

CARE CORNER



October 2020

Meet Norma Jean and Craig

Norma Jean and Craig Robbins have been in love since 1970 and will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary in January 2021. Their life together has been one filled with music, laughter and family. Faith and service are important to Craig. After raising four children, Craig and Norma Jean retired early in order to serve others. Together, they spent eighteen months in El Salvador and Belize, and two years in a Spanish-speaking area of Salt Lake City. While living in El Salvador, Craig organized a massive service project that directly benefited over 2000 people living in abject poverty by starting youth music lessons and orchestras to give teenagers an alternative to the lure of joining the gangs. In addition, their new music skill would provide self-esteem and a means of livelihood performing music themselves.

Craig loves music in all its forms, and became expert with both the piano and trombone. Music has been a wonderful blessing in his life. He played trombone in community orchestras and jazz combos, played piano, organ and sang in church and community choirs. Volunteers who have the blessing of seeing Craig at the Gathering Place know him by his jokes, his ability to wiggle his ears, his beautiful singing voice, and his love of dancing.

In 2012, Norma Jean saw signs of Craig's cognitive impairment when he had difficulty operating a vehicle. After moving to Houston and an intervention from their children, Craig received a diagnosis of Lewy Body dementia with Parkinsonism in 2018 and their life changed.

Lewy Body dementia is characterized by a build up of proteins, called Lewy bodies, in the nerve cells of the brain, mainly affecting thinking, memory, and movement. Symptoms include visual hallucinations, rigid muscles, slowed movement, shuffling walk or shaky legs, tremors, an inability to balance the body, and cognitive problems such as confusion, poor concentration, memory loss and difficulty sleeping.

For Craig, movement, balance and spatial orientation are the most challenging. He has difficulty following directions and cannot play many games that require visual elements but is a wiz at seated exercises and games.

Craig still loves music, and sings along to Pandora for an hour or more every day. It is amazing that he knows all the words to 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s songs. He speaks fluent Spanish and is always a perfect grammarian. He is friendly and likes to get people to laugh with his silly handshakes or by wiggling his ears. And he still loves Norma Jean lots! (she reminds him of that all the time!)



"Thank you for all that you and others do to help all of us through these unsettling times and this unsettling disease of dementia. You are our angels!"

-Norma Jean, caregiver

When talking about CarePartners' Interim Programming, Norma Jean says, *"The [care kits] certainly brighten his day! My day is brightened by the lunch that is included, as it's a nice meal that I don't have to prepare. We have also enjoyed participating in the Zoom Gathering Places. Craig loves singing along and also likes the exercises. One of these Zoom Gathering Places motivated us to make root beer floats. So fun! We hadn't had one for years. Thank you for all you, and others, are doing to provide us with activities and fun breaks during our stay-at-home days."*

The staff at CarePartners is blessed to serve Craig and Norma Jean and so many caregivers like them. Even in this time of isolation due to COVID, we strive to serve our caregivers and our mission in new and creative ways through our Interim Programming.

Events like Gathering at Your Place, Drive-Thru Gatherings, Zoom Common Ground, and online Caregiver Education and Hot Topics are an important part of how we continue to provide resources, education, and support throughout the pandemic.

Keep reading to learn more. And, visit our website at www.CarePartnersTexas.org for even more information and resources.

CarePartners' Volunteers host a Drive-Thru Gathering Place at Kingwood United Methodist Church



On a beautiful Friday morning in September, our Gathering Place Care Team® volunteers from Kingwood United Methodist Church (KUMC) hosted their first Drive-Thru Gathering Place. "We are trying to be as safe as we can and give them some entertainment," said Gathering Place volunteer Heidi Fallon.

A Drive-Thru Gathering Place is an opportunity for family caregivers to bring their loved one on a short drive through one of our community partner's parking lots. Different stations are set up along the route; care partners (clients) receive a goodie bag at the start of their journey, play games, collect prizes and crafts, exercise, listen to music and more. The care partners remain safely in their car while socializing and interacting with our amazing volunteers, (who are wearing masks and using hand sanitizer often), and then enjoy a bag full of fun games and treats at home.

Heidi is part of Kingwood Women's Club which is how she was connected to CarePartners ten years ago. "The coronavirus has been really hard," Heidi said. "I'm just so thankful for CarePartners for finding a way to make it work. This could have been something that crushed CarePartners and what a shame that would have been because there is a need out there for this program."

Partnership and Pandemic Response

The Gathering Place program began at KUMC in 2008 and in 2017 established a CarePartners' Second Family Care Team. Since our partnership began, we have served over 80 families and donated 5,866 hours of free care.

"Normally we meet once a month with our care partners (clients) and have a party with them," Heidi said. "Unfortunately, right now we have to think

outside the box and that's what we are doing out here in this driveway is coming up with a way for our care partners and their caregivers to come and be with us for 10-15 minutes to get a break from their boring routine."

Throughout this pandemic, our staff and volunteers have been connecting and serving our family caregivers and their loved ones living with memory loss and other challenges of aging through innovative and creative ways. CarePartners has been creating weekly online resources as well as providing fun, engaging and socially distant support. Activities include several new expressions of the Gathering Place, weekly virtual Common Ground support group, delivering care kits and online educational resources. During the last 6 months of this crisis, CarePartners has provided more than 4,175 volunteer hours to over 1,000 families. To see the video from KUMC, click [HERE](#).

Welcome Back Emmanuel Episcopal Church!

Last month, Emmanuel Episcopal was able to host their first event in 3 years, a Drive-Thru Gathering, at their new location off Barker Cypress. Unfortunately, Hurricane Harvey forced the team to take a break.

In September, the church welcomed nine families for singing, exercise, games, snacks, and a lunch to take home. We can't wait for October!

Welcome back team! We missed you!

Weekly Resources for Caregivers

Common Ground Teleconference

Common Ground Teleconference is available to family caregivers seeking emotional support and encouragement. Join in on the Zoom call every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. CST or Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. CST. **Passcode: 936 5351 5259.** **Password: CG2020.** More information [on our website.](#)

Gathering at Home and Activity Calendar

Did you know that CarePartners provides weekly resources for you and your loved one? First, a weekly Gathering at Home. This is a guide designed to encourage you to enjoy Gathering Place activities at home. Each Month has a new theme. You can print the document as a whole or only in part. We also provide an Online Activities Calendar filled with fun crafts and stay-at-home activities for you and your loved one. The Online Activities Calendar and Gathering at Home are updated weekly. [Visit our website](#) for more information.

Hot Topic Speakers

Visit our [Facebook](#), [YouTube channel](#) or [website](#) for 20 minute "Hot Topic" live segments featuring professional speakers covering a wide range of topics, as well as answering your questions. These are short presentations on caregiver education, information and helpful resources.

Gathering at Your Place



Join us on Zoom Thursdays from 10:30-11:15AM [Gathering at Your Place](#). We have games, music, exercise all brought to you by some of our Care Team Volunteers. The theme is different every week. **Passcode: 990 7845 8216. Password: GP2020.**

October 15: All In a Day
 October 22: Grand Ole Opry
 October 29: Halloween
 November 5: Laughter is the Best Medicine
 November 12: Veterans Day
 November 19: Fireside Chat
 November 26: No Event due to Thanksgiving
 December 3: Hobbies
 December 10: Paris at Christmas
 December 19: Stopping By the Woods on a Snowy Evening
 December 24 and 31: No Event due to Holidays

*Please Note: Common Ground Teleconference and Gathering at Your Place occur on Zoom. The events now requires a password. Please call the CarePartners office at **713-682-5995** to receive information on how to join the call.



**CAREPARTNERS ONLINE
CAREGIVER EDUCATION - FALL
WORKSHOPS 2020**

We are excited to present these virtual caregiver workshops on Zoom. [Visit our website](#) for more information and register today!



October 16, 2020
from 12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

**Raising Dementia Awareness
Worldwide**

Step into the shoes of someone with dementia as you are guided through the experiences of how someone with dementia navigates the world. This virtual reality will give you a better understanding of what it is like to have dementia.

A talk by Laura Wayman, the Dementia Whisperer.



October 28, 2020
from 12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

**Understanding the Signs and
Symptoms Related to Caregiver
Burnout**

In this presentation, Hailea Whitlock, Director of Resident and Family Services at Silverado Memory Care Herman Park, will take us through the various signs and symptoms you may be experiencing due to the effects of caregiver burnout. She will provide helpful resources and share techniques to help better care for yourself, and in turn, to better care for your loved one.

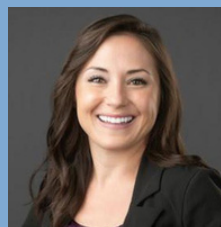


November 13, 2020
from 12:00 p.m. - 1:15p.m.

**Hospice and Dementia: What
You Need to Know**

In this workshop you will learn why getting hospice involved with a dementia patient earlier rather than later can make such a difference for the whole family.

A talk by Misty Gee and Kathy Snyder from Compassus Hospice.



POV on PBS recently published a film called *Our Time Machine*. When artist Maleonn realizes that his father suffers from Alzheimer's disease, he creates "Papa's Time Machine," a magical, autobiographical stage performance featuring life-size mechanical puppets. Through the production of this play, the two men confront their mortality before time runs out and memories are lost forever. It is a powerful production. Click [HERE](#) to view it.



Caregiver Wellness Retreat for Alzheimer's and Other Dementias now has a free on demand retreat that focuses on the self-care of the caregiver. Tools include: **mindfulness; meditation; holistic health and menu planning, yoga for brain health, poetry, writing, mindful looking at art**, and other powerful wellness tools to help you revive and renew your own plan for wellness as the caregiver.

To find out more about this valuable resource, click [HERE](#). And for complete resources and information about upcoming retreats, click [HERE](#).

How to Find More JOY

-Hot Topic Speaker, Carmalyn McCracken

Speaker and Life Coach Carmalyn McCracken shares her advice on how to find joy. She's here to help you realize, discover, re-discover and live the joys that are already in your life, perhaps hidden under the "clutter" of every day life according to her [website](#). "I consider myself a joyologist and I specialize in helping others find joy," Carmalyn said.

Finding Joy Every Day

Life is always changing, especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic. Right now all of our routines are different, our schedules are different and we are experiencing life differently. "What I want to do is just kind of remind you of some things that you probably already know but maybe you haven't thought about in awhile or maybe haven't practiced it in awhile, and so hopefully I'll give you a couple tips that will help you shift a little bit to find more joy in your daily life," Carmalyn said.

Happiness vs. Joy

You cannot be happy without being joyful, but you can be joyful without being happy. Joy is continuous and happiness is fleeting. Joy goes all the way to the bone and happiness is kind of skin deep.

Joy is permanent and it's settled and it abides all the time whereas happiness is temporary and fickle. "The word happiness comes from the Latin word fortuna which means when things are good you feel happy, but what about when things aren't going good, and you're not feeling so happy?" Carmalyn said. "That's okay because joy is always there, even on our dark days."

Joy is based on choice and happiness is based on chance. Imagine this visual:

Joy is like a fire made of oak. Oak embers that give off heat all night long way after the flames have died down, so you just see that warm glow of the oak fire; whereas happiness is a flame made out of pine where it explodes and there's a lot of tall fancy flames and then it dies down quickly and grows cold.

To read the rest of the article, watch the Hot Topic video, and find tips for how to find your own Joy as a caregiver, click [HERE](#).





Join us online October 17th, 2020 for our first ever virtual Pop a Cork benefit.

CarePartners is pleased to announce we are hosting a virtual wine tasting event in partnership with Elevation and Village Liquor.

Your support and virtual attendance at Pop a Cork for CarePartners: A Virtual Wine Tasting Benefit will help CarePartners continue to impact family caregivers and their loved ones across Greater Houston and surrounding Harris County areas. Be sure to check out [our silent auction items.](#)

We hope you and your friends and family are able to join us at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 17th for this fun fundraising event that supports our mission.

For more details about the Pop a Cork benefit, click [HERE](#) or contact Jenna Dhayer, President at (713) 682-5995, ext. 204.

A Special Thank you to our Sponsors:

- The Watson Family**
- Amanda & Josh Weber**
- Linda & Nick Lykos**
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- & Joe Rothbauer**
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10 Ways to Prevent Caregiver Depression

October is National Depression Education and Awareness Month. For caregivers, conversations around mental health and awareness are critical. Early attention to symptoms of depression through exercise, a healthy diet, positive support of family and friends, or consultation with a trained health or mental health professional can help. Below are some simple strategies for coping with depression. Click [HERE](#) for the whole article.

- 1. Challenge your Negative Thoughts.** This helps restructure your thought patterns so you can interpret your environment and yourself in a clearer, less biased way.
- 2. Find Respite.** Take a break from caregiving! No one can commit to a task 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 3. Establish a Support System.** Prioritizing time with the people who care about you is important.
- 4. Look into Self-Help Resources.** Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy by Dr. David D. Burns and Beyond Blue: Surviving Depression & Anxiety and Making the Most of Bad Genes by Therese J. Borchard are two that come highly recommended.
- 5. Put Your Feelings Down on Paper.** Starting a diary and writing about your daily emotions can be a valuable release.
- 6. Make Tasks More Manageable.** Instead of feeling overwhelmed by all that you feel you must do, set realistic goals for yourself.
- 7. Stay Busy.** Focusing your mind and your energy on a productive task is rewarding and makes it harder to focus on negative emotions.
- 8. Get Professional Help.** There is no shame in seeking expert advice on how to handle a mood disorder.
- 9. Consider Supplements.** Clinical trials and studies have shown that St. John's wort, 5-HTP (5-hydroxytryptophan), SAM-e, and ginkgo biloba are promising options for alleviating some of the symptoms of depression.
- 10. Be Patient and Gentle with Yourself.** Expect your mood to improve gradually, not immediately. Depression is a serious condition and feeling better takes time.

Halloween Can be FUN and SAFE in 2020!

-Katelin Jordan, Coordinator

Halloween can be a scary time for people with memory loss. The sights, sounds, and even smells can be overwhelming for them. During the time of coronavirus, handing out candy and participating in Halloween activities is even more risky. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all folks at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19 should not attend in-person Holiday celebrations. (For more information about this, click [HERE](#).)

But that doesn't mean that you can't have a little fun this Halloween season! Below are some fun ways to enjoy the holiday in the safety of your own home.



Enjoy Some Sweet Treats!

[Here](#) is a list of 8 Halloween Treats to make with your loved one, like Pumpkin Patch Dirt Pudding and Snack O'Lantern Fruit Cups.

Make some fun Halloween Crafts!

[HERE](#) is a list of simple Halloween crafts and decorations appropriate for seniors with memory loss.

Enjoy Halloween Games like a pumpkin toss with small pumpkins, or a ring toss with glow in the dark necklaces and pumpkins with stems. And, even better, go for a walk and identify all of the signs of fall you can see.

Find alternative ways to decorate pumpkins! You can paint them with basic acrylic paint, draw on silly faces with permanent markers, or use "Mr. Potato Head" parts to use to make pumpkin faces. (You can find them on Amazon or Walmart.com)

Keep up with CarePartners



Meet Daryan Jones, Caregiver Education & Digital Specialist

Daryan joined our team in July, 2019 as our Caregiver Education and Digital Specialist. Daryan recently transitioned into the role of Digital and Development Specialist and is now in charge of all of our marketing, digital and fundraising efforts. She is an international award-winning photographer and graduated from Texas State University with a degree in Electronic Media in 2018.

After graduation, Daryan began her career in media at a local television news station in Victoria, Texas as a News Reporter, then moved to the role of Web Producer and Assignments Editor. Daryan has always had a passion for helping people. "This last year has been such a blessing for me. It's been a joy meeting all of our wonderful volunteers, care partners and caregivers. I love seeing the impact our programs make in the lives of so many people in need, and I'm so excited to be able to share these important stories."

You may see Daryan running around our events with a camera or hosting our online conferences and Hot Topic Speakers. Make sure you say Hi and introduce yourself, she would love to meet you (and tell you about her cats)!

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay up to date with what is going on with CarePartners by following us on our social media pages. Make sure to also share our pages with family caregivers who are in need of our programs.



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linkedin.com/company/carepartners-texas/

MONITORING THE CORONAVIRUS

To stay up to date on CarePartners' response to the coronavirus and for information about our Interim Programming, visit our website.

www.CarePartnersTexas.org

Your Donation Makes a Difference!

CarePartners is a nonprofit, volunteer led organization and we are so proud to be able to offer all of our programs and events at no cost to participants. We rely on donations to provide our life changing programs now more than ever. CarePartners is committed to continue fulfilling our mission to serve our Care Team® volunteers and family caregivers who are caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's, dementia and other challenges of aging through our three priorities; Support, Education and Resources.

A gift from you today will make an immediate impact on our ability to continue to fulfill our mission to serve our more than 3,660 family caregivers during this time of uncertainty and stay-at-home order. We thank you for your support.

To support CarePartners with a donation today, [click here](#).



Randalls' Good Neighbor Program

The grocery shopping you already do can benefit CarePartners through Randalls' Good Neighbor Program. Fill out this [form](#) with the CarePartners' number 1742, and take it to any Randalls store to link it with your existing Remarkable Card.

Kroger's Community Rewards Program

The grocery shopping you already do can benefit CarePartners through Kroger's Community Rewards Program. Visit their [website](#) to set up your account, enroll and select CarePartners as your community partner. Just search for us by name or by using code YK533.



Amazon Smile



Visit smile.amazon.com set up your account and select CarePartners as your charity of choice. When you shop, your prices on Amazon won't change and a portion of every purchase you make will be given to CarePartners.