



# The Caregiver's Voice

## For People Caring for Family, Friends, & Neighbors

Volume 17, Issue 4  
Fall 2023

The Caregiver's Voice is a quarterly publication of the AA County Department of Aging & Disabilities' National Family Caregiver Support Program. Contact us at: 410-222-4339/4375 or [caregiver\\_support@aaacounty.org](mailto:caregiver_support@aaacounty.org)

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## Caregiver Funding Opportunity

### AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN GRANTS



Funding is available through the American Rescue Plan to provide financial assistance to family caregivers to help pay for respite care. This one time per year assistance is meant to enhance existing support programs and is for the **caregiver's** benefit. The care recipient must live in Anne Arundel County.

If you have not already been approved for a caregiver grant in 2023, call Sandi Mobry at 410-222-4375 or Mary Chaput at 410-222-4339.

#### Caregiver eligibility:

- Adult family members or other informal caregivers age 18 and older providing care to individuals 60 years of age and older;
- Adult family members or other informal caregivers age 18 and older providing care to individuals of any age with Alzheimer's disease dementia disorder;
- Grandparents or other kin (NOT parents) 55 years of age and older providing care to children under the age of 18; and
- Parents and grandparents 55 years of age and older providing care to adult child age 18-59 with a disability.

**Grants are limited to one (1) grant per care recipient.**  
Other restrictions may apply.



## Fall Caregiver Workshops

### UNDERSTANDING DEMENTIA BEHAVIORS

Mary Chaput, MA, CDP; Director, Family Caregiver Support Programs

As an individual with dementia loses their ability to communicate with words, behavior becomes a powerful form of communication. Often, it is an individual's only way to communicate their needs, their feelings, and their pain. Sometimes these behaviors pose challenges for the caregiver. This workshop will identify some common triggers that can cause reactions in individuals living with dementia, as well as discuss how changing our reaction to our loved one can help everyone have a better day!

October 5, 2023; 6:30 pm  
Annapolis Senior Activity Center  
119 S. Villa Avenue, Annapolis

### COMPASSIONATE TOUCH®

Mary Chaput, MA, CDP; Mary Chaput, MA, CDP; Director Family Caregiver Support Programs

Compassionate Touch® is designed to ease physical behaviors and emotional distress and empowers care partners and other caregivers a way to connect with their loved one in a calm and comforting manner. Join us in learning and practicing the basic techniques of providing focused,

*Continued on page 2*

## Fall Caregiver Workshop (continued from page 1)

gentle touch along with a compassionate presence.  
**Bring a partner/friend to practice and share the experience!**

October 24, 2023; 2:00 pm  
North County Office/Hein Bldg.  
7320 Ritchie Highway, Glen Burnie

### CAREGIVER SELF-CARE

Kim Burton, Aging & Behavioral Health Educator &  
Consultant

Caregiving can be physically and emotionally exhausting. For family members, caregiving can also lead to additional pressures, such as financial strain, family conflict, and social withdrawal. Over time, caregiver stress can lead to burnout, a

condition marked by irritability, fatigue, problems with sleep, weight gain, feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, and social isolation. During this workshop, Kim will help you recognize ways that you can care for yourself, combat the stress of everyday caregiving, and recharge your batteries!

December 7, 2023; 6:30 pm  
North County Office/Hein Bldg.  
7320 Ritchie Highway, Glen Burnie

Pre-registration is requested for all in-person workshops so that we have adequate materials.

Register on-line at [www.aacounty.org/aging](http://www.aacounty.org/aging) or by calling 410-222-4375/4339.



### THE DEMENTIA LIVE® EXPERIENCE

This workshop is a high impact, dementia simulation experience that immerses participants into life with dementia, resulting in a deeper understanding of what it is like to live with cognitive impairment and sensory change. Space is limited at each session.

**Pre-registration by phone is required:**  
410-222-4375/4339.

Wednesday, October 18, 2023: 6:30 pm

Thursday, November 16, 2023: 6:30 pm

*In-person sessions held at the Glen Burnie/Hein office location: 7320 Ritchie Highway.*

## Here Comes the Holidays! Mary Chaput, MA, CDP, Program Director, Family Caregiver Support Programs

Halloween. Thanksgiving. Chanukah. Kwanzaa. New Year's Eve. And let's not forget Humbug Day on December 21st!

If you are caring for someone who has been diagnosed with dementia, the holidays which used to bring so much joy can now be frightening for them and overwhelming for you. But with some careful planning and a willingness to be flexible, the holidays can still be a time of happiness and new memories.



Halloween is no treat for people with dementia because individuals with dementia are often unable to process new information and can easily become over-stimulated. Because they often misinterpret what's happening around them, transforming your home with ghostly decorations, cobweb-strewn yards, and candlelit jack-o'-lanterns can cause distress and anxiety. In the dementia world that's full of misperceived threats, home is normally a comfortable and predictable place. But on Halloween, a constant stream of loud visitors dressed in costumes and asking for candy can be disruptive to your loved one.

Here are some hints compiled by the Dementia communities around the country that can help your loved one to be a part of the holiday.

- Be prepared to alter your plans such as replacing a Halloween costume parade with a fall foliage ride or a visit to a local pumpkin patch. Be sure to go at a time when it's not crowded.
- Put pumpkins and mums up on tables to avoid tripping.
- If you find your loved one picking at window decorations, remove or take them down.
- Limit decorations because they may cause confusion and agitation.
- Avoid scary decorations that are voice-activated.
- Avoid using tapes and CDs with creaking doors, ghosts screaming and other scary sounds. Instead try Halloween songs.
- Keep decorations to a minimum. Decorations that change the look of the house may lead to anxiety and confusion.
- Avoid the scary Halloween doormat. If it scares a 6-year-old, it will scare a person with dementia.
- Don't put out a fake cemetery and hanging goblins in the

## Here Comes the Holidays! (continued)

front yard. Decorations may get you in the holiday spirit, but don't be surprised when your loved one refuses to walk in or out of the house.

- Avoid nighttime use of flashlights, candles, and light-up pumpkins. A person with dementia will have visual perception changes and the eerie glow they cast can lead to high anxiety.
- So children won't keep ringing the doorbell and frightening your loved one, place candy outside with instructions for trick or treaters.
- Television channels are filled with horror movies this time of year. A single scene in a scary movie can leave a lasting impression on someone with Alzheimer's. If your loved one tends to channel surf, consider blocking certain channels known to show scary movies. Or keep your loved one busy with other activities so they won't watch as much TV, reducing the odds they'll stumble upon "The Exorcist" or something even worse.
- If you notice your parent or senior loved one is getting upset, move the person away from the environment or situation that is causing anxiety, confusion, or fear.
- Observe your loved one closely and continue to watch for signs of agitation.
- Play some familiar, soothing music and offer a favorite drink or snack as a distraction.
- Talk in a soft voice and reassure your loved one that everything is okay.



By the first of November, we are usually making our Thanksgiving plans.

Thanksgiving is a time for family and friends to gather to give thanks, catch up and share a special meal together. And these festivities are still do-able with some advanced planning.

Keep in mind, as individuals progress through the stages of dementia, three people can seem like a crowd. So, make sure there is a quiet room wherever you are celebrating so that your loved one can retreat there if they become overwhelmed.

Use the "preparation" time to reminisce about previous Thanksgiving celebrations. Have your loved one help with preparations when possible – mixing the pumpkin pie filling or the stuffing, folding the napkins. Not only will being helpful allow them to feel successful and useful, but the sensory stimulation is also good for their brain.

Be willing to change how things are done! An early afternoon dinner might be less stressful for your loved one; a potluck dinner will probably be less stressful for you!

Whether planning for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, or Kwanzaa, there are many tips to help keep the days happy and less stressful for everyone.



- As we lead up to the big day, encourage your loved one to participate in the preparation to the best of their ability. Can they help with the holiday cards by signing their name or stuffing the envelopes? If they are no longer able to produce the cookie masterpieces they did before, can they slice refrigerated cookie dough and add some canned frosting or sprinkles?
- Make sure you slow down during the holiday prep time! Take a walk on those cool crisp days and take your loved one with you. The exercise and fresh air is good for both of you.
- Be careful with your decorations. Extra cords, piles of gifts, and other decorations can be a tripping hazard. Moving furniture around can be confusing, as can blinking lights on the tree or outside.
- Prepare visitors for the changes and limitations they will see in your loved one. Educate them as to the proper way to approach and communicate with him/her, and how to include him or her in the conversation as much as possible.
- Make sure your loved one is rested.
- Ask for help. Ask for help with shopping and cooking. Ask one or two people to keep an eye on your loved one throughout the day to ensure his/her anxiety levels isn't increasing.
- Encourage family and friends to reminisce with your loved one. Leave out some old photo albums and putting them in convenient places to inspire conversation. This can be a great way for younger family members to engage with your loved one, as well as with other older family members, especially when your loved one needs to retreat to that quiet zone.

And finally, remember to take care of yourself. Continue to eat well, socialize, exercise, and get your sleep! Things don't have to be the way they always have been, and they don't have to be perfect. Enjoy time with your loved one, your family, and your friends. That's what the holidays are all about!



## Family Caregiver Support Groups

Jennifer Sapp, MSW, MSG,  
facilitates monthly support groups:

### Glen Burnie Support Group 7320 Ritchie Hwy., 2nd Floor

October 11th  
November 8th  
December 13th

1:00-2:30 pm

Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/91500934491>  
Meeting ID: 915 0093 4491

or call

301 715 8592  
Meeting ID: 915 0093 4491

### Annapolis Support Group 2664 Riva Road, Independence Room

October 17th  
November 21st  
December 19th

1:00-2:30 pm

Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/93285848158>  
Meeting ID: 932 8584 8158

or call

301 715 8592  
Meeting ID: 932 8584 8158

## Community Caregiver Support Groups Booklet

[www.aacounty.org/aging](http://www.aacounty.org/aging)  
or call 410-222-4339



Caregiver Support Facebook Group:

[Facebook.com/ArundelSeniors](https://www.facebook.com/ArundelSeniors)



## National Family Caregiver Support Program

7320 Ritchie Highway  
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

Phone: 410-222-4339/4375  
Email: [caregiver\\_support@aacounty.org](mailto:caregiver_support@aacounty.org)  
Web: [www.aacounty.org/aging](http://www.aacounty.org/aging)

**Anne Arundel County  
County Executive  
Stuart Pittman**  
Arundel Center  
44 Calvert Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Karrisa Kelly  
Director  
Department of Aging & Disabilities  
A Maryland Access Point Program**  
Heritage Office Complex  
2666 Riva Road, Suite 400  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
Phone: 410-222-4257  
Fax: 410-222-4360  
[www.aacounty.org/Aging](http://www.aacounty.org/Aging)

**Family Caregiver Support  
Program Staff**  
**Mary Chaput, Program Director**  
**Sandra Mobry, NFCSP Coordinator**  
**Anne Kaiser, RCRP Coordinator**  
7320 Ritchie Highway  
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

- Information & Assistance (I&A)
- Adult Evaluation & Review Service (AERS)
- Adult Public Guardianship
- Americans with Disabilities Act Office (ADA)
- Assisted Living Facilities Program
- Evidence-Based Health Promotion
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman/Resident Advocate
- National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP)
- Respite Care Referral Program (RCRP)
- Senior Activity Centers
- Senior Care, Senior Center Plus
- Senior Nutrition Program
- Supports Planning
- State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)
- Telephone Reassurance Program
- Volunteer Programs

Anyone needing accommodations to caregiver events must contact Mary Chaput at 410-222-4339 or by e-mail at [agchap01@aacounty.org](mailto:agchap01@aacounty.org) at least seven days in advance of the event. TTY users, please call via Maryland Relay 7-1-1.

To join the NFCSP mail list and receive information regarding up-coming workshops and conferences, or to receive the *Caregivers' Voice* by email, call 410-222-4339 or email us at: [caregiver\\_support@aacounty.org](mailto:caregiver_support@aacounty.org)  
Back issues of the newsletter are available on the Family Caregivers' website at [www.aacounty.org/aging](http://www.aacounty.org/aging).

For information on sponsoring an edition of the *Caregivers' Voice*, contact Mary Chaput at 410-222-4339 or email [caregiver\\_support@aacounty.org](mailto:caregiver_support@aacounty.org).