

CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

1ST QUARTER NEWSLETTER

2022

January, February, March

Hello! I'm hoping everyone is doing well and staying warm while it seems winter is not over yet! I hope you enjoy the first newsletter of 2022.

As always this newsletter is for YOU! If you ever have any topics you would like discussed or resources needed please feel free to reach out to me at the phone number or email below. We are always up for some new ideas.

I want to thank you for being the amazing caregiver you are especially during these last 2 difficult years! Please take care of yourself. Corinna and I both look forward to seeing all of you this year and meeting some of you in person for the first time! Fingers crossed!

**Take care,
Lisa
Aging Care Manager Supervisor 1**

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Caregiver Support Resources

[Family Caregiver Alliance](#)

[American Association of Caregiving](#)

[Youth](#)

[National Council on Aging](#)



Here are 18 marvelous facts about March that you won't believe!

- ♣ In old Roman calendars, one year used to be ten months long, starting in March and ending in December.
- ♣ The “Ides of March” was a day in the Roman calendar equivalent to March 15th. It was considered a deadline for settling debts. It was also the day Julius Caesar was assassinated.
- ♣ If you were born in March, your birth flower is a daffodil!
- ♣ March babies are spoiled with two birthstones: aquamarine, and bloodstone which symbolize courage.
- ♣ There are two zodiac signs in March. Pisces, which is until March 20, and Aries which is from the 21st.
- ♣ The first month of spring is March, which starts between the 19th and the 21st.
- ♣ March is the equivalent of September in the Southern Hemisphere.
- ♣ Every year, March and June finish on the same day of the week.
- ♣ March is the time of year when animals start waking up from hibernation.
- ♣ The name for March comes from Mars, the Roman god of war. It was named as such in both the Julian and Gregorian calendars.
- ♣ The Vernal Equinox occurs around March 20 or 21st. This is when the sun is directly above the equator, making the day and night equal length.
- ♣ The Anglo-Saxons called March “Hlyd monath” meaning “Stormy month” or “Hraed monath” meaning “Rugged month.”
- ♣ The popular social media outlet Twitter was launched on March 21, 2006, with the first tweet going out the same day. It was posted by the founder, Jack Dorsey, which read “just setting up my twttr.”
- ♣ Saint Patrick’s Day occurs every March 17th, celebrated in many western countries to commemorate the day Saint Patrick died.
- ♣ Statistically, March is the most unproductive month of the year in the U.S. This is the result of “March Madness” which is the season of the NBA. Some companies lose up to \$1.9 billion in wages paid to workers who were not productive and instead spent company time on betting on NBA games.
- ♣ On March 10, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell made the first-ever phone call. It was to his assistant and he said “Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you.”
- ♣ The Eiffel Tower was ascended for the first time. Eiffel himself led a group of government officials and members of the press to the top. The elevators were not in operation yet, so the journey was made on foot and took over an hour.
- ♣ President John F. Kennedy founded the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961. It is a successful volunteer organization that has since sent at least 235,000 Americans abroad to developing countries to help with health care, education, and other human needs.

Pennsylvania Department of Aging News

SENIOR CENTERS info:

Area on Aging Senior Centers are open 8am-2pm. Meals are provided for dine in or grab-n-go. For Senior Center or Home Delivered Meal closing: Watch or listen to KDKA, WTAE or WPXI for the latest closings or cancelations

PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATE info:

Property Tax and Rent Rebate applicants can file their applications online at mypath.pa.gov Paper applications are still an option, but we are encouraging applicants to use the online system whenever possible.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

We have many programs that depend on volunteers, such as PA MEDI, Ombudsman, Center related and more. To learn more about volunteering opportunities contact the volunteer coordinator at 724-548-329 or 800-368-1066 or via email at aaa@co.armstrong.pa.us



ST. PATRICK'S DAY WORD SEARCH



c	i	r	e	l	a	n	d	s	i	p
j	s	w	e	u	m	a	r	c	h	t
p	f	p	a	c	u	h	s	d	a	r
f	a	o	i	k	a	c	p	s	r	a
a	o	t	u	y	h	e	a	h	t	i
l	e	p	r	r	e	c	h	a	u	n
u	m	a	a	i	t	r	r	m	w	b
i	e	r	r	o	c	e	s	r	x	o
r	r	a	s	d	l	k	p	o	t	w
i	a	d	g	g	o	l	d	c	h	n
s	l	e	a	r	v	l	l	k	t	d
h	d	s	c	h	e	s	a	i	n	t
k	w	e	e	r	r	e	f	r	i	e
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Irish
Emerald
Clover
Lucky'
Ireland

Parade
Leprechaun
Patrick
Gold
Rainbow

Pot
Shamrock
Green
Saint
March



14 WAYS CAREGIVERS CAN CARE FOR THEMSELVES

- 1. TAKE A QUICK BREAK**
- 2. INVITE OTHERS IN**
- 3. CARVE OUT DOWN TIME**
- 4. TURN TO FRIENDS**
- 5. CONSIDER ADULT DAY CARE**
- 6. SQUEEZE IN EXERCISE**
- 7. REVEL IN NATURE**
- 8. LISTEN TO THE MUSIC**
- 9. CALM YOUR MIND**
- 10. RESIST ISOLATION**
- 11. JOIN A FESTIVAL**
- 12. FIND SUPPORT**
- 13. SHARE YOUR STORY**
- 14. GIVE YOURSELF CREDIT**

How to Be an Effective Advocate for Aging Parents

5 skills that will help you care for the ones you love

by Amy Goyer, [AARP](#), September 24, 2020

As family caregivers, we play many roles: scheduler, money manager, house cleaner, health aide, nurse, navigator, nurturer and more. Perhaps the most important role, though, is advocate, as we ensure the best life possible for our loved ones when they are vulnerable.

That includes understanding their wishes for care and quality of life, and making sure those wishes are respected. It means helping them manage [financial and legal matters](#). And it means making sure they receive appropriate services and treatments, of the highest quality, when they need them. We are their voices when they are unable to advocate for themselves.

If the thought of being an advocate for others seems overwhelming, relax. You probably already have the skills to be effective; you just need to develop and apply them in new ways. Here are the five attributes I think are most important.

1. Powers of observation

Caregivers are often too busy or exhausted to notice small changes, but the slightest shift in our loved ones' abilities, health, moods, safety needs or desires may indicate a much larger medical or mental health issue. Catching those changes early can make all the difference in alleviating the problem.

Equally crucial is keeping a close eye on the services they are receiving and adjusting any subpar care. The COVID-19 pandemic has hindered this kind of observation, preventing many caregivers from accompanying loved ones to the hospital or visiting them at home or in a long-term care facility.

How to be more observant

- Try developing your observational skills through mindfulness and meditation, which help you become more aware and fully present in the current moment. Practice in a class, through yoga instruction or with a mindfulness app.
- Get adequate sleep to keep your mind clear.
- Take notes on your observations about your loved ones so you can track changes over time. If in-person interactions are limited, enlist staff or neighbors who are interacting with them to report back to you.
- Use technology. Phone calls help, but video calls via apps like Zoom, Skype or FaceTime can tell you more about subtle changes in a loved one's physical appearance and abilities. Try a remote monitoring system to track their movements at home and detect changes in routine, such as staying in bed longer.

2. Organizational skills

It can be tough to stay on top of a caregiving plan, with its many moving parts. As an advocate, you'll need to manage your loved one's caregiving team, make task lists and organize the mounds of paperwork associated with health, legal and financial matters. You'll want to make sure you can easily access all legal documents (such as powers of attorney for finances and health care) when you need them.

How to get better at organization

- Consider taking an organizing course, or getting outside help. Ask family or friends to assist, or see about working with a professional organizer. When I was caring for both of my parents and my sister, moving and starting a new job all at once, I consulted a professional to develop an organizational plan. (You can make this option more affordable by implementing the plan yourself, as I did.)
- Tech can help here, too. For example, there are numerous caregiving apps.
- Make digital copies of key documents, such as medication lists, medical history, powers of attorney and living wills), so you can access them on the go from your phone or tablet.

3. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

This is key for building relationships with those who help care for our loved ones, from family members to lawyers, doctors and more. We may not be experts on medical, legal or financial matters, which can make some discussions tough. Caregiving can be an emotional roller coaster, which can also complicate communication.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY:

- Be respectful. Try to set emotions aside when you are advocating for a loved one. Remember that to communicate effectively, listening is just as important as speaking.
- Do your homework before meetings with lawyers, medical professionals and other providers, and have notes ready. Be clear, concise and get to the point.
- To ease communication with busy professionals, find out who in their office handles business like appointments and billing, and build relationships with them. Get to know how they prefer to communicate (phone, email, text, etc.) and the best time of day to reach them. And always express appreciation.

4. Asking questions

Dad, a former professor, used to have a sign in his office that read, "Question everything." As I advocated for him for 12 years while he lived with Alzheimer's, I often thought of that message. My family's doctors and service providers could attest that I ask plenty of questions!

As a caregiver, it's part of your job to gather information — don't be shy about it. It never hurts to ask, and many times you'll miss something if you don't.

How to ask the right questions:

- Educate yourself about your loved one's health conditions, finances and legal affairs.
- Be prepared with a list of questions for phone calls or meetings with facilities staff, doctors and other professionals. Don't give up until you are satisfied you've got the answers you need to advocate effectively. Never assume; always clarify.
- If you hit a roadblock in arranging care or services, question it and think about other ways to achieve the goal. Sometimes, getting questions answered is all about asking the right person, be it a doctor, lawyer, accountant or member of their staff.

5. Tenacity

Someone once said my role when caring for my parents was "chief bulldog." I guess that's true. As their advocate, I had their best interests at heart and I took that job seriously. Facing a fragmented and frustrating health care system and trying to do more with less money can be discouraging. I did my best, and I never gave up until I found the best possible solution.

How to be more tenacious:

- Be clear about goals and believe that there are solutions. Focus on the end result you want.
- Surround yourself with encouraging people who will pick you up and cheer you on.
- Follow other caregivers' stories so you hear about the triumphs as well as the challenges.
- Have a positive mindset. This is crucial. When caregiving knocks you down, get back up again.
- Resilience is success!



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We love and support our Caregivers...



Armstrong County Agency on Aging-Caregiver Support Program