.archstone.org](http://www.archstone.org)



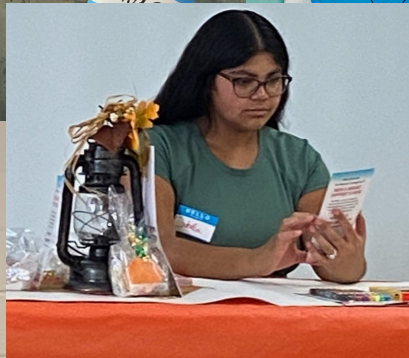
### Care Connection Series

In Recognition of National Family Caregivers' Month

Free, Live, Interactive Webinars for Caregivers

To learn more and register visit [alzfdn.org](http://alzfdn.org)





**OSEC IN ACTION!**  
Highlights from  
Take a Break,  
Falls symposium and  
Bringing Generations Together  
events.







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## STAY HEALTHY CHECKLIST

- Organize
- Keep your appointments
- Buy healthy snacks
- Exercise
- Take time for yourself



## NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH



**During 2024 National Family Caregivers Month**, we focus on empowering caregivers to self-identify and access the resources they need to succeed. Remember, you are not alone in this journey. With the proper support and tools, you can continue to provide care while taking care of yourself.

In the U.S., more than half of those providing care don't recognize themselves as caregivers. As a result, many do not access the tools that can alleviate caregiving stress. To address the caregiving crisis nationwide, we must help individuals identify themselves as caregivers and connect them with resources that can make a difference. **This year, during 2024 National Family Caregivers Month**, we highlight the importance of self-recognition and self-identity—key factors in caregivers' access to essential support. Identifying as a caregiver opens the door to the family caregiver support needed throughout their journey.