



# Centered News



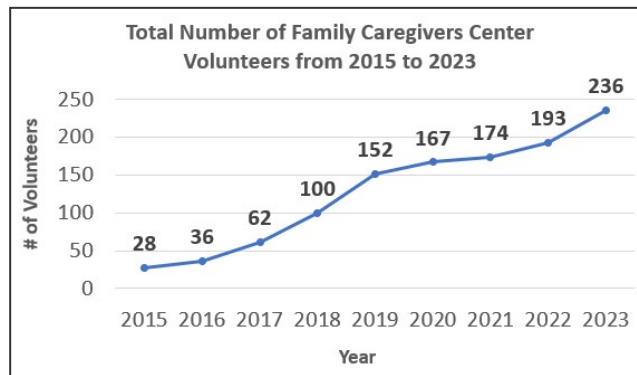
April 2024

## Volunteer Hours Equate to \$1,346,539 in Value

### Events & Groups at the Center

The Family Caregivers Center offers events and groups in two locations and also via Zoom. Check out this month's *Centered Events* calendar for details or call the Center at (319) 221-8866.

Volunteers have been the life blood of the Family Caregivers Center for the last 10 years, even before the Center opened. The chart below highlights the growth in numbers of volunteers:



As of July 2023, volunteers had contributed over 42,344 hours. The value in today's dollars, \$31.80 per hour, equates to a whopping \$1,346,539 in value contributed!

Volunteers become involved with the Center for a variety of reasons. Many have been family caregivers and know what it's like to walk in caregivers' shoes. They

know caregiving can be overwhelming, isolating, difficult to know where to go when you need support and what to ask for when you get there. They have been there and they want to try to help make others' lives a little easier. Often, our volunteers also have a specific skill set. We like to say our volunteers have "lived experience" whether from their job, hobbies or abilities that can be turned into a valuable volunteer role. We always look for good matches and try to incorporate our volunteers' strengths into their roles.

Volunteers at the Family Caregivers Center assist with everything from leading groups and facilitating education sessions to making homemade cookies to serve during those events. Volunteers provide respite; call caregivers to check in; greet visitors; direct and sing in the Together in Song Chorus; stuff envelopes for the monthly mailing; process data; do research; write newsletter articles; and many other tasks. However big or small, we are so grateful for everything our volunteers do! Without their time, energy and dedication, the Center would not be able to offer the same services and quality care.

Thank you, volunteers! We cannot exist without you!

- Family Caregivers Center Staff

### Thank you for your support!

The Family Caregivers Center is donor-funded. Gifts help support programs for family caregivers. If you would like to give, please [click here](#) or call Mercy's Foundation at (319) 398-6206. Thanks to all our wonderful donors!



Downtown - 901 Building | 901 8th Ave. SE | Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
DeWolf Innovation Center | 9000 C Ave. NE | Cedar Rapids, IA 52402  
(319) 221-8866 | [fcgc@mercyCare.org](mailto:fcgc@mercyCare.org) | [familycaregiverscenter.org](http://familycaregiverscenter.org)

## Kathy's Corner

### History of Center Volunteers



**Kathy Good**  
Senior Director  
& Co-Founder

Judy Goldberg became the first volunteer in 2015. Judy was a speed demon. Everything I gave her to do she did well and fast! She became part of the team that took the Caregivers Center concept to Venture School in 2015. She got a job in the middle of the six weeks of Venture School. Later, she became part of the Kitchen Cabinet – the name that was given to the Caregivers Center planning group.

When Judy couldn't continue her role at Venture School, Laura Sagers stepped in and has been part of the Kitchen Cabinet ever since. My husband Dave started dying just as Venture School was ending. When the Venture School Team made their final presentation, Laura suggested that they place an empty chair on the stage to illustrate my absence because the person for whom I had cared for the last 12 years was dying. The team won "Best Presentation" and the \$1500 cash prize that went with it.

At the conclusion of Venture School in May 2015, the Family Caregivers Center had three volunteers – Judy Goldberg, Janice Charles and Laura Sagers. Janice initially got involved when she came with Tim to support me while I made a 60-second pitch about the Caregivers Center at StartUp CR Weekend, which allowed us to form a team that worked all weekend on developing our concept and, ultimately led to our attendance at Venture School. Janice has been a part of the Kitchen Cabinet ever since.

Early on Carole Butz, Christy Rezin, Linda Hofmeister, Kathy Wilden, Nancy Craig, and Ann Bossen all became volunteer members of the Kitchen Cabinet. Carole remains a member having joined in June of 2015! Janice, Laura and Carole have filled many roles besides guiding the Center's development as members of the Kitchen Cabinet. At the time of the ribbon cutting on December 17, 2015, we had 28 volunteers.

The volunteer force of the Family Caregivers Center continues to grow today. We are so grateful for all who have been involved, for however long, and contributed to the mission and work of the Caregivers Center. Thank you!

– Kathy Good, Senior Director, DeWolf Innovation Center,  
Family Caregivers Center

## Volunteer Appreciation Messages

The Family Caregivers Center receives grateful caregiver messages often and many share of the wonderful work of and support provided by Center volunteers. Below are just a few of those messages we'd like to share to honor our volunteers this month!

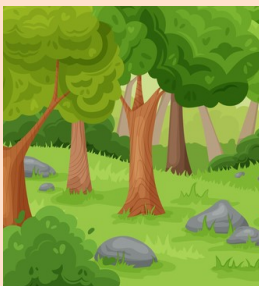
- "The facilitators were compassionate and created a safe place. Each also had a great deal of knowledge and was willing to share how caregiving has changed their lives."
- "Love the coffee and cookies"
- "The time and effort of the volunteers make such a difference to those of us struggling with the ups and downs of caring for a loved one. The support has been invaluable."
- "The flower arranging session was an amazing event to share with my mom!"
- "I walked into the group feeling overwhelmed and hopeless and I left feeling hope."
- "I have been the beneficiary of the wonderful programs of the Family Caregivers Center- especially the Men's Coffee. The Caregivers Center is an extremely valuable resource to our community and those needing assistance."
- "One of the chorus members shared with me how much her husband was enjoying participating in the chorus, far more than she had expected and how it enlivened him and he looked forward to rehearsals."
- "Thank you so much for bringing a huge smile to my face with the care package. I was so inspired that I started making packages to share with friends and neighbors. I was happy to share the joy."
- "Many beautiful things cannot be seen or touched, they are felt within the heart. What you all have done for me is one of them. Thank you!"

**Thank you volunteers, you are making  
a difference!**

## Wandering the Wilderness

The *Caregiver Helpbook, Powerful Tools for Caregivers* explains three stages in dealing with transitions: the ending, the wilderness, and the new beginning.

The transitions start with the ending, the "letting go" of what has ended. You may not want to do this, but it is essential for moving on to what is next. Because of a gradual but steady decline, those with chronic, progressive illnesses must cope with a series of ongoing endings.



During the wilderness period caregivers come to grips with the change and loss. You may experience confusion, emptiness, depression, uncertainty and anxiety. This is a difficult stage because we often want to "solve" situations right

away. We don't like to wander! Give yourself time and be patient with yourself. This period cannot be rushed.

There are questions to consider during this stage:

- What has changed? The person?  
The situation? Me?
- What has ended? For my loved one?  
For me? In our lives?
- How do I feel about this loss? Sad?  
Angry? Relieved?

While in "the wilderness" it is important to maintain routines and structure as much as possible. This gives a sense of predictability. Stay in touch with supportive people. Look for the positive in the change and avoid doing something just for the sake of taking action.

The new beginning comes after the wilderness and may start as vague or unimpressive, or you may wake up to a feeling that you are now ready for something new. You may feel more refreshed and find that you are ready for new opportunities or perspectives. This can be a time when energy and hope is restored.

*Adapted from an article from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, author Cheryl Clark.*

– Laura Sagers, Center Volunteer

## DeWolf Innovation Center News



### Dementia-Friendly Linn County Welcomed to the Dementia-Friendly America Network

The DeWolf Innovation Center is excited to announce as of March 6, 2024, Linn County is a Dementia-Friendly Community! This is just the beginning of exploring how Linn County can better support those living with dementia and their care partners in our community. In November 2023, a large group met to explore the possibility of applying to become a Dementia-Friendly Community. Since, a smaller committee was formed to work on and submit the application. That group included Kathy Good, Kindel Dillon, Susie Winkowski, April Neuendorf, Dawn Riley, Karen Huber, and Jessica Fairbanks.

See "Save the Date" below for information about the parking lot party at the Innovation Center and launch of Dementia Friendly Linn County!

### Save the Date



Join us for a parking lot party with vendors, food, fun and information about how to live your best with dementia!

**June 20, 2024  
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**DeWolf Innovation Center– Parking Lot  
9000 C Ave NE, Cedar Rapids**

The event is in celebration of:

- People living with dementia, their care partners, caregivers & families
- The launch of Dementia Friendly Linn County
- Alzheimer's Association's Longest Day
- The anticipated launch of the GUIDE Program on July 1, 2024

**Look for additional information  
coming soon!**



*“Volunteer Spotlights” highlights our wonderful volunteers who give of their time and talents. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or want to learn more, please call the Center at (319) 221-8866 or email [fccg@mercycare.com](mailto:fccg@mercycare.com).*

I grew up on a farm in Treynor, Iowa, a small town near Council Bluffs. I have an older brother and an older sister. I am married with two adult sons and a six year old granddaughter.



**Diane Godfrey**

crafting, watching movies and walking.

I am a semi-retired RN who started my career in Columbus, Nebraska. And yes, I am a Husker fan. After moving to Cedar Rapids in 1982, I worked at both Mercy Medical Center and Unity Point St Luke's. I enjoy reading,

I was referred to the Family Caregivers Center by a friend and felt I would enjoy giving my time to help in whatever capacity I could, especially in providing respite care. I am still learning and looking forward to learning as much as I can. My advice is to be open-minded, be thankful and embrace kindness.



### “Take a Moment” Podcasts

Are you someone who enjoys listening to podcasts? We encourage you to check out the “Take A Moment” caregiving podcasts! “Take a Moment”

Podcasts are short and informative. Each episode is three to five minutes in length and is produced by our very own volunteer Dr. Peg O’Rourke, retired counselor and caregiver to her husband David.

“Take a Moment” Podcast- [click here](#) or go to <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1855120/> to listen.

New episodes are highlighted periodically in the weekly *Centered Events* emails. If you’re interested in receiving the weekly email with the podcast episode links or have other questions, please send an email to the Family Caregivers Center at [fccg@mercycare.org](mailto:fccg@mercycare.org). Thank you, Peg, for sharing your wisdom and experience with us!



“Ask Abby” is a column dedicated to answering caregiver questions. If you would like to submit a question, email it to [fccg@mercycare.org](mailto:fccg@mercycare.org).

## Planning Ahead: Declaration for Designee of Final Remains

I had the pleasure of meeting with Amy Hart, Licensed Funeral Director & Certified Celebrant, with Murdoch-Linwood Funeral Homes the end of February. Amy is a great resource and strongly encourages planning ahead, including preplanning for burial and funerals. One of the documents Amy specifically highlights is the Declaration for Designee for Final Disposition. This document allows you to decide who can authorize your cremation and burial after your death.



Many do not realize that Powers of Attorneys end at death and your representative no longer has the authority to act on your behalf. With the Declaration of Designee, your wishes in the preparation of your body and who is assigned to carry out those wishes are guaranteed. Without

this document, your legal next of kin is responsible (spouse, adult children, parent, adult grandchildren, adult siblings, grandparents, etc.).

The [Designee for Final Disposition form](#) can be found on the Iowa Bar Association site. The Center also can send a copy to you. The document needs to be notarized or have two unrelated witnesses sign. Before assigning a designee, we recommend a conversation with the individual(s) to make sure they know your wishes and are willing and able to follow them through.

### Comprehensive Planning Guide

We also discuss the importance of this document, along with other important documents as part of planning for the future is stressed during the Comprehensive Planning Guide Series. The next four week series is scheduled to start April 22, see the calendar for specific details. This course comes complete with a guide that takes caregivers through the important information, documents and conversations you should have as you plan for the future. I encourage all to attend, if you haven’t already! If you aren’t able to attend this spring, we will offer another series in the fall. Guides are available at either Center location and if desired, volunteer facilitators are available to walk you individually through the guide.

## Volunteer Photos

Below are a few photos of Center volunteers serving in a variety of roles throughout the last eight years the Center has been open. Thank you volunteers for all the wonderful work you do!



Stuffing and folding the monthly mailing



Organizing books in the resource library



Singing in the Together in Song Chorus



Sharing about the Center at Caregiver Wellness Day



Tracking and entering caregiver data into the Center's database



Participating in a committee



Facilitating a caregiver support group

## Volunteer Roles

Volunteers at the Family Caregivers Center hold a variety of roles. These volunteer roles are vital to the day-to-day functioning of the Center and ongoing support of family caregivers.

- Group facilitators (caregiver coffee groups, Innovation Series, book studies, etc.)
- Greeters at front desk to welcome visitors and answer questions
- Mercy Touch- make caregiver calls to provide ongoing support
- Companion respite- provides respite during groups and events at Center locations
- Together in Song Chorus—directs, accompanies, sings, provides companionship and support to singers living with chronic conditions
- Clerical support— compiles documents, binders and other materials
- Mailing support— folds and stuffs envelopes to distribute the monthly *Centered News* and *Centered Events* calendar
- Data entry— tracks and enters caregiver information in the Center's database
- Baker—bakes homemade cookies and treats to serve at Center events
- Librarian~ processes books checked out and returned to the Center library
- Content Writer—researches resources, reviews books and writes short summaries to include in the *Centered News*
- Sympathy support—sends sympathy cards to caregivers whose loved one has passed
- Photographer—takes photos and/or videos at Center events
- Committee members- Kitchen Cabinet, Advisory Group, etc.
- Community outreach- shares about the Center
- And many more!

## One-on-One Meetings

Individual meetings with a staff member are available for caregivers interested in discussing their situation. During a one-on-one, we help caregivers by providing reassurance, guidance, education, and connection to community and

Center resources. To request a one-on-one meeting, please call the Center at (319) 221-8866 or email [fccg@mercyare.org](mailto:fccg@mercyare.org).

## About the Center

The Family Caregivers Center of Mercy is a resource for family caregivers who are caring for adults living with chronic conditions, such as dementia, Parkinson's, cancer, diabetes, heart and lung diseases, arthritis, COPD, etc.

Caregivers may often feel alone, overwhelmed and are not sure where to find help. Sometimes it is difficult to even know what help is needed. Through individual meetings, trained volunteers and staff members listen to caregivers to help them identify needs, strengths, answer questions and connect to community resources. Support groups, multi-week discussion groups, and educational sessions help caregivers connect to others in similar circumstances with access to trusted resources in two welcoming and supportive environments.

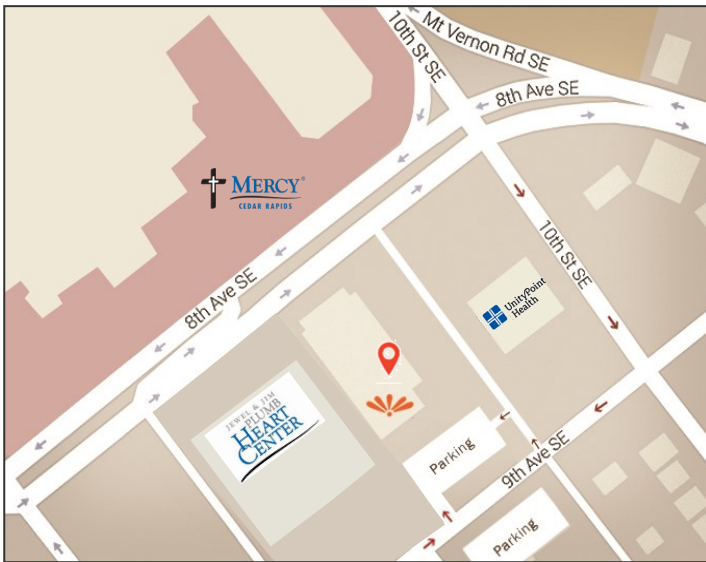
## The Center Provides

- One-on-one meetings to discuss your caregiving situation
- Men's, Women's and Wednesday Afternoon Coffee Groups
- Multi-week supportive learning and discussion groups
- Multi-week series for caregivers whose loved one has died
- Educational events
- Question & Answer sessions (i.e. Veteran's benefits and Medicaid)
- Together in Song Chorus
- Master Gardener events
- Up-to-date resource lists and connection to trusted community resources
- Book-lending library

### Family Caregivers Center at the...

#### Downtown- 901 Building

901 8th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401



**Directions:** Take 8th Avenue and turn onto 7th Street. Travel one block south, then turn left onto 9th Avenue. Travel 1<sup>1/2</sup> blocks east and turn into the parking lot.

**Parking:** Parking is available in the in the back of the building, where the Family Caregivers Center's entrance can be found.

### Family Caregivers Center at the...

#### DeWolf Innovation Center

9000 C Ave NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402



**Directions:** Take C Ave NE, heading North, go past St. Mark's Lutheran Church, to Hallmar Village Senior Living Community and the Innovation Center entrance. Turn right into the drive and proceed to the main parking lot directly in front of the Chris & Suzy DeWolf Family Innovation Center for Aging and Dementia.

Enter the building and check in at the Family Caregivers Center information desk on your left.

## Contact Us

(319) 221-8866 | [fcc@mercy.org](mailto:fcc@mercy.org) | [familycaregiverscenter.org](http://familycaregiverscenter.org)