

CONNECTING TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Program participants have told us that the services we offer make a difference.

Yet, we know that there are limits to what the Caregiver Support Program can provide.

How do caregivers find supportive services for unmet needs? Those who ably manage their journey find successful solutions in the community. Some describe this activity as being the “Art of Managing the Caregiving Experience.”

There are many incredible stories about the services your caregiver colleagues have discovered. Where did they find support and services that addressed their unmet needs? Some of the usual suspects include:

- **Government: Federal, State and Local.** (Some caregivers have found success with VA services.)
- **The local Aging services** (the Area Agency on Aging) with its network of service providers. Just look at what is offered through Senior Services of Snohomish County, just one of our contractors...
 - Aging & Disability Resource Network/Senior Information & Assistance Staff
 - Geriatric Depression Screening
 - Senior Peer Counseling
 - Older Adult Mental Health Access
 - Multicultural Senior Center and ethnic outreach (Chinese, Vietnamese, Hispanic, Filipino, Korean, and Russian/Ukrainian)
 - Senior Nutrition (Meals on Wheels & Congregate/Dining Program)
 - SHIBA Helpline (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors)
 - Minor Home Repair
 - Transportation
 - Senior Source Resource Guide (updated each May.) EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ONE OF THESE!
- **State and local non-profit organizations, and, local businesses too.**
- **The Medical network** – professionals, Hospitals, clinics, research Universities.

- **Local community “institutions”** – Faith Communities, Senior Centers, Social organizations and Clubs.
- **National disease-specific organizations** – with their websites, blogs and, sometimes, 24/7 phone lines.
- **National and local caregiver-focused organizations** – the number has skyrocketed.

“The Art of Managing the Caregiver Experience”

Some caregivers have learned to tap into the unconventional resources that are found in the community every day.

- Two caregivers provided care for their husbands, both with dementia. They met in group, liked each other, and decided to get together one day a week and do laundry (husbands and all.) Soon they realized that the laundry could be done by one, while the other took a break.
- A local organization offered free durable medical equipment.
- A local pharmacy delivered prescriptions (for a small fee) – the same was true for a local grocery store.
- A church ministry team delivered meals, provided minor home repair and friendly visits.
- Free ramps were constructed by a Builder’s association.

These are just a few examples.

How might you find opportunities like these and others?

Decide what you are looking for, and, talk to people. And the best people to talk to are other family caregivers.

Connecting caregivers to the community is an important outcome of the Peer to Peer Connections Groups.