

# Caregiver Corner

*Ideas and Information for People Caring for Others*

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**November & December 2020 / 607-778-2411 / [www.gobroomecounty.com/senior](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/senior)**

## Events for Caregivers

### **Caregiving During COVID-19: Ways to Obtain Respite, Support, and Keep Your Loved One Engaged.**

**Date:** Wednesday, November 18

**Time:** 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

**Location:** Zoom platform

**Presenters:** Judy Bobinski, BCOFA; Shellie Spinelli, Yesteryears Social Day Program; Jane Talbot, Action for Older Persons Health Insurance Counseling Program

No doubt we're living in challenging times, with social distancing and orders to stay home. For those who provide constant care for an aging parent, an ill relative or a disabled individual, respite care, or a period of rest or relief, can be very welcome indeed. Also important are finding ways to keep the one you're caring for as active and engaged as possible. Lastly, knowing how to pay for care is an important consideration for caregivers, especially if private paying may prove difficult.

Attend this presentation to learn what's available to support both you and the one you're caring for during the pandemic.

Judy's presentation will discuss in-home helper options that are available to take over some of the tasks and duties that you perform for your loved one. Her presentation will also include grant-based programs that are available through Office for Aging to provide this care.

Shellie's presentation will provide tips, hints and activities that will help stimulate and engage the one you're caring for in the home environment.

Jane will discuss additional ways to pay for care in the home.

Pre-registration is required; please call Caregiver Services at (607) 778-2411.

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### **Living with Parkinson's Disease: Tips for Caregivers and Their Loved Ones**

**Date:** Wednesday, December 16

**Time:** 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

**Location:** Zoom platform

**Presenters:** Karen Hirst, LSVT Certified Occupational Therapist and Colleen Kussard, Physical Therapist

The presenters will provide an overview of primary symptoms common with Parkinson's Disease as well as the many secondary symptoms like sleep disturbance and worsening cognition. Caregivers will be educated in the use of tools and strategies that can help loved ones improve or maintain function and enhance quality of life. Topics include how posture, body mechanics and relaxation techniques can positively impact those with Parkinson's as well as caregivers. Education will also be provided on simple and safe exercises to do at home.

Pre-registration is required. Call Caregiver Services at (607) 778-2411 to register.



### **Caregiver Chat Groups**

Let's chat! These informal discussions are open to caregivers of any age.

**The Stay Healthy Caregiver Chat:** participants call in using a landline or cell phone.

**Date:** Monday, Nov. 2 & Monday, Dec. 7

**Time:** 1:00-2:30 PM

**Dial:** (607) 778-6547

**Meeting Code:** 2187 #

**Attendee Access Code:** 123456#

**The Wayne Street Caregiver Chat:** participants use the Zoom platform

**Date:** Wednesday, Nov. 18 & Wednesday, Dec. 16

**Time:** Time: 9:30-11:00AM

**Zoom address:**

<https://broome.zoom.us/j/97041617223?pwd=aHU1ZlhFL1VQSDhybjlDSGsxenRkZz09>

**ID:** 2152617450

**Password:** 037464

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## Saying ‘Yes’ to Offers of Help

By Family Caregiver Alliance

How do you respond when someone asks, “Is there anything I can do?” More likely than not, your response is, “Oh no, I’m okay.” And when friends say, “Let me know if I can help you,” do you call them? It is sometimes difficult to say we need help—so we don’t. Learning to say “yes” to such offers is really a gift you give to yourself as well as to the person who offers.

It’s simple, really: People feel good when they do something nice for someone else. And when they help by providing respite and assistance in a caregiving situation, it’s even better. Caregivers may be reluctant to accept help, because they feel they should be able to handle everything themselves. They may feel that caring for a loved one is their responsibility—and theirs alone. Or perhaps they’re afraid something will happen while they are away from their loved one. Some might think that accepting help is a sign of failure or selfishness—that you’re enjoying yourself when your loved one can’t any more. We often think that our loved ones can’t get along without us. Or we don’t want to burden others with our cares. But the fact of the matter is that breaks and support during the caregiving journey are a must. They reduce burnout, help you to be more patient with loved ones, and can even prevent premature placement in a nursing home.

As you approach your relatives and friends, remember that it is better to ask for help directly than to hint. And it’s much better to do so before you are desperate (when hearing “no” would be really

hard). Often caregivers don’t know what to say when someone offers help. To start, you will be more successful if you match the request with a particular talent or interest of the person who is offering.

For example, if someone likes to cook, suggest meals. Post a task list on the refrigerator or attach it to the calendar or another easily visible location. When someone asks you if they can help, refer to your list and say “YES.” Let them choose what task on the list they would like to do. You don’t need to feel indebted to those who help—your sincere appreciation of their help is thanks enough. People understand that you may not be able to return the favor. Little remembrances such as flowers or sweets let people know you care. Learning to receive graciously is a talent we all need to develop.

**To make it easier to say “yes,” here’s some language to use, and a list of things to say “yes” to:**

- Read a book to my loved one, watch TV with my father, listen to music with my Mom, entertain my husband so I can have a break
- Help us in the garden: mow the lawn, pull weeds
- Go shopping for me, or pick up a few items for me when you’re at the grocery store
- Run errands like dropping off the dry cleaning, picking up pharmacy prescriptions, returning books or videos to the library, or taking mail to the post office
- Drive to an appointment
- Be available for talking—help me to laugh and have perspective on my situation
- Call once a week to let me have adult conversation about anything other than caregiving
- Help with a project—it’s always easier to do things with someone else’s encouragement
- Stay with my loved one so I can go to religious services, take a nap, attend a support group, go to a doctor’s appointment, get a haircut, get a massage
- Go to lunch with me or a movie, take a walk with me and help me get some exercise
- Walk the dog or take my pet to the vet
- Do research on the Internet about new treatments
- Call and find out about local resources
- Sort the mail, throw out junk mail

- Wash the car or get some gas
- Give a haircut to my grandfather, or a manicure to my aunt
- Help me fill in forms, deal with medical insurance issues
- Stay with Dad once a month for four hours so I can do whatever I want
- Take Mom for a drive so I can be alone, just for a little while

*This tip sheet was prepared by Family Caregiver Alliance.  
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Source: <https://www.caregiver.org/saying-yes-offers-help>*

## Senior Gifts: It's the Giving, Not the Gift That Matters Most

By Cindy Laverty

Source: <https://www.agingcare.com/articles/gift-ideas-for-elderly-148575.htm>

Have you ever agonized over what gift to give your mom or dad or elderly relative? If you're like most of us, then the answer is: Yes. I remember so clearly wondering what to buy, so I put it off because I didn't know—and Bob, (my former father-in-law who I cared for) already had everything, not to mention that he didn't do much of anything, so what could I possibly give? I would give anything now if I had just one more birthday or holiday to shop for him. Sometimes lessons come to us when it's too late.

I am here to tell you—it doesn't matter. Stop agonizing and enjoy the process of giving a gift to someone you love. It doesn't matter if your gift never gets used. It doesn't matter if you don't receive accolades for the gift. What matters is the giving. What matters is a beautifully wrapped gift which speaks LOVE.

Here's a list of great gifts that will make a difference.

- Find a photo from your loved one's past. Have it cleaned up and framed. Memories create happy moments.
- Give a beautiful hankie to a grandmother.
- Give a tie to grandpa. A tie says, "We're going somewhere fancy one day soon." Make sure you actually make arrangements for the tie to be worn. Follow through.

- Give a music box with a favorite song. DVDs of movies from their past create hours of peaceful afternoons.
- CDs of favorite music – or better yet, create a CD especially for your loved one with all his/her most loved music.
- Make a basket of favorite treats or, better yet, have your children bake something special.
- Give a digital voice recorder and encourage the senior to tell his/her Life Story.

### What the holidays mean to elders

Holidays are critical in a senior's life. Holidays conjure up all kinds of memories and can send someone into a downward spiral or, worse, into a deep depression if not handled with sensitivity. Memories can be an especially sensitive issue. They have the ability to be wonderfully moving if the senior is encouraged to share memories and experiences. However, if the senior is made to feel like his/her memories don't matter, a feeling of isolation can take over. Try not to let this happen. The more you can involve your loved one in holiday celebrations, the better.

When someone reaches true maturity, it's not the things—it's the thought. It's the moments with the family. It's the treasure of being with loved ones. The caregiving journey allows you to create moments and memories that will be cherished. Creating moments is what our life is all about. Make them special.

"If you find it in your heart to care for someone else, you will have succeeded." – Maya Angelou

The Caregiver Services Program is sponsored by a grant from the Administration for Community Living, New York State Office for Aging, and Broome County.

*Contributions are accepted to help support this program. No one is denied service because of an inability or unwillingness to contribute and all contributions are confidential.*

To make a contribution, please send checks or money orders to: Broome County Office for Aging, PO Box 1766, Binghamton, NY 13902.

**Caregiver Corner**

Broome County Office for Aging  
60 Hawley Street  
PO Box 1766  
Binghamton, NY 13902-1766

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[OFA@BroomeCounty.US](mailto:OFA@BroomeCounty.US)

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**Thank you!**