



Centered News

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

October 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!



Hello – Goodbye

Some years ago, I wrote an article for the *Centered News* entitled “Hello - Goodbye” which comes from a song by the Beatles. At the time, the Family Caregivers Center was exploring new opportunities and letting go of some of the old. It was challenging then and is challenging now as we are again faced with a difficult decision. After careful evaluation and in keeping with how our events/services have expanded and the ease of accessing multiple services in one location, it has been decided to make the transition on January 1, 2025, to one Family Caregivers Center location housed at the DeWolf Innovation Center.

Prior to the move to a second location at the DeWolf Innovation Center, we knew we were running out of space. Many times we would see caregivers continuing conversations in the parking lot after attending an event. There wasn't space to socialize well at the 901 Building.



Family Caregivers Center 901 Building

We worried about how creating a second location of the Family Caregivers Center at the DeWolf Innovation Center would work. For the last 13 months, as events and programs have been provided at the Innovation Center, it appears as though our worry was needless. Caregivers are coming to events at the Innovation Center. There is way more room to socialize before and after scheduled events. There is room for the individuals for whom caregivers care to come to the Innovation Center and be hosted by companions while their caregivers attend an event.

Continued on page 2

DeWolf Innovation Center News

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At the same time this transition has been taking place, the development of the Caregivers Center at Mercy has been occurring. It is planned that by November 1, 2024, caregivers may begin visiting and receiving support at that location within Mercy- in the Watts Library. In addition, the Family Caregivers Center has had a room at the Hall-Perrine Cancer Center where counseling was offered. This room will remain available for use by caregivers.



Kathy Good at her desk at the 901 Building

As I write this article, I am sitting in what has been my office at the 901 location of the Family Caregivers Center for almost 9 years. I love this office. I love the Family Caregivers Center. I loved working with others to design this space years ago. I loved how caregivers reacted so positively when they entered the Center not knowing what to expect. I love the memories I have from the last nine years of living in the Center and all that has occurred here. We are now saying “hello” and “goodbye” in another way.

Change is difficult. I know many people may have feelings and memories about this original Family Caregivers Center location. To celebrate all that this place has meant, we are holding an open house on Sunday, October 20th from 2 to 4 p.m. We all can come together and tell stories about the memories we will take with us and to show appreciation for all that this Center and this location has meant and provided.

- Kathy Good, DeWolf Innovation Center Senior Director

Mercy Center for Memory Health News

Are You Taking More Medications than Needed?

Frequently I review a patient’s medication and find possible medications that could be stopped. For many people taking more than three medications a day is common. But it is often challenging or inconveniencing for a person. Here is some information to consider as to whether a medication should be continued:

- It is important to identify why a medication is being taken and determine if it is doing its job. If you do not know why a medication is being taken, contact the prescribing provider to clarify. Seek to understand if the goals of the medication align with yours and if progress is being made.
- If a medication is difficult to take in the form prescribed, ask the provider for options to or suggestions of how to take it. In many cases, what is an optimal way to take a medication may interfere with taking it.
- Be aware of adverse effects of multiple medications. Reporting concerns of side effects from a new medication as soon as possible improves the ability to associate them with the new medication. Close communication with your pharmacist and prescribing provider will help.



Asking questions and providing information helps reduce unnecessary medications. Honest reporting of how medications are taken and struggles that happen are the best way for your doctors to limit or eliminate medications and reduce the challenges that exist in taking multiple medication.

-Christine Griffith, Rph, Mercy Center for Memory Health

Family Caregivers Center of Mercy News

Online Community Launching October 22!

Beginning October 22, 2024, caregivers caring for an adult with chronic conditions, including dementia, are invited to join the new Family Caregivers Center Online Community.

This online community is a virtual gathering place where caregivers can:

- Connect, interact, feel heard, understood, less isolated, and alone
- Hold discussions
- Ask questions of each other, share answers, and information
- Access a library of vetted and trusted resources



The online community is available 24/7. A major feature of the community is the opportunity to also be part of smaller groups representing each support group and education series offered through the Caregivers Center.

This project has been in development for several years due to the unique nature of the Family Caregivers Center. Helen Romanowsky, a Family Caregivers Center volunteer, has given huge number of hours, working with Kathy Good, the Senior Director of the DeWolf Innovation Center, to create the online community. Support has been provided by the Mercy Medical Center IT/IS Department and various staff members of Higher Logic who have worked with Helen to adapt their platform and process. We also appreciate all those who have tested the online community and given helpful feedback. We look forward to exploring this new resource with you and continue learning how we can best utilize it to provide trusted information and help you connect to others in similar circumstances.

See the flyer insert in this month's newsletter to learn more about the online community and how to access it.

Event Highlights

Good Time Social



In August, the Good Time Social, enjoyed a "day at the fair" complete with carnival games and snacks!

Flower Arranging



Flower arranging in August was informative, fun and enjoyed by all!

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 fccg@mercy.org.



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@mercycare.org.

I am married with three adult children and four grandchildren ages 1, 2, 3, and 4. I grew up in a small town in northern Iowa and moved to Cedar Rapids to attend Mt. Mercy University. I have been a registered nurse for 44 years, working in Pediatrics at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics and then as a school nurse.



Cindy Fagan

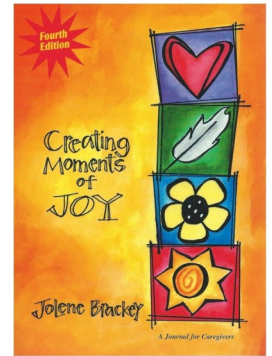
During my working years, I often had a "side gig", mostly related to gardening and flowers. I retired in 2020 to become a "Granny Nanny". I love to fill my time with gardening, flowers, dogs, reading, kayaking, birding, and sharing these things with my grandkids!

At the Family Caregivers Center, I volunteer with the Mercy Touch Program, the Together in Song Chorus, and bake cookies occasionally. I also am a member of the Linn County Master Gardener group that partners with the DeWolf Innovation Center presenting information and leading workshops for caregivers and their loved ones.

I decided to become involved with the Family Caregivers Center at the urging of a friend, and because I love to sing! The things I look forward to most are the chorus practices and concerts, and the Master Gardener workshops where we make bouquets, plant containers in the spring and fill porch pots in the fall. It is so fulfilling to see the delight in the caregivers and their loved ones as they participate in these events!

Author Jolene Brackey Visit to Cedar Rapids

Rob Cook and I attended a talk by Jolene Brackey, the author of *Creating Moments of Joy*, in Hiawatha this summer. She is an energetic speaker and did a great job engaging the crowd. She is currently involved in providing care to her mother and is not writing any new books. The Men’s Caregiver Coffee uses Backey’s book often in our meetings and find it to be a reference of great value!



I wrote down a few notable points in her presentation that I felt were worth sharing. [Note: this is not a list of the most significant points made in her book, which there are many. I do think this list is worth thinking about more deeply as you go about your caregiving.]

- Observe the loved one's emotions first. Task completion is secondary.
- Be an observer. Look for big changes and identify causes (like infection, constipation, pain, fatigue, etc.)
- If someone needs to be the “bad guy”, make it a third party, not the spouse or caregiver.
- What are ways your loved one can finding meaning and purpose by giving back to others?
- Your loved one might be a different age in their mind. Try meeting them where they are at.
- The caregiver is usually the one that holds the entire story. They are an important key to caring for someone living with dementia.
- Discover what brings your loved one joy and practice it often.
- Learn what calms your loved one down and try to incorporate more of that activity each day.
- Do one thing each day for yourself.

Creating Moments of Joy can be found in both Center libraries for you to check out and enjoy. I highly recommend you do!

- Tom Brennom, Center Volunteer & Caregiver

I Am Fine: A Spectrum of Emotions

Erin Spooner, MS, LBSW, CCM

It is important to acknowledge and process how you are feeling whether positive or negative to live a balanced emotional life. At times you may feel that you are unable to express these feelings without fear of judgement from others. However, not attending to these feelings can bottle them up and cause them to fester until they are dealt with.

When a loved one is hospitalized or receiving infusions and treatments, it can be a difficult time for the caregiver. In many cases, caregivers will put their emotions to the side to support their loved one, and present as the strong front in the difficult or challenging time they are facing. Emotions are on a spectrum, that can ebb and flow from happy, sad, angry, guilty, irritable, frustrated, anxious, scared, lonely, and joy. There are many coping strategies that can help with understanding these emotions, a few key ones are:



- Give yourself grace. Find constructive ways to express yourself, learn to step away when you need time to yourself.
- Create a list of things you are in control of, and those things that you are not. Truly understand what you can and cannot control.
- Allow yourself to feel both sets of feelings. Write down the things that are bothering you about care giving, and the things that you enjoy about care giving.
- Understand that a “should” is someone else’s expectation, turn that phrase into a “could”, which represents your own expectations and desires.
- Find a place in your heart for gratitude.
- Accept help in whatever form that may come in for your situation.
- Enjoy hugs, humor, and hygge (coziness).

It is the hope of the Caregivers Center at Mercy to provide the needed one-on-one conversation to help caregivers process this spectrum of emotions and feel supported and heard without fear of judgement. For more information on the Caregiver Center at Mercy or to inquire about volunteer opportunities, please contact Erin Spooner at (319) 369-4749.

Information for this article was sourced from The Emotional Side of Caregiving. Schempp, Donna LCSW. Family Caregiver Alliance.

Cedar Rapids Metro Parkinson’s Association News

Parkinson’s Foundation Award Grant Received

In August 2024, Cedar Rapids Metro Parkinson’s Association was awarded \$15,000 from the National Parkinson’s Foundation in recognition of its programs for and outreach to individuals living with Parkinson’s and their care partners. The national Parkinson’s Foundation has given over \$1 million in community grants to Parkinson’s Disease programs across the U.S. this year. The Foundation invests in community programs that make an impact in local communities and help people living with Parkinson’s Disease by providing support for health, wellness, and education needs.

Congratulations to the Cedar Rapids Metro Parkinson’s Association for this recognition of the wonderful support they provide!

The Cedar Rapids Metro Parkinson’s Association is a partner of the DeWolf Innovation Center with events and programming held at both the DeWolf Innovation Center and Family Caregivers Center’s downtown location. For more information on the CR Metro Parkinson’s Association and its offerings [click here](#).

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 Faith Life 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

