



The Family Caregivers' Grapevine

July/August 2011

A bi-monthly newsletter published by the
**North Shore Supporting Family Caregivers
Across the Lifespan Project**

Caregiving from a Distance

By: Kendra Jones

If you live an hour or more away from the care receiver you are considered to be a long-distance caregiver. Even though you may not be living nearby there are a number of ways for you to be involved in caregiving for your friend or family member. Often, long-distance caregivers act as care managers, which involves gathering information on necessary services and coordinating those services by communicating with the care receiver, caregiver(s) living nearby, and health care providers.

Contact the care receiver frequently. Calling to chat or sending brief newsy letters with photos and other interesting materials helps to reaffirm the care receiver's personhood and provides important emotional support. Try to visit as often as you can. This can be challenging as many long-distance caregivers must use their vacation time from work to travel back and forth. When you are visiting, make yourself available to the care receiver to spend time renewing and reshaping your relationship. This also provides the other caregiver(s) with some well-needed time off from their caregiving responsibilities.

Contact the caregiver(s) who live nearby regularly. Learn all that you can about the care receiver's disease or disability so you have an understanding of what some of the important issues are and will be in the future. Make time to participate in family meetings over the phone or Internet. Being involved in this way also allows you to understand the challenges faced by the caregiver(s) who live nearby. This will be helpful down the road when it comes time to make major care decisions (i.e. moving into a care facility) as you will have a better understanding of the situation and why this change might be necessary. Don't forget to acknowledge the time and energy that the caregivers who live nearby put into caregiving; a sincere "thank you" is very meaningful.

Although you may not be living nearby, as a long-distance caregiver you are still an important member of the care team for your friend or family member. Speak with the caregiver(s) living nearby to see how best to help... after all, an extra pair of hands lightens everyone's load!





New Technology for Caregivers

By: Erin Reddekopp

Technology for caregivers is rapidly expanding. Resources are available to alert caregivers of an emergency, help with medication, locate lost friends and family members, and make communication more personal. Some of the resources available include.

Medication Dispensing Units

Ensuring a care receiver is taking their medication properly can be challenging, but new medication dispensing units can help ease the process. The units release the pills when it's time for the care receiver to take their medication and remain locked for the rest of the day to prevent accidental overdoses. You can also purchase vibrating watches or pagers to go off when it's time for the care receiver to take his or her medication. For more information visit www.epill.com.

Skype, Google Voice and other Video Calling Programs

Using a video calling program is a personal and inexpensive way to keep in touch with family and friends around the world. Video calling allows you to see the person you're calling in real time on your computer screen. It's a great way to share special moments, watch children's dance routines, tell grandchildren bedtime stories, have tea together, or just check in and see your friends or family. To use a video calling program you need a computer with internet access, web camera, speakers and a video calling program. Video calling programs can be downloaded free of charge at www.skype.com or www.google.com/voice.

Global Positioning System (GPS) Shoe

Shoes, loafers, and sneakers, with a GPS Personal Location tracking device built into the heel are being released in the USA. The shoe allows the caregiver to locate the wearer or they can receive an alert if the care receiver wanders out of a pre-set safe zone. The shoes are not yet available in Canada but will hopefully be released here next year. For more information visit www.gpsshoe.com. GPS devices for watches and jewelry are also being developed.

Before purchasing a product or introducing a care receiver to a new technology it is important to assess their ability to use the technology. Do they have access to a computer? Are they able to learn how to use the device or resource? It's also important to make sure he or she is comfortable using the technology and having it in their home. Some of the best ways to get the care receiver on board are to explain to him or her how the technology will help and to get them involved in the decision making process. If you can, let the care receiver select the specific product(s). Adjusting to the technology can be slightly overwhelming, so give the care receiver time to adapt to the potential change and introduce them to product slowly.

*North Shore Community Resources Society does not endorse any specific product. This article is for information purposes only.



Health Link BC (8-11)

By: Erin Reddekopp

If you have non-emergency, health related question, you can call Health Link BC at 8-1-1 24 hours a day, seven days a week and receive trusted advice. When you call 8-1-1, you can ask to speak with a registered nurse about symptoms, procedures and if you should take the care receiver for medical attention. If your neighborhood pharmacy is closed you can speak with a pharmacist who will answer medication questions. Pharmacists are available every night from 5PM—9AM. Health Link BC can even connect you with a dietitian for nutrition advice and the health navigation team will help you find the closest medical services to your home..

You can also visit Health Link BC online at www.healthlinkbc.ca to use the online symptom checker, learn about health conditions and topics, and to find the resources and services near you.

For deaf and hearing impaired assistance (TTY) call 7-1-1.

DID YOU KNOW?

Health Link BC has translation services in over 130 languages and they have medically-approved information on over 4,000 health topics in their searchable database?

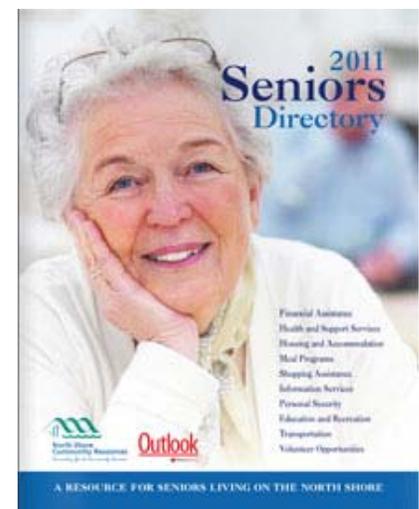
2011 Seniors Directory

By: Erin Reddekopp

Are you a senior living on the North Shore? If you answered yes, you'll want to pick up a copy of the *2011 Seniors Directory*. The Directory provides information and referrals to a large range of services including financial assistance, meal programs, health and support services.

A downloadable copy is available on the North Shore Community Resources Seniors' One Stop website at www.nscr.bc.ca/information/senior.html. You can also pick up a print copy at the North Shore Community Resources Office (Suite 201-935 Marine Drive, North Vancouver.)

For more information contact the Seniors' One Stop program at





July 2011 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Caregiver Network Group 7:00pm-9:00pm	8	9
10	11	12	13 Caregiver Network Group 10:30am- 12:30pm	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

All programs are for (unpaid) family or friends caring for an adult with an illness or a disability. All programs are free, unless otherwise noted.

Caregiver Network Groups are an opportunity to share ideas, experiences, practical tips, and to gain reassurance that you are not alone on your journey. Caregiver Network Groups can help you learn how to access community services and increase your ability to care for yourself.

You are welcome to join us for either group. One group meets the first Thursday of the month from 7:00pm-9:00pm and the other group meets the second Wednesday of the month from 10:30am -12:30pm. All groups meet at North Shore Community Resources (Capilano Mall, #203-935 Marine Drive, North Vancouver). For more information contact Karyn at 604-982-3320 or karyn.davies@nscr.bc.ca.



Recipe Corner: Summer Squash Burritos

Eating a balanced diet is an important part of keeping you and your family healthy, but it can be hard to find the time to cook a nutritious meal. The summer is a great time to try new recipes and add more fresh fruit and vegetables to your diet. Here is an easy, healthy, and delicious recipe for summer squash burritos:



Ingredients: (Serves 3-4)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 tablespoons olive oil | 8 small flour tortillas |
| 1 cup chopped onion | 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese |
| 6 small summer squash, sliced | 1 cup chopped tomato |
| salt to taste | 1/4 cup cilantro |

Directions: (Ready in 20 Minutes)

1. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Slowly add the onion to the oil;. Simmer while stirring for about three minutes.
3. Add the squash to the oil in small parts, making sure each part has softened slightly before adding the next.
4. Season with salt.
5. Heat the tortillas in the microwave for about 10 seconds, until they are warm.
6. Spoon the squash mixture into the center of the tortillas;
7. Top with cheddar cheese, tomato, and cilantro
8. Roll into a burrito and serve.

HEALTHY EATING TIP

Include at least one orange and one dark green vegetable each day (Examples are Carrots, sweet potatoes, squash, broccoli, romaine lettuce, and spinach)

Tip: For variety, you can add other vegetables and spices to the summer squash or add salsa to the top of the burrito.



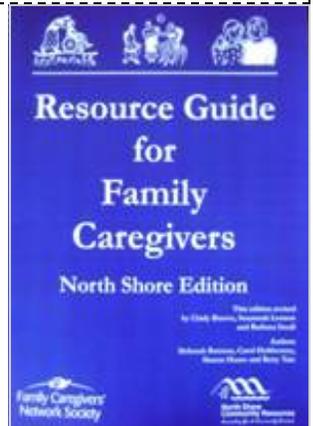
August 2011 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 Caregiver Network Group 7:00pm-9:00pm	5	6
7	8	9	10 Caregiver Network Group 10:30am- 12:30pm	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

All programs are for (unpaid) family or friends caring for an adult with an illness or a disability. All programs are free, unless otherwise noted.

Did you know that the Resource Guide for Family Caregivers (North Shore Edition) is now available online?

The Resource Guide is full of practical information to about the various services available to caregivers and care receivers on the North Shore. To access the Resource Guide free-of-charge, visit our website at <http://www.nscr.bc.ca> click: Information click: Caregiver. Click on Guide





Meet the Newest Staff Member at North Shore Caregivers' Support Project

Erin Reddekopp, Writer/Researcher



We welcome Erin to the North Shore Caregiver Support team. She will be taking over Kendra's role as Editor of the Newsletter. Erin is from Edmonton, Alberta, where she received a degree in Classical Studies and Sociology from the University of Alberta and a diploma in Public Relations from MacEwan University. Erin moved to Vancouver a year ago to attend Simon Fraser University (SFU) and to coach the SFU Debate Team. She is thrilled to combine her passions for writing, grammar, and giving back to the community.

Your Daily Dose of Laughter!

A man walks into a Doctor's Office. He has a cucumber up his nose, a carrot in his left ear and a banana in his right ear.
"What's the matter with me?", he asked.
"You're not eating properly", replied the Doctor.



North Shore Hospice

By: Erin Reddekopp

Last October, the first free standing hospice on the North Shore opened. The facility is 15,000 square feet and has 15 private rooms, family areas, a healing garden and a sacred space. All of the bedrooms have ensuite washrooms, are equipped with state of the art entertainment systems, ceiling lifts, electric beds, and have home style furniture.

The staff and volunteers at the hospice are dedicated to helping individuals and their families with end of life care. To assist in this difficult time, the hospice offers day programs, counseling services, music therapy, support groups for residents, friends and family. The North Shore Hospice is located at 319 East 14th Street, North Vancouver.



For more information contact Vancouver Coastal Health at 604-736-2033 or feedback@vch.ca



Travel Tips for Caregivers

By: Kendra Jones



During the summer months, many people take advantage of the sunshine and warm weather and take a trip with friends or family. However, those with caregiving responsibilities may be hesitant to travel. As a general rule, the more advanced the care receiver's disability or disease, the more challenging travel will be. However, each caregiver must consider their own situation and decide whether the care receiver is fit to travel or whether it would be

better to make arrangements for him or her to stay in a short-term respite bed while you travel by yourself. If you decide to travel with the care receiver, there are a number of steps that you can take to make the trip go more smoothly for both of you.

Try and make "getting there" as short and simple as possible. It is best to keep trips with the care receiver to only one destination. If the care receiver has not traveled in some time you can plan a "trial" day or weekend trip to gauge how well they will be able to handle a longer trip. Make sure you have a Plan B in place in case you need to get home quickly. Do some research ahead of time to find out where the local hospitals are along your route in case the care receiver needs medical attention while you are away. You should pack for the care receiver and make sure you remember to pack the care receiver's medical information, medication(s), and any legal documents as well as comfortable and familiar clothing for the care receiver. Make sure the care receiver carries ID along with your contact information at all times during the trip.

If you are travelling by plane or bus, as always, give yourself plenty of time at the airport or bus terminal. If you are on a plane, take advantage of the preboarding option. Seat the care receiver in the window seat so that they will not distract other passengers. If you are driving, make sure you take enough breaks so you do not become overtired. Consider travelling with a friend or family member who can share the driving responsibilities with you (but do not expect the care receiver to share the driving responsibilities). If the care receiver becomes agitated, do not try to calm them down while driving. Pull the vehicle over as soon as it is safe to do so and deal with the issue once the car is parked.

When staying at a hotel or with friends or family, be upfront about the care receiver's health condition. Also, a sense of routine is important for the care receiver. Remember that the care receiver may not be able to handle large crowds or long periods of activity so plan quiet times throughout the day for the care receiver to be alone and rest. This quiet time is especially important after a day of traveling, so do not plan any activities for the evening of your arrival.

Planning ahead for the care receiver's travel needs will make the trip more enjoyable for both of you and will give you an opportunity to create positive memories of your travels together.



How to Communicate Effectively with your Health Care Provider

By: Kendra Jones

One of the best ways to keep yourself and your family members healthy is to take an active role in your own health. For many years, patients were expected just to listen to what their health care provider said. However, today, this relationship has changed so that patients and providers can work together as partners in care. Patients can contribute to this partnership by learning to communicate effectively with their provider. One of the best techniques to use is assertive communication. This involves expressing your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a direct, honest, and appropriate way and helps to improve care as your needs and wants are more clearly presented and understood. It is important that assertive communication is also respectful of the provider as a person.

Before you visit your health care provider, decide what you want to discuss at that appointment. It may be helpful to write down a list of questions to ask ahead of time. At your appointment, start with the most important problem to make sure your provider has enough time to address the issue. Remember, you know your body best and have important information to share with your provider about your symptoms and health history. Tell the provider all of your symptoms so that they can make a more informed diagnosis. A symptom that you might overlook may be a critical piece of information for your health care provider.



Many patients look for health information about on their own; however, when you visit your provider, try not to self-diagnose. He or she may have a different understanding of what a certain medical term means and this can lead to misunderstandings and misdiagnoses. Instead, clearly describe your symptoms. That doesn't mean you can't ask questions like, "Do you think I have the flu?" or say things like, "These symptoms remind me of when I had the flu".

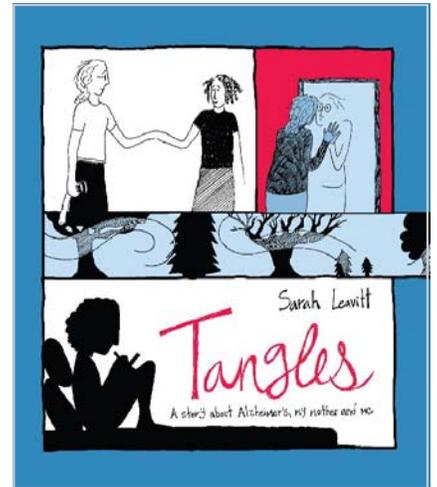
If you have questions about your diagnosis or treatment—ASK! If you do not, your provider will think that you do not need or want any more information and that you understood everything that was said. Repeating what your provider tells you back to them in your own words will help you to feel confident that you understand what was said. You can also take notes or ask your provider for written information or instructions. It may be helpful to have a family or friend join you for the visit. They will be able to hear information that you may miss. It is also helpful to do your own research to become familiar with what to expect with your health condition. Your provider may be able to point you to an organization that can provide additional information, education, and support for your particular health condition(s).



Resource Review: "Tangles" by Sarah Leavitt

By: Kendra Jones

"Tangles: A Story about Alzheimer's, my Mother, and Me" is a graphic memoir by Sarah Leavitt about her family's struggle to cope with her mother's Alzheimer's disease. In the book, Sarah shares her family's journey from her mother's first signs of memory loss to eventual death using both images and text. Sarah and her family experience a range of emotions and ultimately find moments of happiness and humour in the midst of dealing with the challenges of caregiving for someone with Alzheimer's disease. The graphic memoir format of the book is unique and makes it accessible to all readers. "Tangles" has been nominated for several prominent Canadian literary awards. For more info, visit <http://www.sarahleavitt.com/tangles/>.



The Caregivers' Bill of Rights

By: Wendy Lustbader

I have the right:

- To take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my loved one.
- To seek help from others even though my loved one may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- To maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I provide care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything I reasonably can for this person and I have the right to do some things just for myself.
- To get angry, be depressed and express other difficult feelings occasionally.
- To reject any attempt by my loved one (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt, anger or depression.
- To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness and acceptance for what I do for my loved one for as long as I offer these qualities in return.
- To take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my loved one.
- To protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my loved one no longer needs my full time help.
- To expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid persons living with illness, physical or mental challenges in our country, similar strides will be made toward aiding and supporting caregivers.



Visit the Caregiver Resource Library!

The library has many great books, videos, and CDs for family caregivers. Sign out these resources, free of charge, for up to three weeks. The library is located at:

North Shore Community Resources (Capilano Mall, 2nd Floor)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00am-4:30pm

For more information, contact Karyn at 604-982-3320.



Moving to an Assisted Living Facility

Adapted from the Resource Guide for Family Caregivers: North Shore Edition

Assisted living is a housing plus health option that provides rental accommodation, “hospitality services”, and personal care services. It is intended for seniors and persons with a disability who can live independently and direct their own lives, but require regular assistance with personal care. Personal care services may include assistance with bathing, grooming, dressing, and medication management, depending on the individual’s needs.

The rental accommodation is a private, lockable apartment or suite which is furnished with the individual’s own belongings. Hospitality services include meals (lunch and supper are provided in a communal dining space), weekly housekeeping, weekly laundering of linens, social and recreational activities, and a 24-hour emergency response system.

If you and the care receiver decide that assisted living may be a good option, you can choose either a publicly-funded or privately-funded residence. If you choose a publicly-funded residence, a Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) case manager will use a standardized assessment

tool to determine whether the care receiver is eligible for assisted living. Individuals and couples living in a publicly-funded assisted living residence pay 70% of their after-tax income for the full package of services (subject to a minimum and maximum rate). The cost of personal toiletries, breakfast supplies, incontinence products, and hydro, cable, and telephone service are not included in this package of services. To find out more about assisted living, contact your VCH case manager, or if you do not have a case manager, call the VCH North Shore Home Health Program at 604-986-7111. Privately-funded residences are also available on the North Shore. The costs of these residences are not subsidized by VCH and thus, they have no involvement in determining eligibility for these residences. To find out more about privately-funded assisted living residences, you can contact the residence directly. For a list of publicly-funded and/or privately-funded assisted living facilities on the North Shore, call Seniors’ One Stop at 604-983-3303 or 604-925-7474.

What is the difference between “assisted living” and “residential care”?

Assisted living refers to housing with added hospitality services and personal assistance. Residential care is more extensive care than assisted living and refers to around-the-clock nursing care for those who can no longer live at home due to physical and/or mental health conditions.

Information on Residential Care—next issue.

The Family Caregivers' Grapevine is a bi-monthly publication intended to support family caregivers by promoting the importance of self-care while providing practical information and resources.

If you have any questions or feedback about the newsletter, please contact the editor at:
erin.reddekopp@nscr.bc.ca

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**North Shore
Community Resources**

Connecting You to Community Services!

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The Supporting Caregivers Across the Lifespan Project

The Supporting Caregivers Across the Lifespan Project works in partnership with the North Shore Caregiver Support Program. Together we provide a wide variety of educational workshops, caregiver support and resources for family and friends supporting someone with an illness or disability.

The Project provides:

- Education sessions for family caregivers
- Social recreation programs
- Expressive arts programming
- Tele-learning education sessions for family caregivers (educational workshops over the phone)
- Education for professionals working with family caregivers
- Education for employers

Additional activities provided by the Caregiver Support Program:

- Family Caregiver Network groups
- Stress management and relaxation workshops
- Telephone support and individual consultation
- Educational workshops
- Information and referral to community services
- Library with books, videos, and other educational resources

Are you a family caregiver?

You are if you provide a family member or friend who is chronically ill, elderly, palliative or living with a disability with **any** of the following types of assistance:

- **Personal Care:** dressing, bathing, eating
- **Household Work:** house cleaning, shopping/errands, preparing meals, yard work
- **Coordination of Care:** transportation, appointments, arranging services, visiting
- **Support:** phone check-in, supervision, emotional support
- **Nursing Care:** medication, changing dressings

You're not alone.

We're here to help.

For more information, contact Helen at 604-988-3313 or helen.wait@nscr.bc.ca.