

# Pathways

SERVING FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS OF BRAIN IMPAIRED ADULTS AND THE FRAIL ELDERLY

## Respite Care: The Key to Caregiver Survival



**I** imagine running a help wanted ad for a caregiver with these requirements: “Caregiver wanted. Must work 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 52 weeks a year. No pay. No breaks. No vacation. No benefits. Apply in person. Bring a packed suitcase and plan to stay indefinitely.”

How many people do you think would show up? Not many, right?

*Why, as family caregivers, do we think that we’re shirking our responsibility and acting selfishly when we take a little time for ourselves?*

We all know it would be impossible to hire someone to work 24 hours a day with no time off, regardless of how much money you offered. So, why, as family caregivers, do we think that we’re shirking our responsibility and acting selfishly when we take a little time for ourselves?

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# Pathways

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## Respite Care . . . continued from page 1

Here's the bottom line: If you want to avoid caregiver burnout and maintain the mental, physical and emotional strength you'll need to care for a loved one over an extended period of time, you must make caregiver self-care as high a priority as your care receiver's care.

Self-care is important because when caregivers reach the point of burnout, they can lose their ability to feel compassion and empathy for their care receiver. They experience extreme fatigue, anxiety and depression along with physical symptoms such as:

- Headaches, backaches and digestive disorders
- Weight loss or gain
- Difficulty sleeping
- Withdrawal from friends, family and other loved ones
- Feelings of irritability and apathy
- Desire to hurt oneself or inflict harm on the care receiver

In the midst of an acute health crisis, it is necessary and appropriate to put your own personal desires on hold and make your care receiver's needs the top priority. However, when the crisis is over and you have settled into a long-term care situation, in order to stay healthy yourself, you will need to find respite care so you can take some occasional breaks from your caregiving responsibilities.

Getting respite care is not selfish. It may be the key to your survival. My mom was the primary caregiver for my dad; in a letter she wrote to me after she'd pushed herself too hard for an extended period of time, she said, "I realized I will be of absolutely no use to Quentin if I end up in the hospital or the morgue. I have to start paying attention to my own health."

What is Respite Care?

The dictionary defines respite as a short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant. It's further described as a rest, break, breathing space, intermission, recess, time out; relief, relaxation and an informal breather.

Respite care services are provided for the benefit of the caregiver. The care receiver is watched over by someone else for a few hours, overnight, or sometimes for several days. This can happen at adult day care centers, in a person's home, and at assisted living facilities. To find respite resources in your area, contact Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center at (916) 728-9333.

After caring for my dad for more than six years, my mother was physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted. Dad took a terrible fall and ended up in a rehab facility. Once he got settled, Mom spent a few days at a Catholic convent where the sisters provided a silent retreat. I don't know whether Mom would have been able to muster the strength to go on if

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she hadn't spent a few days away from the physical strain and emotional stress of caring for Dad.

Nothing will ever make the job of caring for an aging, chronically ill or disabled person easy. But if you can accept the idea that providing occasional relief for the caregiver is as important as providing care for your loved one, you will have a much greater chance of avoiding caregiver burnout.

Getting enough rest and scheduling regular respite breaks will not only help you survive, it could end up being one of the most generous and beneficial things you will ever do for your care receiver.

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*Elaine K Sanchez is an author, speaker and co-founder of CaregiverHelp.com, a video based caregiver support program. She co-teaches "Gero 407- Caregiving" at Western Oregon University with her husband, Dr. Alex Sanchez. She also writes the daily blog, "Caregiver Help Word of the Day".*

## Parkinson's Goodbye

*By Lois Ann Abraham*

His train is leaving.  
I stand on the platform  
My hand reaching the window  
to hold his hand, walk beside  
him all the way,  
but his train is leaving.

Our fingers part and he  
is leaving.  
He looks from this distance  
like a stranger,  
someone from another time,  
a child,  
now like a bear  
now a dog  
now a small bird leaving.

I see him smaller, less,  
his features blurred to  
an expressionless dot  
disappearing around  
the curve.

I stand on this platform  
future-blind  
flat-footed  
empty-handed  
leaning against the emptiness  
about to fall.

## Remember

*By Gloria C. Hernandez*

Come back to me, Mom!  
Let us remember how we  
laughed  
And how we shared the times  
of my children's birthdays.  
Come back to me, Mom!  
Let us remember how  
we cooked during the  
Holidays.  
I can smell tamales cooking  
and steaming on the stove  
in big pots.  
Come back to me, Mom!  
Please remember my name.  
Come back to me, Mom!  
How now the days are the  
same. No remembrance,  
just a smile on your face  
and a stare into space.  
Come back to me, Mom!  
Come back to this place.  
Your daughter, Gloria.

## Written at our 2016 Caregiver Retreat:

*By Lauri Dilbeck*

Today I set aside time  
for myself  
To come to a place where I  
can get help  
To care for my husband in  
a better way;  
To revive myself if just for  
a day.  
The laughter is good, the  
fellowship needed,  
The advice is important and  
now will be heeded.  
So thanks to Del Oro for this  
little respite.  
I no longer feel so entirely  
desperate!

*By Bob Oyafuso*

Her words emerged haltingly  
her grimace showing strains  
of forcing each word out.

She wants to tell me something  
important  
I can't get the words out she cries  
the tears flow, I fold her in my arms  
we both cry.

### INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO CAREGIVER'S COLUMN

Please submit your contributions via email to [crc@deloro.org](mailto:crc@deloro.org). Please be sure to include your source(s), unless it is your own work. Additionally, please share how this information was beneficial to your caregiving journey.



**ON JUNE 15TH**, Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center held our 12th Annual Cruise Around the World Cook-off and Fundraiser in Orangevale. This fun event supports the efforts of Del Oro, allowing us to expand much needed services to family caregivers in our community.

At the heart of the event is a cook-off competition between local senior care providers. There were two phases to the competition—professional judges and crowd favorites. The professional judge panel consisted of Teresa Urkofsky, Chef and Culinary Faculty at American River College, Thomas Harder, Chef with Mustards Grill in Napa, and Keith Breedlove, Culinerdy Cruiser. The panel of judges scored each participant on presentation of the food, taste, originality, and authenticity to the region or country the culinary partner chose. We are pleased to announce this year’s winners:

**FIRST PLACE—Carlton Senior Living** with their Food Truck Flair featuring Reuben Egg Rolls, Fusion Street Tacos and Kalbi Rib Sliders

**SECOND PLACE—Atria Senior Living** with their Peruvian Halibut and Scallop Ceviche

**THIRD PLACE—Aegis of Carmichael** with their Jerk Pork Slider with Pineapple Coleslaw and Jerk Chicken and Jamaican Beans and Rice

The event attendees chose Oakmont Senior Living as the overall “Crowd Favorite” with their Trio of Tacos, Braised Pork Belly, Citrus Grilled Steak and Potato Soyriozo on Homemade Corn Tortillas. Congratulations to all of our winners!!

Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, culinary partners, and attendees, Del Oro raised just over \$45,000 to provide vital services to family caregivers in our community! We appreciate your support of our mission and goal to improve the well-being of family caregivers throughout their journey.

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# FINDING *Hope, Humor* AND *Heart* IN CAREGIVING

PRESENTED BY ELAINE K. SANCHEZ  
*Author, Speaker & Co-Founder of CaregiverHelp.com*

**Wednesday, November 8th**

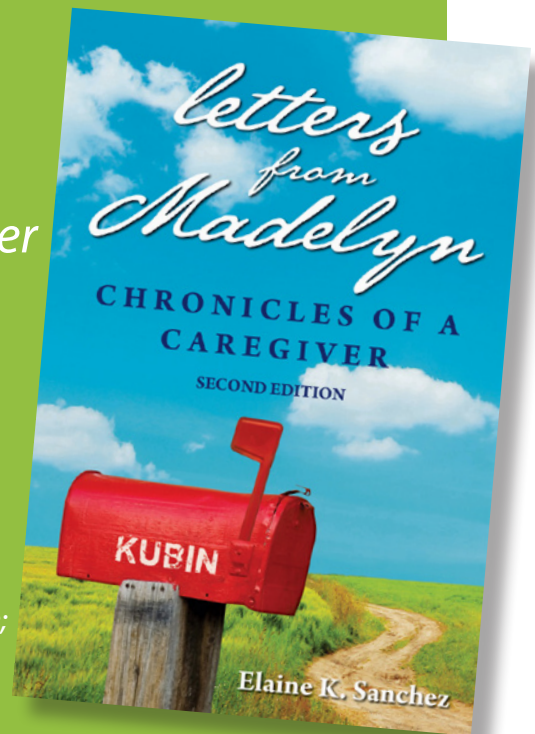
9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

*Citrus Heights Community Center*  
6300 Fountain Square Dr.,  
Citrus Heights, CA 95621

**There is no cost to attend the event**

**RSVP:** Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center  
916.728.9333

*If you need someone to care for your loved one to attend, in-home care may be available; please state need upon registering.*



An inspiring and informative presentation featuring real-life stories and strategies for coping with the emotional stress of caregiving. You will come away with strategies that will help you:

- **Cope with Caregiver Anger and Guilt**
- **Deal with Caregiver Depression and Grief**
- **Understand and Respond to Dementia-Related Challenging Behaviors, Including Surprising and Inappropriate Sexual Behavior**
- **Develop a Plan for Self-Care**



*Elaine K Sanchez, author of the unflinchingly honest and uproariously funny book, Letters from Madelyn, Chronicles of a Caregiver will share stories that touch the heart and tickle the funny bone, and you will discover that it is possible to experience mental and spiritual growth even in the very worst end-of-life situations.*

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