November is National Family Caregivers Month

MY FAVORITE CAREGIVER TIPS
from National Family Caregivers Assoc.

- Make sure legal documents are in order.
- Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
- Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
- Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
- Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
- Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.
- Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
- Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
- Give yourself credit for doing the best that you can

LAUGH!

HOW DO I KNOW IF I QUALIFY TO BE CALLED A CAREGIVER?

Some people don’t connect with the caregiver label at all, preferring care partner or simply wife, husband, daughter, etc.

____ Do you provide any physical, emotional, financial or other types of assistance to a family member or friend who has a chronic health condition that requires ongoing care and attention?

____ Do you visit, bring meals, call to check on them?

____ Do you help with rides, checkbook, pills?

If you answer YES to even one question… consider yourself a hero

“A caregiver is a person who is doing something for someone else that contributes to their ability to remain living in the community.”
People spend decades trying to answer the question “who are you” before they eventually realize that it can’t be answered - who we are is always changing.

So we come up with a word to describe ourselves by pointing to the primary role we play at any given point in time. I’m a lawyer… I’m a mother. For people taking care of a loved one, this role is often caregiver. Because it can be an all-consuming role, it's easy for us to feel as if that's all we are. It's hard to envision an identity—a life—beyond caregiving.

But we are more than caregivers. We are still nature lovers, skilled knitters, doctors, parents and children. We need to recognize our feelings and our limits and listen to them, get help when we need it – and plan for the time when our role will change again. Do something fun today!

⇒ Approximately 43.5 million caregivers have provided unpaid care to an adult or child in the last 12 months.
⇒ The value of services provided by informal caregivers has steadily increased over the last decade, with an estimated economic value of $470 billion in 2013, up from $450 billion in 2009 and $375 billion in 2007.
⇒ At $470 billion in 2013, the value of unpaid caregiving exceeded the value of paid home care and total Medicaid spending in the same year.
⇒ The economic value of the care provided by unpaid caregivers of those with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias was $217.7 billion in 2014.

Help for caregivers is available in many different ways:

♥ 24 hour call in line - Alzheimer’s Association (always answered by a person) 800-272-3900
♥ Free telephone learning sessions. (register ahead by calling 866-390-6491) different subjects each time. http://caregiversos.org/caregiver-teleconnection/ Also starting a Caregiver Telephone Support Group that meets for 8 weeks at a time. Call 866-390-6491
♥ Veterans Caregiver Support Line 855-260-3274
♥ Online help from AARP: http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/
♥ Call the ADRC 920-386-3580

A caregiver recognizes both the challenges and the reward of supporting a loved one. We often talk about the stress of caregiving, but the closeness and commitment of caregiving can be deeply meaningful, too. “Yes of course there is sadness and struggle and change, but also a lot of joy,” actress Kimberly Paisley-Williams said about her mother’s dementia diagnosis.

AND A FAVORITE QUOTE:

In everything that must be done, there is an element of fun. -Mary Poppins