



# CAREGIVER LINK

May/June 2026

Volume 26 Issue 3

560 Seminole Road

Muskegon, MI

## Take Care of Yourself as a Caregiver



Activities like these can lower your stress, boost your mood, and help make you a better caregiver, too.

Learn more about caregiving at [www.nia.nih.gov/caregiving](http://www.nia.nih.gov/caregiving).



### Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

If you are helping a loved one with daily tasks, medical care, or emotional support, you are a caregiver — and you are not alone. Millions of people across the country provide care for an aging parent, spouse, or other family member. Caregiving can be deeply rewarding, but it can also be exhausting — physically, emotionally, and mentally.

As the days grow longer and summer approaches, it is a good time to pause and reflect on how you are doing. Many caregivers put their own needs last and feel guilty about taking time for themselves. But caring for yourself is not selfish — it is essential.



#### HOW WE HELP

Your Area Agency on Aging serving Muskegon, Oceana and Ottawa counties.

We serve as a center of information, offering community services and supports for older adults who qualify, with many available at no cost or donation based, including:

- 🏠 In-Home Support Services
- 👥 Caregiver Support Groups
- 🏠 SHIP Medicare Counseling

#### IN-HOME SERVICES

- ➕ Primary Care at Home
- 👉 Adult Day Care
- 🧼 Personal Hygiene Care
- 🍴 Home Chore Services
- 🍽️ Home Delivered Meals
- 💊 Medication Management

(For qualified persons through MI Choice/VisiCare Program and Older Americans Self-Funding)

Tell us your story.  
We're here to help.  
231-733-3585

**An Area Agency on Aging**

560 Seminole Road  
Muskegon, Michigan 49444  
Phone: (231) 733-3585  
Toll Free: 1-800-442-0054

info@seniorresourceswmi.org  
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 target older persons in greatest need but to advocate for all.



**Caregiver Support**

**Paula Kolberg**  
Caregiver Support Specialist  
pkolberg@seniorresourceswmi.org  
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.

**Small Steps That Make a Big Difference**

- Ask for help and be specific about what you need
- Take breaks and use respite care when possible
- Stay socially connected with friends or support groups
- Eat nourishing foods and stay hydrated
- Move your body with gentle exercise
- Let go of guilt — rest helps you be a better caregiver


Source: National Institute on Aging / MedlinePlus

**Healthy Habits for Caregivers**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention remind caregivers that self-care is essential. Even small habits can reduce stress and prevent burnout:

- Schedule regular breaks from caregiving
- Accept help from family, friends, or community services
- Talk with a health care provider about stress or sleep problems
- Reach out for emotional support when caregiving feels overwhelming

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention


SeniorResources   
Our Name. Our Focus.


**GUIDE Model**  
Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience

Improving the quality of life for patients with Alzheimer's, dementia and their unpaid caregivers, including FREE respite!

**Eligibility**

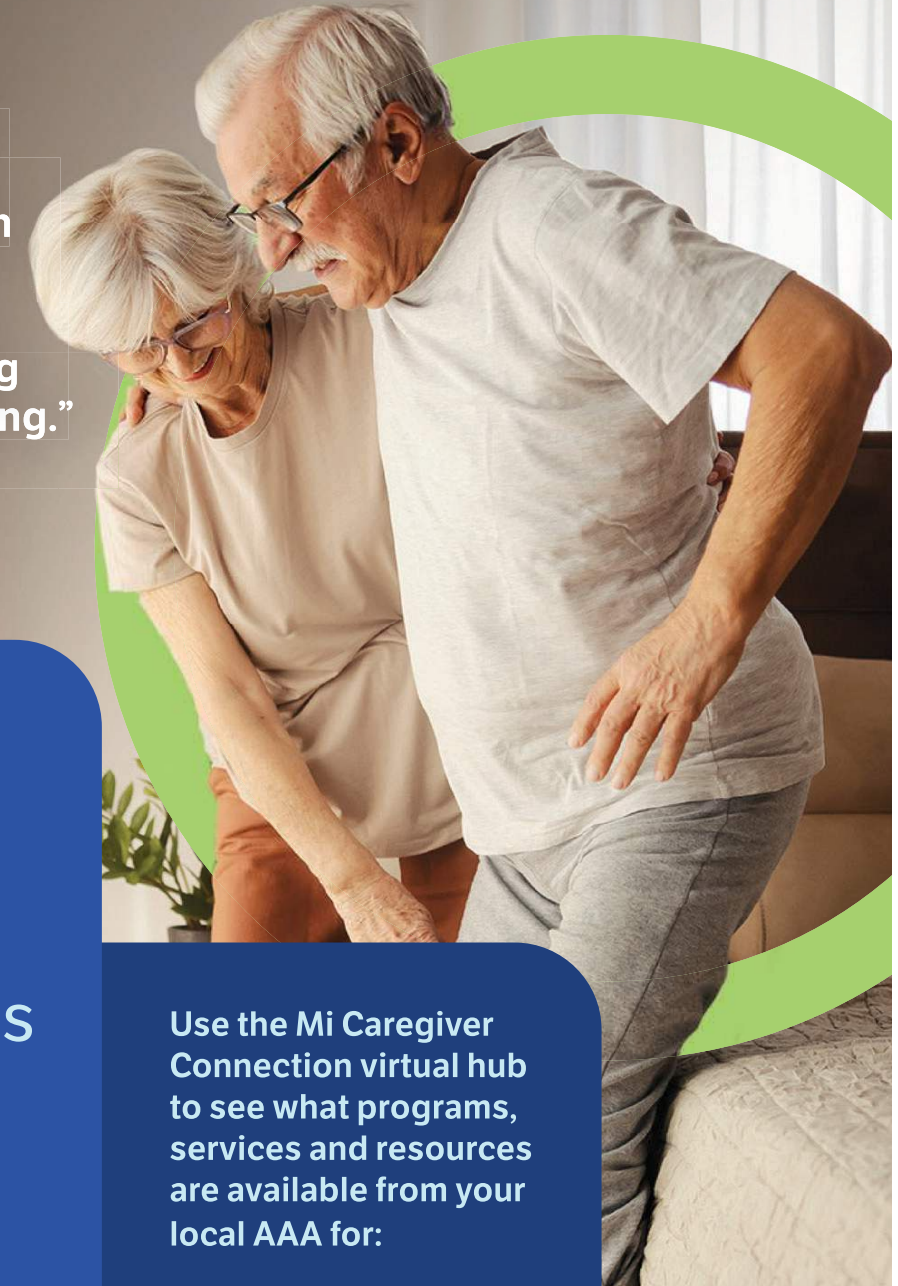
- Has dementia
- Enrolled in both Medicare Parts A & B
- Not enrolled in Medicare Advantage or another Medicare Special Needs Plan or PACE
- Not enrolled in Medicare hospice benefit
- Not a long-term home resident

 (231) 737-4041, choose option 1

 www.SeniorResourcesWMI.org

**“Instead of feeling afraid and alone, I found strength from my AAA, knowing others had walked this road before me. Caregiving doesn't have to feel isolating.”**

— Char



**Caregiving takes time.**

**Finding resources shouldn't.**

If you are a caregiver balancing work and family life with caring for an aging loved one, your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) can help.

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.

Use the Mi Caregiver Connection virtual hub to see what programs, services and resources are available from your local AAA for:

- Respite Care for Caregivers
- In-Home Care
- Caregiver Support Groups
- Education, Workshops and Training
- And more

Get connected to support at

**MiCaregiver Connection.com**



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**CREATE A NETWORK OF SUPPORT**  
TO HELP YOU IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.

PREPARE FOR A POWER OUTAGE IF YOU USE ELECTRIC MEDICAL DEVICES.



talk to a health care provider about what to do



identify an alternative power source for devices



inform your emergency contacts of the plan

## WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

- Contact information for important people and care providers
- A list of medicines you need, dosage instructions, and any allergies
- Styles and serial numbers of all medical and assistive devices
- Need-to-know information for first responders and others who might need to help you



Food, water, and essentials for you and pets or service animals

Medicines, medical supplies, batteries, and chargers

Copies of Medicaid, Medicare, and other insurance cards

Learn more: [acl.gov/programs/emergency-preparedness](https://acl.gov/programs/emergency-preparedness)



## Emergency Preparedness: A Guide for Caregivers

Disasters and emergencies can happen anytime, from severe weather and power outages to flooding or community-wide crises. Older adults and people with disabilities often face greater risks during these events, especially when access to food, water, medications, electricity, or healthcare is disrupted.

According to the Administration for Community Living (ACL), about half of adults age 65 and older live with two or more chronic health conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, or Alzheimer's disease. Many people with disabilities also rely on services, medical equipment, or supports that may be difficult to access during an emergency.

Caregivers play an essential role in helping prepare for and respond to emergencies. Planning ahead can reduce stress, improve safety, and help ensure continuity of care.

### Key preparedness steps include:

- Creating a personal emergency plan tailored to health, mobility, and communication needs
- Building an emergency supply kit, including medications and medical information
- Identifying emergency contacts and backup caregivers
- Planning for power outages, evacuation, or sheltering in place

Experts emphasize that protecting older adults and people with disabilities requires a whole-community approach. This includes individuals, caregivers, service providers, first responders, and community organizations working together to ensure safety and access to needed supports.

Helpful tools are available through the Administration for Community Living, including printable emergency preparedness posters, a medical information card for emergency responders, and a communication assistance card for people who may have difficulty communicating during a crisis.

More emergency preparedness resources and planning tools are available at Ready.gov. Taking time now to prepare can make a meaningful difference in safety and peace of mind for caregivers and the people they support.

### Sources:

Administration for Community Living (ACL) – *Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults and People with Disabilities*: <https://acl.gov/emergencypreparedness>

Ready.gov (FEMA) – *Disaster Preparedness for Older Adults and Caregivers*: <https://www.ready.gov>

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – *Administration for Strategic Preparedness & Response (ASPR)*: [https://aspr.hhs.gov/at-risk/Pages/older\\_adults.aspx](https://aspr.hhs.gov/at-risk/Pages/older_adults.aspx)

## May and June Website

[micaregiverconnection.com](https://micaregiverconnection.com)

## Quote of the Month

*“There are only four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.”*

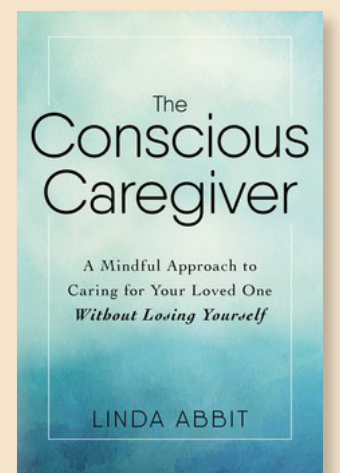
— Rosalynn Carter, Former First Lady of the United States

## This Month's Book

*The Conscious Caregiver: A Mindful Approach to Caring for Your Loved One and Yourself*

By Linda Abbit

Caring for a loved one can be meaningful — and overwhelming. The Conscious Caregiver offers practical, compassionate guidance to help caregivers reduce stress, manage emotions, and stay present while navigating daily challenges. This thoughtful read reminds caregivers that caring for themselves is an essential part of caring for others.



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 – 1:00 p.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

Caregiver Support Specialist  
pkolberg@seniorresourceswmi.org  
231.683.4760

## Caregiving Takes Strength — You Don't Have to Do It Alone

Senior Resources of West Michigan is here to support family caregivers in Muskegon, Oceana, and Ottawa counties.

As your Area Agency on Aging, we offer:

- Caregiver support groups
- One-on-one caregiver guidance
- Respite care options
- Education and referrals to community services

Call: 231-733-3585 or 1-800-442-0054

Email: [info@seniorresourceswmi.org](mailto:info@seniorresourceswmi.org)

Website: [www.seniorresourceswmi.org](http://www.seniorresourceswmi.org)

## Gentle Activities That Promote Connection

For individuals with memory changes, the goal of activities is not productivity — it is connection. Activities that engage the senses and simple routines often reduce anxiety and bring comfort:

- Folding towels or sorting familiar items
- Listening to favorite music or singing together
- Gentle walks or spending time outdoors
- Looking through photo albums
- Simple gardening or flower arranging
- Holding hands, rocking, or rhythmic movement

Even five minutes of positive engagement can be meaningful.

Source: National Institute on Aging

## Your Health Matters

Caregivers often delay doctor visits, skip exercise, eat irregularly, and sacrifice sleep. Over time, this can take a toll. Research shows caregivers are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, and sleep problems.

Signs of caregiver stress include:

- Feeling constantly tired or overwhelmed
- Difficulty sleeping
- Becoming easily irritated or impatient
- Frequent headaches or body aches
- Feeling lonely or disconnected

Taking steps to care for yourself helps protect your health and allows you to continue caring for your loved one.

## CAREGIVING

2021-2022 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data from adults in 47 States and Puerto Rico



**1 in 5** adults are caregivers

CAREGIVERS provide regular care or assistance to a FRIEND or FAMILY member with a health problem or disability

### WHO ARE CAREGIVERS?

- 59% are women
- 24% are 65 years old or older
- 35% are caring for a parent or parent-in-law
- 22% are providing care to someone with dementia



### CAREGIVING CAN BE

**LENGTHY**  
Over half have provided care for at least two years



**INTENSE**  
Nearly a third have provided care for at least 20 hours per week



### HOW DO CAREGIVERS HELP?



Nearly **80%** manage household tasks

**Over Half** assist with personal care



### FUTURE CAREGIVERS

**1 in 7** NON-CAREGIVERS expect to **BECOME** CAREGIVERS within 2 years




U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



[cdc.gov/aging](http://cdc.gov/aging)

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Non-Profit Organization  
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Muskegon, Michigan

 **Senior Resources**  
*of West Michigan*  
560 Seminole Road  
Muskegon, Michigan 49444-3720  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



# MEMORY CAFE

Music, art, gentle movement and community for those affected by memory changes and their caregivers. Refreshments provided. Registration required at **MADL.org/Calendar** →

Scan here to register



**1<sup>st</sup> TUE of the Month | 10:30am**  
North Muskegon Branch  
1522 Ruddiman Dr, North Muskegon, MI

