

Pathways

SERVING FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS OF BRAIN IMPAIRED ADULTS AND THE FRAIL ELDERLY

7 Ways to Strengthen Family Bonds

When Moving an Aging Parent into Your Home



Nancy looked around the dinner table and smiled. Seeing her two young boys, husband, and mother all sitting together, chatting about their days, made her heart warm with gratitude. It had been a year since she'd invited her mom Paula to come live with them—a proposition that had initially caused some stress for her and her husband as they tried to figure out how to swing it financially, although Paula had enough savings to help pitch in, including a few renovations and extra safety features for the bathroom.

Having Paula in the home turned out to be great for everyone, after an initial settling-in period: she reveled in taking care of the kids when Nancy and her

husband enjoyed a date night, and loved whipping up home-cooked meals for the family to eat at the end of a long day. So, perhaps it's no surprise then that one in four caregivers in America lives with an aging relative they care for.

These days, it's often better to pool resources together than to pay for assisted living or a nursing home, with the added bonus of getting to spend more quality time together as a family. Many parents also prefer their children to see firsthand what it's like to care for an older adult, and to form a deeper connection with their grandparents. Still, the transition of moving an aging parent into your home can bring some challenges—and a certain amount of stress is normal during any big life change. Approaching the move from a place of openness and love can help your aging parent, and the rest of the household, to stay focused on the benefits and joy of living together once again.

7 Steps When Moving a Parent into Your Home

Inviting your aging loved one to live with you can be rewarding for the whole family. Taking these thoughtful steps to prepare ahead of time can help give an extra warm welcome to your aging parent, and ensure that everyone in the home feels respected throughout the transition.

Inside this issue:

Caregiver's Column	3
Cruise Around the World: 12th Annual Cookoff!	4
Del Oro Celebrates 30 Years	5
Mark Your Calendars: Big Day of Giving!	6
Alzheimer's Association Care Partner Education Forum	6
Thank You to our Generous Donors	7



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Pathways

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7 Ways . . . continued from page 1

1. Understand Your Loved One's Health Issues

It often happens that an aging parent moves in when they start to need long-term care, or after they've been diagnosed with an illness. Fully consider any illnesses your loved one is currently coping with, and what type of care they need because of it. Understanding their unique needs can help you and your family prepare and get a sense of how your schedules and lives will be impacted.

For example, they might suffer from arthritis and need help doing daily tasks like cooking a meal, which you can ask your children to pitch in on. Or perhaps they have dementia and require help remembering things, or they're recovering from a hip fracture and need plenty of rest. Familiarizing yourself with the type of care your loved one will need—both now and in years to come—can help prepare you and minimize any surprises.

On the other hand, if your aging parent is still in good health and relatively independent, this can also be an ideal time for them to move in: they'll have a wonderful opportunity to bond with your children and get to know your spouse better, as well as be able to offer support at home like babysitting, cooking, and contributing financially.

2. Set Realistic Expectations with Family Members

Speak with both immediate and extended family members about your loved one moving in so that everyone is on the same page. Be clear about your intentions, how the move might affect them, and be transparent about financial situations—especially whether or not your parent is contributing financially to your household. Keeping everyone in the loop can help to nip misunderstandings in the bud, and prevent unnecessary conflict.

Make sure immediate family members have an idea of the changes that might take place. For example, perhaps the kids will need to take on extra chores, help care for grandma or grandpa, or need to share a bedroom. Listen to any concerns they

may have, such as a lack of privacy or reduced time with you. This can help everyone to feel included in the decision and reduce anxieties so that the focus remains on the excitement of being able to share more time together as a family.

3. Consider Your Relationship With Your Parent

Be honest with yourself about how well you really get along with your aging parent. If you've always had a good relationship, chances are that living together will be a pretty smooth transition. But, if you've had issues with your parent in the past, it's really important to figure out how to overcome them. If it's not possible to work through your relationship problems, you might want to reconsider the impact of them moving in with you.

It's just as important that your other family members get along well with your parent. Otherwise, consider investing in a therapist or mediator to help mend fences between your spouse and parent, for instance. You can also try strategically delegating tasks, and planning schedules to avoid potential conflict between people. Most of all, everyone needs to commit to being respectful and bringing an open heart to the table.

4. Create Healthy Boundaries

Figure out what your loved one's needs are, and what level of caregiving you feel comfortable providing on a daily basis. While living together can make it easier to keep an eye on your aging parent—like making sure they're eating well and taking their medication—it can also create extra stress.

Some caregivers find it difficult to let go of being a caregiver and concentrate on themselves. A caregiver's list of tasks is limitless, so it's essential to create strong boundaries that protect your time for self-care. Good time management is also key: be honest with yourself about how much you can do for your loved one, and don't be afraid to reach out for help. And, even though you live with your aging parent, you may find that hiring an outside caregiver works best for everyone.

5. Prepare Your House

Creating a safe and comfortable space for your aging loved one can be as simple or as complex as you want to make it. Don't fret if you don't have financial resources available: there are easy tricks to make your home safer. Try rearranging the furniture to make it easier for your loved one to get from one place to another—placing chairs in hallways, for instance, gives them a spot to sit down if they get tired. If you want to go further, add a few grab bars around hallways and in the bathroom.

Also determine how much space your loved one and other family members will need to feel comfortable. If you're short on space, consider tweaks to living arrangements like having two children sleep in one room, or turning the study into a bedroom.

And, make sure there's a bathroom on the same floor as your loved one's bedroom and that it's properly equipped with safety features like grab bars and slip-resistant mats. The bathroom may need to be big enough to accommodate a walker or wheelchair, or have the potential to be expanded in the future. If your loved one has trouble walking, consider adding ramps to staircases, or putting their bedroom on the ground floor.

6. Figure out Finances

Many families these days are living in multigenerational homes—pooling resources often creates a higher quality of life for everyone. It's increasingly common for adults and their aging parents to buy a larger house together for the whole family to live in. Even if they don't help with the cost of the home, your loved one may be able to offer financial contribution in other ways, like paying for a renovation, babysitting the children, or buying groceries.

It's equally important to consider the amount that their care may cost. Depending on how much assistance they need, you might want to invest in a home-aid, reduce the number of

hours you work, or pay for medical costs. Create a budget beforehand to get a handle on how your family's finances could change once your parent moves in.

7. Be Open to Asking for Help

It can be helpful to expect the unexpected when your aging loved one moves in with you. Depending on how things go with their health, your lifestyle may stay the same, or become very different. And if your aging parent has a fall, or gets sick, time can slip away without warning. That's why it's so useful to arm yourself with support before you need it.

Reach out to friends and family to see who might be willing to step up when you need them. Having a list of trusted people you can ask for support helps reduce stress during tough times, whether in the case of an emergency, or simply when you need a break. It's also helpful to get some recommendations for home-aids in your area if it turns out you need extra assistance.

Moving an aging parent into your home can be rewarding for the whole family, a time filled with love and compassion. And the right preparations can do a lot to lighten your load during the transition. Being aware of individual family member's unique perspectives can help your family unite through empathy and understanding, while focusing on teamwork and being open to compromise can help you build even stronger family bonds.

Living together can create priceless opportunities for your family: young children get to know their grandparents better, your loved one can help out around the house, and will feel safe knowing they're cared for at all times. Like any type of change, it can at first bring some stress as everyone adapts to the new situation. But, with careful planning, caregivers can help create a supportive environment for everyone to grow together.

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The Shadow

by Linda Berry

The shadow in the corner,
it scares me.

The rabbit in the bedroom,
it scares me.

The falter in your voice as you
wonder what is real,
it scares me.

They call it the "non-motor
symptoms" of Parkinson's,
it scares me.

I've done this before, caring for
someone with dementia,
it scares me.

Wondering if your mind will go
before your body,
it scares me.

I was ready for wheelchairs and
hospital beds, not this. . .
this scares me.

Retreat

by Teresa Moraga

This still point between grief and
going forward;

Between yesterday's failures and
tomorrow's opportunities.

Just this 'now' where tears fall so
easily and often;

Where sadness, exhaustion, striving,
gild and resentment

Are distilled into tears, that fall on

This still point between grief and
going forward.

What is She Thinking

by Gloria C. Hernandez

I sit and I wonder,
what she sees.

I sit and I wonder,
about her disease.

I sit and wonder,
does she?

INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO CAREGIVER'S COLUMN

Please submit your contributions via email to crc@deloro.org. Please be sure to include your source(s), unless it is your own work. Additionally, please share how this information was beneficial to your caregiving journey.



12th Annual Cook-off and Fundraiser, benefiting Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center

Date: Thursday, June 15, 2017

Time: 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Divine Savior Catholic Church
9079 Greenback Lane
Orangevale, CA

Please join us for this festive event featuring a cook-off by local chefs, live entertainment, silent auction and raffle prizes!

To purchase tickets please visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/12th-annual-cruise-around-the-world-cook-off-and-fundraiser-tickets-29796615479> or call Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center at (916)728-9333

Name _____ Organization _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Number of Tickets _____ x \$35.00 = \$ _____ Package of 10 tickets for \$300.00 = \$ _____

Reserved table for 10 \$350.00= \$ _____

How would you like your tickets? Mailed to the address above Will call at the door

Make Check Payable to: Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center, 8421 Auburn Blvd., Suite 265, Citrus Heights, CA 95610.



Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center Celebrating 30 Years of Service

Thank YOU!

In April 1987, Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center was established as the fifth site among our 11 statewide Caregiver Resource Centers. It is with great pride that we celebrate our 30th year! This journey has been filled with momentous milestones that are only achieved with the support of our dedicated staff, Board Members, volunteers, donors and community; a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has touched Del Oro!

To celebrate this milestone, the California Caregiver Resource Centers held an exhibit titled, "The Many Faces of Caregiving" at the State Capitol Building in Sacramento. Outside the Governor's office, the exhibit highlighted the personal stories of family caregivers throughout the state who have each sought support and services from their local Caregiver Resource Centers. It is our hope that the testimonials helped legislators and other parties understand the often unrecognized contributions of family caregivers.

Looking Ahead

Caregiving, at one time a very private family concern, has become an increasingly important public issue. Over the course of our 30 year history, Del Oro, along with our statewide system of California Caregiver Resource Centers, have brought these issues to the forefront by acknowledging the needs of family caregivers, educating the public about long-term health disorders and their impact on families, and designing and delivering services tailored to the unique needs caregivers have identified. Our clients ignite an unwavering passion within us to advocate on their behalf, while maximizing all services available to them.

Currently, over 4.5 million Califor-

nians are providing unpaid care for a family member or friend. According to the University of California, Berkeley (2013), California's population of older adults is projected to expand by 44%, growing from approximately 4.8 million to nearly 6.9 million individuals. Moreover, the population age 85 and older—those who are most likely to need long-term care services and supports—is expected to expand its size by 24% by 2023. As our population ages, more Californians will need to rely upon family members for care as they age. Unfortunately, the demand for services has outpaced funding available due to a 72% cut in to the Caregiver Resource Centers in 2008-09.

In January, Senate Bill 177 was introduced by Senator Nguyen to appropriate \$3.3 million to reinstate much needed respite care services for unpaid family members. According to Nguyen, "SB 177 would help families by restoring respite care services at 11 CRCs throughout the state, giving critical, unpaid caregivers a temporary rest while ensuring that the person who is being cared for receives assistance in a safe environment." If this funding is approved, full restoration to baseline funding at 2007 levels will occur, a huge step forward.

How You Can Help

Please help us in this advocacy process by writing and/or calling your State legislators to support Senate Bill 177. To locate your legislators, please visit <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/> and type in your address. Please fax a copy of your letter to us at (916) 728-9333. For frequent updates, please visit us on Facebook or via our Twitter handle at @DelOroCaregiver.



Mark Your
Calendars!

**Big
Day of
Giving**

MAY. 4

*“We hope your heart is
with Del Oro Caregiver
Resource Center”*

Join the Sacramento region on Tuesday, May 4th for a celebration of philanthropy! Our community will come together for one Big Day of Giving, a 24-hour giving challenge that brings together the region’s non-profit community to help raise much needed unrestricted funds and shine a spotlight on the work nonprofits do

to make the region the place we call home.

We hope your heart is with Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center, serving family caregivers of brain-impaired adults and the frail elderly in our region. To give, simply visit www.bigdayofgiving.org/delorocares on May 4th.

SAVE THE DATE

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Alzheimer’s Association Care Partner Education Forum

**Thursday, April 27, 2017
9:30 am – 2 pm
Citrus Heights Community Center
6300 Fountain Square Drive
Citrus Heights, CA 95621**



Interested in Sponsorship and Exhibitor opportunities for the 2017 forum? Call or email our Program Coordinator, Denise Davis at denise.davis@alz.org or 800.272.3900

Come join us for this Care Partner Forum, designed to fit the needs of care partners and families caring for those with Mild Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer’s disease, and other forms of dementia. Learn more about the diseases, the latest updates on research, strategies in communication and tips on self-care.

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or visit our website at www.deloro.org**

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