



Centered News

Family Caregivers Center of Mercy • Mercy Center for Memory Health
Community Connections Program • Age and Dementia Friendly Smart Show Room
Caregivers Center of Mercy

September 2024



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Your investment propels the DeWolf Innovation Center and its programs forward. It's an opportunity to change the way we serve older adults, caregivers, and volunteers in our community and beyond. To give, please call Mercy's Foundation at (319) 398-6206. Thank you to all our wonderful donors!



Welcome to the DeWolf Innovation Center Centered News!

Beginning with this issue, *Centered News* will feature articles and information from all components housed within the Chris & Suzy DeWolf Family Innovation Center for Aging & Dementia.

The new design was created by deNovo Marketing who worked with staff to expand the monthly newsletter without losing the look and feel of the Family Caregivers Center *Centered News* which has been published monthly since late 2016.

The expanded *Centered News* reflects the growth of services regarding dementia and aging that began at Mercy with the opening of the Family Caregivers Center in 2015. When Mercy opened the Caregivers Center it was forward thinking in considering family caregivers as an integral piece of supporting individuals living with chronic conditions, particularly dementia and recognizing that family caregivers need support to sustain their pivotal role.



Fast forward to 2024 and there is now recognition by the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid of the important role of family caregivers and the need to support them. There is increased emphasis on the importance of early diagnosis especially related to dementia. There is an increased awareness of the growing population of older adults as the baby boomers turn 65 at the rate of 10,000 a day!

Continued on page 2

DeWolf Innovation Center News

Welcome to the DeWolf Innovation Center Centered News continued...

The original design of the Family Caregivers Center was based on “customer discovery” meaning that caregivers were asked what support they most needed. During the last nine years Mercy has continued to ask caregivers and older adults what matters to them and then design programs and services to meet their unmet needs. This process has led to among other things:

- Expanded resources for family caregivers - especially those supporting individuals living with dementia
- Redesign of the memory clinic, to become the Mercy Center for Memory Health
- Programs/Services for individuals living with earlier stage dementia that provide respite for their care partners/caregivers
- Information/products/assistive technology that allows for older adults and those living with chronic conditions to live better and to age-in-place



And all of these components have been brought together under one roof at the DeWolf Innovation Center. *Centered News* will now reflect this jewel of services available in one location.

-Kathy Good, DeWolf Innovation Center Senior Director

Mercy Center for Memory Health News

Welcoming Megan to the Mercy Center for Memory Health

Please join us in welcoming Megan Wullner who joined the Mercy Center for Memory Health in June 2024 as the Clinic Manager!



“I knew I wanted to work for Mercy from the time I toured Mercy’s birthplace in 2011. I was provided the “Mercy Touch” and had always thought about entering the health industry.

I started with Mercy in 2018 working at Hallmar while attending Kirkwood Community College for my CMA. After graduation in 2019, I worked at the MercyCare Blairs Ferry for Dr. Ahn and Dr. Quinn. My goals with Mercy have been to advance my career to a manager role. In 2024, that

opportunity was presented at MercyCare Edgewood.

After starting at MercyCare Edgewood, a part-time manager role with the Mercy Center for Memory Health opened. I declined the offer at first, wanting to put all efforts into my role at Edgewood. I then sat down with two individuals that helped change the course of my decision. The first was Kindel Dillon, she went over the want for a new manager and what the job would entail. The second was Kathy Good. We toured the Innovation Center and she provided me background and goal of the center moving forward. Her passion for the cause and patient care made me excited and want to part of their future.

I have been married to my spouse Tony for 15 years. We have two girls, Sienna age 13 and Charlize age 10, as well as a dog Macs and cats Pretzel and Cisco. I love Disney and doing puzzles. I look forward to meeting you!”

Family Caregivers Center of Mercy News

A Story of Hope & Gratitude

The Family Caregivers Center has been supporting Linda Noll since Steve was diagnosed with Frontotemporal dementia in February 2022. In April 2024, Linda was diagnosed with brain cancer and has been receiving ongoing treatment since. Her prognosis ranges from several weeks to several months. Her goal is to celebrate her 70th birthday with Steve and her family in December of this year.



Since my initial contact with Linda, she has been actively involved at the Center. She is a participant in the Women's Caregiver Support Group. In the summer of 2022, she started participating in the Center's first

Innovation Series and has attend many others since. Connecting to other caregivers and building trusting relationships, she has felt less alone and become a more confident caregiver.

Through working with families like the Nolls, the Center became curious about the impact a support group for people living with dementia might have. Steve Noll is one of the initial participants of what began as a pilot group. He has found camaraderie, friendship, and laughter in attending "Living Your Best Life" which has become a weekly support group for people living with early to mid-stage dementia. Organically, the caregivers of the "Living Your Best Life" group formed their own support group and meet while their loved one attends the support group.

One of the biggest fears of caregivers is becoming ill or something happening so they cannot continue to be there for their loved one. Research shows that as many as 40 percent of caregivers – particularly those caring for a person living with dementia – will die before the person for whom they are caring. Linda may be one of these caregivers. Linda's desire is to tell others her story and share about the Family Caregivers Center as she feels incredibly grateful for the help and especially for the emotional support she and her family have received. [Here is a video](#) telling the Noll's story. Thank you, Linda, Steve, and family, for sharing your story!

- Mary Ann Grobstich, Family Caregivers Center
Education & Community Facilitator



Caregivers are Everywhere

I interact with multiple family caregivers daily in my role at the Family Caregivers Center. When I go out in the community, I sometimes forget that others do not have the same conversations and may not recognize the sheer number of those caring for a friend or family member. Per the CDC, in 2020 there were an estimated 53 million Americans, more than 1 in 5, caring for an adult.

I was a family wedding this summer and interacted with a few distant relatives I haven't seen in a while. I knew several of them were caregivers but didn't know of the others who shared they were also caring for parents, spouses, and siblings. The number of new caregivers within my own extended family amazed me. We talked and shared of the many stresses and joys of caregiving as well as support options.

You might feel isolated and alone at times but please know there are many out there like you. Their situation might not be exactly the same but it doesn't mean you won't find commonalities in your stories. If you haven't checked out a group through the Family Caregivers Center or another local support group in your area, I strongly encourage you to do so. We can do an awful lot on our own but often added support of people who understand can make a world of difference.

- Abby Weirather, Family
Caregivers Center Manager



Volunteer Spotlight

“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.

I was born & grew up in England, just outside London in the countryside. I attended both ballet & drama schools before becoming a State Registered Nurse. After that I had a variety of roles in retail (Executive Training at Harrods of Knightsbridge), administration (ran a 300 person Planning Department for a local council) and medical field as our two young sons grew up.



Elizabeth Buckeridge

In 1994, John’s company invited us to move to Iowa for 3 years. 30 years later - we’re still here! Now U.S. Citizens, we are retired and have four grandchildren. Volunteering restarted for me when John and I moved into HallMar Village late last year. I am interested in respite and help with the Connections Club.

My father, back in UK, lived with Vascular Dementia at the end of his life. For several years, I was able to fly back numerous times each year to help my physically disabled mother care for daddy at home. We were blessed for some time that they were able to receive a lot of support at home, enabling them to remain in their own home for as long as possible.

Having seen what did and didn’t work with daddy was an eye-opener to me and generated an interest in me to continue volunteering in this area. So far, I have really enjoyed the folks I have met through respite and have so much fun with our Connections Club group. It is powerful to see someone suddenly catch onto something new and we all spend a lot of time laughing and learning together. Equally, if someone isn’t having the best day, it’s encouraging to be able to distract them or calm them and get them past a difficult few moments. Everyone is so different - both care recipients and caregivers, we all find our strengths and purpose within our group.



“Take a Moment” Podcast

“Take a Moment” Caregiving Podcast is a podcast with reflections, tips and inspiration for family caregivers. Each episode is three to five minutes long and 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

Community Connections Program News



The Connections Program is a multi-faceted program for adults living with earlier stages of dementia. Connections Club started in April 2024. We meet each Thursday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Small Hall of the DeWolf Innovation

Center. This program gives the members living with chronic conditions, primarily dementia, a chance to connect with others and socialize. Their caregivers also get a break for a few hours. The program is volunteer-based where volunteers provide various stimulating activities following a theme.

As more and more hear about the Connections Club, we have started a wait list. We also are looking for volunteers. Please reach out to me by calling (319) 451-8088 if you are interested in volunteering or have someone in mind for the Club.



- Melissa McClure, Community Connections Facilitator

The Caregivers Center at Mercy News

Introducing: The Caregivers Center at Mercy

The Caregivers Center at Mercy is a dream that is coming to fruition. Currently it is under renovation and expected to open in the fall 2024. The Caregivers Center at Mercy will provide a dedicated space for resources, compassionate support and a healing environment for caregivers of those receiving services within the walls of Mercy



Medical Center. Whether that be a caregiver of a loved one hospitalized, a caregiver of a loved one receiving outpatient services within our main campus, or an employee of Mercy Medical Center that is needing more one-on-one assistance. We are committed to providing the tools, guidance, and support necessary to ensure exceptional care for all.

The Watt's Medical Library located within Mercy Medical Center will integrate a wonderful new space for caregivers and will include a private relaxation room; snacks and refreshments; access to computers, printers, wi-fi, and chargers; a library of medical, wellness, and caregiving resources; and community education sessions on advanced care planning, management of chronic conditions, and other relevant topics.



Our social worker, Erin Spooner has been with Mercy Medical Center for 10 years in a variety of roles. Her experience within the Outpatient Psychiatry, Continuum of Care, and Inpatient Rehabilitation departments has provided her with the experience to provide healthcare navigation; compassionate care and understanding

at our Caregivers Center at Mercy. Currently available now is a 1:1 Caregiver Advocate to answer questions, connect you with resources, and provide emotional support; assistance with navigating the healthcare system; caregiver wellness resources; café discounts; and continued support with our voluntary Stay in Touch program.

To contact Erin or for further information please call (319) 369-4749 or email espooner@mercyare.org.

The Caregivers Center at Mercy & the Family Caregivers Center of Mercy

Many of you are familiar with the Family Caregivers Center of Mercy and may be wondering what is the difference between the Family Caregivers Center of Mercy and the Caregivers Center at Mercy?

The Caregivers Center at Mercy will be an addition to the DeWolf Innovation Center adding support for caregivers while their loved one is hospitalized or receiving outpatient services at Mercy Medical Center. The Family Caregivers Center at Mercy will continue to assist family caregivers supporting adults living with chronic conditions in the community, regardless of where they receive their medical care.

Erin Spooner will meet with caregivers and offer support and education at Mercy Medical Center. The Family Caregivers Center staff and volunteers will continue to offer one-on-one meetings, supportive calls, and events at the DeWolf Innovation Center and the 901 8th Ave location.

If you have any questions, please contact the Family Caregivers Center at (319) 221-8866 or email fcgc@mercyare.org.

Updating Contact Information

Do you have a new phone number, email or address? If your contact information has changed and you're still interested in receiving information from the Center, please let us know by calling (319) 221-8866 or emailing fcgc@mercyare.org.

It's Time to Think Differently About Aging & Dementia

At The Chris & Suzy DeWolf Family Innovation Center for Aging & Dementia of Mercy, older adults and those living with chronic conditions are empowered to lead satisfying and fulfilling lives. Family caregivers receive support to make caregiving easier. And our volunteers – often older adults with lived experience – find meaning and purpose in helping others.

Our future-focused philosophy exists throughout the entire DeWolf Innovation Center. From our programs to the décor, each element of our environment is intentional. The plaques in our atrium and Cambridge Auditorium showcase these details for visitors. It's important that age and dementia-friendly insights continue to be a driving force behind our decisions.



The Chris & Suzy DeWolf Family Innovation Center for Aging & Dementia of Mercy

9000 C Ave NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

(319) 784-9200

Directions: Take C Avenue NE. Heading north, go past St. Mark's Lutheran Church to HallMar Village Senior Living Community and the DeWolf Innovation Center entrance. Turn right into the drive and proceed to the main parking lot directly in front of Innovation Center.

Family Caregivers Center of Mercy

Providing resources
and support to family
caregivers

(319) 221-8866
fcgc@mercyare.org

Mercy Center for Memory Health

Evaluating and
diagnosing memory
concerns

(319) 398-6435

Caregivers Center at Mercy

Providing resources
and support to
caregivers at Mercy
Medical Center

(319) 369-4749

