

# CAREConnections

Information and Inspiration for Caregivers

A Publication of Boulder County Area Agency on Aging

Mar/Apr 2018

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## Dear Caregiver,

The path of supporting a loved one can take many forms. You might be supporting from another state, from across town, or in the same home. You could be a full time caregiver or perhaps you are balancing caregiving with work or other demands of life. Whatever your circumstances are, the chances are that you could use some help. Fortunately, there are several programs in Boulder County through which volunteers serve, by providing that help to older adults and their caregivers, in a variety of ways.

In this issue of *Care Connections*, we hear from some of the organizations that bring forth a collective army of dedicated individuals who volunteer their time. Their services can be a gift to caregivers. They offer companionship, support, meals, practical services, opportunities for entertainment, and more. As you read through this issue and learn about the various programs represented inside, you will have the opportunity to hear the voices and tales of volunteers, care givers, and care recipients who have been impacted. May one or more of them speak to you in a way that leads to increased connection and support.

*The Editors*

## A Warm Meal and Much More

*By Kathryn Wisner*

**A** meal provides immediate and helpful sustenance, but Longmont Meals on Wheels is so much more than that. In addition to a hot, nutritious, home-delivered meal, Longmont Meals on Wheels provides a safety and wellness check every day. The agency's mission is to serve Longmont, Niwot, Hygiene, and Lyons by promoting client health and independence with good nutrition and social interaction.

Longmont Meals on Wheels offers several services. Their principle program provides delivery of meals to the homes of local homebound elders and people with disabilities. The agency can also deliver five free meals to anyone returning from a hospital visit or outpatient procedure, and serves lunch for seniors at the Longmont Senior Center. Coupled with these services, Longmont Meals on Wheels also offers a





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lockbox program. Recommended for most of its clients, the service allows for local emergency personnel, like the fire or police departments, to reach clients in their homes, should Longmont Meals on Wheels need to call 9-1-1.

Seniors and people with disabilities use Longmont Meals on Wheels for a variety of reasons. Whether it is because they struggle to afford meals, can't stand long enough to cook, are on medications that suppress their appetite, or don't have the energy to cook healthy meals, Longmont Meals on Wheels is here to help. For some it is just as much about the daily wellness visit as it is the meal. Some clients, or their families, are concerned about going long stretches of time without someone to check on them.

When a senior, a person with a disability (permanent or temporary) or a person returning from a hospital stay or outpatient treatment, who lives in Longmont, Hygiene, or Niwot, believes they could benefit from Longmont Meals on Wheels services, they need only call the agency to sign up. Longmont Meals on Wheels doesn't have a waiting list and generally can start a new client on services the very next business day. Meals will be provided on a sliding-fee scale. These healthy meals are prepared by the agency to exceed all nutritional guidelines and fulfill many special-diet needs. Volunteers then deliver these meals to client's home, or serve them at the Senior Center.

Clients look forward to this daily visit because it offers them human contact and less isolation. The visit serves not only as a daily safety check, but also as a check in on how things are going. Our volunteers are trained on how to spot when a client's health may be declining and to know when things may not be the norm. Everything gets reported back to Longmont Meals on Wheels staff. Minor concerns are tracked to see if they become new trends. With this information the agency will talk to a client about new referrals for additional support services, or staff may talk to the client's family about any concerns. If a volunteer's concern is immediate, LMOW calls the Longmont Fire Department for a wellness check, so that they can help assess the need for emergency medical or police services. The agency meets emergency services at the client's home, providing any relevant information. Because Longmont emergency services need probable cause to do anything more than knock on a door during an emergency wellness visit, it is very important that clients sign up for the agency's lockbox program. This ensures that there is a waiver on file as well as a

spare key that emergency services can use to enter the home. For more information or to sign up for services, please call 303-772-0540 or visit the agency's website at [www.LongmontMeals.org](http://www.LongmontMeals.org).

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*Kathryn Wiser is the Development Coordinator for Longmont Meals on Wheels.*

## **Volunteer Medicare Counselors Understand the Challenge**



*By Jean Hart*

**B**oulder County Area Agency on Aging SHIP Medicare counseling program has a robust group of volunteers that are dedicated to providing non-biased information, education, and support to seniors and their caregivers. They must understand the continuous changes in health care rules and regulations in order to guide seniors accurately. Volunteers go through the same State Health Insurance Assistance Program training and certification process as staff members. Most of them made the choice to serve through the Medicare program upon discovered how confusing and complicated the process was when they were either enrolling in Medicare themselves for the first time, or helping parents, friends, and neighbors through the process. These volunteers have mastered the art of explaining complex and overwhelming information in a straightforward manner so that the caregivers can focus on the aspects of coverage that will be important to them going forward.

Our volunteers dedicate a considerable amount of time during the Medicare Open Enrollment season each year (October 15 – December 7) helping consumers and caregivers understand and review their specific medication lists with respect to Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage plans. Reviewing and understanding your Part D

plan yearly is a vital part of containing monthly health care costs.

Throughout the year volunteers are available to help Medicare recipients navigate Medicare options by learning about enrollment, benefits, and out-of-pocket costs. They help caregivers navigate and review coverage options to understand if and when they might qualify for Extra Help with Prescription Drug, or if they might qualify for a Medicare Savings Program, and how these programs fit together.

The service that our volunteers provide makes a difference in the lives of caregivers by removing some of the stress directly related to accessing health care. Volunteers work with caregivers to provide detailed information and education so that they understand the rules and regulations surrounding inpatient hospital stays, skilled nursing, prescription drug coverage, physical therapy, durable medical equipment, as well as many other aspects. Getting a handle on this information better enables the caregiver to plan ahead for expected health care needs.

As an example of the many different types of Medicare services our volunteers provide, one recently helped prepare the proper documentation for an appeal related to the billing of medication received during an inpatient hospital stay. Each situation is unique, but our volunteers walk with the caregivers for a moment in time so that they can be confident, knowledgeable, and prepared when accessing services. For information about the Boulder County Area Agency on Aging Medicare Counseling program please call our appointment line at 303-441-1546.

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*Jean Hart is a Medicare Counselor with Boulder County Area Agency on Aging.*





## Boulder County CareConnect Helps Seniors Stay in Their Homes

*By Thalia Foster*

**D**on's work and passions took him all over the world but when his aging mother started to show signs that she was not living the same quality of life as she always had, he became concerned. He wondered if was going to have to change jobs to be closer to her. His mother had always been so strong and independent and although she could no longer drive, she still thought of herself this way. He spoke to her almost every day on the phone, but how could he possibly help her from thousands of miles away?

Don found Boulder County CareConnect after researching available services on the web. Boulder County CareConnect is a 45 year old volunteer powered non-profit providing services to help seniors stay in the comfort of their homes. Over 500 volunteers help Boulder County seniors 60 and better with their grocery shopping, getting to and from medical appointments, minor home repairs, snow shoveling, and yard work.

Boulder County CareConnect's only service requirement is to be 60 or older, a Boulder County resident, and show need of the service. His mother filled out a short application and within a week, she had a volunteer signed up to get her to and from her doctor's appointment. Volunteers were able to get her groceries delivered each week. Don was grateful that a volunteer was also able to finally repair the curtain rod and install grab bars in the bathroom that he had been meaning to take care of, but just didn't have the time.

According to Don, the best thing about Boulder County CareConnect was that not only did he have complete trust, since all of Boulder County CareConnect's volunteers are background

checked, but many of the volunteers became his mother's friends. And, although Don still talked with her almost every day, he was glad to hear she was no longer as isolated in her home. It was also extremely comforting to know there were people in Boulder County watching out for his mom.

Boulder County CareConnect volunteers do not just help seniors who have no family in town, they can also serve as much-needed backup for that 24/7 caregiver. Taking care of a loved one can be overwhelming and Boulder County CareConnect can help. Seniors do not need to use the service every week to be eligible. Sometimes just knowing that one does not always have to do all the grocery shopping, or doesn't always have to be available for doctor appointments, can make a world of difference to the caregiver.

Please call Boulder County CareConnect at 303- 443-1933 and speak with a Program Coordinator to receive our information packet. Our services are free of charge; clients only pay for their groceries and home repair materials.

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*Thalia Foster is the Director of Volunteers at Boulder County Care Connect.*

## Boundaries with Volunteers

*By Sara Thompson*



**J**ust as it is important to have good boundaries with family and service providers, adhering to appropriate boundaries with volunteers is important to protect you, as well as the volunteers that work with you. Talk with the manager of any volunteer services about how to work with your volunteer, and remember these guidelines as you embrace their help.

1. Check with the volunteer organization to make sure that volunteers complete a background check and are trained on appropriate boundaries. It is probably not best to enlist volunteers that do not work through an organization, as boundary issues are likely to happen, and be more problematic.
2. Make sure that you understand ahead of time what types of services the volunteer can and cannot provide, and stick with those tasks.
3. Do not ask the volunteer to change their schedules or come on their own private time. Speak with the volunteer organization if you need to change the schedule. If a volunteer asks you to change the scheduled visit times, ask them to speak with the agency to make schedule changes. Any insurance protection provided by the volunteer agency would only apply to times that are scheduled through them.
4. Even though the person is volunteering their time, it is okay to express to them any concerns that you have. You should not feel bad for speaking to a volunteer supervisor if you are having problems. Volunteer services are for you, and volunteers should be spending the time focused on your loved one.
5. Don't ask your volunteer personal questions about themselves, and it is okay to say no if they ask you something that is too personal.
6. Don't give gifts or money to volunteers; if you wish to give them a gift, speak with the volunteer organization. If a volunteer asks you to borrow money or asks for any gifts, please speak with the volunteer organization immediately.

Remember, for the most part, you would work with a volunteer the same way you would work with a paid service provider. If you keep it friendly and professional, you and your loved one will have the best experience with the services that are offered.

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*Sara Thompson has worked with older adults and their family caregivers since 2002, managing a home care agency, volunteering, and facilitating a support group for family caregivers of Parkinsons patients. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Human Development & Family Studies with a Gerontology minor from Colorado State University and is a member of the Care Connections Editorial Advisory Committee.*

### Faith in Action

*By Jan Davies*



**F**aith in Action started in 1997 to provide services for people with disabilities and frail adults so that they can access community resources, thereby enriching their lives. Services provided to Boulder County residents include transportation to medical appointments, community outings, companionship, respite for caregivers, yard/garden help on a one-time basis, small moving projects, and help with music activities in nursing homes.

We are a volunteer organization and our services are free to people with disabilities of all ages, whether temporary or permanent, and to seniors. Our volunteers come from various faith communities in Boulder County and we get referrals from community agencies, medical facilities, senior service organizations, as well as Care Connect and Via Mobility Services. They have taken people to doctors, dentists, physical therapists, hospitals, hair dressers, work sites, and church services, just to name a few.

We believe that Faith in Action can help to fill the gaps in services for people who may not qualify for other assistance. It can also strengthen bonds between friends and neighbors resulting in safer, stronger communities. Faith in Action can



help to decrease isolation, and allow persons with a need to participate to a greater extent in the life of the community, to do so. Faith in Action can also enable families to have released time in care-giving for a family member. For our volunteers, Faith in Action provides a ministry to those in the community whose needs might not be met otherwise.

Since our volunteers use their own vehicles, most people can be accommodated, with the exception of those who are confined to wheelchairs, as personal vehicles are not wheelchair accessible. For additional information, to schedule a ride, or to volunteer call 303-666-9312 or email [Jd Daviesfia@aol.com](mailto:Jd Daviesfia@aol.com) or go to [www.abilityconnectioncolorado.org/support/faith-action](http://www.abilityconnectioncolorado.org/support/faith-action). Financial contributions may be sent to: Faith in Action, 800 Yosemite Street, Denver, CO 80230.

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*Jan Davies is Lead Coordinator at Faith in Action.*

## Respite and Companion Volunteer Program

*By Kari Middleton*



**T**wo truisms familiar to those of us who work at the Boulder County Area Agency on Aging are that social isolation is bad for people and that caregivers need respite. The BCAA's Respite & Companion Volunteer Program addresses both of these issues by matching screened, trained volunteers with older adults whom the volunteer visits for two hours once a week. Some volunteers are matched with older adults who don't have a caregiver, but who are isolated; other volunteers are matched with older adults whose caregiver could use respite (and who themselves could benefit from additional companionship).

Visits are activity-based: whether the match is a companion match or a respite match, the idea is that the volunteer and the older adult are doing something together. That can range from simply having conversation at home to going out for coffee or visiting a local museum together (volunteers whose driving records have been screened can drive their program match on such outings). The volunteers do not provide hands-on care such as giving medications, bathing assistance, etc., but just by being a safe presence with whom a loved one can be left, they allow a caregiver to take a break. Scheduling is flexible—the volunteer and caregiver/older adult decide on a set weekly schedule or select visiting times based on their schedule that week.

There are no income restrictions to participate in the program, but to receive a volunteer visitor, an older adult must live in Boulder County and be at least 60 years old (or, if under 60, be experiencing early onset dementia).

If you are interested in receiving a volunteer, contact your local senior services or call 720-864-6526. If you are interested in volunteering, visit [bouldercountyvolunteers.org](http://bouldercountyvolunteers.org) and click on Respite & Companion Volunteer, or call 720-864-6526.

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*Kari Middleton is Respite and Volunteer Coordinator with Boulder County Area Agency on Aging and a member of the Care Connections Editorial Advisory Committee.*

## VISIT WITH A CAREGIVER

*To help illustrate the Volunteer and Companion Respite Program, we talked to a caregiver whose mother receives an RCVP volunteer.*

**Care Connections:** How did you and your mom come to participate in RCVP?

**Caregiver:** My mom had a stroke in July 2016 while she was living in Las Vegas. She was living independently, but after the stroke, she had to go into rehab for two months. Then my partner and I drove her here to live with us in Colorado, and she went into rehab for another six to eight weeks. My mom had to relearn how to walk, and she can't talk. She was depressed in long-term care, and I made a commitment that she wouldn't need to stay there, no matter what it took. I had to quit my job. My mom initially couldn't be left alone at all, and I needed to make all these health care arrangements for her. I didn't know what I was getting into; it was totally overwhelming. A coworker of my partner's knew someone who worked for the Area Agency on Aging. We ended up meeting that staff person, and he gave us a lot of resources and support. That's how we heard about the Respite & Companion Program.

**CC:** What difference has having a volunteer made for you?

**Caregiver:** Our volunteer, Ellen, was a life preserver. At the beginning, when she started to come, her visits were literally the only time during the week I could leave the house; I felt trapped inside it. Having Ellen visit was amazing; it really helped me. My mom was initially reluctant to have a volunteer, but Ellen was tenacious; she talked with me about how best to approach it with my mom, first just dropping off a book about quilting (one of my mom's interests). When Ellen went to pick the book back up, she and my mom started talking and just really hit it off. Now my mom can be alone for short periods of time, but I'm never quite comfortable leaving her by herself. When Ellen comes now, I go to a coffee shop, get a pastry and some tea, and read (I'm a big reader) and just enjoy being alone. As we got to know Ellen,

I came to trust her, and she became a friend. She's a lovely person: funny, patient, kind, and loving. She's a great listener and has helped me, too—she's a great sounding board.

**CC:** What kinds of things do the volunteer and your mom do together?

**Caregiver:** Ellen is always coming up with fun things to do, fun places to go. She drove them up Flagstaff Mountain and parked so my mom could see the view; my mom was so happy. Ellen took her to the Boulder Dushanbe Tea House, and to Sturtz and Copeland garden center to see the greenhouse. They go for walks, play cards, listen to music, and watch funny videos. They're so cute together, and they're always laughing. Even though my mom can't talk, somehow Ellen has found a way to communicate with her.

**CC:** What sort of difference has having a volunteer made for your mom?

**Caregiver:** The huge thing that's happened is the visits have alleviated her isolation. That's the most important thing. My mom has a friend here now. She's happier. It was so isolating and sudden, moving here, and Ellen's visits have made a huge difference. The days Ellen visits, my mom gets up early, washes her hair, and dresses up nice. The visits are energizing for her, and give her something to look forward to.

**CC:** Thank you for taking the time to talk with us! We're so glad the program has been helpful for you both.

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*This interview was conducted by Kari Middleton, Respite and Volunteer Coordinator with Boulder County Area Agency on Aging and a member of the Care Connections Editorial Advisory Committee.*





## Longmont Senior Center-Tech

By Erica Illingworth

**I** could write a veritable tome on technology, volunteers, and caregiving. Every situation is unique, but my inquiry on the subject leads me to believe there are three key elements of caregiving which are more or less universal: the need for information, organization, and social connection. Thankfully, we live in an age where the world wide web and related technologies are designed to facilitate just that.

Before diving into tools and apps, simply accessing the web, known as the ‘information highway’, can be revolutionary in the quest for medical knowledge. Websites like webMD, MayoClinic, and even user-driven chat forums empower care recipients and caregivers. On the web, users can find insight and guidance on everything from symptom development to treatment expectations to provider recommendations. And, using web services to pay bills, order groceries, and book transportation can save enough time to squeeze in a little extra time for yourself.

If you’re one of the nearly 40% of adults over the age of 55 who struggles, you can get help with peer-to-peer instruction on searching the web, organizing files, safe computing practices, password management, and more computer basics. Since 2000, the all volunteer, older adult team of the SCTC has served thousands of older adults with lectures, classes, demonstrations, drop-in labs, and personal coaching on a wide range of devices, including PCs, Macs, laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

When you’re ready to move beyond internet basics, the SCTC volunteers can coach you on how to get the most out of applications designed to help you stay organized. Many tools on the market significantly streamline caregiving administration. CareZone and CareMind are two indus-

try leaders offering a single repository for medication reminders, notes, calendar, to-do lists, and more. Even traditional project management applications can ease the struggle of tracking documents, reminders, medications, calendars, and communications in one location. Best of all, several of these apps are free.

The most vital service that technology can provide is connection with family, friends, support groups, and community participation. People often feel there’s no substitute for a face-to face meeting, but today’s tech tools provide virtual support from real friends. The connective power of Facebook private support groups, Skype video calling, text-message counseling, and community organization websites offer on-demand stability in a moment of crisis and provide long-term support independent of location. Our SCTC volunteers can help you establish a safe social media presence or bring you up to speed video messaging to keep you connected to the ones you love.

Finally, intelligent devices like Alexa provide hands off voice interactive entertainment, news, and games. Wearable tech like Fitbit can track heart rates, sleep cycles, or simply remind you to stretch your legs with a quick walk around the block. Robotic tech like medication dispensers and no-spill cups and spoons are just a couple of the devices that add to the caregiver’s technology toolkit. To learn more about caregiver tech or to get peer-to-peer computer help, check the Longmont Senior Center’s quarterly GO Catalog, give us a call at 303-651-8411, or visit [longmontcolorado.gov/senior-services](http://longmontcolorado.gov/senior-services).

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*Erica Illingworth is a marketing specialist at the Longmont Senior Center. She has a master’s degree in web design & software development from Denver University and consults on communication design & technologies.*





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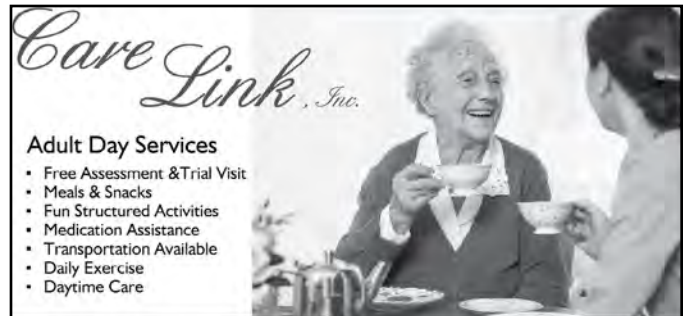


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## The Benefits of Support Groups

by Lisa Apel

**S**upport groups can be so helpful in many situations. I am a volunteer facilitator of a grief and loss support group for caregivers whose loved ones have been diagnosed with dementia for some time, one of many offered by the Alzheimer's Association of Colorado. The group I facilitate is on the losses that happen when your loved one is diagnosed with dementia, and working on the grief. Losses can include the loved one's gradual or sudden memory loss, the loved one no longer being safe driving or getting lost taking independent walks, having your loved one move into a care facility. No matter the loss that is being discussed, I am touched by how kind, respectful, and open the group participants are. The participants can be adult children caregivers for a parent or parents, or caregivers for spouses, partners, siblings, or friends.

The depth of understanding the group participants have for each other helps the group be a safe place for emotions to be expressed. Tears, laughter and quiet are all part of this. In addition, participants bring up discussions around coping with the complicated, rewarding tasks of caregiving. Ideas are often shared around various situations with the loved one. One of my roles is to encourage participants to share ideas without giving advice: expressing their experiences or ideas in a non-judgmental way.

One group discussion that was especially helpful for participants was around how to find a care facility that will accommodate your loved one's needs. The emotions of guilt and fear are often present during this type of discussion. Reassurance that the decision is being made for the safety or needs of the loved one and the safety or needs of the caregiver can, with time, help participants shift from guilt to confidence that the best decision is being made.

I came to this work through my own life experience as a caregiver for my aunt who was diagnosed with vascular dementia. I didn't attend a support group, so I didn't have a place to share my concerns and ask my questions. As a caregiver there often seems to be a fear that "I'm not doing this right" or "There must be more I can do." There are questions about "Is a care facility really the right choice for my loved one?" and "If so, which one?" The self-doubt and feelings of guilt that can come up are really difficult to work through on our own. Having discussions with loved ones around the decisions that need to be made can be helpful, but having a safe place to talk about how it feels to make those decisions with those who have had similar experiences adds another layer of support. In the end, I feel honored that my aunt trusted me and that the decisions I made were focused on what was best for her safety and her needs. The rewards of seeing her laugh and enjoy the companionship of others in her care facility, her home, are what I now focus on.

Being a caregiver for a loved one diagnosed with dementia can have many challenges and rewards. Sharing both the challenges and rewards with others in similar situations can be a way to help yourself. Support groups are a place to share your concerns, hopes, sadness, frustrations, and worries. They can be a place that allows others to learn from you and you to learn from them. If you are a caregiver, I encourage you to find a support group that will fit your needs.

For more information about support groups and other programs of the Alzheimer's Association, visit [www.alz.org/co](http://www.alz.org/co) or call 800-272-3900.

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*Lisa Apel is a volunteer for the Colorado Chapter of the Alzheimers Association and is a grief counselor for Halcyon Hospice.*



## A Volunteer So Nice, She's Doing It Twice!

By Jodi Ansel

**F**or many years, Boulder Jewish Family Service (JFS) has had a Friendly Visitor program for adults 60+ and adults with physical disabilities. The purpose of this program is to support JFS clients who may be socially isolated. The volunteer can provide companionship in a variety of ways and settings. The volunteer is asked to visit with the client an hour or more per week, with a six month commitment.

Barbara has been volunteering with Boulder JFS for the past year and a half, ever since she retired from her position as a tax advocate. She was looking for a meaningful way to volunteer and help others, and Boulder JFS offered precisely the opportunity she was looking for. "Volunteering with JFS was always in the back of my mind," says Barbara. "When the time came, I knew who to call."

Barbara liked the idea of serving as a Friendly Visitor and establishing a meaningful and supportive relationship with someone elderly or living with a disabling condition. Boulder JFS's volunteer coordinator, worked to match Barbara with a client in need of companionship and to whom Barbara would relate well. It didn't take her long to suggest Reba, who is living with a brain injury and all the complications that come with it. It was a match made in heaven. Not only has the pair developed a lasting friendship, but Reba is thriving in ways no one thought possible.

"I enjoy meeting with Reba," says Barbara. "She's highly educated and we share a lot of similar views." When they first got together, Barbara learned that Reba enjoyed knitting before her injury. Barbara loves to knit, so she encouraged Reba to try it again. Reba picked it up quickly and now knitting is their shared pastime when-

ever they get together. "It's rewarding for me to help her and see how much she can do in the creative process of knitting," says Barbara. "Knitting offers so many benefits, including improved cognitive function, memory, and eye-hand coordination, as well as the opportunity to talk."

Beyond knitting, Barbara and Reba have been working on making positive lifestyle changes and enjoy improving their diets and walking outside. Barbara's influences have had a positive impact on Reba. She is thriving when she used to be isolated and alone. She has confidence, long-term goals, and a sense of purpose she didn't have before.

Barbara has enjoyed her time with Reba so much that when an opportunity came up with a second client in need, she was quick to accept. This time she was matched with Clara, a 95-year-old woman who lives in a local skilled nursing care community. Clara has severe dementia, which has advanced significantly in the last year. In the beginning of the relationship, Barbara would bring activities to sharpen Clara's cognitive skills, including simple puzzles, word games, and crossword puzzles. Clara can no longer do puzzles but Barbara still visits her at least once a week and accompanies her to activities at her residence. Sometimes she sings to Clara, who will sometimes sing along. More recently, Clara and Barbara enjoy simply sitting in the sun and being together. Barbara often just sits with Clara and holds her hand. "I provide the extended personal contact that the nurses at the facility can't give," says Barbara. "I work to make my visits with Clara as pleasant as possible, which reduces the anxiety and frustration she experiences with her dementia. Even though she doesn't always remember who I am, we have developed a nice bond. Clara definitely feels love, and that is special for me."

*(continued on page 13)*





## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

*This column provides information about events, classes, services, and other resources of interest to family caregivers in Boulder County. Please remember that it is each person's right and responsibility to research a service provider before taking action. See "Information and Assistance in Boulder County" on the back page for ways to learn more about these and other resources. (To share information about a resource for family caregivers, please email [InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org](mailto:InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org) or call 303-678-6116. The deadline for the May/June is 2018 issue is March 22.)*

The annual **Caregiving Symposium**, sponsored by Boulder County Area Agency on Aging and TRU PACE Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, is on Thursday, May 17, 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (come for all or part), at the Plaza Convention Center, in Longmont. This popular event features a large resource fair of local service providers, 16 workshops on caregiving topics, informative handouts, complimentary lunch, and more. Preregistration is required for admission with lunch. Beginning March 1, register online at [www.2018CaregivingSymposium.eventbrite.com](http://www.2018CaregivingSymposium.eventbrite.com) or by calling 303-441-1685. Walk-in registration, without lunch, is permitted. Financial assistance for respite care may be available; call 303-678-6284 to learn more. The full agenda will be posted on the event website (above) by April 1. *The Caregiving Symposium is co-sponsored by Aging Services Foundation, Frasier, Brookdale Senior Living Solutions, Home Care of the Rockies, Life Care Center of Longmont, Relay Colorado, Alta Vita, The Carillon, 50 Plus MarketPlace News, Golden West, Hover Communities, Landmark Memory Care, ManorCare, Synergy HomeCare, A day Place, The Alzheimer's Association, Audio*

*Information Network of Colorado, Brightstar Care, Broomfield Skilled Nursing, CapTel Outreach, Compassionate Home Health, Dignity Care, Edward Jones Investments, Elms Haven Center-Genesis, Hearing Health Care Centers, Home Instead Senior Care, Homewatch Caregivers, Hudson Integrative, Meals on Wheels of Boulder, Mental Health Partners, Nymbl Science, Orion Mortgage, The Peaks at Old Laramie Trail, The Peaks Care Center, Professional Case Management, and Windhorse Elder Care.*

AgeWell – Longmont United Hospital (Centura Health) holds **Advance Directives workshops**, about considering and clarifying one's wishes for end-of-life medical treatment, with program director Peggy Arnold, on Thursdays, March 8 or April 12, 9:30 – 11 a.m. (\$5 fee for Longmont residents, \$6 for non-residents); And because April 16 is National Healthcare Decisions Day they are promoting a **Talk by Katy Butler, author of *Knocking on Heaven's Door***, Wednesday April 18, 7 p.m., at Har Hashem, 3950 Baseline Road, Boulder (tickets \$15 with online purchase at [www.theconversationprojectinboulder.org](http://www.theconversationprojectinboulder.org)) and **Unlocking the Mysteries of Life Support**, Thursday April 26, 3 – 4 p.m. (free, pre-registration is required). Call 303-651-8411 to register; 303-651-5080 for further information. All presentations, aside from Katy Butler's talk, are held at the Longmont Senior Center, 910 Longs Peak Avenue, Longmont. Pre-registration is required, at 303-651-8411.

Boulder County Area Agency on Aging is hosting **Everybody's Table**, March 15, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. This is about good nutrition for seniors and their caregivers and includes a talk by Dr. Coco Dughi on "The Power of Diet and Lifestyle in Healthy Aging" as well



as a resource fair and demonstrations featuring food, meal, and nutrition services in Boulder County. Continental Breakfast provided. Free to seniors and family caregivers. The event is being held at Jewish Community Center, 6007 Oreg Avenue, Boulder. Pre-registration by March 13 at 303-441-4995 or [tdeanni@bouldercounty.org](mailto:tdeanni@bouldercounty.org).

A Day Place Adult Day Program in Longmont is hosting **Swinging Seniors** Monday, March 12, 1:30 p.m., **Celtic Content Music**, Tuesday, March 20, 1:30 p.m. and **Nina/Storyteller** Thursday March 29, 10:30 a.m. Longmont adults are welcome to attend with their caregiver. All programs are free and are located in Room 1 of the First Lutheran Church, 803 3rd Avenue, Longmont. There is parking in the rear parking garage under the church. Pre-registration is required at 303-435-9948.

**Savvy Caregiver**, a 6-session course that teaches an understanding of dementia and strives to increase caregiver confidence while reducing the adverse effects of caregiving, led by gerontologist Jessica O'Leary, MA, MVW, is on Wednesdays, April 4 through May 9, 6 – 8 p.m., at Longmont Senior Center, 910 Longs Peak Avenue, Longmont. The course is open to persons caring for a loved one with early or mid-stage dementia; it is not for professional caregivers. There is no charge, but pre-registration is required, at 303-651-8411.

The Alzheimer's Association of Colorado holds **Dementia Caregiver Support Groups** throughout Boulder County. They are monthly at the following locations and times: East Boulder Senior Center, 5660 Sioux Drive, first Thursday of the month from Noon – 1:30 p.m. and on the second Tuesday from 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; Community United Church of Christ, 2650 Table Mesa Drive, Boulder, second Tuesday of the month, 3 – 4:30 p.m.; Erie Community Center, 450 Powers Street,

first Thursday, 4 – 5:30 p.m.; Longmont Senior Center, 910 Longspeak Avenue, second Tuesday, 12 – 1:30 p.m.; Longs Peak United Methodist Church, 1421 Elmhurst Drive, Longmont, fourth Tuesday, 1 – 2:30 p.m.; Louisville Recreation and Senior Center, 900 Via Appia Way, second Thursday, 6 – 7:30 p.m.; Niwot United Methodist Church, 7405 Lookout Road, first Wednesday, 5:30 – 7 p.m. There is no cost to attend. For more information call 800-272-3900 or visit [www.alz.org/co](http://www.alz.org/co).

Longs Peak Energy Conservation provides the following **Weatherization Services**: energy audit, furnace check, and carbon monoxide testing. This allows for attic and/or wall insulation, air leaks sealed, furnace repairs or replacement and refrigerator replacements. This will help to lower your heating and utility bills by making your home more energy efficient. Each home may receive this level of service once. This is free of cost to those who, along with their home, qualify for the weatherization program. To qualify you 1) rent or own a house, mobile home, duplex, triplex, or 4-plex and 2) receive LEAP, AND, TANF, SSI, SSDI, OAP or have a gross yearly income, for a family of two, of under \$32,480. For more information and an application please call 720-864-6401.

**The Conversation Project in Boulder** focuses on helping families engage in meaningful conversations around end-of-life care. Services, education, and coaching are free. Contact Phyllis Coletta, at 303-442-0436, ext.133, or email [Phyllis@theconversationprojectinboulder.org](mailto:Phyllis@theconversationprojectinboulder.org). The website for more information is [www.theconversationprojectinboulder.org](http://www.theconversationprojectinboulder.org).

For a full list of **caregiver support groups** that meet in Boulder County, email [InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org](mailto:InfoCaregiver@bouldercounty.org) or call 303-678-6116.



## A Volunteer So Nice, She's Doing It Twice!

*(continued from page 8)*

Barbara's relationship with Clara has been a big help to Clara's daughter and primary caregiver, Susan. With Barbara spending quality time with Clara, Susan can take time for herself, apart from her caregiver role. "She knows that I am giving Clara the contact and comfort that she needs," says Barbara. "She's very grateful for my help."

Being a JFS Friendly Visitor for two people has been extremely rewarding for Barbara. "It's my way of giving back and it's very meaningful to me," she says. "I'm gladdened and warmed by the difference I have been able to make in the lives of two people I care deeply about. I highly encourage anyone to consider exploring what JFS has to offer. I've enjoyed meeting wonderful people, from the staff to my new friends."

After this article was published, we learned that Clara recently passed away. Our condolences are with her family.

JFS offers a variety of volunteer opportunities that can easily fit into your lifestyle and schedule. Consider being a Friendly Visitor for someone who is isolated and needs companionship. To learn more, contact Ingrid Swords, at 720.749.3403, or [iswords@jewishfamilyservice.org](mailto:iswords@jewishfamilyservice.org).

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*Jodi Ansel is Care Manager with Jewish Family Service of Colorado.*

## Circle of Care—A Cultural Respite Program

*By Joan Raderman*



**M**usic and the Arts always held an important place in my life growing up. When things got hard, I would hide under my aunt's baby grand piano whenever she played. I was transported by Mozart, Chopin, Beethoven and Bach resonating

through me as the music seemed to transcend my world far beyond that which I could comprehend at that age. I believe it was my first experience understanding beauty, human potential, and the power of music to heal.

In 2003, I decided to design a program that would expand arts opportunities and cultural access to seniors in our community. Many were cut off from what could enrich and enliven their lives and re-engage them into the fabric of community life. Circle of Care offers a path to remaining socially and cultural connected, meeting new people, and living a better quality of life with more meaning, purpose, and love.

For many seniors and caregivers, cost, transportation, and mobility are an issue and no matter how old you are most of us would rather not go it alone. The excitement of anticipating and attending a concert or performance, getting dressed and ready for the show, and sharing the experience with someone during and after, are all part of the experience. This gives so many something to look forward to and a reason to get up in the morning.

Circle of Care's first outreach is to low or moderate income seniors and caregivers in Boulder County with limited opportunities to get out and get social. Your ticket, ride, and escort are provided first come first serve. Volunteers receive free concert and event tickets for accompanying seniors who need a ride and escort.

In 2012 Circle of Care received a National Best Practice from the MetLife Foundation for our innovation. We have provided over 300,000 door to door volunteer assisted rides to quality of life programming. We are a purely volunteer organization working with over 50 community arts and cultural partners and volunteer driver/ cultural escorts. Our goal is to help make arts access available to all in our community regardless of age, income or ability. We depend on community support to operate and new community partners are always welcomed and appreciated.

To learn more about becoming a Circle of Care Volunteer Cultural Companion, a senior member, or community partner call 303-358-4300 or [joan@circleofcareproject.org](mailto:joan@circleofcareproject.org), or visit [www.circleofcareproject.org](http://www.circleofcareproject.org).

*Joan Raderman is the Founder and Director of Circle of Care Project.*

## Counseling Support for Caregivers

*By Brandy Queen*

**I**n Longmont and Boulder, we are fortunate to have two groups of peer counselor volunteers who are older adults providing free counseling for other older adults. Volunteers provide individual counseling as well as facilitation for support groups. In Longmont this service is also available for caregivers of older adults regardless of the caregiver's age. All peer counselors receive training and ongoing supervision in basic counseling skills so that they may serve seniors struggling with grief, family problems, life transitions, and more.

Caregiving can be a positive experience and can also involve stress, a sense of loss as roles change, and the range of emotions from anxiety to sadness to anger. One of our peer counselors in Longmont, Sharon, is willing to share how caregiving and reaching out for support impacted her life. Sharon was married to Jerry for 50 years and became his sole caregiver. After some time, Sharon struggled with the caregiving role: she felt isolated in coping with the loss of the man she knew and loved to the difficulties of dementia, and her husband was very dependent. However, Sharon said, "I thought I was Wonder Woman" and could do anything and everything by herself. This went on until a friend kindly pointed out that Sharon really could not do it all alone, and Sharon then reached out for support. She attended a care-

giver support group led by peer counselors, took the Savvy Caregiver class, attended a Caregiving Symposium, leaned on her friends, and later sought peer counseling for individual support as well. Her husband struggled with anxiety when she left to access these supports, so she found a day program for him to attend. Sharon found the caregiver support group incredibly beneficial. She always felt that other caregivers "had my back," and she was able to leave the group truly feeling better each time she attended.

After Jerry died, Sharon found that she had a hole in her heart. She accessed grief support from our peer counselors. Sharon believes it is important for people to have permission to grieve for as long as they need and to "have a meltdown sometimes." She understands that the grief one feels as a caregiver doesn't end when a loved one passes away, and new grief gets piled on top. She appreciated her peer counselor and said, "I could tell her anything and she would just listen and be supportive." After some months of finding her life on the other side of caregiving and grief, Sharon decided she would like to become a peer counselor herself. She says, "It kind of saved my life." She enjoys working with caregivers, as it feels good to know she can truly help them with her understanding from her own life experiences. Sharon's message to caregivers is this: "You'll surprise yourself. You're much stronger than you think you are." And life does go on after caregiving. For peer counseling referrals in Longmont, call 303-651-8414; for peer counseling in Boulder, call 303-441-4388

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*Brandy Queen is a Licensed Professional Counselor with Longmont Senior Service where she co-facilitates caregiver support groups, provides one-on-one caregiver consultations and family meetings, oversees the Lunch Bunch (a dementia-friendly socialization program), and coordinates classes on caregiving topics.*

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## INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE IN BOULDER COUNTY

Within Boulder County, there are several ways to access information and assistance about resources and services for older adults and their family caregivers:

- Check out **Network of Care for Seniors and People with Disabilities**, a comprehensive online service directory, at [www.BoulderCountyHelp.org](http://www.BoulderCountyHelp.org).
- Call the **ADRC Help Line**, at 303-441-1617, and Boulder County Area Agency on Aging staff will respond to your message.
- Call the **resource specialist** in your community (numbers below). Services vary by community but include identifying needs, exploring options, finding solutions, and providing in-depth assistance.

<b>Allenspark area</b>	303-747-2592
<b>City of Boulder</b>	303-441-4388/303-413-7494 (bilingüe)
<b>City of Lafayette</b>	303-661-1499
<b>City of Longmont</b>	303-774-4372/303-651-8716 (bilingüe)
<b>City of Louisville</b>	303-335-4919
<b>Erie</b>	303-441-1617
<b>Lyons area</b>	303-823-9016
<b>Nederland area</b>	303-258-3068
<b>Niwot area</b>	303-441-1617
<b>Superior</b>	303-441-1617

