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Newsletter **OCTOBER 2015**

Who is Caring for those with Alzheimer's Disease?

The answer is "families". In California, we have 580,000 individuals diagnosed with this disease and it is projected to grow by almost 45% by 2025 according to the Alzheimer's Association "Facts and Figures" Report of 2014. The Report further noted that these families provide 17.9 billion hours of informal (unpaid) assistance valued at \$217.7 billion dollars!

Why do families decide to provide the care?

1) they desire to keep the family member at home (65%), 2) they live near the person with dementia (48%) 3) the caregiver perceives this as their obligation (spouse or partner) (38%).

Who are the caregivers? 34% are women age 65 or older and two-thirds are married and living with a partner or spouse. Over 40% of family caregivers have a college degree or higher education and most live with the care recipient or within 20 minutes.

If you have lived this experience you know the burden. If you have not, your future might hold that experience, but for certain someone in your circle

of family or friends will be impacted by this disease that still has no cure or real treatment.

The stress of caring for someone who needs help with all the activities of daily living, from eating to bathing, who can't hold on to a thought or a memory, who no longer can be the companion, is both physically and emotionally exhausting.

This is a long journey, and some individuals have this disease for over 20 years before death – so the journey of caregiving can be overwhelming and depressing. Recent studies shows between 40-60 percent of all caregivers have clinical depression, and they are not being treated – because the focus is always on the care recipient.

The Alzheimer's Fact and Figures Report also pointed out that the chronic stress of caregiving is associated with physiological changes that could increase the risk of developing chronic conditions. Spouses or partners are more likely to have these changes that include high levels of stress hormones, reduced



About Our Founder

Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989, which now employs over 200 caring people. Eldercare Services has been providing Bay Area families with care management, home care services (caregiving), advocacy, counseling, support groups and education for 26 years.

MONTHLY AFFIRMATION: *"I have the skills and knowledge I need to care for others and myself..."*

immune function, slow wound healing, increased incidence of hypertension, and heart disease.

There are support services for family caregivers, but it is my observation they are under used and not sought out until after the illness has taken a toll on more than one person. **Research points to three important interventions that family caregivers could find lifesaving and health-giving:**

1. **Assist** caregivers over a long period of time – one central place or person in getting support or advice from. Professional Care Management/ Care Coordination can be the “lighthouse” for such caregiving families.
2. **Approach** dementia care for the entire family. Everyone gets the education on the illness and shares in the caring duties – no one person is overwhelmed. Eldercare Services provides classes and support groups and very often we have entire families come for these sessions.

3. **Train** all dementia family caregivers in the management of behavioral problems. Please note that Eldercare provides such classes as does the Alzheimer’s Association.

Caring for yourself needs to be a priority so you can care for, advocate and love the family member with dementia. A time might come that you will need to look for options outside the home, but your role will never end as an advocate – so keeping you healthy has to be a priority.

Eldercare Services will have a team walking at the Annual **Walk to End Alzheimer’s** in Walnut Creek this month – on Saturday, October 17th at 9am. We would greatly welcome clients, friends and professionals to join or to sponsor us. If you would like to be a sponsor – just mail a check to us made out to the Alzheimer’s Association and together we will fight for a cure and support for those who care with heart and soul.

Upcoming Events

Brain Remodeling: You Can Change Your Brain and Your Health

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2015 • 5:30PM

A workshop for family caregivers or those dealing with the challenges of aging with Linda Fodrini-Johnson.

You will learn:

- How you can repair damage done by stress to your brain
- Simple ways to change your chromosomes
- The power of “mindfulness”
- It’s never too late to be a better you!

**Limited seating. No fee. Class intended for family caregivers or those dealing with the challenges of aging.*

Dementia Education

Join Linda Fodrini-Johnson as she discusses what you need to know, what you need to plan, and what you and your family can do when faced with the challenges of dementia.

Dementia Roadmap: From Diagnosis to Family Care

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2015 • 5:30 PM

- What is dementia? Where is it diagnosed? Understanding the progression.
- What does a family need to do to prepare for the journey?
- Protecting dignity & reducing stress in all family members.

**No fee. Advanced registration required. Class intended for family caregivers or those dealing with the challenges of aging.*

Location of Events: Eldercare Services, 1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595

TO REGISTER Call: **866.760.1808** or Email: info@eldercareanswers.com