

January/February 2026

Volume 26 Issue 1

560 Seminole Road

Muskegon, MI

## Happy New Year and Mental Health Awareness Month

Taken in part from: [www.homehelpershomecare.com](http://www.homehelpershomecare.com)

As we welcome a new year, it's the perfect time to refocus on something that truly matters — mental wellness. Caregiving brings immense joy and purpose, but it also comes with challenges that can leave caregivers feeling stretched thin. This January, recognized as Mental Awareness Month, let's take time to care for ourselves, check in on others, and set the tone for a balanced and peaceful 2026. Setting goals for mental health can feel overwhelming, but small, consistent actions make the biggest difference. Instead of major changes, focus on what fits naturally into your day — journaling, stretching, or meditating for ten minutes can be a powerful start.

Tip: Track your progress and reflect on how these small efforts make you feel. Remember, success isn't about perfection — it's about showing up for yourself every day. Mindfulness helps caregivers stay present and manage stress more effectively. You don't need special tools or a quiet room — it can be as simple as:

- Taking deep breaths while washing dishes
- Enjoying your morning coffee without distractions
- Try apps like Headspace or Calm for guided meditations. Even five minutes of mindful breathing can help you reset and recharge



## The Power of Gratitude and Self-Compassion

Gratitude helps shift your focus from what's wrong to what's right. Take a moment each day to notice the good — a kind word, a shared laugh, or a beautiful sunrise. Keeping a gratitude journal can help reinforce this mindset. And don't forget self-compassion. Caregivers often expect too much of themselves. Be gentle — speak to yourself with the same kindness you would offer a close friend.



## Finding Balance Amid Caregiving Demands

Caregiving can feel overwhelming when your own needs are set aside. Maintaining balance isn't selfish — it's essential. Set clear boundaries and learn to say no. Ask for help from family, friends, or professional respite care. Take breaks to rest, recharge, and maintain your health. Caregiving is a marathon, not a sprint. When you care for yourself, you can care better for others.

## Building Connections and Seeking Support

You don't have to face caregiving challenges alone.

Join a support group — online or in person — to connect with others who understand. Consider talking with a counselor for personalized guidance and coping strategies. Seeking support isn't a weakness, it's strength. It's how you build resilience and sustain your ability to care.

## Celebrating Small Wins

Each day as a caregiver brings victories, big and small — calming a loved one, preparing a comforting meal, or simply getting through a tough day. Celebrate these moments.

Do something you love: watch a favorite movie, take a walk, or treat yourself to something special. Self-care is not selfish — it's necessary.

### An Area Agency on Aging

560 Seminole Road  
Muskegon, Michigan 49444  
Phone: (231) 733-3585  
Toll Free: 1-800-442-0054  
[info@seniorresourceswmi.org](mailto:info@seniorresourceswmi.org)  
[www.seniorresourceswmi.org](http://www.seniorresourceswmi.org)

### Mission

To provide a comprehensive and coordinated system of services designed to promote the independence and dignity of older persons and their families in Muskegon, Oceana, and Ottawa — a mission compelling us to



### Caregiver Support

#### Paula Kolberg

Caregiver Support Specialist  
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231.683.4760

### Go Green or Stop Receiving Newsletter

If you would like your copy of the *Caregiver Link* emailed or would like to discontinue receiving our newsletter, simply send your request to: [kport@seniorresourceswmi.org](mailto:kport@seniorresourceswmi.org).

## New Year, New Focus: Check in on Yourself, Check in on Others

As we begin 2026, let's focus on both our own well-being and the well-being of others.

#### Our challenge for you this month:

- Check in on others. Perform small acts of kindness — hold a door, give a compliment, or simply smile. These gestures brighten someone's day and lift your own mood.
- Check in on yourself. Ask, How am I really doing? Prioritize joy, reduce stress, and strengthen relationships.

This January, let's come together to support mental wellness.

#### Remember:

- You are not alone.
- It's okay to ask for help.
- Take care of yourself so the best version of you can shine.

## Moving Forward with Resilience

Resilience isn't about avoiding challenges — it's about facing them with strength and adaptability.

#### This year, commit to:

- Prioritizing your mental wellness
- Practicing mindfulness and gratitude
- Seeking support when you need it

With these small, steady steps, you'll build the resilience to thrive in your caregiving journey.

From all of us at Senior Resources of West Michigan — we wish you a happy, peaceful, and balanced New Year. Let's make 2026 a year of growth, balance, and joy for caregivers everywhere.



## Connect with Your Local Area Agency on Aging.

You show up for your loved ones. That's why your Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is here to show up for you. For over 50 years, Michigan's 16 AAAs have worked with a clear mission: to enhance the quality of life for older adults, adults with disabilities and caregivers.

Now we've built a tool to make it easy to connect with resources near you! With Mi Caregiver Connection, the support you need is just a few clicks away. Search for specific resources or use the caregiver help tool. Using your phone scan the QR code below or go to [www.micaregiverconnection.com](http://www.micaregiverconnection.com).



This survey will match you with the right resources, support and community to help address your caregiving needs. With local care and trusted support designed for you, your AAA can help at any stage of your journey.

#### Mi Caregiver Connection makes it easy to get connected to local support like:

- Assistive Technology
- Respite Care for Caregivers
- Home Safety Assessments
- In-Home Care
- Education, Training and Workshops
- Caregiver Support Groups
- Caregiver Case Management
- Individual Counseling

Are you a caregiver? Do you assist your loved one with essential daily tasks? You're a caregiver and you're not alone. Thousands of individuals are caring for their loved ones and **we can help.**

Senior Resources' Support Groups meet regularly to provide advice, support, tips, guidance and a safe place to share concerns.

## CAREGIVER *Support Groups*



### JOIN US

Attend regularly or drop in when it is convenient for you. Respite help may be available.  
For more information contact one of our caregiver support specialists.

#### GRAND HAVEN

Every Thursday – 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
Four Pointes Center for Successful Aging  
1051 S. Beacon Blvd., Grand Haven

#### HART

Every 3rd Wednesday –  
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
Oceana County Council on Aging  
4250 Tyler Rd., Hart

#### MUSKEGON

Every Wednesday – 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
Tanglewood Park  
560 Seminole Rd., Muskegon

#### WHITEHALL

Every Tuesday – 1-2:30 p.m.  
White Lake Community Library  
3900 W. White Lake Dr., Whitehall

#### JENISON

Every 3rd Friday – 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
GT Connections Senior Center  
7100 8th Ave., Jenison  
616.457.1170

Paula Kolberg

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### January and February Website

[dementiafriends.org](http://dementiafriends.org)

### Quotes

*Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes... including you.* — Anne Lamott

*Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is relax.*  
— Mark Black

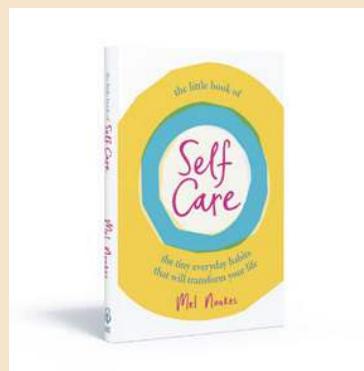
*Caring for yourself while caring for others is one of the wisest choices.* — Unknown

*Self-care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what's left of you.* — Katie Reed

### This Month's Book

The Little Book of Self Care  
by Mel Noakes

A compact, accessible guide with short practices and tips you can integrate daily — great for caregivers who may only have small pockets of time.





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