



December 2011

Hot Cocoa, Peppermints and Mom: How to Enhance the Holidays for Everyone

As we approach the December holidays and all the festivities, it can be overwhelming for our aging parents, as well as for those of us trying to balance life, work and family care. Many of us want to fast forward to January – but we are not living in the times of Star Trek!

So, how can we enhance the holidays for everyone in the family without breaking the “stress” bank? I think the best advice is to simplify and not try to be Martha Stewart. That might mean giving up some elaborate family tradition that is filled with hours of cooking, entertaining and/or gift exchanging.

However, adding a new tradition, such as going out for a meal and to a holiday concert – or joining together for gifting to a shared charity could be a welcomed change. Choose a meal location that has easy access for the frail elders in your life. Ask questions about parking and access for those with walkers or wheel chairs before you make reservations.

For those who are home bound and for whom outings only bring stress and worry, think about ordering a turkey or ham dinner with all the fixings from your favorite grocer. Actually, these pre-paid dinners can save time and dollars. You might want to provide some festive flowers to dress up the table.

Those with dementia are more sensitive to over stimulation so “quiet and simple” will enhance their ability to celebrate with you. If you have a large family and want to bring mom or



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dad over for a holiday meal – pick them up just before you are about ready to eat and bring them home just after desert.

Gift giving for those who are frail could consist of easy on and off clothing (those with elastic waists and the right length). Soft and plush is most welcome on cold winter days and nights.

Other items could be:

- Night lights that are motion sensitive
- Flash lights – they come in pretty colors and are very bright
- Music – an easy to use CD player and some music they like
- Electronics – consider items like the “Jitterbug” phone or “Universal Remote” for the TV that are easy to use and enjoyable all year.

The one gift that my mother loves is the fast blooming and amazing Amaryllis. Last year, even though she was recovering from a stroke, she called me so delighted with each bloom that opened.

Families come together for the holidays, and that can bring new issues. The brother or sister who lives at a great distance and hasn’t seen mom or dad for many months is always full of “helpful” ideas and

yet has no time to do them for your parent. When this happens, and if it causes family problems, it might be the perfect time to suggest a family meeting. A Geriatric Care Manager can help you find ways that enhance life, not just at the holidays but all year for everyone in the family.

May the peace of the Holiday Season be with each of you, whether you provide direct care for your family member, you care from a distance, your aging process is bringing changes into your own life, or you are a service or health care professional who has passion for the highest quality of life for elders and family caregivers.

Eldercare Services’ Professional Geriatric Care Managers are here to assist you with family care, client resources or family education – give us a call and we will assist in any way we can.

In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love - Mother Teresa



Eldercare Services provides Counseling, Support Groups, Home Care and Care Management to aid Family Caregivers. If you or someone you know could benefit from self-care, give us a call at (866) 760-1808 or email us at Info@EldercareAnswers.com.

Eldercare Services works with Seniors and their families in Walnut Creek, Alameda County, San Francisco and the Tri-Valley, CA. Visit us on the web at <http://www.EldercareAnswers.com> for more

Community Classes

Walnut Creek

Dementia: 101 **For Families Experiencing the Challenge**

Classes Start in January

3rd Friday of every month from 10 AM to Noon

1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595

Cost for Classes: None

Class Registration:

Please call at least 3 days ahead

For more information regarding classes and support groups, visit us at www.EldercareAnswers.com or call (925) 937-2018,

Support Groups

When concerns for aging family members are part of every day life, or when they interfere with work, your health or other relationships, you need to join a support group.

Caring for An Aging Family Member

2nd Thursday of every month from 7 to 8:30 PM

1808 Tice Valley Blvd., **Walnut Creek**, CA 94595

1st Tuesday of every month from 6 to 7:30 PM

605 A Chenery St., **San Francisco**, CA 94131

Cost for Support Groups: None

Support Group Registration: Not required



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Advocacy, Care, and Education

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