

Pathways

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



When Dementia is on the Holiday Guest List

Holiday Planning Ideas For Family Caregivers

THE HOLIDAY SEASON calls for advance planning in order to honor family traditions and remembering when times were different . . . before Dementia joined the family tree. Most caregivers, who are actively involved the care of a family member with Dementia, understand this world of varying moods and needs, the unraveling

of reciprocity in the relationship, as well as, the understanding that each new day may reveal another twist in the journey. Of course, with Dementia, one does not peer too far into the future yet when the holidays are just around the corner—we must consider this in our holiday planning.

As a family caregiver, you may be

tempted to not decorate the tree since your wife with dementia won't even notice . . . or you may not want to even consider getting together with family when your husband has lost impulse control and tends to comment on ladies' bosoms (yes, you're not alone!). Even though Dementia may provide challenges to the holidays as they do in your daily round, you don't have to forego the holidays this year . . . let's focus on how you and your loved-one-with-dementia (LOWD) can make adjustments in order to enjoy the holidays.

The first step to approaching the holidays, as well as, other events that may be anticipated throughout the year, is to acknowledge expectations surrounding family traditions. Consider the family traditions that mean the most to you and your family, especially the person with dementia. What do you hope to experience this year? You may even want to consider making a list of the "events," noting who hosts the event (especially those that you have traditionally held in your home), whether travel is needed, and prioritize each one. It's okay to say "yes" to what you want and to say "no, thank you" to other events that are not a good fit right now. Saying "no" can even look like a discussion for brainstorming other ideas. Communicating with family and friends about how Dementia will impact the holidays this year is important so that

Inside this issue:

When Dementia is on the Holiday Guest List	1
Caregivers Column: Book Review	3
A Dose of Inspiration	3
Cruise Around the World	4
Thank You to our Generous Donors	7

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Thank You, Elizabeth!



One of our beloved Family Consultants, Elizabeth Rawson, retired from Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center in June. Elizabeth is a skilled Clinician and always used the right balance of tough love and empowerment to move her clients through the difficult times. We are grateful for her service to Del Oro, and the caregiving community. We wish her the best as she moves forward with the next chapter of her journey and her book, *WHO CARES? A COMPANION GUIDEBOOK FOR THE FAMILY CAREGIVER'S JOURNEY*. Check out Elizabeth's website at <https://who-cares-caregivers.com/>. We miss you, Elizabeth, but suspect retirement is pretty extraordinary!

Pathways is published by Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center. We welcome your comments. Please send letters and change of address notices to Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center, 8421 Auburn Blvd., Citrus Heights, CA (916) 728-9333 or via e-mail to crc@deloro.org. Material in Pathways may be reproduced only with permission of Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center.

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When Dementia is on the Holiday Guest List, continued from page 1

everyone can adjust their expectations and maybe even offer to help or even host the event.

Invitations are an excellent way to organize the need-to-know information for special events, especially when Dementia is on the guest list:

WHERE:

- Where will the gathering be held?
- If you need to travel, you may want to consider asking someone to be a travel companion to relieve the stress of driving/flying;
- If your LOWD feels uncomfortable or agitated in a new environment, you may want to consider asking if there is a private and quiet space where your LOWD can go to relax, having the event at a favorite restaurant, or in your home;
- If you typically host a holiday event and it feels like too much this year, you could see this as an opportunity to pass the honor to another family member or friend to host the event while you provide the traditional main dish (this is a good example of how a tradition can be adapted yet maintained);
- You may want to consider alternatives that include meeting at a local (familiar) restaurant that will offer separate checks for each family or asking family to stay in a hotel rather than staying with you this year.

WHO:

- Keep guest list limited to smaller group to ease the experience for both of you;
- Ask family members or friends (or hire someone) who are familiar to LOWD to be present for social interaction and companionship;
- Invite family members to contribute to the gathering, such as decorating, bring a dish, meal preparation, clean-up and even transportation;
- Key question: What would help you enjoy the festivities?

WHEN:

- What time of day/week is best for you and your loved one?
- Keep with routine as much as possible;
- RSVP—communicate with family/

friends so they are aware before the event and can understand what is needed based on the circumstances this year.

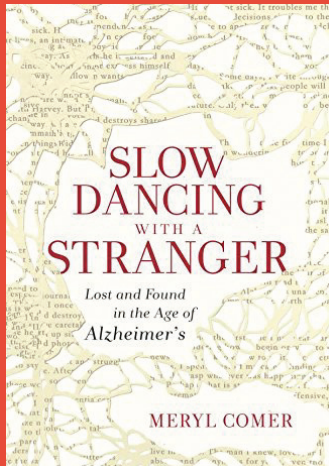
No matter which holiday you celebrate each year, gift-giving (and receiving) is oftentimes part of the festivities. If you are part of a large family, you may want to consider drawing names to reduce the amount of shopping and stay within your budget. Shopping for others can be challenging when it's difficult to leave home for an extended time (or the idea of finding a parking spot at the mall gives you chills), then consider keeping it simple with personalized gifts (such as family pictures with stories that can be passed along for future generations) or shop online and take advantage of free shipping offers.

At Del Oro, we recognize how the focus of our clients is typically on their LOWD and constantly remind clients of the importance of self-care. In addition to healthy eating and exercise, be sure to stay connected with those who care about your well-being. Your support team is valuable year-round and may be looking for ways to ease the stress you are feeling, especially during the holidays. Even gift-giving can be a great opportunity to ask for what you truly want this year: weekly companionship for your LOWD, respite (in the form of a crisp \$100 bill or their own time), a gift certificate for insert favorite indulgent activity here, or even a gift card to a favorite local restaurant or grocery store that delivers. What is it you truly need right now to help you continue on this path? Be honest with yourself and others for this present could be the one you've been waiting to open all year long.

Article written by Stefani R. Wilson who is a Family Consultant at Del Oro. Stefani also has a counseling practice where she meets with family caregivers who are looking to gain a new perspective of their experience and unravel the stress and strain of caregiving (www.agingfamilyadvocate.com).

Caregiver's Column: Book Review

I HAVE JUST FINISHED reading a book titled, "Slow Dancing With A Stranger," written by Meryl Comer. This book has changed my way of dealing with my husband's Alzheimer's disease and especially my own thinking. Up until now, all the books (and other reading materials) deal with moms and grandparents, not a spouse. Like the wife in the book, I, too, am living every day with a man, Larry, my husband who no longer is the man I married. He is no longer able to complete daily tasks like eating, bathing, etc. He has been robbed of what we all take for granted. I now feel I can handle these things a little easier and with a little more grace and sometimes even a smile! I highly recommend this book to all spouses and family members who are living this sometimes nightmare.



Thank you to Maureen T. for being our first contributor to The Caregiver's Column! This column is for Family Caregivers and we would like to hear from you! We welcome any contributions from our clients to reach out and share what inspires you! This could be a movie review, book review, poem, or even what you are learning along the way to inspire and give hope. You can make a difference in another caregiver's life by reminding them "You are not alone."

INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO CAREGIVER'S COLUMN

Please feel free to submit your contribution to email address. It is best to type your review in a Microsoft Word document. Be sure to include the title, author, a brief description, and mention how this was beneficial for you. The newsletter editor may need to make changes to your submission for various reasons, including spelling/grammar check and to adjust article to meet spacing requirements.

A Dose of Inspiration

Be there for others, but never leave yourself behind.

DODINSKY

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

Doctors diagnose, nurses heal, and caregivers make sense of it all.

BRETT H. LEWIS

In the end, just three things matter:

How well we have lived.

How well we have loved.

How well we have learned to let go.

JACK KORNFIELD

Courage is being scared to death—and saddling up anyway.

JOHN WAYNE

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9th Annual Cook-off and Fundraiser, benefiting Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center

ON SEPTEMBER 18TH, Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center held our 8th Annual Cruise Around the World Cook-off and Fundraiser in Orangevale. This fun and festive event is an opportunity to support the efforts of Del Oro, a private, non-profit agency dedicated to serving families and people who are providing care for brain-impaired adults and the frail elderly.

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, Shawna Rivera, Chef and Owner of The Lido Bar and Grille, and Tina Mucuha, Anchor and Reporter for Good Day Sacramento. 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 – Alta Manor with their Curry Chicken Salad, Wontons and Chinese BBQ Pork Parfait

SECOND PLACE – Hank Fisher Properties served delicious desserts from New York, including a winning cheesecake.

THIRD PLACE – Revere Court brought us back to the 1950's with their Rock & Roll Burgers and Fries.

CROWD FAVORITE – The event attendees chose Carlton Plaza as the overall "Crowd Favorite" with their Texas sized Longhorn Baby Back Ribs, Southern Slaw, Kickin' Cheddar Cornbread. Congratulations to all of our winners!!

Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, culinary partners, and attendees, Del Oro raised \$30,000 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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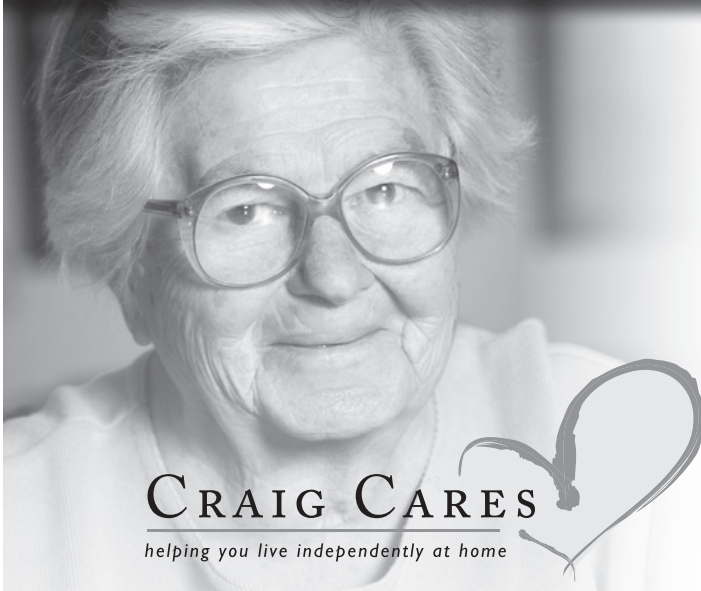
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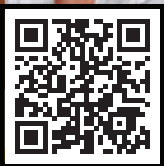


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