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CareLinks

The Increasing Need for Care

Families have always been the backbone of our system of caring for people.” So says Kathy Greenlee, the assistant secretary for aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in a recent Wall Street Journal article.¹ Greenlee continues: “Really, if we didn’t have them, we couldn’t afford as a country to monetize their care and we couldn’t replace, frankly, the love they provide to family members.”

She is right. You all know that families are indispensable to the ongoing needs of chronically or terminally ill patients. Perhaps you know this because you have been a family caregiver. Perhaps you know it because you see the strain on the faces of the family caregivers you serve through the Care Team® program. Whatever the reason is, we know that the first—and, sometimes, last—line of care is the family member: the spouse, the adult child, the niece, nephew, or cousin, etc. Problems in caregiving arise, though, when the family caregiver faces their own issues: caregiver burnout, co-morbidities, health problems, stress, depression, anxiety, poor diet, neglect of social engagements, or any other of the myriad problems facing the caregiver.

The article continues: “About 40 million U.S. family caregivers provided unpaid care, valued at \$470 billion, to an adult with limitations in daily activities in 2013, according to AARP. In Maine, the state with the oldest median age in the U.S.—44.2 years—the pressure on families is palpable. The percentage of the state’s population that is 65 and over is climbing and tops 18%, compared with nearly 15% for the U.S. as a whole, according to the most recent census data.”²

So what is the crisis? The crisis is that this is an unsustainable model of care for the future. The fact is that baby boomers continue to age and the family size of the generation(s) they precede is smaller than they are. In other words, there is a top-heavy impending demand that exists in disproportion to the supply of family caregivers that are out there. Compound this with the reality of the costs of care (see the below article) and the likely fixed income of those who will need the care, and it does not take long to recognize that something has got to give. “The math doesn’t add up,” said U.S. Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D., N.M.), a member of a bipartisan congressional caucus, formed last year, focused on caregiving. A caregiver to her own elderly mother, she recently introduced legislation for a national “Care Corps” program, modeled after the Peace Corps, to bolster the ranks of volunteer caregivers.”³ Volunteer caregivers like, say, you.

I have been saying for a long time that the programs and the services offered by Interfaith CarePartners through the congregational partnerships we enjoy are only going to increase as the family caregiver census decreases. The volume of calls for new service and new partnerships that we get seem to corroborate this.

Since we are in the middle of baseball season, permit a sports analogy: volunteer caregivers are very much like relief pitchers. When a starting pitcher has too many pitches in his pitch count or he is in a slump, relief pitchers are brought in. In much the same way, when a family caregiver is at risk for burnout or needs some respite to handle other daily activities outside of caregiver, volunteers can step in and provide that much-needed break. There is no way a volunteer can be the primary caregiver, but the value a volunteer adds to the quality of life a family caregiver has can be immeasurable.

Our programs have long been designed to serve a dual purpose: to provide the care and love to the person who is suffering from a particular diagnosis or otherwise limiting condition, and to provide that person’s family caregiver a much-needed break. The scope of impact you as volunteers have is extraordinary, as you will see in the below article.

It is my hope that as more comes out about the future of family caregiving, the Wall

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June 2016

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Upcoming Educational Opportunities

Our spring caregiver conference season has come to its successful end. The next conferences we will present are listed with their dates and venues below. If you are interested in **Family Caregiver Trainings** over the summer or an **Expert Panel** presentation for your congregation, business, or organization please contact the office at (713) 682-5995.

Fall Conferences

September 24: Christ the King Lutheran Church: 3803 W Lake Houston Pkwy, Kingwood, TX 77339

October 29: St. Luke's United Methodist Church: 3471 Westheimer Rd, Houston, TX 77027

The Increasing Need for Care

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Street Journal, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the many other groups of people who are just beginning to be aware of the caregiving reality will discover more and more services like ours which offer free caregiving to people desperately in need of it. Moreover, I hope and pray that more services like these will be begin to spring up. Families cannot do it alone and

it is our privilege to assist them in their caregiving journeys.

—John K. Burk, President

¹ Family Caregivers Become More Crucial as Elderly Population Grows, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/family-caregivers-become-more-crucial-as-elderly-population-grows-1464946204>, accessed June 4, 2016.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

The Cost of Care

Genworth, a Virginia-based insurance company, has a very useful, interactive website at www.genworth.com/costofcare that outlines what it costs families or individuals to provide long-term care for themselves or loved ones. The costs are broken down by state and region, and the figures are staggering.

In Houston, costs of long-term care for 2016 are, on average, as follows:

- **Home Health Care:** -Homemaker Services: \$44,616 annually; -Home Health Aide Services: \$45,188
- **Adult Day Health Care:** \$15,600 annually
- **Assisted Living Facility Costs:** \$45,900 annually
- **Nursing Home Care:**
 - Semi-Private Room: \$55,298 annually
 - Private Room: \$84,315 annually

Anyway this is cut, these are astounding numbers. And to compound matters, in many situations, family caregivers are no longer working and are, therefore, on fixed incomes. Those who are still working see the impacts of their caregiving duties on their professional lives, too. Genworth reports that:

- Caregivers miss **18%** of their work week; or, 7 hours each week.
- On average, caregivers lose **33%** of their income each year due to the cost of caregiving
- In 2015, 77% of employed caregivers missed some work time
- **62%** of working caregivers reported using some of their retirement or savings to pay for caregiving in 2015

Caring for someone has more than a financial impact, though. It can have serious ramifications on a caregiver's emotional and physical health.

- **54%** of caregivers reported feeling guilt or resentment in relation to their caregiving duties
- Of those who are caregiving for someone with long-term health needs, **43%** said that their duties have impacted their health and well-being in a negative way

Finally, the demographic of caregivers appears to be changing:

- Over the past **five** years, the average age of caregivers for someone needing long-term care assistance decreased from **53** to **46**.
- **60%** of caregivers are between ages **25-54**
- Adult children caring for a parent constitutes the caregiving demands for the majority of caregiving in the United States: **52%**

Of course, probably none of these statistics surprise you if you have been a caregiver yourself, or if you have been involved with our programs for any length of time. They are also one of the reasons that your volunteerism in our Care Team program is so important. In 2015, our volunteers donated over 100,000 hours for **the 11th straight year**. A volunteer hour is currently valued at approximately \$24 in Texas. In other words, you, our loyal volunteer, helped give roughly **\$2.4 million** in free caregiving to people whose physical and/or financial burdens might seem otherwise overwhelming. Though we can quantify the service you have offered, there is no adequate way that we can say thank you for all you do. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your caring spirit. Thank you for being the sustaining presence is so many lives around Greater Houston. We are grateful for you.

Spring Events

What do we do when we are not working? We are having fun...in order to support our work! Spring around the office is always a busy and enjoyable time. In addition to our caregiver conferences, Gathering Tables, volunteer recruitment and trainings, monthly Gathering Place meetings, team meetings, staff meetings, etc., we also throw two big parties: **Sweet Charity** and our annual **Kentucky Derby** party. These are designed fundraisers that help support our signature Care Team program and all that goes into its implementation and execution. But they happen to be quite a lot of fun, too!

In February we celebrated 29 years of volunteer caregiving with our annual Sweet Charity event. This year we returned to the Westin in Memorial City, where we have been holding the event for the past three years. Corporate honorees for the evening included Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas and Enbridge, who were recognized with the Sustaining Presence award for their charitable giving and community impact. We also recognized Gayle and Jack Hillman, Care Team leaders for the Gathering Place at Chapelwood United Methodist, who won the Dr. Ronald Sunderland Award, the annual volunteer of the year award given to volunteers who have been nominated by their peers and voted on by Interfaith CarePartners' board of directors. The evening featured community partners, underwriters and friends who came together to celebrate Interfaith CarePartners' free caregiving services and the invaluable contributions of the honorees.

The night commenced with a warm greeting by the evening's Master of Ceremonies, Ernie Manouse of Channel 8 and an invocation by Tim VanDuivendyk, Vice President and Chaplain of Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care System Services for Memorial Hermann Health Systems. After a delicious dinner, John K. Burk, president of Interfaith CarePartners, presented the Sustaining Presence awards to the corporate honorees. Dr. Robert Morrow, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas' president of Houston and Southeast Texas accepted the award on behalf of the company. Greg Harper, president of Gas and Pipelines Processing for Enbridge accepted the award for his company. Each recipient spoke about the need for services like the ones offered by Interfaith CarePartners and the significant impact those services have on the community. Burk then presented the Sunderland Award to the Hillmans, who spoke about the impact serving on the Care Team at Chapelwood UMC has had on them and on those who receive the services. They graciously acknowledged all of the team members who make the Gathering Place ministry a reality for so many people.

Through the years, Sweet Charity has become known for its signature "dessert fair" and this year did not disappoint. A delicious spread of "take-as-many-as-you-can" sweets was laid out for attendees, who were given an empty takeaway container and told to "dream big." The Art Institute, Carmelo's Ristorante Italiano, Churrascos, Nothing Bundt Cakes, and Phoenicia Specialty Foods all donated a spread of desserts that included cookies, tres leches, baklava, pastries, brownies, and more. Austin-based party band, The Crush, played favorites throughout the dinner and then kicked it into high gear for those who stayed behind to dance to some great live entertainment. Special thanks are due to Lott Entertainment, who coordinated the details of the evening and pulled everything together seamlessly.

Just a couple of months later we held our third annual Kentucky Derby party. Much like Sweet Charity, this is a fundraiser dedicated to raising support for our caregiving programs. But this party takes place during the day of the Kentucky Derby and coincides with many of the actual Der-



Top left: Dr. Robert Morrow and John Burk

Top right: Greg Harper and John Burk

Middle: John Burk, Gayle and Jack Hillman

Above: Ernie Manouse

Below: The Kentucky Derby party





The Kentucky Derby party

Spring Events

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by events. With the seemingly endless rain holding off for the day, we welcomed almost 200 guests to The Wynden on South Post Oak Lane on May 7, from 3:00-6:00. Light bites and derby-inspired drinks were served as guests donned their fanciest hats, bowties, seersuckers, and dresses. Prizes for the best dressed man and woman, stick horse race winners, and the top three who selected the win, place, and show horses from the derby were awarded.

Of course, none of this is possible without a dedicated committee of volunteers

who work tirelessly behind the scenes and for months leading up to the event. Those on our committee secured prize donations, decorated the room with an impeccable sense of style and grace, invited their friends, toured countless potential venues for the event, and attended to the smallest of detail to pull off our best derby party yet. We are excited about the way this new tradition complements our annual Sweet Charity event.

To inquire about either of these fundraisers or ways you can be involved in 2017, please call the office at (713) 682-5995 or email us at info@interfaithcarepartners.org.

Happy Anniversary!

Care Team Anniversaries Celebrated So Far in 2016... (Years Celebrated in Parentheses)

AIDS Care Team®

St. Cecilia Catholic Church (29)
Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church (27)

Second Family Care Team®

Congregation Emanu El (21)
Jordan Grove Missionary Baptist Church (11)
Northwoods Presbyterian (10)
Independence Heights Asst. Ministry (10)
St. Paul the Apostle Catholic (8)
St. Mary's UMC (8)
Northside Antioch Baptist Church (3)
Lakewood UMC Second Family (1)

St. John the Evangelist Catholic (13)
Christ The King Catholic Church (12)

Alzheimer's Care Team®

Memorial Drive Presbyterian (23)
St. Martin's Episcopal (17)
Northwoods Presbyterian Church (15)
Christ the Good Shepherd Catholic (11)
St. Cecilia Catholic Community (11)
Cypress United Methodist Church (10)
Chapelwood UMC (10)
St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church (10)
First United Methodist Church Pearland (9)
St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church (9)

1st Presbyterian Pasadena (8)
Living Word Lutheran Church (7)
Friendswood United Methodist (6)
St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church (5)
Lakewood United Methodist Church (5)
First UMC Humble (4)
First Presbyterian of Kingwood (2)
St. Stephen's United Methodist (1)
Trinity East United Methodist Church (1)

If you know of congregations interested in starting their own Care Team ministry, please contact our offices at (713) 682-5995, or email us at info@interfaithcarepartners.org

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"Creating Caring Communities"