



Care Partners News Spring 2020

Support & companionship on the journey of aging and serious illness.

Care Partners Responds to the COVID-19 Pandemic

During these extraordinary times, we at Care Partners cherish each one of you. We are aware of both unique needs and gifts you bring to our community.

For those who are elderly, or living with chronic illness, this is the time for Care Partners, neighbors, family, and friends to support you, so that you can stay safely at home and not feel isolated. You have lived through so many hard times and good days; thank you for your wisdom and resilience.

Caregivers—now you have new challenges in providing care and will need support if you become ill or need to quarantine. There is much you can teach us about taking care of yourself as you give, and living with uncertainty. Care Partners Volunteers—thank you for all the ways you continue to give and for knowing when you need to protect your own health. You have taught us so much about the joy of giving.

Cook County—we are so thankful to serve a community that in the midst of uncertainty and hardship is so ready to rally, learn, pitch in and adapt for the good of everyone. Finally, and especially, we are grateful for our health care providers. Thank you for your foresight, diligence, care, bravery and hard work. Even as the measures of social distancing get old and create hardship, we know these measures are the best way that we can have your back.

A Good Time for Health Care Planning

In the face of all the fears and worries brought up by the COVID-19 pandemic, it can actually be reassuring and empowering to plan for what you would choose if you became gravely ill. Think through your options and choices. Talk to your family and friends. Do your homework. Go to www.carepartnersofcookcounty.org for lots of helpful information and links.

To make sure your wishes are known even if you can't speak for yourself, complete a Health Care Directive, choose a health care agent, and send it to the clinic. Care Partners' nurse can help you understand the form and complete it. Call Care Partners staff at 387-3788. We can also send out forms and help you get them to the clinic.



Current Services

Care Partners' office is not open to the public. Staff are working remotely, and will return calls and emails during office hours: M-F, 10 am to 3 pm.

Telephone Support: Staff are offering caregiver coaching and care coordination and volunteers are keeping in close contact with clients over the telephone.

Rides will be carefully monitored. For now, they are limited to essential medical appointments after careful screening questions to make sure all involved are healthy and have limited exposure.

Delivering Supplies: Care Partners volunteers will assist as possible with delivering supplies and completing important errands for individuals who need to stay safely at home.

Programs: Memory Café and Caregiver Support Group are canceled at present. As this continues we may look for other ways to connect.

Please call Care Partners at 387-3788 or email us at carepartners@boreal.org if you have any questions, needs or concerns. We're happy to listen and help as we can.

If you wish to limit treatment options, have a high-risk chronic health condition or might choose to die at home, you should work now with your health care provider to complete a POLST form. Call the clinic to set up a phone or video appointment.

Do you want help thinking about end-of-life, your legacy, or what you would want to resolve or say to your loved ones while it is easier to do so? Talk to your minister or call Care Partners to connect with one of the trained End of Life Doulas. Thank you! These efforts will relieve your mind and ease decision-making for your family and health care staff.

Making a Difference

Thanks to your support and our wonderful volunteers and staff, Care Partners was able support **110 senior clients** in 2019 to stay in their homes and our community and navigate the challenges of aging and serious illness.

- ◆ 44 Senior Rides clients received over 400 rides and logged 27,000 miles!
- ◆ 40 caregivers received coaching & support.
- ◆ 18 clients received care coordination/end-of-life care.
- ◆ 23 clients received over 270 hours of chore assistance.
- ◆ 23 clients received over 400 volunteer visits.
- ◆ **58 volunteers donated over 2100 hours** to provide companionship, rides and chore help.

In addition, Care Partners provided programs that increased awareness of Dementia, Health Care Planning, LGBT Elders, Aging Services and Caregiving.

A Kindred Spirit

Any worries Care Partners volunteer Mary Ofjord had about her new companionship assignment melted away when she met with Chuck and his wife. Chuck not only liked art, he was an avid fisherman who had even built his own fly rods. Mary remembers thinking, "He's a kindred spirit!"

Chuck had enjoyed oil painting for years, but a series of health issues left him with limited eyesight and mobility and he'd given up in frustration. Mary hoped that she could help him reclaim the talent that still lived within him by teaching him to paint using watercolors. She dug out her old brushes and other materials and began helping Chuck experiment with new techniques. "You may not have the same control that you had before all this," she patiently reminded him, "but you can work with what you have now."

Mary was impressed over the months with Chuck's willingness to try new things. The last time Mary visited Chuck, he had started a new watercolor painting on his own. Mary recalled, "His wife was so happy – it's the first time he's done that since his health troubles started." After reflecting for a moment, Mary added, "He's given me a gift too – after years and years, I've also started to paint again. I even got to go out on the pontoon boat with them and 'throw out a line'! I would encourage anyone who's thinking about volunteering as a companion to give it a try. You're not going to regret it. Go into it with an open mind. You'll make somebody's life better – and you'll benefit too."



Our Business Sponsors!

Angry Trout Cafe
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Blue Water Cafe
Cobblestone Cabins
Coldwell Banker
Cook County Whole Foods Co-op
First and Second Thrift Store
Grand Marais State Bank
Johnson's Big Dollar
Lake County Veterinary Clinic
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Nordic Electric of Grand Marais, Inc.
North Shore Federal Credit Union
Red Pine Realty
Sawbill Canoe Outfitters
Security State Bank
Sivertson Studio, Gallery & Frame Shop
Thrivent
Tuscarora Lodge & Canoe Outfitters
W.I.S.E.

Help with Spring & Summer Chores

We are hopeful that Care Partners Chore Volunteers can still get out and help seniors with clean-up around their yard and garden in June and July. If you'd like to help as a volunteer give us a call. If you are a senior who could use help, give us a call at 387-3788.

Volunteer Opportunities

Care Partners depends on community volunteers to provide companionship, rides, and assistance with chores and errands. Check our web site for new training opportunities this summer and fall when we are able to resume these in-person services.

Volunteer needs during COVID-19:

Care Partners anticipates that it may need new, younger volunteers who are not in high-risk groups to help with deliveries, errands and telephone companionship for those who need to stay at home, especially if the need for precautions lingers. Call 387-3788 for more information about needs and opportunities.

Community Resources

during COVID-19 as of April 1, 2020

Here is a list of some important phone numbers for those who don't have internet access. Expect to leave a message. Call Care Partners for updated information or help finding what you need at 387-3788.

Call Sawtooth Mountain Clinic at 387-2330

if you have symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, fever, or shortness of breath. The clinic will help you take care of yourself and those around you if you feel ill.

Arrowhead Transit	800-862-0175, option 8
Cook County Public Health	387-3620
North Shore Hospital	387-3040
Grand Portage Clinic	475-2235
The Hub "take out" meals & Meals on Wheels	387-2660
Gene's Foods	387-1212
Cook County Coop	387-2503
Johnson's Foods	387-2480
Violence Prevention Center	387-1262

Complete the Census!

A significant amount of federal dollars & programs for Cook County are based on census data.

Visit: <https://my2020census.gov/>

Or Call #844-330-2020

New End of Life Services

Q: I understand that Grand Marais now has four trained Death Doulas—what is a Death Doula?

Death Doulas are a recent and welcome appearance in Health Care in the United States. We assist people in the dying process, much like a birth doula does for the birthing process. When someone is facing a chronic degenerative illness or terminal diagnosis, they can benefit from the support of death doulas in addition to the medical assistance they are receiving. We provide support primarily to the patient, but also their families, and others who surround them.

Q: Why would someone work with a death doula?

Our purpose is to provide emotional, social, and spiritual support as people go through the journey of the end of life. We provide deep listening; we offer respite to caregivers; we assist in legacy work and questions of closure; we engage in the quest to find meaning at end of life and to restore sacredness to dying. We also assist in creating the environment that the patient desires

Making & Receiving Deliveries

Thank you to everyone for looking out for your friends and neighbors and bringing them the supplies they need! There's lots of conflicting information out there with COVID-19 about how to avoid infection. But here's a few basic tips to keep in mind.

- Keep the number of trips to someone's home down by delivering as much as possible at once.
- Call the person ahead of time so they know when to expect the delivery.
- Drop off the items with minimum contact. Leave items left on the door step or between doors. (wipe off handle,) ring the doorbell, and then step back at least six feet.
- Do not go into the home if it can be avoided.
- If they do need help, make it quick and keep the 6 foot distance.
- Wash hands or use sanitizer before, during and after delivery and avoid touching your face.

If you are receiving a delivery, it is good to take some precautions. Wash your hands and work surface before and after putting groceries or supplies away.

Dispose of the delivery bags or boxes. Remember to wash produce. If you want to be extra careful, disinfect hard containers or let items sit somewhere out of the way for three days before you unpack them.



when they are actively dying through to the last breath. We are available to sit bedside with the patient through the dying process, which we call sitting the vigil.

The more time we have to work with the patient the better, but we can provide valuable support to people wherever they are in the dying process. We work as a team to provide care that is well rounded and attends to each person's specific wants and needs.

Q: How would someone start the process?

We are working in collaboration with Care Partners and received additional training and backgrounding through them. All inquiries and referrals can be made to Care Partners, 218-387-3788. They will start the process so that we can follow with a visit and work on a care plan.

The Doulas are planning presentations to help increase awareness about their work and confronting mortality including a Virtual Death Café on Monday, April 13, from 5:30—7 pm. Look for more information on Care Partners website, www.carepartnersofcookcounty.org.

Making Warm Connections over the Telephone

Health precautions and social distancing are vital right now, but it can result in even greater social isolation for our older clients, friends and neighbors. The lack of ways to feel connection, validation, inspiration, and reassurance can be hard on their physical and mental health. With most in-person contact limited, telephone calls can still be a good way to connect. For some people, making warm connections over the phone is easy; but for many of us, it can be awkward and limiting. Here are a few tips to make it go better, based on Care Partners of Cook County's many years of training companion volunteers.

Presence

Just because you are not present in person, doesn't mean you don't need to be present. This is not a quick business call made while you are multi-tasking. Before making the call, pause, take a breath, and settle yourself. Let your worries go and notice the present moment. Think kindly of the person you are calling and your hopes for them and the call. *Then* dial the number. The person at the other end of the line will feel that you are 'there'.

Check in

Introduce yourself and remind the person who you are and why you are calling. Re-inforce your connection. (*I've been thinking about you and remembering. . .*) Ask how they are doing and if they are needing help. Ask if it's a good time to talk, if they are comfortable. Maybe ask them to turn down a TV to eliminate distraction.

Listening skills

Ask simple, specific questions inviting them to talk. Listen with openness and respect. I love to catch the tone of my staff on the phone, as they respond to others with curiosity, warmth, laughter and empathy. We all have our own ways of showing interest. As they talk, don't leave them wondering if the call was dropped because of the silence. Use minimal encouragers like *mmm, wow, oh my, I know, funny*, and other assorted murmurs, groans and chuckles to let them know you are there listening without having to interrupt them.



Be real, Be uplifting

Honor and respond kindly to their worries and concerns. Make some tentative guesses to help them articulate their needs or losses. Then find real ways to introduce a sense of connection, hope and gratitude. Ask them how they've gotten through other hard times. Get them to notice the present, use their senses or spark their curiosity.

Keeping the Conversation Going

If you can follow their lead, listen and help it unfold with your curiosity. If the conversation lags, you are in charge! Before your call think about topics you could introduce. Try to enter their world and what they are inclined to focus on. *"Tell me about when you. . ."* *"Do you like to garden?"* There was a stage when I could hold long, concrete, relaxed, repetitive conversations with my mother, even with her growing dementia. I'd talk simply about being happy to hear her voice and make guesses about the weather where she lived and what she'd been doing. I'd ask if the big birds had come to her feeder, if she was sitting in her chair, had her legs up, was looking at her wall hanging. She'd respond with yes or no, or struggle for words, and I'd answer like I knew what she meant.

Be Flexible, Be Creative

Plan for shorter, more frequent calls. Figure out what works or fills the gap: a daily morning chat and check-in, FaceTime, a coordinated schedule with other callers, watching a TV show on the phone together, a few texts in addition to the lovely sound of your voice, having them leave a message each morning so you know they are okay, sending a card through the mail or including a card in supplies you've arranged to drop at the door (wash hands!). If you can get out, ask if it's okay when you are out walking to wave through the window, or knock and do a wellness check through the door, or converse across the lawn. Before you say goodbye, make a plan to connect again, so the person you are befriending has something to anticipate.

We are social animals. We are all connected. We will figure this out. Thanks for all you do.

Kay Grindland

Thank You to all who Supported Care Partners in 2019!

Grants

Federal Older Americans Act grant from the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging
Live Well at Home Grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services
Scott Hawkins Fund of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
Cook County Community Foundation Head of the Lakes United Way
Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation Medica Foundation
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Pamela Zalesky

From a client family: *Marnie, Thank you for all you did to help us through a hard time with dad. Grand Marais is so fortunate to have you and Care Partners!*



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carepartners@boreal.org

*Remote Office Hours:
Mon-Fri, 10 am-3 pm*

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A Mindful Approach to Dementia Care

The mindfulness course with Michelle Barclay was reframed into a one-day workshop. Twenty participants practiced simple ways to provide care with awareness, connection and compassion. Here's a simple practice to begin a task with someone with dementia in a way that provides connection and empowerment. It may even save you time by creating better cooperation.

Sitting With

When the person is sitting or lying down, take the time to sit with the person first, before asking them to do anything:

- "May I sit with you?"
- Wait for response
- Sit, breathe, and observe
- Connect
- Proceed with task



Our 1st Memory Café!

Nine guests braved the cold to enjoy conversation, laughter, goodies and a fun watercolor project. Thanks to all who came, our wonderful café volunteers, and the Hub/Senior Center.

Stay tuned for news of when we can reopen the Memory Café either in person or virtually. For information call Christie at 387-3788.

Save the Date!

**Care Partners 5th Annual
Ice Cream Social & Quilt Raffle
Sunday, August 23, 2-5 pm**