



October 2010

## The Family Circus: Walking the Tightrope of Elder Care

When you are a family caregiver, it can feel as if you are in a circus – with activities whirling around you. It can seem like you have more than three circles to watch at the same time. In one circle of your life, it can be aging family members, the others your own children, your career or your health. In the United States 78% of all care to adults over the age of 50 is provided by family and the average age of those family caregivers is 63. Research shows that 60% of all family caregivers are still in the workforce.

Besides trying to be the “Ring Master” and keeping control of each ring in the “Family Circus”, there is an underlying fear of what will happen next. So, this life journey very much becomes like walking on a tightrope, making it hard to keep your balance.

We all know the importance of reducing stress for our own health and finding time for exercise, meditation and relaxation. However, if you are trying to do everything yourself you will fall off the tightrope – it is just a matter of time. In my many years as a Geriatric Care Manager, all too often I have witnessed, “overcaring” family members take the fall and it is usually their own health that is severely affected.

Eldercare Services and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Pleasant Hill are sponsoring a day of workshops to empower and prepare family caregivers so that they can provide care and also find balance on the “Tightrope” of elder care.

It is our goal that the general sessions, the breakout sessions and the exhibitors of senior support services will give family caregivers new tools, resources and ideas so they can give care with love and still find peace and balance in their lives. Every time I teach a class, at least two or three



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people always say, “I wish I knew that three years ago.” It is our hope that the wisdom and tools shared will equip families for this role, now or in the future. Caregiving to an aging family member affects one out of four families.

- Mark Frisbie an Elder Law Attorney, will talk about the “Legal Tools Necessary for All Those What lfs of a Longer Life”.
- Robin Bon Fredericks, Nurse Practitioner from Kaiser, Neurology and Memory Clinic will discuss, “Dementia vs. Alzheimer’s – What do we name the problem and then what do we do?”
- Cazeaux Nordstrum, Family Therapist will discuss the “Emotional Tightrope: Learning How to Keep a Balance while Caring for Aging Family Members.”
- As a Professional Geriatric Care Manager and Family Therapist, I will talk about “The Empowerment and Joy that Can Come from Being a Family Caregiver”.

We will have breakout sessions on: hiring help or resistance to hiring help, long distance caregiving, communication with someone who has a dementia, how to approach those who should not drive anymore, benefits and entitlements, as well as how to set limits and have boundaries.

Our community is fortunate to have

many businesses, senior housing communities, hospital supports, advocates, financial planners and home care agencies in addition to legal services that assist older adults and their families. Vendor space is limited, however, we have several major sponsors who will share information with those who attend this event. Proceeds from the Sponsors will be donated to the Alzheimer’s Association and donations received from the “**free lunch**” will be given to Meals on Wheels.

Space is limited to 125 participants and there is **no charge**. So, call soon to reserve your space. Registration begins at 8:30 (time to visit the exhibitors and the program will begin at 9:00 am and end at 3:00 pm). Call 925-937-2018 for registration and directions to St. Andrew’s, 1601 Mary Drive, Pleasant Hill, 94523 – very near to Contra Costa Blvd., Taylor Blvd. and Willow Pass Road.

Invite a friend; be prepared for the care you might be asked to give someone you love. Don’t lose time off of work. Know who to call and what questions to ask so your life can be in balance and you don’t fall off the “tightrope”.



**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.**



**ATTENTION!! Eldercare Answers is now green.**  
To ensure you or someone you know receives our newsletter, please send a valid email address to [DanielleG@EldercareAnswers.com](mailto:DanielleG@EldercareAnswers.com).



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Walnut Creek, CA 94595

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

Eldercare Services has offices in Oakland, San Francisco and Walnut Creek, CA. Visit us on the web at <http://www.EldercareAnswers.com> for more information.

**Families Dealing with Dementia**  
Friday, October 22, 2010 from 10 AM to Noon

**Families Dealing with Dementia**  
Thursday, November 19, 2010 from 10 AM to Noon

**Class Registration:** Please call at least 3 days ahead  
For more information regarding classes and support groups, visit us at [www.EldercareAnswers.com](http://www.EldercareAnswers.com) or call (925) 937-2018, (415) 469-8300 or email us at [info@EldercareAnswers.com](mailto:info@EldercareAnswers.com)

Walnut Creek

**Community Classes**

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 Cheney St., San Francisco, CA 94131

**Cost for Support Groups: None**  
**Support Group Registration: Not required**

**Support Groups**