



Centered News

August 2024

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.

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!

Welcoming Change: New Newsletter Format

The Family Caregivers Center has diligently published a monthly newsletter since opening its doors in December 2015. The format of the *Centered News* newsletter and *Centered Events* calendar has evolved over time as additional groups and events have been added; trusted resources have been highlighted; and caregiver stories have been shared. Our newsletter and calendar are vital to keep readers, often family caregivers, up-to-date with what is occurring at the Family Caregivers Center and resources available. We have close to 2,000 individuals and businesses receiving the newsletter monthly via postal mail and 1,500 individuals who receive it via email. We have come a long way since 2015 and are so grateful to our readers for their support!



Starting in September 2024, our format will be changing. This time, the change involves more than a new look. The *Centered News* and *Centered Events* will now encompass news and events of all components of The Chris & Suzy DeWolf Family Innovation Center for Aging & Dementia. The Family Caregivers Center, as one component of the DeWolf Innovation Center, will continue to have a strong presence in the newsletter, and Family Caregivers Center events will continue to be included in the calendar, along with other events at the Innovation Center. The new combined format will allow readers to learn more about

the other components of the DeWolf Innovation Center and additional resources that might be of interest.

We ask for your patience as we make this transition exploring and highlighting new content, as well as continuing to share resources for family caregivers. We hope you continue to find the *Centered News* and *Centered Events* to be an informative and helpful resources, as well as vital sources of information about what is occurring at the DeWolf Innovation Center. If you have any questions, concerns or feedback, we would be happy to hear from you. Please call the Family Caregivers Center at (319) 221-8866 or email fccg@mercyare.org.

– Abby Weirather, Family Caregivers Center Manager



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 | fccg@mercyare.org | familycaregiverscenter.org



DeWolf Innovation Center News

Parking Lot Party

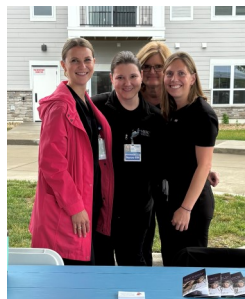
On June 20, 2024, the DeWolf Innovation Center hosted a Parking Lot Party. The Parking Lot Party was an opportunity for community members to learn about dementia by interacting with people living with dementia and their care partners, as well as visiting more than 20 tables with information, games and experiences. The party was also the launch of Dementia Friendly Linn County. Linn County became a member of the Dementia Friendly America Network in March 2024. Dementia Friendly Linn County's Action Team will soon launch plans to train individuals and organizations to become dementia friendly. June 20 was also the Alzheimer's Association's Longest Day, a day of recognition of the summer solstice and "clearing the darkness" of Alzheimer's by promoting participation in a variety of activities on the brightest day of the year.

Despite the storms prior to the event, it was a great day and a lot of fun! The University of Iowa's Steel Drums played. Residents from HallMar Village came to listen. Tables included representation from Dementia Friendly Iowa; DeWolf Innovation Center; Family Caregivers Center; Caregivers Center at Mercy; Connections Club; Connections at St. Paul's; Memory Café; Good Time Social; Conversations for Couples; Together in Song Chorus; Mercy Center for Memory Health; Alzheimer's Association; HallMar Village; Heritage Area Agency on Aging; Mercy Volunteer Services; Mercy Hospice and Palliative Care; CountryHouse; Home Instead; Right at Home; and Living Your Best Life "The Great Eight." Participants enjoyed visiting with representatives at the tables and stayed for food from Loosies and The Freeze! Overall, we received very positive feedback and visitors left knowing more than they initially knew about dementia.

Thank you to all those who helped to make the day a big success and to those who braved the weather to join us. If you didn't make it, we hope to hold similar events in the future and hope you will be able to join us then!



University of Iowa Steel Drum Band and audience



Mercy Center for Memory Health Staff



Together in Song Chorus table



Connections Club and Memory Café/Good Time Social/Conversations for Couples table

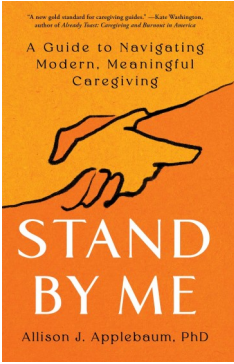


DeWolf Innovation Center and Family Caregivers Center table



Connections Club members participating in gentle yoga

Book Review



“Stand By Me” by Dr. Allison Applebaum

The title of this book, “Stand By Me,” comes from the author’s father, who was a renowned composer who wrote the arrangement of “Stand By Me” used in the movie. Dr. Allison Applebaum, a clinical psychologist, was focusing on her

doctorate on oncology patients and their caregivers when she realized the need for caregiver support and began the first Caregivers Clinic at Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She soon became not only its director, but also began her caregiving journey caring for her father.

Dr. Applebaum experienced firsthand caregiver distress; financial anxiety; her own physical and mental health changes; unmet needs; unpreparedness; invisibility; powerlessness; and uncertainly. It is with this background that she writes to shine a spotlight on the caregiver experience to make meaning, as well as advocate for support for caregivers from the healthcare community.

Her story begins with the overlooked importance of honoring the dignity of the life that has been lived, what makes the person unique and helping the healthcare team see a real person there. The patient often has a cloak of invisibility but is unable to be seen and heard. Dr. Applebaum helps to remove that cloak and see the patient as a real person with goals.

In addition to the importance of helping illuminate the life and goals of your loved one, Dr. Applebaum applies tools to empower and engage caregivers, including “homework” from each chapter with questions.

“Stand By Me” is guide for caregivers to help in understanding and using resources while also constantly advocating for the patient. The discussion in the book is thoughtful. Specifically, the section on finding meaning is full of insight on how to turn the caregiving experience into a way forward, instead of being mired in a myriad of problems and burn out.

Chapters include Embracing the Change, a Master-class on Meditation, Combatting Ageism, Care is Not One Size Fits All, The Caregiving House of Cards

(falling apart), Surfing the Waves of Grief, Finding Meaning in Caregiving, Stepping into the Spotlight, and Forever Changed by Caregiving. Her insights on problems, illustrated by real-life examples, lead to needed solutions.

This is a thoughtful book and differentiates itself from other guides with the emphasis on the need to tell the story of the patient, allowing the healthcare team to envision a complete person with goals and a lived life. This book would be especially useful to those beginning the caregiving journey, as well as to reread when needed through the journey. Her ongoing support for all caregivers makes this a useful resource.

This book is available in the Center’s library. A video condensation is also available through the Daughterhood website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_rY14Ua_bU

– Dot Hinman, Content Writer

Event Highlight

Monarch Research Station Visit



On June 19, the Family Caregivers Center visited the Monarch Research Station with the Linn County Master Gardeners. Monarch Research Station Manager, Augie

Bergstrom, gave an informative presentation about Monarch life cycles and how to protect and building Monarch habitats. Participants toured the grounds and gardens to see various types of milkweed, the lab and tents where Monarchs are reared. It was a great experience and we highly recommend you check out the Monarch Research Project to learn more!

The Monarch Research Project’s mission is to restore and rebuild green infrastructure supporting the monarch and other native animal life that comprise our ecosystem and community. For additional information or learn how you can get involved, [click here](#).

Age Beliefs



Kathy Good
DeWolf
Innovation
Center Senior
Director

On June 23, 2024, I made a presentation to the Insight Group at First Presbyterian Church in Cedar Rapids entitled, “New Concepts in Senior Living.”

I cited facts about aging and recommendations from a report for a national plan for aging that is being made to Congress.

I also shared some insights I gleaned from *Breaking the Age Code – How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long*

& How Well You Live by Becca Levy, an epidemiologist from Yale University.

Ageism is prejudice or discrimination based on age. Levy’s book is about ageism as it pertains to older adults. In the classes she teaches she has students write down five words that come to mind when they think about an old person. She finds that in analyzing the words or phrases that almost all have some that are negative. She explains that the stereotypes and prejudices we hold about older adults come from the beliefs we develop over time of how we expect older adults to behave based on their age. This process often happens unconsciously. She writes that “There actually are no single biological marker to identify when someone has reached old age, which means that age is a somewhat fluid social construct.” She also states that ageism is the most widespread and socially acceptable prejudice today.

Levy’s stereotype embodiment theory (SET) helps make understandable how culture-based age stereotypes “get under our skin.”

- Stereotype messages are internalized across the life span; they start when we are young; in our culture older adults are segregated thus drawing children to infer that this is due to differences between age groups rather than people in power marginalizing older people
- There is unconscious self-relevance of age stereotypes -if you misplace your keys at age 25 you don’t think a thing about it, but at age 75 you worry it is a sign of dementia even though the stereotype isn’t accurate. When something can’t be remembered it is blamed on old age

which in turn leads to stress which can produce poor memory performance.

- There are psychological, behavioral and, biological pathways beliefs follow: people can develop low self-esteem because of assimilating negative age beliefs; older people can take in negative beliefs about the inevitability of declining health leading to an earlier death.

Levy encourages readers to make conscious the negative beliefs, and prejudices held about aging.

I used to explain to my counseling clients that once thoughts are made conscious, one has choice but without conscious awareness we keep on thinking and doing what we have always thought and done. Levy explains the same thing.

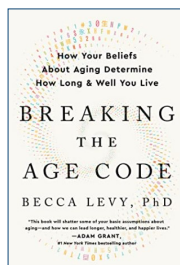
Research Levy cites validates that more positive views of aging can contribute to living 7 to 8 years longer and living better during those years. **Levy suggests using the ABC’s of Age Liberation:**

A: Increase awareness – take stock of age beliefs by checking for portrayals of older people that feel like negative stereotypes; be aware of how you speak to older people; be aware of calling older people by names usually reserved for children; attempt to pay attention to positive images of aging

B: Place the blame where it belongs – blame ageism not aging; reshare age beliefs to improve health by focusing on upstream factors (what we believe) not downstream factors like eating well, reducing stress, and exercising

C: Change negative age beliefs – confront ageism instead of ignoring it; call it out

Levy writes: **“The good news is that we are not born with a set of age beliefs and once we take them in are not set in stone.”** Only 25 percent of our health is due to genes.



Information for this article was sourced from *Breaking the Age Code—How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long & How Well You Live* by Becca Levy, highly recommended by Kathy Good.

Benefits of Yoga

Have you ever tried yoga? Yoga can sometimes look intimidating, but regardless of your experience, if practiced regularly, can have many benefits.



According to John Hopkins Medicine, yoga:

- Improves strength, balance and flexibility.
- Helps relieve back pain and ease arthritis.
- Benefits heart health.
- Provides relaxation and promotes better sleep.
- Increases energy and brightens mood.
- Helps manage stress and promotes self-care.
- Connects you with a supportive community.



Yoga can be practiced in a class or group setting or individually. If you are interested in trying yoga at home, there are many free videos online. Check out this seated yoga [video](#) shared by Daily Caring.

On Tuesday mornings in August, starting August 6, join the Family Caregivers Center for a four-week, gentle yoga series led by Diane Wiesenfeld, certified yoga instructor. For more information about this series, check out August's Centered Events calendar. We hope to see you there!

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 connections to community and Center resources. To request a one-on-one meeting, please call the Center at (319) 221-8866 or email fcgc@mercy.org.



"Volunteer Spotlights" highlight our wonderful volunteers who give of their time and talents. If you're interested in becoming a volunteer or want to learn more, please call the Center at (319) 221-8866 or email fcgc@mercy.org.

After two decades of raising three children, three decades of work as a hospitality educator at Kirkwood Community College, and one decade of hosting international students in my home, I was ready for retirement. But, after reading countless fiction books; binging on television shows and movies; and traveling internationally, I needed to focus on something else. My theme became, "RE-wired for RE-tirement" to try something new.



Mary Rhiner

I began with typical retirement activities of golf, swimming, biking and hanging out with friends. I loved the spontaneous lifestyle, meeting new people and trying new activities. Did I really go dog-sledding in Minnesota; fishing and canoeing in Canada; and whitewater rafting in Wisconsin? I just kept saying yes to the invitations.

A good friend kept pestering me to join Mercy's "Together in Song Chorus." I kept saying no. Then, I finally agreed. What fun for me to share in the joy of singing with others from different backgrounds. And, I found something I used to do in high school that does not hurt. That's encouraging.

After retirement, I also joined the Guild Writers, a special interest group of the Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids. Our fellow writers have collaborated in self-publishing four memoir books. My current project is writing stories about my father's World War II experiences as a corpsman in the navy. Eye-opening, indeed.

With a renewed interest to strengthen my Catholic faith by serving others, I will be sharing my skills by writing stories in the Center's monthly newsletter featuring volunteers and caregivers. Everyone has a story to tell.

There are many opportunities at the Center to personalize volunteer work to your skills, energy and time. Today, we invite you. No matter what stage you are at in your life journey, perhaps your new theme might be "RE-wired for a RE-warding Experience."

About the Center

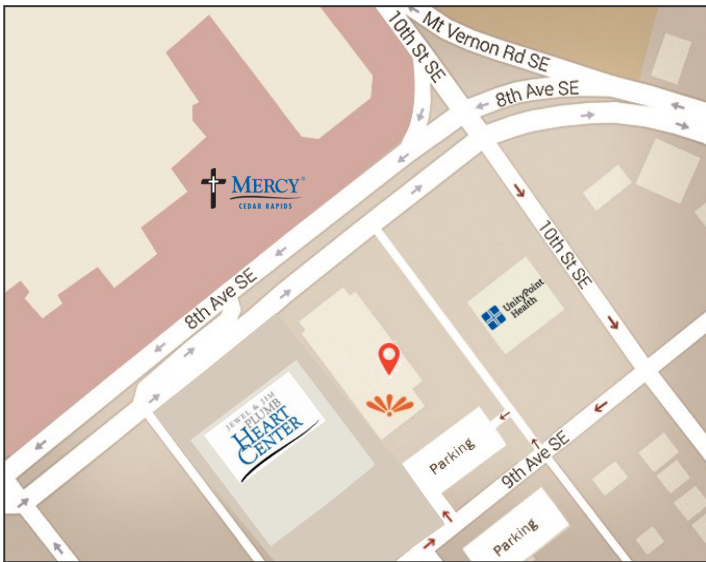
The Family Caregivers Center of Mercy is a resource for family caregivers who are caring for adults living with chronic conditions, such as dementia; Parkinson's; cancer; diabetes; heart and lung diseases; arthritis; COPD; etc.

Caregivers may often feel alone, overwhelmed and 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 and 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.

Family Caregivers Center at the...

Downtown - 901 Building

901 8th Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401



Directions: Take Eighth Avenue and turn onto Seventh Street. Travel one block south, then turn left onto Ninth Avenue. Travel 1.5 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 is located.

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...

DeWolf Innovation Center

9000 C Ave. NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402



Directions: Take C Avenue 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 & Dementia.

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

Contact Us

(319) 221-8866 | fgc@mercyare.org | familycaregiverscenter.org