

Pathways

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



The Climate Change Challenges for Family Caregivers

How turbulent weather and fires are adding stress to what are often already stressful responsibilities

GROWING UP IN NEW ORLEANS

in the '70s, for me, meant that during hurricane season there would be extended family sleepovers with pallets of blankets, sheets and pillows covering the floor. We'd congregate in our public housing project's brick apartment home and offer safe harbor in the storm.

Today, climate change means that many family members need to take on their own additional caregiving responsibilities to assist loved ones dealing with stronger winds, higher storm surges and record rainfalls. I speak from experience, as the founder of The Caregiver's Guardian, a Denver-based consulting service supporting and advocating for family caregivers.

For family caregivers, the decision to leave during intense weather is much harder than for others because of the difficulty of moving someone who may not be ambulatory and the weight of durable medical equipment that must be transported, along with medication and supplies.

When Hurricane Ida quickly began to gain strength along the Gulf Coast and was projected to be a Category 5 storm in 2021, The Caregiver's Guardian reached out to all our clients to find out what their plan of action was.

A Family Caregiving Story from Hurricane Ida

For some, it was a no brainer: they were leaving as quickly as possible. Others decided to wait it out, includ-

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Pathways

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Climate Change Challenges for Caregivers, continued from page 1

ing my 91-year-old father and his wife, who is his primary caregiver.

Let me share with you the Hurricane Ida story of Karen Hill, of Stone Mountain, Ga. At the time, she was a long-distance caregiver to her mother who has Alzheimer's and lived seven hours away in New Orleans. During the storm, Karen attempted to convince her brother in New Orleans to drive their mother to Georgia and stay until the storm subsided. When he refused, Karen got in her car and headed to The Big Easy.

After arriving, she packed up her mom, but failed to convince her brother to leave with them. Within 30 minutes, Karen and her mom were on the road to Stone Mountain. They arrived safe and sound, but Karen then had 24-hour sleep deprivation with a mother who was confused and disoriented.

For the next two weeks, as New Orleans experienced power outages, they would acclimate to life in a different environment and the challenges associated with living with, and caring for, a loved one with Alzheimer's.

These days, it appears that Karen's mom will be with her for some time to come.

"Being a long-distance caregiver is hard, but at least I had my brother's help and could receive some respite. Now, that's not possible," says Karen. "Hurricane Ida has certainly changed life as we know it. I believe that my mom may be best served staying here in Georgia with me."

California Fires and Family Caregivers

In California, climate change is presenting itself in a wholly different way. The rising temperature that is warming the ocean is also evaporating moisture from the ground, drying out the soil and making vegetation more flammable. The resulting dryness has been increasing the frequency of enormous wildfires in California that burn hotter and longer than in the past.

According to the California De-

partment of Forestry and Fire Protection, eight of the state's 10 largest fires on record and 12 of the top 20 have happened in the past five years, collectively destroying 40,000 homes, businesses and infrastructure.

Some in California are being challenged with family caregiving responsibilities and evacuation orders due to wildfires that threaten their homes and communities. These caregivers grapple with where to go, what to take and the unimaginable dilemma of knowing that there may be no home to come back to.

And just how do you evacuate with a wheelchair, hospital bed or bedside commode and oxygen tank?

Raya, a caregiver in Northern California (who prefers not to reveal her last name) has lived on the edge for the past two years. She

created a Plan of Care for Evacuation and a strategy for where she and her husband might go if need be. Raya keeps her bags packed and essential items and medications in a specific place, so if the call for evacuation comes, she and her husband will be ready to go.

The Caregivers' Guardian has created an evacuation checklist for family caregivers and making discussions about it is an essential part of our caregiver education and training.

Caregiving is a demanding, all-encompassing challenge. Add in the impacts of climate change and that raises the stakes exponentially.

Talk to the caregivers in your family to address the possibility of evacuation from storm or fire. And try to create or expand a neighborhood watch program for caregivers in the community. The need is great and urgent.

By Nadine Roberts Cornish, Certified Senior Adviser, gerontologist, author, speaker and founder of The Caregivers Guardian, LLC; originally published December 31, 2021. Reprinted with permission from Next Avenue, 2022: <https://www.nextavenue.org>

Family Caregiver Alliance's Emergency Preparedness Checklist

Floods, earthquakes, tornados, snowstorms . . . wherever you live, there likely exists the potential for a variety of natural disasters that can create an emergency situation. When you're caring for a loved one, it's times like these that you'll be thankful for having prepared for such a situation . . .

QUESTION	Yes	No	Comments
Do I know the most important disaster issues for the area where I live (earthquakes, floods,etc)?			
Do I know how I should respond to a disaster that might strike with little or no warning?			
Do I know the recommended evacuation route if there were an evacuation order?			
What are my transportation options?			
Where is the nearest shelter?			
Do I know where the shut off valves to my home are? Do I know how to shut them off? If special tools are needed, do I have them? Do I know where they are?			
Do I have an emergency contact person who lives out of the area? Do my relatives or close friends know who this person is?			
Do I know my neighbors in case we need to help each other in an emergency?			
If I'm receiving home health services, have I discussed emergency procedures with the provider?			
If I have special needs, do I have a plan for dealing with them in an emergency? (Mobility, medical equipment, incontinence supplies, others)			
If I live in a senior community, am I familiar with its emergency planning and procedures?			

Home Supplies Checklist:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking water (3-6 day supply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Manual can opener | <input type="checkbox"/> Backup prescription glasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food (3-6 day supply, requires no cooking, high energy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Light sticks | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra clothes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight (check batteries regularly) | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof matches | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain slicker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portable radio (check batteries regularly) | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications list | <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottles |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash | <input type="checkbox"/> Dust masks |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency medical form | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal hygiene items | |

Source: Family Caregiver Alliance. <https://www.caregiver.org/>

That Which Is You, That Which Is Me *by Simone Nazzal*

You are sleeping now,
floating in a morphine-
induced haze that numbs
but does not erase
pinpricks of pain
inside your bones,
inside your brain.

We spent the last hour
bathing: the slow trek to and from
the shower, a grim
processional.

You'll never have occasion or
opportunity to feel cool jets
against your skin again—just
sponge and terrycloth.
You realized this sitting on a
plastic lawn chair I
brought in from the backyard,
weeping, while I washed your hair.
I swallowed my own epiphany
in silence.

In the hospital bed, you look
small, a sliver of the statuesque
giant of my childhood, pushing me
higher and higher on the swing,
defying gravity.

The light from a dull lamp hits
your face; I observe drastic
changes in its dimensions, an
unnatural outcropping of skin and
sinew on your forehead. The purple
mass appears to push outward—
emerge from—your skull, as if
another face is gazing back.
This gives me pause.

I recall when you told me
you could feel the cancer
tingling inside your head,
like an anxious dinner guest,
arriving late, ringing the doorbell
before abruptly barging in.
I remember how you winced
when I asked if it hurt, and said, No,
not yet.

Muted and diffuse, dimming light
illuminates the outrageous beauty of
your own cells, far removed from
breasts where they were born,
giving birth to themselves,
again and again and again,
terraforming your lovely face,
a text I learned to read
over 25 years
of intimate study.

My breath hitches; I'm struck,
terrified by this cubist re-arrangement
of your high and sloping forehead,
landscape once marked by noble
aspirations of progress, a world
where poverty is not a life sentence,
where human dignity is guaranteed.
There is nothing dignified, I think,
about such shameless mutiny.

Then I realize, with suffocating
certainty that these cells
reaching beyond their outer limits,
deforming you—well, they are also
you. How, then, can I
despise that which is
you? How, then, can I
rail against the inexorable
desire to live—so characteristic of
you—the same force that once ushered me
into the world through rapid divisions
beneath your skin?

Like me,
like you,
it wants to live,
that which is you,
that which is me.

So, I do not cry.
I do not walk away.
I simply sink to my knees,
witness this metaphor
with unease and
tremendous fear
of God.

INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO CAREGIVER'S COLUMN

We invite you to submit original work (poetry and prose) to be featured in upcoming newsletters. Send submissions directly to crc@deloro.org or complete the form on our website www.deloro.org. If you reference or borrow from specific sources, please be sure to cite them properly. **Submit no later than Friday, August 12, 2021 to be considered for our Fall 2022 issue.**

Del Oro is Turning 35!

IN 1984, the Comprehensive Act for Family Caregivers of Brain-Impaired Adults became law, due in large part to the avid advocacy of unpaid family caregivers in the San Francisco Bay Area. This legislation established the California Caregiver Resource Center (CRC) system that today represents roughly 5.5 million people. Since 1987, Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center has served as the greater Sacramento region's local CRC, carrying out our mission to improve the well-being of family caregivers through various services designed to support the physical and mental health of those caring for another vulnerable adult. We are so excited to celebrate this significant milestone and look forward to another 35 years!



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Call In Service – Confidential telephone discussions for people 60+ who may be lonely, isolated, grieving, depressed, anxious and/or thinking about death or suicide, their caregivers and/or younger disabled adults.

For additional information or to schedule a presentation by Founder and Director Patrick Arbore, Ed.D, please contact Natalie Schroeder at 415.750.4137 or nschroeder@ioaging.org



Join Our Team!

DEL ORO IS HIRING! Join our tight-knit team of dedicated professionals who work together to improve the well-being of caregivers caring for an adult with cognitive and physical impairments within a thirteen-county service area.

Apply online TODAY at:

<https://www.deloro.org/available-postions>

Program Assistant II

The Program Assistant II will support the Del Oro team by providing excellent customer service to our vendors. Other job duties include answering a multi-line telephone system, conducting data entry, greeting visitors, collecting and distributing the mail, and providing general office support. This position is full-time (40 hours/week) and based in Citrus Heights. Salary will be based on experience.

Family Consultant (2 positions available)

The Family Consultant provides direct and indirect social services to family caregivers of physically and cognitively impaired adults through Intake, Assessment, Information & Referral, Family Consultation, Care Management, Counseling, Support Groups, and Education Classes. This position is full-time (40 hours/week) and based in Citrus Heights. Salary will be based on experience.

Friendly Volunteers Needed!

Do you love people? Do you love Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center? We are looking to fill several volunteer positions at Del Oro and we need YOU! Whether you can spare a few hours a week, or make a more significant time commitment, please consider becoming a Del Oro volunteer.

We can use your help in the following areas:

- Office Help
- Fundraising
- Speaking Engagements
- Advocacy

If you are interested, please contact Amber Henning, Director of Finance and Administrative Services, at ahenning@deloro.org or **(916) 728-9333**.

17TH ANNUAL COOK-OFF AND FUNDRAISER

Cruise Around the World

BENEFITTING FAMILY
CAREGIVERS IN OUR COMMUNITY



COMING SUMMER 2022

Ahoy, mateys! Our Cruise will feature a cook-off by local chefs, live entertainment, a silent auction and raffle prizes! This fun and festive annual fundraiser is an opportunity to support Del Oro's efforts to expand much needed programs and services for unpaid family caregivers in our region. And it's coming to a shore near you.

If you're interested in becoming a **Culinary Partner** or **Cruise Sponsor** or donating auction items, please continue to visit www.deloro.org/support for updated information.



05.05.22

#BDOG2022
BigDayofGiving.org

**Heart Is Our Region's
Hidden Gem**

Join the Sacramento region on Thursday, May 5th, 2022

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 nonprofit 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.

Visit us at <https://www.bigdayofgiving.org/delorocares> to donate!

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to our Generous Donors

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- Donate Stocks or Mutual Funds
- Donate online at **www.deloro.org**
- Designate Del Oro as your nonprofit at **www.smile.amazon.com**, Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to your charity of choice.



Your contributions help fund critical programs for family caregivers. Donations or memorial gifts of any size are most welcome.

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