At My PACE

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In 2014, President Barack Obama proclaimed November as National Family Caregivers Month. He said caregivers support the independence of their family members and enable them to more fully participate in their communities. President Obama encouraged all Americans to pay tribute to those who provide for the health and well-being of their family members, friends, and neighbors.

PACE knows that being a caregiver can be hard. Day-to-day care and changes in medical needs and physical abilities can be stressful. Decreased support from other family members or friends and decisions about care can be difficult. We applaud you for all that you do to provide care for your loved one. I’d like to share 3 tips from HelpGuide.org website.

**Tip 1: Accept your feelings**

As you already know, caregiving can spark emotions, including anger, fear, resentment, guilt, helplessness and grief. Recognize and accept what you’re feeling, both good and bad. These feelings don’t mean that you don’t love your family member—they simply mean you’re human. Speak with a PACE social worker, connect with a support group or talk with other family members who will listen without judgement.

**Tip 2: Don’t try to do it all**

It is not always easy to ask for help, but as a family caregiver, I am sure you need it. Before asking for help, have a clear understanding of your family member’s needs. Many times, friends and other family want to help but don’t know how. HelpGuide.org suggests that you list all of the required caregiving tasks and decide which ones you can do (based on your abilities and time). Which tasks could be handled by someone else? Set aside one-on-one time to talk to the person about those tasks. Discuss the list of needs and point out any areas in which the person could possibly help. Having someone who could be responsible for outside chores, grocery shopping or sitting with your loved one once a week or a few times a month (while you run errands) could make a huge difference.
Notes from Ellen

Ellen Smith, BS, RN
Staff Development Coordinator

Change, Change, Change

I looked at all the articles I have written for this space over the years. I have covered one topic more than any other: change. That only seems right. After all, we are all changing and have been from the day we were born. PACE has certainly changed over the years. And, as my mama always said, “the only thing that is constant is change.”

The change I write about today is one about me that Ursula mentioned in her article last month. I am changing jobs at PACE. The new Center Manager is Joe Stanley. Many of you have met him at the Adult Day Health Center. And if you haven’t met him yet, I hope you will soon. I know that his training, skills and experience (even as a PACE Center Manager in Boston) make him the right person for this job.

My next job is as the first PACE Staff Development Coordinator. This will allow me to use my creative side, train staff and continue to work at PACE, now part-time. Although I will not be working directly with participants anymore, I will still be around to see you at the Center. That feels good to me. As many of us know, too much change, even good change, can be hard to handle.

Tip 3: Attend to your own needs

Your emotional well-being is most important. Take time to relax and relieve stress. Take a short walk outside or exercise in other ways. Consider keeping a journal to write down your thoughts and feelings. Talk with someone who cares about you. Feed your spirit: meditate, pray or do something else that connects you with something greater. Don’t become isolated. Visit regularly with others when you can. Do things you enjoy. Get enough sleep and keep up with your own health care needs.

PACE staff including our social workers, medical care staff, therapists and others are here to connect you with support, services and training to assist you with your caregiving responsibilities.

In recognition of National Family Caregivers Month, PACE is sponsoring a Family Caregiver Skills Boot Camp, Thursday, November 19, 2015, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at the PACE Center. A PACE nurse and occupational therapist will demonstrate transfers and teach other important safe caregiving techniques. Supervision for PACE participants will be provided on site at PACE for families attending the Family Caregiver Skills Boot Camp. We will also provide refreshments. Please respond by November 18th to (336) 550-4040 to ensure your seat and materials. If you are calling after hours or on the weekend, leave a voice mail on the answering machine.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Ursula
My name is J.J. Rosati and I am originally from Long Island, NY. I came to Greensboro after hurricane Wilma destroyed my property in 2005. I decided to come to PACE so I could have something to do with my free time while receiving medical care. When I joined PACE, I was depressed and not able to walk at all on my own. I was living with my mother and wasn’t getting the medical care that I needed. Despite these obstacles, PACE helped me understand that I can be independent.

Now, I am living in my own apartment. I am walking with a walker instead of using the wheelchair all of the time. I recommend PACE to others for the medical care, physical therapy and personal attention they provide, all under one roof. One of my favorite things about being part of PACE is being able to exercise. I also enjoy getting out of the house to socialize with the other participants. PACE has been very influential to me and helps me feel more confident.

One day I hope to walk independently without the assistance of a walker. Now I have the confidence and strength to do most things on my own. I used to be stressed but because of PACE all my needs are covered and I don’t have to worry anymore.

We salute our Veterans. Thank you for your service.

Important Notice:

Medicare Open Enrollment is October 15 – December 7, 2015. DO NOT CHANGE your Medicare or your Medicare Part D plan or you will lose PACE! Disregard telephone calls from other insurance plans suggesting changes to your Part D plan or Medicare. If you any have questions, speak with Rena Wright, Business Office Coordinator, Ursula Robinson, Executive Director or your social worker.
Low Income Energy Assistance Program

Do you realize that you may be eligible for a one-time payment to help with your heating bill? The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally-funded program that can help. The program is available to households with a person age 60 and above or with a disabled person receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS). Benefits are available December 1st through December 31st or until all of the funds are distributed.

To apply, you must meet the basic income requirements, have savings of less than $2,250 and have a heating bill that you pay (for example: Duke Energy, Piedmont Natural Gas, Berico Fuel, etc.). Do not wait until January or February to apply for help since the funds may be gone by that time.

In addition to the LIEAP program, there may also be assistance available through DAAS Crisis Intervention Program. For more information, contact your PACE social worker. It is important to make the call now if you are eligible.

Mark Your Calendars!

The PACE choir will perform Thursday, December 10, 2015 at 1:00 pm at the Four Seasons mall in Greensboro. Share this information with family and friends. The performance will be held on the atrium stage at the center of the mall. Join us as we support this special public performance of the choir.

Call PACE at (336) 550-4040 to cancel PACE Center attendance as soon as you know you are not attending. Leave a message after hours and weekends on the message line and remember to include the reason (personal, out-of-town, not feeling well, etc.).
Caregiver Connections Expo, Friday, November 13, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. The free event, sponsored by Adult Center for Enrichment and Senior Resources, includes a presentation from Bobbi Matchar MSW, MPH with the Duke Family Support Program other expert panelists to address questions on insurance, legal aid and other resources. Lunch will be provided. Register by November 6, 2015 either online at www.ACEcare.org, via email: jkolada@well-spring.org or call: (336) 274-3559.

Family Caregiver Skills Boot Camp, Thursday, November 19, 2015, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at the PACE Center. A PACE nurse and occupational therapist will demonstrate transfers and teach other important safe caregiving techniques. Supervision for PACE participants will be provided on site at PACE. Refreshments will be provided. Register by November 18th to (336) 550-4040 to ensure your seat and materials. If you are calling after hours or on the weekend please leave a voice mail on the answering machine. This training is for family caregivers, not professionals.

Do you know the signs of a stroke? Use the letters F A S T....

F  Face drooping  Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the smile uneven?

A  Arm weakness  Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S  Speech difficulty  Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence like, “The sky is blue.” Is the sentence repeated correctly?

T  Time to call 9-1-1  If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and get the person to medical attention. Keep track of the time you first noticed symptoms so you can share with the medical team. Remember to call PACE so we are aware of his or her condition and can provide support and/or assistance.

It is possible for symptoms to appear slowly, so be aware of subtle changes. Call PACE and ask to speak with a nurse if you have any questions. Information provided courtesy of StrokeAssociation.org.