Dear Family Caregivers,

The focus of the Fall 2017 Caregiver Quarterly newsletter is ABUNDANCE because the Caregiver Support team believes all Family Caregivers deserve an abundance of health and happiness in their lives.

Please note: This year the VA Caregiver Support Program is thrilled to be partnering with community partners, Tuality Healthcare and Washington County DAVS Family Caregiver Support Program, to offer our annual Family Caregiver Conference on Friday, November 17, 2017. (*See info below & full flyer on last page of this Caregiver Quarterly Newsletter)

Please also note: This year the VA Caregiver Support Program is offering a Family Caregiver Tea at the VA Salem Clinic on Tuesday, November 14, 2017. (*See details on this page).

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO:
”Nourish Your Mind, Body and Spirit”
with a focus on family caregivers of older adults

WHEN:
Friday, November 17, 2017
9a.m. – 2:30p.m.

WHAT:
Keynote Paul Larrobino, Master Story Teller & Consultant:
“The Practical Side of Caregiving and Resilience”
Presentations & Resource Fair

WHERE:
Tuality Health Education Center
334 SE 8th Avenue
Hillsboro, OR 97123

Registration required. Please call 503-846-3089
Conference, refreshments & lunch are free.
What is abundance? When the word abundance comes to mind the first thing I think of is the vegetables in my garden, specifically, tomatoes! This is a nice thought, because “Who doesn’t love home grown tomatoes?” Since there is typically an abundance of tomatoes, it is easy to share them with friends and neighbors for all to enjoy. Let’s explore other areas of abundance.

Abundance goes beyond simply having or acquiring something. It’s more all-encompassing and bigger than that. Abundance can be a feeling. It can be something we already have but have not tapped into yet. Abundance can be gratitude or seeing the richness of something in the very moment. Abundance can be love. More and more, people are realizing that experiencing abundance involves choice.

Both abundance and lack of abundance exist simultaneously in our lives. It is our conscious choice when we choose not to focus on what is missing from our lives but are grateful for the abundance that is present such as: love, health, family, friends, work, nature, and our personal pleasures.

Abundance comes in many forms. For some people it is about a feeling of wealth, but I think it is much more. For me it includes good health, an enthusiasm for life, fulfilling relationships, creative freedom, emotional and psychological stability, energy, a sense of well-being, and peace of mind.

With the start of the school year with all its demands, work-related stressors, Halloween treats, Thanksgiving celebrations, and the onset of the cold and flu season, healthy lifestyle choices can become quite a challenge. We can quickly lose our sense of abundance and sink into a feeling of scarcity (the opposite of abundance).

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Family, Friends & Coworker: Positive feelings from being connected to others can increase our sense of abundance. Research indicates that close relationships support our efforts to thrive and be well. As a caregiver it is important for us to balance our “giving with receiving.” Staying in touch with others, outside of with whom we live, will keep us whole and healthy.

Call a friend, come to the Caregiver Support Program support group, go for a group walk in the crisp air, stop for a hot tea. The more we care and fill ourselves up with abundance, the more we can then share our riches with others.

Here are a few self-care tips to help keep you feeling abundant through the autumn months.

Food and Drink: Self-sustaining foods like a warm bowl of oatmeal for breakfast or a nourishing cup of soup can fill you up. Bring into your meal time different choices of protein like salmon, walnuts, almonds, beans and lentils, or multi-grains such as millet, spelt and quinoa. Enhance your food with turmeric, cumin, ginger and mint. Remember drinking water as your first choice will increase your level of alertness, reduce dehydration, and boost the immune system needed to fight colds and flus.

Working the Body: Regular and frequent weekly exercise boosts the immune system, reduces blood pressure, strengthens the cardiovascular system, which then release the “good” hormones and endorphins that help reduce the symptoms of depression.

Power of the Mind: Ask yourself, “Am I worthy of abundance, joy, aliveness in my life?” Research has shown that our brains produce between 12,000 and 50,000 thoughts a day with most of them negative. “True prosperity begins with feeling good about yourself.” In other words, good mental and physical health begins with acceptance and approval of one’s self. The choice is within your control.

Cultivating gratitude can be a healthy step towards alleviating negative thought patterns and may offer us a deeper level of happiness, fulfillment, and wellbeing. Focus on what you do have, rather than what you do not have.

Continued in next column...
We are human beings not “human doings”. So how did we get to this place where so many of us are so busy? And how is all this busyness effecting our health and happiness? Are there other ways of being that can bring us more true satisfaction with life? Some people are finding more life satisfaction by intentionally, or purposely, simplifying their lives.

Just what do we mean when we refer to simplifying our lives? Some people are buying fewer items and letting go of items (often by donating them) that no longer serve a function or bring joy to their lives. Some people are exchanging unnecessary activities for more time with people who matter to them, or engaging in creative activities they find enjoyable, or simply enjoying more unstructured time. Some people are taking more time to simply rest and slow down the pace of their lives. Some people are practicing exchanging “multitasking (doing several things at once)’’ for “monotasking (doing one thing at a time)”. Some people are taking time to shift some of their focus on outer activities toward a more inward focus- through mindfulness, meditation or contemplation in nature.

This is probably not the first time you have heard how gratitude can enhance one’s well-being and my hope is that this will provide a simple reminder of how fun and simple it can be to develop a gratitude practice! Often, we can get caught up in life’s stressors and demands, losing sight of the abundance of beauty that exists all around us – either in nature, a kind smile of a stranger, a starry sky, the laughter of a child, the smell of fresh baked bread, the sound of the wind rustling through the leaves, and so much more. Developing a gratitude practice can help shift our awareness to the beauty and small wonders that are always available to us when living in the present moment.

I will keep it simple. There is a lot of research that shows how an ‘attitude of gratitude’ can support us physically, mentally and emotionally. For example, studies have shown that those who cultivated a grateful outlook experienced less sickness, had more energy and focus, exercised more often, experienced more joy, felt more connected to friends and family, and felt stronger during trying times (http://www.chopra.com/articles/cultivate-the-healing-power-of-gratitude#.0001b2huhk1). If this sounds inviting to you, here are some simple ideas to create a gratitude practice. I also encourage you to use your creativity to create a practice that feels right for you!

• Start a gratitude journal. Commit to writing down 3 things you are grateful for each day.
• Take a gratitude walk and notice all of the beauty in nature around you.
• Make a gratitude collage.
• Create a gratitude ritual with your family either at meal time or bed time. Invite each person to share 1-2 things they are grateful for from the day. Or share an act of kindness that you engaged in from the day.

There are so many ways to cultivate an ‘attitude of gratitude’, and many ways to integrate it into your family’s daily life. Have fun with it and notice if you start to feel, think, and show up differently in your life!

Abundance Found in Simplicity
by Amber Lynch, LCSW
We are human beings not “human doings”. So how did we get to this place where so many of us are so busy? And how is all this busyness effecting our health and happiness? Are there other ways of being that can bring us more true satisfaction with life? Some people are finding more life satisfaction by intentionally, or purposely, simplifying their lives.

Just what do we mean when we refer to simplifying our lives? Some people are buying fewer items and letting go of items (often by donating them) that no longer serve a function or bring joy to their lives. Some people are exchanging unnecessary activities for more time with people who matter to them, or engaging in creative activities they find enjoyable, or simply enjoying more unstructured time. Some people are taking more time to simply rest and slow down the pace of their lives. Some people are practicing exchanging “multitasking (doing several things at once)” for “monotasking (doing one thing at a time)”. Some people are taking time to shift some of their focus on outer activities toward a more inward focus- through mindfulness, meditation or contemplation in nature.

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People who intentionally simplify their lives report benefits or “abundance” in the following areas: feeling less emotionally reactive, an increased sense of calmness, feeling “more present” in their lives, having more time for “what really matters”, better self-care and better overall health, more engaged and satisfying relationships, more freedom, improved finances, and overall satisfaction with life.

What does intentional simplifying require of us? It begins with taking time to identify what really matters to us. Next, is requires identifying what things or activities we are ready (and able) to release in order to create more time and space for what really matters to us. Next, it requires taking reasonable and regular steps toward guiding and simplifying our lives in our intended direction. The Caregiver Support team is eager to support you in this process, through Whole Health Coaching.

Here are some suggestions to begin practicing simplicity in small ways: noticing our food choices, being selective with purchases, being aware of how much time and types of technology we are using, look into the eyes of a loved one rather than at your phone, take a short walk while noticing the feeling of each footstep, take several mindful breaths to “check in” with yourself, eat with attention and try to notice every bite, declutter one room in your home, declutter your car, listen to the sounds of nature right outside your home, listen to soul soothing music.

Playing with simplicity can be fun and can lead to long-term choices that result in greater overall relationship and life satisfaction! The Caregiver Support Team would love to hear your stories of how you are intentionally simplifying your lives, so please feel welcome to share with us!
More VA Resources for you

New Dementia Education Program Offerings
Starting in Fall 2017, the Dementia Education Program at VA Portland will be offering a new series of workshops based on input from caregivers! Each workshop will be two-hours long and offered at multiple VA sites of care. Workshops are geared toward dementia caregivers but are open to family members, Veterans, community members, and staff.

Fall 2017
- Introduction to Dementia: Dementia 101 – Vancouver, West Linn, and Hillsboro
  - Oct 17 – Vancouver Clinic 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
  - Nov 7 – West Linn CBOC 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
  - Dec 5 – Hillsboro CBOC 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Winter 2018
- Stress Reduction – locations TBD
- Communication and Dementia - locations TBD

Spring 2018
- Long Term Care Planning – locations TBD
- Savvy Caregiver – Salem, Center 50 Plus

Summer 2018
- Stages of Dementia – locations TBD
- Common Safety Issues and Dementia – locations TBD

To learn more about the new Dementia Education Program or to sign up for Introduction to Dementia Workshops, contact Kristi Ketchum, LCSW at (503) 220-8262 ext. 58594 or Laura Tauber, LCSW at (503) 220-8262 ext. 51151.

VA Cancer Care Navigation Team offers:
Veteran and Caregiver Support Group

When: Thursdays, 10am-12pm

Dates: 10/19, 11/16, and 12/21

Where: VA Portland Health Care System/ VA Portland Medical Center, 3710 SW US Veterans Hospital Road, Portland OR 97239 6th Floor 6 D-126 Conference Room

To register: Call Marcia Long, LCSW, OSW-C, at 503-220-82632, ext. 51754

CHECK IT OUT!

The Caregiver Support Program website has been redesigned!

The website includes a section linking caregivers and Veterans of all ages to resources and home- and community-based services available through VA’s Geriatrics and Extended Care Programs, as well as caregiver tips by diagnosis, caregiver education, real-life caregiver stories as well as connections to various caregiver supports available.

Visit: www.caregiver.va.gov

Caregiver Support Program
VA Portland Health Care System
503-273-5210
Caregiver/Community Corner:

NAMI Homefront Online Classes

NAMI Homefront is a free, six-session class for family, friends and significant others of Military Service Members and Veterans. The class helps families comprehend what the Military Service Member/Veteran is experiencing related to trauma, combat stress, civilian life, PTSD and other mental health conditions. Topics covered include mental health, communication, handling crises, treatment and recovery.

The program is designed to help family members understand and support their Service Member/Veteran while maintaining their own well-being. NAMI Homefront leaders have personal experience with mental health conditions impacting their Service Member/Veteran. The class is free but you are expected to attend all six sessions.

Now offered online! We understand that attending an in-person class can be difficult for busy individuals and families. We now offer NAMI Homefront Online. Online classes meet weekly in a virtual classroom, so participants experience the same level of interaction and learning as traditional in-person classes. You must have access to a laptop, PC or tablet with a stable internet connection to participate. Audio will be via telephone line, a headset is recommended.

USE THE FOLLOWING LINK TO REGISTER*:
https://www.research.net/r/HomefrontOnlineRegistration

*All participants are screened to ensure this class is appropriate for their needs.

Washington County’s Disability, Aging & Veteran Services Division
Presents The Advisory Newsletter for September and October, 2017

To learn important information for older adults, veterans and family caregivers:

- Open Enrollment for 2018
- Message from Mjere
- Medicare 101 Event
- Social Security News
- Veteran News
  - Pomeroy Place
  - VA Crisis Line
  - HATS Group
  - VA Portland Family Caregiver Services
- Family Caregiver News
  - Classes and Training
  - 14th Annual Washington Co. Family Caregiver Conference: Nourish Your Mind, Body and Spirit
- DAVS Volunteers – Profile: Mr. Duane Damiano, BEC
- WISE (Wellness Initiative for Senior Education) & King City Expo


“The list of local resources in this section is provided as a courtesy of VAPORHCS. None of these agencies or providers are affiliated with VAPORHCS and VAPORHCS does not endorse or recommend any agency or provider on this list. Nor does this list constitute a referral by VAPORHCS to any of the listed entities. Use of any of these services or providers is at your own risk.”
Nourish Your Mind, Body, and Spirit

2017 Washington County Family Caregiver Conference

Friday, November 17, 2017
9:00 a.m. - 2:30

Tuality Health Education Center
334 SE 8th Ave.
Hillsboro, OR 97123

Expect a day of fun, learning and empowerment, with inspiring presenters, helpful resources, and the opportunity to meet other caregivers who share similar challenges. This conference focuses on the needs of unpaid family caregivers of older adults.

Keynote: Paul Iarrobino, Master Story Teller and Consultant,
The Practical Side of Caregiving and Resilience

Presentations
- What Matters Most to You: Whole Health & You
- Maintaining a Loving Relationship While Meeting the Challenges of Caregiving
- Effective Approaches to Common Challenging Behaviors
- Legal Considerations for Family Caregivers
- Caregiving: It’s a Practice & It Takes A Lot of Practice
- Paying for Care When Funds are Limited

Registration required. Please call 503-846-3089 to register.