



# Caregiver News Winter 2018

*We are ready for 2018. Hope you are, too! Our new issue focuses on kinship care. As the Council's second largest program, we help families discover new ways to achieve a healthy balance of all their caregiving commitments.*

*For this issue, we thought you might enjoy reading an appreciation of her grandparents written by our case manager Heidi Baker.*

Nancy Oakes  
Family Caregiver Support Director



Not all of us get the experience of growing up with an older generation. I am proud to say I was lucky my grandparents raised me for most of my childhood. While there were many times we differed, a lot of who I have become, and who I am still to become, is attributable to them.

I could write an endless book on the lessons I've learned. It would **truly be unending because I'm still learning from them as I begin to raise my own family.** As I look back, I now understand the challenges they faced:

They had already raised their own family. Suddenly, they had to change their retirement plans. I'm

grateful they were willing to face this challenge and adjust their plans to be there for me.

**"Be there for me..."**as I think about this phrase, a couple of examples come to mind. One was the first day of third grade. My grandmother took me to school. It was a new one for me, with many new faces. I was overwhelmed and emotional. She stayed a little longer and helped me introduce myself. This was something she did often: Encourage me to interact with **others, and be confident. I didn't** learn this lesson quickly, but it proved valuable as I noticed success. I hope to nurture my daughter in the same way.

When I turned 15, I wanted to travel to Europe. My grandmother thought it was a great idea. However, both of them were raising me and my two siblings **it wasn't** possible to pay for the trip. But with their help, I got a job, opened a savings account, and learned how to save money. It was a meaningful moral.

During my senior year, my grandparents and I shared a lesson in patience as I tried to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. I was so excited about the opportunity to go to college and begin a new chapter, but with so many options, it was hard to make a decision. My grandfather took me

on college visits and made sure I asked all the right questions. He may have also embarrassed me a few times, but that was his style. Together my grandparents helped me understand the financial aid process. Then, on my first day, my grandfather drove me to my dorm and stayed until my **roommate arrived. I'm thankful** for their guidance as I took my first steps into adulthood.



*"There are not enough words in the world to express my gratitude for my grandparents' sacrifices. It wasn't always easy, but my appreciation is endless."*



## Caregiver Spotlight...

*Vermont has a proud heritage of families taking care of different generations under one roof. Grandparents, other relatives, and even long-time family friends step forward every year to help nurture children and young teens whose parents are unable or unwilling to raise them.*

*According to the 2000 Census, more than 2.4 million grandparents said they were responsible for meeting their grandchildren's needs. But while kinship care is not new, the challenges facing these families have changed dramatically, from increased substance abuse, incarceration, and domestic violence to chronic unemployment and illness.*

*To give encouragement to those providing kinship care, we're starting a monthly support group in our large meeting room in St. Johnsbury. It is a safe gathering place to share experiences, evaluate programs, discover community resources, and discuss guilt-free self-care. Sitter reimbursement is available. A light supper will be served. RSVP info is listed on the back page.*

*This is welcomed news to Linda Britt, 69, of West Burke, who is raising three granddaughters while caring for her husband, C.W., 70, who suffers from COPD. Both are retired from the state Department of Corrections.*

"We always have to ask for help," Linda explained. "For emergencies I use Facebook. By word of mouth I find other grandparents and we compare experiences."

After a pause, she added, "This isn't what we had planned for retirement."

Linda and C.W. have been married for 34 years. Their daughter's three daughters are the focus of the couple's energy as she seeks treatment for substance abuse. "Stability is what it's all about. You can't split up sisters. I love my sister dearly, and she's now looking after our mom who's 90."



But Linda, who is the West Burke Senior Meal Site president and Friends of the Cobleigh Library vice president, does admit there's a physical toll raising a new generation when you're older, especially when lifting a three-year-old in and out of the mandatory car seat. "It's hard to cope and balance everyone's needs."

Living full-time in a home her much older cousins regard as visiting when all the grandchildren get together is bittersweet, according to Jade, 14, a freshman at Lyndon Institute.

"We have curfew. We have punishments." On the other hand, Jade said, "We know they care about us." There are family trips to the Montshire Museum of Science in Norwich and to

New York to experience a Broadway show.

Even though many schools throughout the Northeast Kingdom continue to regard "mom and dad" as the norm, Linda believes schools with smaller enrollments are more familiar with each pupil's family story and are able to exercise some flexibility. According to Linda, Jade had graduated from eighth grade with four other girls who were living with their grandparents who had no guardianship rights. "All the teachers were understanding."

As to the new kinship care support group, Linda says she'd like to see alternating meeting times between days and evenings because of the grandchildren's after-school activities. She added, "I'd also like to learn how other grandparents are coping with the tug-of-war over guardianship.

**How do you figure it out?"**

Some Programs That Can Help:

- Vermont Kin as Parents [www.vermontkinasparents.org](http://www.vermontkinasparents.org)  
802-871-5104
- Benefits QuickLINK from the National Council on Aging & AARP: [www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)
- Guardianship assistance by state: [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org)
- NEK Council on Aging offers respite grants for childcare, summer camp, housecleaning, and purchase of special items:  
800-642-5119

## Eat Healthy. Live Strong.

Does your monthly mortgage or rent, plus utilities, cost more than your monthly income along with any cash you may have on hand or in the bank?

Did you know the Council on Aging can help you fill out the 3SquaresVT paperwork to find out if you qualify? If you or someone in your household is over 60, call us at:

800-642-5119.

We're here to help you find new directions for eating well!



### **YOU CAN DONATE**

**Make a secure gift via  
the link on our  
website.  
Thank you!**

## Tai Chi Ideal for Stressed Out Caregivers

Tai Chi is described as "moving meditation." Its slow, graceful movements **are accompanied by deep, circular breathing. It's known** to decrease stress and depression and increase stamina, energy and balance. You can do it standing up or sitting in a chair. What you learn in a series workshop you can practice on your own at home.

Known for its eight-movement exercise routine that lasts for 45 minutes, Golden Ball Tai starts at 8:30 a.m. on the following days and locations:

- Mondays & Thursdays at the St. Johnsbury House
- Tuesdays & Fridays at the First Congregational Church in Lyndonville.

The Council on Aging is also accepting participants for the following Tai Chi classes:

- Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. at the Dailey Memorial Library in Derby led by Maureen Profera
- Tuesdays at 1 p.m. at the Peacham Apartments; presented in partnership with SASH, led by Casey Doerner and Kim Russell
- Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. at the United Community Church, St. Johnsbury, led by Jenny Patoine
- Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. at the School Cafeteria in Concord led by Daniel Miller
- Wednesdays 10 a.m. at the Hardwick Senior Center led by Norma Spaulding
- Wednesdays 10:30 a.m. at the North Troy Senior Meal Site led by Doreen Lyon and Patty Beckwith
- Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. at the Peacham Library; presented in partnership with SASH, led by Casey Doerner and Kim Russell

Call RSVP Volunteer Coordinator Karen Budde to register: 802-751-0431 or send email to [info@NEKCouncil.org](mailto:info@NEKCouncil.org) and put "Tai Chi" in the subject line.

## Calendar of Winter Workshops

### **February**

#### **Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body**

An Alzheimer's Association Program

**Tuesday, Feb. 6, 6-8 pm  
Conference Room 126  
NVRH, St. Johnsbury**

### **February**

#### **Understanding and Responding to Dementia Related Behaviors**

An Alzheimer's Association Program

**Tuesday, February 13, 3-5 pm  
Meeting Room  
North Country Hospital, Newport**

### **March**

#### **Managing Stress**

For Family Caregivers

**Tuesday, March 20, 6-7:30 pm  
Conference Room 126  
NVRH, St. Johnsbury**

**\*Registration needed for all our caregiver workshops\***

**Call Nancy at 751-0435 or Pam at 751-0427**

**You can also e-mail: [info@nekcouncil.org](mailto:info@nekcouncil.org). Put "caregivers" in subject line. Thanks!**



**SAINT JOHNSBURY**

481 Summer St., Suite 101  
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819  
*Phone: 802-748-5182*

**NEWPORT**

Derby Time Square Shopping Plaza  
5452 US RT 5, Suite. A  
Newport, VT 05855  
*Phone: 802-334-2190*

**ISLAND POND and HARDWICK**

Northern Counties Health Care  
hosts us once a week at its offices  
in these two communities.

**Call ahead for an appointment:**

**800-642-5119**

Visit us at:

[www.NEKCouncil.org](http://www.NEKCouncil.org)

Follow our daily posts on:



*On-Going Groups for Caregivers*

**Alzheimer's Support**

**St. Johnsbury:**

NVRH Rm. 224

Last Monday of each month @ 6 PM

Call Pam: 751-0427 or

Call Nancy: 751-0435

**Newport:**

NCH Rm. 220

4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, @ 6:30 PM

Call Suzi: 673-9499

**24/7 Phone Support**

Alzheimer's Association Helpline:

**1-800-272-3900**

**Online Support:**

[www.alzconnected.org](http://www.alzconnected.org)

**Bereavement Support**

**St. Johnsbury:**

Caledonia Home Health and Hospice

3rd Monday – 6:00 to 7:30 PM

**Bereavement Support**

**Morrisville:**

Call Lamoille Home Health & Hospice

802-888-4651 for information

**Parkinson's Support  
St Johnsbury at NVRH:**

3rd Friday from 10:30 AM to noon

**Kinship Care**

**St. Johnsbury:**

Weds., Jan. 17 – 5:30 to 7:00 PM

Mon., Feb. 6 – same time

Mon., March 5 – same time

Call Nancy: 751-0435

**National Alliance on Mental Illness**

**NAMI Family Support**

**St. Johnsbury:**

NVRH Library

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday – 5:30 PM

**Connection Peer Recovery Support**

**St. Johnsbury:**

Every Thursday @ 6:30 PM

Universalist/Unitarian Church

802-876-7949

**Survivors of Suicide**

**Newport:**

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday – 5:30-7:30 PM

Nevermore Bookstore

100 East Main Street

Call: 802-744-6284