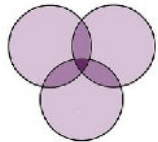


**NORTHLAND  
SHEPHERD'S  
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AND  
TRI-COUNTY  
MENTAL  
HEALTH**

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# Together We Care Caregiver Support November Newsletter



## The Caregiving Evolution and Life

**When I got married I didn't think about what getting older would look like. I didn't realize a lot of things back then, like what is truly meant by the saying that "Through sickness and in health" or the reality that experience and the wisdom it brings comes with age. What I wouldn't give**

**to be able to make my life decisions when I was 20 knowing what I know now! But then I would not have grown to be the person I am today, that is just the way life works – through experience.**

**Doing caregiver support was some-**

**thing I never thought I would be doing but I have found that I have learned and grown by doing and getting to know so many wonderful caregivers and their loved ones. I also learned it is the way life goes for some of us that**

*(Continued on pg 2)*

## Who We Are

“Together We Care” is a support program offered to older adult caregivers. This program was formed out of a joint effort of two local organizations: **Northland Shepherd's Center (NSC) & Tri-County Mental Health Services (TCMHS)**. Both recognize a need to support and encourage those that are in a caregiver role.

**NSC** has been helping adults 60 and older remain independent at home for 30 years. **Of special interest to caregivers is BreakTime Club**, where your loved ones can go to have fun while you get a break! **Call 816-452-4536** for details about this and other services.

**TCMHS** provides emotional support to individuals living within Clay, Platte, and Ray Counties. The Older Adult Program is one area of support that is offered through community presentations, support groups, and individual therapy that is available either in an office setting or in-home. **Call (816) 468-0400 x330 for additional information.**



when our physical bodies and minds age there is a different journey for everyone.

November is National Caregiver Month, being a caregiver is **HARD** work and it can take a lot out of you. If the stress becomes too great a caregiver's own health will begin to fail – then what happens to the loved one?

Therefore, even if it seems selfish to find some respite it is the only way that you can recharge your energy and soul so you can continue to care for your loved one. Putting yourself first is critical to your very survival.

I have also seen that sometimes after doing everything physically possible it can become necessary to place your loved one in a care facility where they can be safe and you can have that peace of mind. Relationships naturally evolve and the best advice I remind myself to do is to take one day at a time and to be intentional.

Mindfulness is a process that describes the importance of being in the “here and now”. Many times, we focus on the past or the future and then miss out on the joy of the present.

When caregiving, there are many practical tasks that require us to plan ahead. Or maybe we are replaying the past and wondering “Did I do

that right?” When facing changes with our loved ones' needs, we may feel like we have to stay alert in order to meet all their needs. There is a place for this approach, but it is also important to carve out time to pause and simply be present. There is a phrase: “The days are long but the years are short.” This can apply to being a caregiver for an older adult loved one. The monotony or stress of daily tasks can make each day seem really long. However, we can simultaneously look back and wonder “Where has time gone?”

When our loved one is going through changes, the most important gift we can offer is the stability and constancy of our presence. In our focus to do everything right, we may be tempted to run around and check things off our list. However, sitting with our loved one and going through the process with them is a big source of comfort. It may not be realistic to expect to do this all day long. But, practice paying attention to your loved one during times of heightened emotion, stress, or confusion. During those times, practice the following:

- Make eye contact
- Get on their level
- Talk in a low voice
- Speak with respect
- Give simple choices
- Offer reassurance

Also, as a caregiver, be aware of your own needs when your loved one is going through changes. For instance, if your loved one is no longer sleeping through the night, it may be necessary to obtain assistance for overnight care from a loved one or an agency. Giving yourself permission to take care of yourself also allows you to be more present with your loved one.

We're here for you through all the seasons of caregiving. We know these tasks can bring additional stress and hardship.

We also rejoice with you in the little moments of joy and meaning. Thank you for making us part of your journey!

Dianna and Becky



**November is Family  
Caregiver Appreciation  
Month!**

“Together We Care” is excited to offer an upcoming pampering event for individuals caring for an older adult. This event will be offered on Monday, November 7th from 11 am—1 pm at Northland Shepherd’s Center.

This will be a fun time of eating, socializing and goodie bags. And being able to participate in the following opportunities:

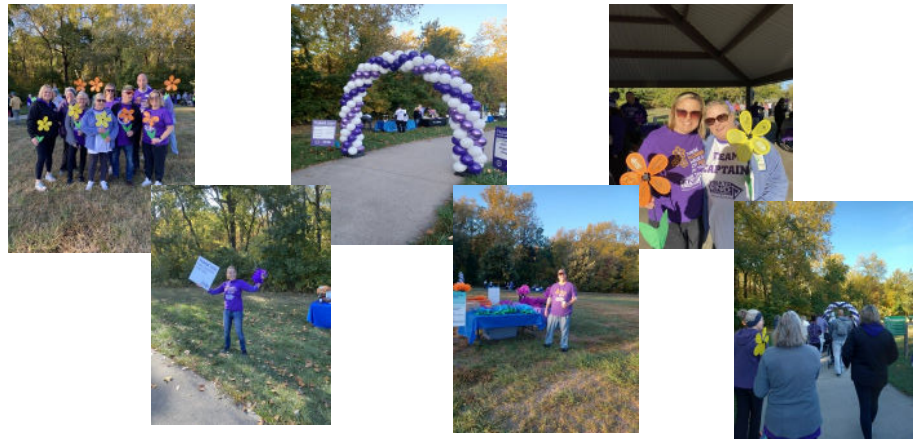
- A virtual dementia tour offered by Brian Wilbond with Right at Home Senior Care.
- Self-care BINGO with prizes offered by Care Patrol.

We are excited to honor the hard work that you provide throughout the year as caregivers.

**Please RSVP to (816)  
256-8096 so we have  
enough goodies!**

Thank you to those who participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer’s at Happy Rock Park on October 9th.

Each year, “Together We Care” forms a team to be part of the right to end Alzheimer’s. Overall, we are currently at 75% of our goal for the Liberty Alzheimer Walk with \$41,981! We have done so well and are very close to what we raised last year, \$44,792. If you are interested in making a donation, you can do so at:  
[https://act.alz.org/site/TR/Walk2022/KS-HeartofAmerica?pg=entry&fr\\_id=15583](https://act.alz.org/site/TR/Walk2022/KS-HeartofAmerica?pg=entry&fr_id=15583)



*“Effective Communication Strategies with Loved Ones”*

We enjoyed hearing from Brenda Gregg with the Alzheimer’s Association during our Caring Café meeting on October 19th from 2 –4 pm.

Brenda shared practical tips for communicating effectively, particularly with those with a dementia diagnosis. The overview of her presentation included:

- Explaining communication changes that take place throughout the disease process.
- Decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia and respond in ways that are helpful to the person.
- Identify strategies to connect and communicate at each stage of the disease.



## Together We Care Support Group Information

We are continuing to offer monthly meetings for caregivers:

- A caregiver support group the first Thursday of each month from 10—11:30 am. November 3rd is our next meeting. Tri-County is continuing to provide a hot drink from the coffee shop.
- This group will meet in a hybrid format, either at Woodneath Mid-Continent Library in Liberty or virtually by Zoom. Email [Dianna@northlandsc.org](mailto:Dianna@northlandsc.org) for link.
- There is a Caring Café meeting on Wed, November 16th from 2-4 pm at NSC. This is a fabulous opportunity for caregivers (past and present) to gather together. You are welcome to bring your loved one too — We will focus on “Coping with the Holidays” by Brenda Gregg of the Alzheimer’s Association.

Please RSVP to either

[Dianna@northlandsc.org](mailto:Dianna@northlandsc.org)

[beckyf@tri-countymhs.org](mailto:beckyf@tri-countymhs.org)



### Are you interested in getting further information on caring for a loved one?

Benton Houses and Lifescape Law & Development will provide important and helpful information for seniors, their families and caregivers at an upcoming presentations. The programs include a panel of speakers (Attorney Glen Smith- estate planning and legal challenges; Melissa Hardin- life care planning, senior services and resources; Bonnie Smith, caregiver challenges and resources), with time before and after for participants to meet and discuss specific needs with local senior service agencies.

Complimentary refreshments provided by Chefs for Seniors.

Please RSVP at [kcinfo@bentonhouse.com](mailto:kcinfo@bentonhouse.com) or 816-550-0837.

3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 10  
Pleasant Valley Baptist Church

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**LIFESCAPE**  
LAW & DEVELOPMENT

The Northland Grandfamilies Program is offering an opportunity to gather for a Thanksgiving potluck luncheon on Tuesday, November 22nd from 12—1:30 pm at Tri-County Mental Health. If you are in a kinship role, such as a grandparent raising a grandchild, we’d love to invite you to participate in this program. Please contact Becky Franklin to RSVP at (816) 468-0400x330 or [beckyf@tri-countymhs.org](mailto:beckyf@tri-countymhs.org).

### SAVE THE DATE!

The December Caring Café meeting will be held on Wed, 12/21 from 2—4 pm. At NSC. We will be joining together for a holiday celebration, including appetizers, cookies, and Christmas carols led by special music from caregivers in our program. This will be a fun time to gather together and celebrate the holiday season!

## Resources

Alzheimer’s Association:  
[www.alz.org/kansascity](http://www.alz.org/kansascity)  
Call 913-831-3888. for Information

American Association for Retired Persons:  
[AARP.org/caregiving](http://AARP.org/caregiving)

National Council on Aging:  
[NCOA.org/caregiving](http://NCOA.org/caregiving)

Clay County Senior Services  
<http://claycoseniors.org/community-resources>  
816-455-4800

Platte County Senior Services  
<http://platteseniors.org>