



November / December 2018  
*Caregiving is a mission of the heart*

## Caregiver Newsletter

Greetings Caregivers of SE Alaska,

November is National Family Caregiver Month! It is a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country. We will be featuring a caregiver education series every Tuesday in November at the KTOO building in Juneau from 3:30 to 5:00. We are always available to provide the following services year-round:

Information • Caregiver grants • Home visits • Assistance with Caregiver Training  
Individual phone support • Provide education on self-care • Group activities  
Referrals to other supportive agencies • Monthly call-in Peer Support Group

### **Experiencing Grief during the Holidays as a Caregiver**

The holiday season is upon us! For most individuals, this is a cheerful time of year and a time to bring family together to share meals and enjoy each other's company. However, for those who have experienced loss, the holiday season can be difficult.

It is natural to grieve when we lose something important to us, and it does not necessarily mean the loss of a loved one. As caregivers, we may grieve because the person we are taking care of has turned into a different person as a result of a progressive disease.

As Alzheimer's progresses, we may one day not be able to recognize the grandparent that we have been taking care of every day for years. As Parkinson's progresses, our in-law that used to play golf every day is no longer able to make it to the bathroom without our assistance. In a sense, we are losing the person we love as they are replaced with a stranger that relies on us for everything.

The Widowed Persons Program is here to support those that have experienced loss. Below is an interview with Sue Nielsen and Sandy DeLong who will speak on the grieving process and what resources are available in Juneau for those that are struggling or need support.



A Division of Catholic Community Service

# CAREGIVER EDUCATION SERIES

## WHEN

Every Tuesday in November  
From 3:30pm until 5:00pm

## WHERE

KTOO Building  
Conference Meeting Room

360 Egan Dr, Juneau, AK 99801

FEATURING • Amber Smith, Education Specialist, Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska | Holly Handler, Attorney, Alaska Legal Services | Eileen Hosey, Southeast Senior Services | Kelsey Wood with the Bridge Program

FAMILY  
CAREGIVERS  
ENCOURAGED  
TO ATTEND

NOVEMBER 6TH

AMBER SMITH

SUPPORTING AND  
COMMUNICATING WITH  
PEOPLE LIVING WITH  
DEMENTIA THROUGH-  
OUT THEIR JOURNEY

NOVEMBER 13TH

HOLLY HANDLER

HEALTHCARE  
PLANNING, LIVING  
WILLS, AND CREATING A  
DURABLE POWER OF  
ATTORNEY

NOVEMBER 20TH

EILEEN HOSEY

FALL PREVENTION IN  
SENIORS WITH A TAI CHI  
DEMONSTRATION

NOVEMBER 27TH

KELSEY WOOD

INFORMATION ON THE  
JUNEAU BRIDGE  
PROGRAM



The Senior and Caregiver Resource Center receives financial support from the Juneau Community Foundation's Hope Endowment Grant, the City and Borough of Juneau Social Service Grant and the State of Alaska, Senior and Disabilities Services.



# Thoughts from Sue Nielson & Sandy DeLong with the Widowed Persons Program

Sue Nielson & Sandy DeLong are two founding members of the Widowed Persons Program, a local group that helps widows and widowers cope with the loss of their spouse through social events and other gatherings. The Widowed Persons Program, created in partnership with a hospice counselor, has grown from 10 members up to a list of 50! Sue became involved with the program as a result of already working with other grief and loss groups, whereas Sandy was a member-turned-facilitator after attending following the loss of her husband.

Because holidays can be painful for those that have experienced loss, the WPP will be facilitating a “Grief, Loss, and the Holidays” program that is open for all to attend regardless of whether or not they are a widow or widower. The event aims to explore why the holiday season can be so difficult and how to navigate those feelings in a friendly, supportive atmosphere.

The Widowed Persons Program offers events throughout the year for widows, including brunches, support group meetings, and even summer tours. As explained by Sandy, when you become widowed, you also become a 5th wheel to your friends that are couples. Other friends may stop talking to you because they just don’t know what to say. The WPP offers a diverse, judgment-free opportunity to socialize with other widows that have been through it all and know what it is like.

Though the WPP is just for widows, there are other groups in Juneau that serve the same purpose, including the caregiver support group mentioned in this newsletter. Sue & Sandy explained that grief is unique for caregivers because you start grieving before the person dies. When a person is in pain and receiving care from family, you don’t want to give up on them but at the same time you don’t want them to suffer.

For Sandy, this was her reality when caring for her husband. Though she received support from hospice, she was the primary caregiver for her husband. Before he passed on, she remembers almost having to give him permission the night before. “It’s okay to go, I don’t want you to suffer and be in pain anymore. Just go to sleep” were her words to him the night before he passed away. As caregiver, you may end up feeling guilty for wanting your care recipient to pass on just so you do not have to watch them suffer anymore. This is a natural part of grieving, and as Sue explains below, it is called “grief work” for a reason.

Everyone’s grief is unique, and the grieving process is like a journey. Since caregivers may grieve before their loved one passes, the process is exhausting. Even though you know the person is dying, it is still a shock when they pass on. Sue & Sandy both agreed that something that helped them cope throughout the process, was having a normal aspect of life to hold onto.

For Sue, this normal, unchanging part of her life was her job. She knew that she could go to her job and everything would be the same. For Sandy, it was swimming. As a life-long swimmer, just being able to go to the pool, swim laps, and forget was valuable.

One thing they both had in common was a strong support group. For caregivers, we are here for you and encourage you to reach out if you are struggling with the grieving process.



## Tai Chi 8-week class series begins Sept 11, 2018

Time: 5:30PM to 6:30PM on Tuesdays & Thursdays

**NO COST \* Location: The Filipino Community Hall \* NO COST**

**A Free Health Promotion Program: Tai Chi for individuals age 60 years +**

The benefits of Tai Chi for elders are many including increased strength, energy, flexibility and balance. Studies show the practice of Tai Chi reduces the risk of falling. These classes are designed for participants **60 years and older**.

No previous experience needed. Registration is required. **Call 463-6113 to register.**

### Elder Abuse Awareness

Vulnerable adults may suffer abuse if they appear to be neglected or to be abused in an intentional or reckless non-accidental manner. If the elder appears exploited by another person or a sign of apparent neglect of essential services by self or by others in control of the elder, there may be abuse. You can help!

Any person may report a confidential matter in good faith, you are protect by law from retaliation. You may also report a matter anonymously.

Call: 800-478-9996

Adult Protective Services

## *Grief, Loss, and the Holidays*

☞ Coping with Loss During the Holidays ☞

Many types of losses become more painful during the holiday season. Join us to explore in a friendly, supportive atmosphere just what is so difficult about the holidays, and how to navigate through!

Create new traditions that pay tribute to the memory of your loved one.



Make family plans that work for everyone.

Light refreshments provided.

Tuesday, November 13, 2018 – 5:30 pm

**Community Room – Fireweed Place  
415 Willoughby Avenue**

Sponsored by Widowed Persons Program & Hospice & Home Care of Juneau

For further information, please contact  
Sue @ 586-6424

## Ketchikan

Are you a caregiver caring for an elder?

Do you want to talk to others in a similar situation?

**“We are here to help”**

We hold a caregiver support group the second Friday of every month, from 2-3pm, at Saxman/Ketchikan Senior Center 2401 Eagle Ave.

Call **Bernice Metcalf** for more information:

(907) 225-8080

## Sitka

“Be of Brave Heart”

### Caregiver Support

Manager’s House of the Sitka Pioneer Home  
**Fourth Monday of Every Month at 6 pm**

Homemade soup, salad, and bread provided.  
Contact Maury to RSVP or for information at

747-4600 or

maury@braveheartvolunteers.org

## “ Lending Library is for you”

The Senior and Caregiver Resource Center has a variety of resources available for loan to caregivers and elders. In addition, we offer a variety of books and educational materials on caregiving skills and self-care. If we don't have material that you are looking for, we will help you find it. Feel free to stop by our lending library in Juneau or give us a call and we will gladly ship items promptly to you if are in the Southeast Alaska area.

**We have “Tai Chi” DVDS too!**

**Call us at 907-463-6181**



*Southeast Senior & Caregiver  
Resource Center*



## Southeast Senior Services

Catholic Community Service

419 Sixth Street

Juneau, AK 99801

(907) 463-6177

www.ccsjuneau.org

**Serving All of Southeast**

**"The Senior and Caregiver Resource Center receives financial support from the Juneau Community Foundation's Hope Endowment Grant and of the City and Borough of Juneau Social Service Grant and the State of Alaska, Senior and Disabilities Services."**

Southeast Senior Services is a division of Catholic Community Service

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