



ULSTER COUNTY NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Innovative New Caregiver Support Groups Forming In 2009

Anne Cardinale, Director of the Ulster County Office for the Aging announces a partnership project, "Caregiver Support Groups", with the Jewish Family Services of Ulster County.

In 2007 in the United States about 34 million family caregivers provided care at any given point in time and about 52 million provided care at some time during the year. The estimated economic value of their unpaid contributions was approximately \$375 billion, up from an estimated \$350 billion in 2006. In New York, the estimated value of care is \$25 billion up from \$24 billion. And given our aging population, we can expect that the numbers and value of care received from family caregivers will increasingly rise.

Research shows that family caregiving helps the older care receiver to avoid nursing home placement by at least 18 months. Not only does that save the state enormous amounts of money, but it allows a senior to age in place and often to avoid nursing home placement all together.

However, the stress, anxiety, emotional, physical and financial burdens experienced by caregivers is enormous. However, caregivers who participate in structured support groups are far more able to contend with the challenges that face them as well as better maintain their emotional and physical health.

JFS-UC and OFA announce exciting new programs that will launch early in 2009. For the first time in Ulster County, multi-session *Telephone Caregiver Groups* will be available to caregivers throughout the county. No longer will caregivers be precluded from participating in groups because they live in far reaches of the county or are unable to take time away to attend an

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in- person group. New technology allows groups of caregivers to participate in regularly scheduled, professionally led groups of up to 12 people in which they can freely interact with each other. The groups will include educational components, interactive problem solving opportunities, buddy-systems and a workbook for ongoing support. The Caregiver Support group that meets in Kingston will continue in 2009 and contain the same elements as the Telephone Support Program.

Caring for You, While You Care for Them is a 6 week program that will be held once a week for 1 hour and 15 minutes. The course content is based on the result of research on the characteristics and needs of caregivers. Rather than an informal, open-ended format, these sessions will provide topic based modules that include education, skill building, problem solving techniques, goal setting along with interaction and sharing.

Modules will include:

1. What it Means to be a Caregiver – Trends, elements of a caring relationship and elements of caregiving.
2. Taking Care of Yourself – Determining and improving self-care. Preventing caregiver burnout. Learning new coping skills
3. Building Cooperative relationships – Caregiving relationships involve a minimum of 3 people: Care Receiver, Family Caregiver, Professional Caregivers.
4. Preventing and Solving Problems – Using a 6-Step process for Problem Solving
5. Accessing and Developing Resources – Barriers to getting help, learning about available services, etc
6. Buddy System to create ongoing support

Interested caregivers must call JFS at 845-338-2980 to schedule for a brief information telephone session. Group size will be up to 12 people for the telephone groups and 14 for the face-to-face groups to be held in Kingston at the Business Resource Center on Development Court. Since these groups are similar to taking a class, after the second session no new people will be added to the groups. However, if people register after a group has begun they will be invited to participate in the once a month group until a new caregiver series group begins. A schedule of monthly topics and group start dates will be announced in early January.

In addition, JFS will hold once a month telephone topic-specific education groups on a specific topic that will be available with registration. Guest speakers will participate. Caregivers who are not members of *Caring for You* groups are welcome to participate. These groups will begin in February.

Each of these experiences is funded by New York State Office for the Aging and Ulster County Office for the Aging and there is no charge for participation.