

THE CAREGIVER UPDATE

+810-239-7671

VALLEYAREAAGING.ORG

ISSUE 02 / APRIL 2026


SENIOR POWER DAY!

Wednesday, May 20, 2026
 9:00am - 2:00pm
 Crossroads Village
 6140 Bray Rd. Flint, MI

Tickets: \$5.00 per person

Includes: To-Go Lunch*, Train Ride, Resources, Legislative Updates
 Tickets are available at your local senior center, VAAA Office, Genesee County Parks Office, and can be purchased on the day of the event*.

*Lunches and tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

CONTACT US

valleyareaaging.org

810-239-7671







UPCOMING EVENTS

Dementia Caregiving Workshop

Memorial Healthcare
 826 W. King St. Owosso, MI
 Neurology Building
 April 16 - 30
 1:30pm - 3pm

Virtual Dementia Tour

Davison Senior Center
 10135 Lapeer Rd. Davison
 April 21, 2026, Noon - 4pm



“To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides” – David Viscott

Effective Communication

Effective communication helps reduce stress, prevents misunderstandings, and builds trust with all involved.

Here are some practical, real-life communication tips:

1. Active listening (maintain eye contact, don't interrupt, repeat back what you heard)

2. Keep it simple (clear-direct sentences, one thing at a time)
3. Validate feelings for everyone involved & allow time for responses
4. Set healthy communication boundaries (ie. “I need help, but I need us to speak calmly about what is needed”)
5. Call VAAA for help at (810) 239-7671

Message from 101 yr old, Kathleen Rawls

“Kathleen was born in 1924 in Tunica, Mississippi. Kathleen decided to move to Michigan after being a Greek Instructor at UBI Seminary. She started working at AC Spark Plug and worked there for about 2 years. She met her husband (Robert) there, and they were married in 1945. They were married for 63 years, and had 6 children. Kathleen has a strong faith and loves to spend time with her family, friends and church family. Kathleen credits her faith throughout the years. She stated, “I give the Lord credit, he is the one that has blessed me with all these years.”



The Sandwich Generation Survival Guide






Are you part of the sandwich generation? Caring for parents and children simultaneously can be very challenging. Here are some tips on how to survive! Remember VAAA is just a call away at (810) 239-7671.



'The Sandwich Generation Survival Guide'

Build a system to survive the squeeze.

DailyCaring.com

 <p>Nearly 30% of caregivers are "sandwiched."</p> <p>Most are adults in their 40s simultaneously supporting parents aged 65+ and children under 18.</p>	 <p>Caregiving costs average \$21,000 in income.</p> <p>Time away from work and reduced hours create a significant "money leak" for dual-role caregivers.</p>	 <p>Automate routines with a Digital Vault.</p> <p>Centralize legal documents, medication schedules, and emergency forms in one secure, shared digital location.</p>	 <p>Set "Radical Boundaries" for personal time.</p> <p>Establish "Digital Office Hours" (e.g., 8 PM - 8 AM) where non-emergency family requests are ignored to protect sleep.</p>	 <p>Practice 10-minute "Micro-Respite" sessions daily.</p> <p>Scheduled, non-negotiable short breaks are more sustainable than waiting for rare vacations to prevent burnout.</p>
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VAAA HEALTH & WELLNESS TEAM NEW CLASSES!

Join us to reduce stress! Drumming on a ball seated or standing can improve coordination, it synchronizes brain activity, release endorphins, and it provides a cardio workout.



JOIN US!!

NEW! DRUMS ALIVE GOLDEN BEATS



Drums Alive Golden Beats class uses drum sticks with a stability ball and can be done seated or standing. We drum and dance while having fun!

Mondays: Brennan Senior Center at 11am
 Mondays: Carman Ainsworth Senior Center at 1pm
 Tuesdays: Hasselbring Senior Center at 9:15am
 Wednesdays: Loose Senior Center at 12:30pm
 Thursdays: Loose Senior Center at 9:30am
 Fridays: Swartz Creek Senior Center at 9:30am



MI VIRTUAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Below are three virtual support group options (General, Dementia, and Kinship) for you to join. These support groups will discuss issues, challenges, and concerns that caregivers face. See topics below.

These groups are informal and provide dialogue along with peer support. Participants will be able to reflect and connect with others in a similar situation.



Zoom Meeting Link:
 Meeting ID: 876 5118 1524
 or
 Dial by Phone: 1.312.626.6799
 Scan the QR Codes to join the Zoom link.

DEMMENTIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

First Wednesday of the month from 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.





RELATIVES RAISING RELATIVE'S CHILDREN (KINSHIP) CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Second Thursday of the month from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

GENERAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

First Monday of the month from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.



SUPPORT GROUP TOPICS:

- **January:** Setting Healthy Boundaries
- **February:** Understanding Grief and Loss
- **March:** Caregiver Burnout Compassion Fatigue
- **April:** Effective Communication
- **May:** Dealing with Family Issues
- **June:** Helpful Tools and Technology
- **July:** Asking for Help
- **August:** How to Cope with Lack of Sleep
- **September:** Home Safety/Fall Prevention
- **October:** In-Home Help
- **November:** Caregiving During the Holidays
- **December:** Self-Care

Project is supported in part by the Caregiver Resource Center grant.

Virtual Support Groups

Above are three virtual caregiver support group options (General, Dementia, Kinship) for you to join. These support groups will discuss issues, challenges, and concerns that caregivers face. These groups are informal and provide dialogue along with peer support. Participants can reflect and connect with others in a similar situation. To join a caregiver support group, either click the button or scan the QR Code with your phone camera to join the Zoom Meeting.

Get Involved!

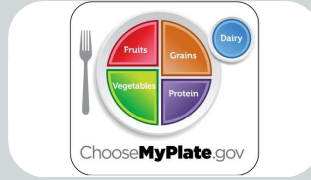


RSVP shows you how you can apply the skills and wisdom you've acquired throughout your life to make a positive difference in the lives of others. A part of AmeriCorps Seniors, RSVP is America's largest volunteer network for people 55 and over, with more than 200,000 volunteers tackling tough issues in communities nationwide. You choose how and where you want to serve, how much time you want to give, and whether you want to share skills you have or develop new ones.

If you are interested in volunteering call VAAA at (810) 239-7671.

Spring Nutrition

- Following the MyPlate.gov method helps everyone eat the right types of food to encourage a healthy body and mind.
- The simple visual of MyPlate helps:
 - Promote balanced nutrition
 - Supports disease prevention
 - Helps with healthy weight management
 - Improves energy and daily performance
 - Easy for families and caregivers to follow



Fruits

- Banana
- Berries
- Applesauce
- Orange
- 100% Fruit Juice
- Raisins
- Melon
- Peach
- Tangelo
- Nectarine
- Grapes

Grains

- Oatmeal
- Cereal*
- Muffin*
- English Muffin
- Toaster Pastry*
- Bagel
- Tortilla
- Pancake*
- Waffle*
- Toast
- Pizza Crust*

Vegetables

- Potatoes
- Spinach
- Salsa
- Peppers
- Tomatoes/ Tomato Sauce
- Zucchini
- Onion
- Avocado

Protein

- Egg
- Nut and Seed Butter
- Beans
- Turkey Sausage*
- Ham
- Canadian Bacon*
- Steak*

Dairy

- Low-fat, Fat-free Milk
- Low-fat Yogurt
- Calcium-fortified Soy milk
- Low-fat Cheese
- Low-fat Cottage Cheese

Tangy Crisp Vegetable and Pasta Salad

Use your favorite pasta and veggies to make this salad a family favorite. Make a day ahead and allow to chill in the refrigerator overnight so the flavors blend.

Yield

- 6 servings
- Ingredients
- 1/2 cup pasta (uncooked, (such as shells, macaroni, etc))
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic (powder)
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 medium cucumber ((peeled, seeded, and coarsely chopped))
- 1/2 medium carrots ((thinly sliced))
- 1/2 medium tomato ((coarsely chopped))
- 1/4 medium green pepper ((coarsely chopped))
- 1/2 cup broccoli ((coarsely chopped))
- 1/2 cup radish ((thinly sliced))
- 2 tablespoons onion (green or red (coarsely chopped))



Steps

- Wash your hands and work area.
- Cook pasta according to package directions but do not add salt to cooking water. Drain, rinse with cool water, and drain again.
- Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine vinegar, sugar, salt, garlic powder and black pepper. Stir and heat over medium heat until sugar is dissolved, but do not boil.
- Let cool.
- Rinse, drain, and chop remaining ingredients.
- Combine in a shallow container, such as an 8x8 inch pan.
- Add cooked pasta, and vinegar mixture. Mix gently.
- Cover and refrigerate overnight to allow flavors to blend.
- Serve cold using a slotted spoon.
- Cover and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.



Caregiver Tips from VAAA CEO YAUSHICA AUBERT

Hi Caregivers!

With the time change and the sun staying up a bit longer, you might notice a little more “sundowning” in someone living with dementia—and if you do, you’re not doing anything wrong. Sundowning (sometimes called sundown syndrome) is when symptoms like confusion, restlessness, anxiety, pacing, or even hallucinations can get stronger in the late afternoon, evening, or at night. The good news: a few small, steady changes can really help while they adjust.

- **Keep a steady routine:** Try to stick to consistent times for waking up, meals, and bedtime.
- **Use light to your advantage:** Get plenty of daylight during the day, and keep rooms well-lit in the evening to reduce shadows.
- **Go easy on late naps:** Short rest is fine, but try to avoid long naps late in the day so nighttime sleep is easier.
- **Dial down stimulation:** In the late afternoon, keep noise and busy activity to a minimum when possible.
- **Choose calm, familiar activities:** Music, a simple task, a favorite show, or a cozy, quiet space can help the evening feel safer.
- **Validate, then redirect:** If they’re upset, try not to argue. Acknowledge how they feel and gently guide them to something comforting (music, photos, a snack, a familiar conversation).

If evenings feel harder right now, you’re not alone—and it won’t always feel this heavy. You may understand what’s changing, but your loved one may not, so it’s okay to keep things simple and focus on comfort. Even small wins count: a calmer meal, a shorter period of pacing, an easier bedtime. Try leaning into what already works—favorite music, a familiar game, looking through photos, a warm drink, or the same story they love to tell again and again. And remember: your steady presence matters more than doing everything perfectly.



Valley Area Agency On Aging

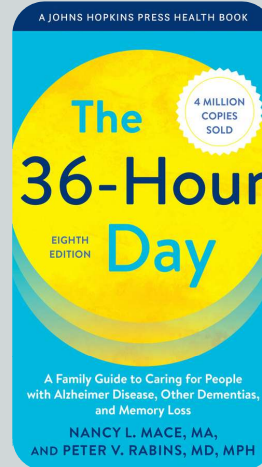
Answers, Action & Advocacy
for **All Things Senior**

<p>In Home Services</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Care • Medication Management • Respite • Emergency Response Units • Home Delivered Meals • Telephonic Wellness Checks
<p>Health Access Information</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information & Assistance • MI Choice Waiver Program • Nursing Home -Transition • Care Management Services
<p>Wellness Programs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matter of Balance • Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program • Art Therapy • Creating Confident Caregivers • Dementia Caregiver Series • Diabetes PATH • Drums Alive Golden Beats • SilverSneakers and Silver& Fit Exercise Classes

Valley Area Agency on Aging is a non-profit agency serving persons 60 and older and/or disabled individuals of Genesee, Lapeer and Shiawassee Counties. If you are living with disabilities or concerned about the well-being of an older adult please contact us for more information on our programs and services.

810-239-7671
www.valleyareaaging.org

Information for this newsletter came from Alzheimer.org, Dementia Caregiving Series and the National Institute on Aging. If you have additional questions, please reach out to Abbie Mars, Health and Wellness Program Manager at marasa@valleyaaa.org or 810-239-7671.



For 40 years, The 36-Hour Day has been the leading work on the care of people with dementia and their family members. Written by experts with decades of experience caring for individuals with memory loss, Alzheimer disease, and other dementia's, the book's authoritative and compassionate approach to care features discussions of the causes of dementia and the management of its symptoms from the early stages to late-stage disease.



Michigan's **MI Options Program**

Person-Centered Options Counseling

- Explore different long-term care options for adults 18 and older, including help at home or in the community.
- Learn what to do after a big life change and what services may be available.
- Get support making a plan that fits your goals and what matters most to you.
- Person-Centered Options Counseling is free for any adult 18 or older, along with their family and caregivers, no matter what their age, income, asset, or disability status is.

Our trained Options Counselors are here to help you with your long-term care needs.

Help Begins Here!

Call today to learn your care options and get free, personalized guidance for your next steps.

To Schedule an Appointment:

Statewide Call Center
1-800-803-7174
8 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Friday

A&D Home Health Care, Inc
1-810-869-7200
9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

With the right support from MI Options, people can feel more confident about the future. A trained expert can help you understand what kind of care you or a loved one may need as you get older, what it might cost, and how to stay at home while staying as independent as possible.

This project has been made possible through a grant awarded to The Information Center by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Follow us on Social Media & Join our Caregiver Corner Facebook Group!

