

July 2021

## Meet Katie Scott, CarePartners President

Over the past month, I have enjoyed attending Gathering Places, drive thru events, and team meetings and I have been delighted to meet so many caring, loving, and compassionate people. Seeing the dedication of so many individuals revitalizes my hope about the return of our programs and ignites my excitement for our future. Though the process seems slow, we are moving forward. We are adding two new staff members in August and hope to add a third in November. We have developed new partnerships to strengthen our support of our current programs, including more education for both volunteers and caregivers. We are also pursuing new funding opportunities to expand our services to provide our caregivers and care partners with more support tools.

Supporting family caregivers and individuals with dementia is both my life's work and my life's passion, and I'm excited to bring my experience to CarePartners. I started working with individuals with dementia and family caregivers as an educator for the Alzheimer's Association. In fact, I worked directly with CarePartners to train Gathering Place volunteers and spoke at caregiver conferences. From then, I moved into direct care work, leading a dementia-specific adult day center for nearly ten years and piloting support programs for family caregivers and individuals living alone with dementia. I love every aspect of this work, from creating new programs to better serve our most vulnerable care partners to simply enjoying time with the people I serve.

Our community is better recognizing the needs of family caregivers and individuals with dementia and CarePartners is uniquely positioned to step up in bigger and better ways. I greatly look forward to leading CarePartners into its next chapter and I look forward to sharing this journey with each of you.



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# The Gathering Place Returns!



CarePartners is thrilled to announce that many of our Gathering Place Care Teams are opening in person programming in the coming months. Each partner location is opening under their own safety guidelines according to the needs of their community. As such, each Gathering Place will look a bit different. Some will still ask caregivers and volunteers to wear masks if not vaccinated. Some will continue to maintain social distancing. And many are opening with all COVID restrictions lifted.

As we move forward, we ask all caregivers to observe the safety guidelines at each location as we move towards a fully open program in the coming months. Teams will inform you of their guidelines through their invitations and upon your arrival.

The following page includes a list of the Gathering Place locations with confirmed opening dates. When you and your loved ones are ready to return, you may contact a CarePartners Coordinator to enquire about any additional Gathering Place locations in your area by calling (713) 682-5995 or emailing Katelin at [KJordan@CarePartnersTexas.org](mailto:KJordan@CarePartnersTexas.org) or Nanci at [NEngle@CarePartnersTexas.org](mailto:NEngle@CarePartnersTexas.org)

## **Already Open:**

Houston's First Baptist  
Holy Comforter Lutheran  
First Methodist Humble  
South Main Baptist  
Christ Church Sugar Land

## **Open in July:**

Grace Presbyterian  
Clear Lake Presbyterian

## **Open in August:**

Emmanuel Episcopal  
Kingwood United Methodist  
Lakewood United Methodist  
Spring Branch Presbyterian  
St. Francis Episcopal  
Zion Lutheran  
First Methodist Conroe

## **Open in September:**

Christ the Good Shepherd  
Klein United Methodist  
Memorial Drive Presbyterian  
Woodlands United Methodist  
Epiphany of the Lord Catholic  
St. John Vianney Catholic  
St. Paul the Apostle Catholic  
St. Paul's Episcopal  
St. John the Divine

## **Open in October:**

Chapelwood United Methodist  
St. Martin's Episcopal  
Woodlands United Methodist  
St. Cecilia's Catholic

# Milestone markers... 40, 35, 30: *The Stories are Hidden in the Numbers*

by Tom Breaux

Vice President, CarePartners

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Enjoying my first sip of coffee as the morning news broadcast in the background, I was reminded by the reporter that June honors the LGBTQ+ community, young and old, as Pride month is celebrated around the world. What followed next was another story, albeit a more somber one than the first, June 5th, 2021 marked the **40-year anniversary** since the first five cases of what later became known as AIDS were officially reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Globally more than 32 million people, including 700,000 in the United States have died from complications from HIV/AIDS. I was stunned to realize four decades have passed and we still don't have a cure. I pause to remember those we've lost and to honor those long-term survivors living today with HIV and their resilience in their journey.

35

This 40-year milestone caused me to reflect on my 31-year tenure with CarePartners and the early days serving alongside many volunteers with the AIDS Care Team® program. Our organization was launched in 1986 by our co-founders, Dr. Earl Shelp and Dr. Ron Sunderland. This year we celebrate its **35th anniversary**.



*AIDS Memorial Quilt*

It was the courage and strength of volunteers from diverse faith communities throughout Houston who accepted the challenge to volunteer and non-judgmentally serve people with HIV/AIDS that had an irrevocable impact on me, our staff and community.

It was a difficult time as we lost so many men, women and children as we served them. In March 1992, over 40 quilt panels were made by our teams for the AIDS Memorial Quilt to remember those who so graciously touched our lives.

These panels were displayed with 20,000 others in Washington, D.C. later that year as part of the Names Project. Our organization was then known as the Foundation for Interfaith Research and Ministry (FIRM). It was through the success of this initial journey in volunteer caregiving that we laid the groundwork to embark on our mission to serve families caring for loved ones with memory loss and other challenges of aging.



## ***The Stories are Hidden in the Numbers, cont.***



Looking ahead 18 months, in January 2023 we will celebrate the **30-year anniversary** of the Alzheimer's Care Team® program. This program originally served caregivers and their loved ones at home who were coping with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or other type of memory loss. This program later developed into the Gathering Place. In 2024, we will celebrate 30 years of the Second Family Care Team® program serving families in-home. No matter the disease name or challenges faced by clients and caregivers, volunteers around the city embraced the challenges and rallied to serve new populations with compassion, dignity and dedication. Our staff remain humbled and honored today to serve with you

So, what do these numbers really tell us? The hidden stories behind these milestone markers represent thousands of lives, profound life changing memories, and an incredible journey that continues its quest. The numbers remind us of those we've cared for, loved, and lost yet also offer us a renewed hope of serving once again as we embrace the day when we find COVID-19 in our collective past. Perhaps the successes seen in the record-breaking discovery of the Coronavirus vaccine will lead to successful vaccines for HIV and Alzheimer's. As we have experienced, we know there is much to learn as we navigate difficult times. No one could imagine, nor predict, that since we began 35 years ago that volunteers would donate over 3 million hours of free care to those we serve.

This number may be better appreciated in different terms. Three million hours is equal to 343 years of service 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. These numbers hint at the stories; however, they don't measure the impact of serving as a volunteer on a team, or the benefits of receiving care. What they do remind us of is what we as a diverse and inclusive community of different faiths, politics, ethnicity, gender and culture can do when we work together as one.

We are now setting sail on a new chapter. One that will restart our in-person programs, rebuild our staff and volunteer teams and resume our mission to care for others. We are here today because of the dedication and support of our volunteers and partners. The same holds true for all those we serve. The courage to ask for help is as powerful and impactful as the grace and compassion to serve. We can't have one without the other.

We know that you, and our Houston community, will once again mobilize and lead the call to care and volunteer and when you do, our staff will be waiting to work with you. It may look a little bit different than pre-COVID, but we have much work to do and we know there will be challenges to overcome. We are confident we are up to those challenges and the future milestones we have yet to achieve.

***"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate action of its members."***  
***Coretta Scott King***

# CarePartners is Making a Difference!

I received this photo last evening from Janelle Powell. This is her mom who was in the program for several years. Her dad, Bob Foley, is now a care partner.

She wrote the following words, "I don't think you know how important your job is. This woman taught a Bible study of ten Catholic ladies. She taught them the word of God for years. She taught kids in Sunday School, she traveled an hour and a half each way to another ladies Bible study for years. She had a big impact on the kingdom and you Nanci, have had a big impact on her life and my dad's and mine."

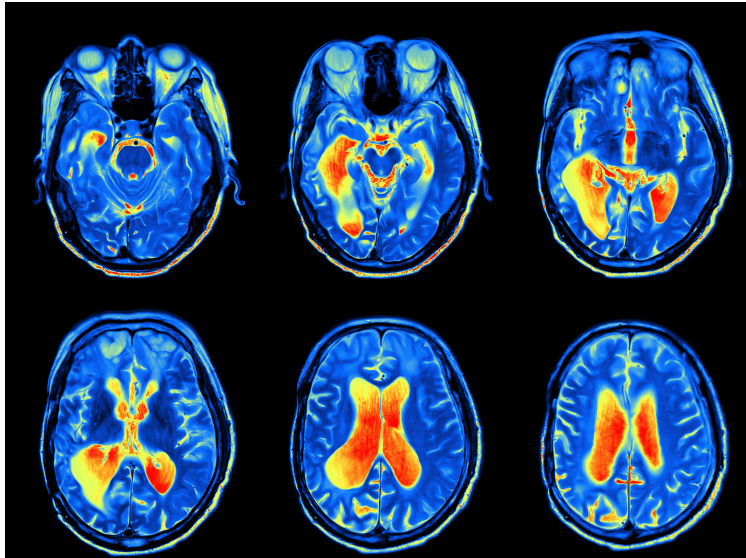
Another reminder of the importance and impact of what we do. -Nanci Engle, Care Team Coordinator



Care partner Mark and his wife Sherry have been busy attending multiple Gathering Place Drive-In's lately in Clear Lake, Friendswood and Pasadena. With the freeze behind us and spring on it's way, tiny plants echoing the hope of spring became a go-to gift from the Gathering Place Care Teams. Sherry gave the tiny flower new pots with room to grow and sent the following message this week: "Mark is enjoying the beautiful flowering plants he has received from CarePartners' Gathering Place events this spring! We are so blessed to be a part of this wonderful organization!"

# **First Drug That Could Slow Alzheimer's Disease Gets FDA Approval**

by Rachel Nania, AARP, June 7, 2021



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Biogen's aducanumab on June 7, making it the first Alzheimer's medication available in nearly 20 years and the only one that could slow the progression of the disease.

Aducanumab (which will go by the brand name Aduhelm) is not a cure for Alzheimer's, which affects 6.2 million Americans, and it does not reverse it. But data shows the drug is successful at breaking up sticky plaques of protein that accumulate in the brain — a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease. And health officials expect that if the drug can help remove those plaques,

it may help slow the rate of cognitive decline in people who are in the early stages of the disease. Other Alzheimer's drugs on the market simply attempt to tackle the disease's debilitating symptoms.

The FDA's approval, however, comes with a condition: The drug's maker, Biogen, who co-developed aducanumab with Eisai, must do further studies to prove it works the way it's intended. In the meantime, a few million people suffering from the disease could have access to aducanumab, although the company did announce that the therapy is expected to cost \$56,000 a year, and it's not yet known whether Medicare and private insurance will cover it.

Still, patient advocacy groups welcomed the FDA's decision. Kristen Clifford, chief program officer for the Alzheimer's Association, calls the announcement a "landmark moment" — one that signifies "the beginning of a new future" for people living with Alzheimer's and their families.

"We know that slowing decline, particularly with early diagnosis, could add days, weeks, months, maybe even years of active life for individuals and families," Clifford says.

Click **HERE** for full article.

## **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.

## **Next Hot Topic Speaker Event:**

**July 28 at 2:00pm:**  
**The Working Caregiver**



# **Forecasting the Future Workplace for Family Caregivers**

By Sherri Snelling, Next Avenue Contributor

Here are four forecasts from the experts on how things will change for family caregivers and their employers:

**1. Work from home is here to stay, for those whose jobs allow it.**

The recent working-from-home experiment often showed that productivity has increased. So, experts say, many employers will take a hybrid, staggered or permanent work-from-home approach with employees.

Employers will do more to give family caregivers a break.

Global Workforce Analytics predicts 25% to 30% of the U.S. workforce will work from home multiple days a week in 2021.

That's the sacrifice that at least half of U.S. workers are making because their jobs can't be done from home. Those positions include front line health care workers, delivery personnel, retail staff and restaurant workers. For these caregiving employees, more employer support through flex time and back-up care will continue to be critical.

**2. No commute will mean more self-care time and peace of mind for family caregivers.**

Family caregivers who now have no commutes have earned back the equivalent of nine days a year to focus on other activities including more time for self-care. Many employers now offer employees meditation and mindfulness app subscriptions such as Headspace and Calm.

**3. Employers will do more to give family caregivers a break.**

"Work-life will take on a new and truer meaning. Employees will talk more freely with supervisors and co-workers [about caregiving]. And employers will realize caregiving is not an 'event,' but is an ongoing part of an employee's life throughout most of their career," said Burki.

**4. There will be shift to a caring corporate culture.**

Video conferencing during the pandemic has personalized and humanized the workplace: we see each other's kitchens and living rooms, pets and kids and also learn about, or even meet, employees' older parents. That's led to more empathy for fellow workers, which experts expect to continue.

Providing a workplace offering support, empathy, open conversations and flexible work options showing that caregiving is not a one-size-fits-all solution are likely to be lessons learned from the pandemic.

But the most important element of the new workplace social contract will be trust. Employers have learned they can trust employees to get their work done from home, even when handling caregiving responsibilities.

"Employers that show their commitment to caregivers and demonstrate they understand their challenges will be rewarded with employee loyalty and will also have a powerful recruitment and retention tool," said Kenny. "The key is to communicate these employee benefits effectively and often. In fact, you cannot over-communicate when it comes to caregiving support in the workplace."



To read the whole article, click **HERE**

# Upcoming Online and In-Person Caregiver Conferences

**August 20, 2021**

What Caregivers Need to  
Know Online Conference

[www.senior-conference.com](http://www.senior-conference.com)

**October 2, 2021**

Half-Day Conference  
at Gloria Dei  
Lutheran Church  
*Nassau Bay*

**September 25, 2021**

Empowering the  
Caregiver Conference  
Online/In Person

**October 30, 2021**

Half-Day Conference  
at St. Luke's United  
Methodist Church  
*River Oaks Area, Houston*

**November 19, 2021**

Long Term Acute Care:  
What You Need to Know  
Online Conference

**November 6, 2021**

Full-Day Conference at  
Christ Church United  
Methodist  
*The Woodlands*





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. We thank you for your support.

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

**[www.CarePartnersTexas.org](http://www.CarePartnersTexas.org)**

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