

# The Family Caregiver

Newsletter of the Lewis-Mason-Thurston Family Caregiver Support Program

Winter, 2016

## Greetings Caregivers-

We had an outstanding workshop in November so we have dedicated this issue to summarizing and sharing what we learned...

*-the Family Caregiver Support Program Staff*

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## PALLIATIVE CARE: THE CAREGIVERS BEST FRIEND

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On the first day of our annual fall workshop we heard from Dr. Kevin Murphy, Director of Palliative Care for Providence Hospital. He gave us a guided tour of what palliative care is and how it can help you.

Palliative care is a medical specialty which provides relief from pain and stress of illnesses, no matter the seriousness of the diagnosis. It is an approach which brings the person with the illness and the family together for the goals of comfort and safety and improving the quality of life. That sounds like every caregiver's dream for their family member – a medical specialty which directly works to reduce the burden of care for both care receiver and caregiver.

Palliative care may be provided at any stage of an illness and can be given at the same time as curative treatments. Care receivers who can benefit the most may be those who are seriously ill and are having trouble making decisions with complex medical care or need help coordinating their care.

Palliative care can be provided while in the hospital, but also in the outpatient clinic. Most insurance plans, including Medicare, will pay for palliative services with a referral from your doctor.

Following a referral from your physician, you will meet with a palliative care doctor who will learn about your medical needs and goals. Family members are invited to the appointments and are included in the palliative care plan. After the initial appointment, you will meet with other specially trained palliative care team members like nurses, social workers and pharmacists to complete your plan.

Palliative care is one more resource for you and your family member to help you provide the best care possible that focuses on easing the symptoms and stress that can come with complex health issues.

If you think palliative care may be helpful for your family member talk with your doctor and request a palliative care consultation.

## *Notes on Megan Carnarius – Companions on the Journey*

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Megan Carnarius, RN provides caregivers a framework to understand the losses that come with dementia by looking at the developmental losses of adult, adolescent and childhood learning.

Seeing ourselves as companions on this journey provides a collaborative approach to caregiving. Megan's recommendations for working as a companion and support to our family member with dementia provides both challenges and support to for family caregivers. She encourages families to reduce stress and simplify daily life for both yourself and care receiver and work toward providing the best quality of life.

Megan reminds family caregivers that both you and your family member with dementia are important, and that you both are equally important in your need for health, well-being and a good quality of life.

Megan offers family caregivers tips to support your resilience while caregiving:

- Anticipate problems when possible, and simplify your expectations of yourself and your care receiver. Simplify your living environment as well.
- Live life in the present moment when with your care receiver.
- Learn not to take difficult interactions with your care receiver personally.
- Develop your patience, and be aware of your body language when with your care receiver so that you send a positive message.
- Humor is vital and an incredible salve.
- Have a safe person that you can vent to when needed.
- Validate and applaud yourself for your ability to provide good care to your care receiver.
- Begin to allow unconditional love to flow from you in all directions.



# FRIDGE NOTES

(yes, take this page & put it on your refrigerator- do it now!)

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## *Messages from Megan*

### **1. Focus on strengths – yours and theirs.**

When we are caring for someone with dementia it is easy to focus our attention on all the losses. Consider reframing your thinking to what they can still do. Can they still fold socks? Let them fold socks then. Can they rake the leaves? Let them do it. Sometimes it may be more work for you, but helping them do what they are even somewhat able to do gives their brain and your caregiving a boost.

By focusing on your strengths you are allowing yourself to be somewhat vulnerable. This will let you realize what you can and cannot do. Admitting that you cannot do it all is tough. Broaden your support network and allow help in the areas you struggle as a caregiver.

### **2. Self-care is the *best care***

Self-care is essential for everyone, but especially for caregivers. Caring for ourselves, mind/body/spirit, is just as important as the care you give your loved one. It is imperative that we are mindful of our own needs. Our interests, hobbies, and health should not be ignored during our time as a caregiver. By taking care of ourselves, we are more capable of providing better care to our loved one.

### **3. Humor**

Caregiving can be some serious business and the thought of laughing might seem inappropriate or rude. Finding humor in difficult times can help ease the pain of the situation. It is okay to find the lighter side of things and allow yourself to laugh at situations. You need humor and so does the person you are caring for.

*Megan Carnarius, RN presented at our annual Family Caregiver Workshop.*

More on Megan at [www.MeganCarnarius.com](http://www.MeganCarnarius.com)

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[www.LMTAAA.org](http://www.LMTAAA.org)

1-888-545-0910

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Join us for

# DEMENTIA STUDY GROUPS

“Come with questions, leave with answers.”

In SHELTON: Second Wednesday of the month from 1pm-3pm  
In CHEHALIS: Second Thursday of the month from 1pm-3pm  
In OLYMPIA: Third Thursday of the month from 1pm-3pm



Find us on the web at

[www.LMTAAA.org](http://www.LMTAAA.org)

## Contact one of our Resource Managers:

*Lewis County* Joan Vance

360-748-2524 ext. 210, or toll free 1-888-702-4464  
1651 S. Market Blvd., Chehalis, WA 98532

*Mason County* Carolyn Merling

360-427-2225 ext.260, or toll free 1-877-227-4696  
628 W. Alder / P.O. Box 2087, Shelton, WA 98584

*Thurston County* Kathy Schroeder

360-664-3162 ext. 106 or toll free 1-888-545-0910  
2404 Heritage Ct SW, Suite A, Olympia, WA 98502



## Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes

*“Learn how to care for yourself while caring for others”*

The caregiving class will be held on six consecutive Tuesday afternoons:

Tuesday, February 21 - Tuesday, March 28, 2017

from 1pm-3pm at the Olympia LMTAAA office,

2404 Heritage Court SW, Suite A, Olympia, WA 98502

The class and the Caregiver Helpbook are offered at no cost to you.

Pre-registration is required. A commitment to attend the entire series is requested.

*For information, accommodation or to register please call (360) 664-2168 ext. 102  
Register online at [www.LMTAAA.org](http://www.LMTAAA.org) or complete the form below and mail it in.*

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Send your completed registration to:

**LMTAAA FCSP, 2404 Heritage Court SW, Suite A, Olympia, WA 98502**

You will receive a confirmation to acknowledge your registration.

As an **unpaid** caregiver, you are caring for a:

Spouse     Parent     Sibling     Friend     Other: \_\_\_\_\_



## Class Description

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### **Class #1: Taking Care of You**

This class sets the stage for the entire course. It emphasizes that the focus is on “YOU, the caregiver, not on the family member receiving care,” and that caregivers will develop a “box of self-care tools.” The challenges of caregiving and significance of caregiver self-care are dramatized through a video. Beginning in this class, caregivers make a weekly action plan for self-care.

### **Class #2: Identifying and Reducing Personal Stress**

Four steps are presented for effective stress management:

1. Identifying early warning signs
2. Identifying personal sources of stress
3. Changing what you can change and accepting what you cannot change
4. Taking action.

Tools to reduce stress are discussed. Participants learn how to change negative self-talk – which increases stress and erodes confidence – to positive self-talk. Beginning in this class, caregivers learn five relaxation activities that are easy to incorporate into their daily lives.

### **Class #3: Communicating Feelings, Needs, and Concerns**

Participants learn how to communicate their feelings, needs and concerns more effectively by using “I” messages. Through brief dramatizations, participants experience the impact of both “I” messages and “You” messages (which tend to sound blaming and put people on the defensive). They practice changing “You” messages to “I” messages, and identifying when statements beginning with the word “I” are actually “Hidden You” messages.

### **Class #4: Communicating in Challenging Situations**

Participants practice two communication tools – assertiveness and Aikido – which are helpful in difficult situations. They learn a four-step process, called DESC (Describe, Express, Specify, and Consequence) for using the assertive style of communication. With Aikido, participants learn how to align and find “common ground” with a person who is distressed. A segment highlights guidelines for communicating with a person who is memory impaired.

### **Class #5: Learning From Our Emotions**

The overriding theme of this class is “our emotions are messages we need to listen to.” It emphasizes that feelings occur for a reason and that feelings are neither good nor bad. Focus is on identifying constructive ways for dealing with difficult feelings – especially anger, guilt, and depression – and resources for professional help.

### **Class #6: Mastering Caregiving Decisions**

Focus is on the internal emotional process caregivers go through when they experience a life change. Tools for dealing with changes and for making tough decisions – including a seven-step decision-making model and the family meeting – are discussed.

# UPCOMING CLASSES & EVENTS



February 21, 28, March 7, 14, 21, 28, 2017  
See insert for details or visit our website [www.LMTAAA.org](http://www.LMTAAA.org)



Dementia Skills Class featuring videos from Teepa Snow's presentation at our annual Fall Workshop in 2015

April 18 & 27, 1-3pm in the Olympia LMTAAA office.  
Call (360) 664-3162 x102 to reserve your seat.



"Come with questions, leave with answers."

If you have joined us in the past, thank you for your questions. If you are attending now, glad to have you. If you are thinking of attending, just come. It is the place to better understand the brain and how to be a more skilled caregiver. Our motto is still the same, "come with questions, leave with answers."

In SHELTON:	Second Wednesday of the month from 1 PM-3 PM	(360) 427-2226 ext. 102
In CHEHALIS:	Second Thursday of the month from 1 PM-3 PM	(360) 748-2524 ext. 102
In OLYMPIA:	Third Thursday of the month from 1 PM-3 PM	(360) 664-3162 ext. 102



South Sound Alzheimer's Council annual Conference coming May 12, 2017



Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area Agency on Aging

2404 Heritage Court SW  
Suite A  
Olympia, WA 98502

## ALZHEIMER'S READING ROOM

The ARR has the up to date scoop and a huge archive of dementia information, caregiving skills and current research.

[www.AlzheimersReadingRoom.com](http://www.AlzheimersReadingRoom.com)

## FAMILY CAREGIVER RESOURCE MANAGERS

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360-748-2524 ext. 210, or toll free 1-888-702-4464  
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