



The Family Caregiver

Summer, 2014

Aging & Disability Resources

LETTERS FROM MOM TAUGHT HER LIFE LESSONS 2014 Challenges in Caregiving Conference

Elaine Sanchez grew up on a farm. Her life revolved around the daily chores and changes of seasons that are typical of a life that revolves around livestock and crops. It was all good until her father Quinten, suffered a stroke and developed dementia. Her mother became an instant caregiver.

Years later the letters Madelyn wrote – a kind of exercise in personal therapy to keep her own mental balance – were read by her daughter and a whole new world was revealed.

Using those letters from her mother Madelyn, Sanchez shared the wit and wisdom of her mother as she travelled the challenging road of caring for her husband. “Life was certainly not what they wanted,” said Sanchez, “but it was what it was and they lived it as best they could.”

Donning her mother’s apron, Sanchez told those stories of trying to maintain emotional balance while her husband continued to decline physically and mentally. The man who had been meticulous in his personal care was no more. There were times when she had to fight thoughts of revulsion.

Sanchez recounted how her mother developed an attitude of creative indifference – not allowing herself to become emotionally ravaged by events and the progression of the disease. Her three steps were simple:

1. Become aware of the issues that cause stress
2. Accept the difficulties and complexities of the situation
3. Change the things she could change and release the things over which she had no power, influence or control.

All of the lessons that Madelyn learned were written down and stuffed in a box. The box was discovered by her daughter years after her passing and the lessons about life that were learned were passed on from one generation to another . . . and now to us. They are recorded in Sanchez’s book, “Letters from Madelyn, Chronicles of a Caregiver”.

Memories were the saving tools that Madelyn embraced in the difficult times – memories of the laughter that held their marriage together.

Save the date for next year!
2015 Challenges in Caregiving Conference
Monday, June 1, 2015

DEALING WITH THE NEED TO GIVE UP THE KEYS, STOP DRIVING

There comes a time when some families have to deal with the fact that someone should no longer drive.

Vision problems, memory problems, slowing reaction times, poor distance judgments and difficulty with directions are all indicators. How can a family “take away the keys?” What can be done when people resist the need?

Pierce County Aging & Disability Resources will host an open conversation dealing with several key questions. Free. No RSVP required.

- What are the signs that a person should no longer drive?
- What does the law say?
- How can conversations happen?
- How can families “take away the keys” from reluctant drivers?

July 16

- 12:10 – 12:50 p.m.
County City Building Rainier Conference Room
930 Tacoma Ave S., 7th Floor in Tacoma
- 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Sound View Building
3602 Pacific Ave., Tacoma

June 21

- 12:10 – 12:50 p.m.
Pierce County Annex Main Meeting Room, 2401 S. 35th Street in Tacoma
- 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Sumner Library
1116 Fryer Ave., Sumner

Scenes from 2014 Challenges in Caregiving



Mark Your Calendars

June 13-14 – Relay for Life
Relay For Life is a 24-hour event held to honor those who have lost the battle, for survivors and caregivers currently fighting this disease, and for future generations - a world free of cancer. Held at Mt. Tahoma High School with a great health fair starting at 4 p.m. Contact survivors@tacomarelay.org or call 253-503-2396 (work).

June 19 – Aging Smart Educational Workshops
This free workshop takes on two topics. "Dementia and Alzheimer's Care" and "Geriatric Care Management" Held at Harbor Place at Cottesmore, 1016 29th St., NW in Gig Harbor. From 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Call (888) 377-1770 for details.

Sept 13 – Walk to End Alzheimer's
The South Sound Walk will be held at Thea's Park, 535 Dock Street in Tacoma at 8:00 am.

Sept 13 – Cancer Survivor Conference
Anyone who is dealing with or has dealt with cancer is welcome to this free, informative day-long event held at the University of Puget Sound. Event details will be at <http://pccancersurvivorship.org/> or call the ADRC:(253)798-4600.

Sept 25 – Alzheimer's Caregiver Conference
The annual Pierce County Alzheimer's Caregiver Conference. (Location TBA) Registration coming soon.

Oct 22 – Making the Link
An annual information fair to help health care and social service providers get acquainted with all the senior services in Pierce County. All are welcome. Held 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the STAR Center, 3873 S. 66th St in Tacoma. Free.

Want to know more about upcoming events? Call the ADRC for details at (253) 798-4600 or (800) 562-0332.