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SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
COMMUNICATIONS

NEWS

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NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – Sedgwick County Department on Aging/Central Plains Area Agency on Aging (SCDOA/CPAAA) will celebrate National Family Caregivers Month (NFC Month) in November to thank and support our community's family caregivers.

According to the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA), in any given year, more than 50 million people provide some level of care-giving services. Those services are valued at more than \$306 billion dollars a year. Family caregivers provide more than 80 percent of all home care services. Of today's family caregivers, 40 percent provide some level of nursing support. American businesses can lose as much as \$34 billion each year due to employees' need to care for loved ones who are 50 years of age or older. Forty-seven percent of caregivers are employed (71 percent of those are employed full time).

Like many, Harley is a working caregiver. He holds a full-time job with Sedgwick County and is a single parent caring for a young daughter and his mother. His daughter is four years old and has just begun preschool. His mother, who is 75 years old, moved in with him 22 years ago after her arthritis became disabling. Over the years her care needs have increased to involve more doctor appointments to ensure she has good nutrition and her well-being. "Care giving can be very stressful and often it's the simple things that are most helpful." Simple things like support from the doctor, a home health nurse that visits his mom weekly for her blood pressure

and blood sugar, a wheel chair ramp provided by Sedgwick County Department on Aging and flexibility offered at work.

“CPAAA is pleased to have this opportunity to formally recognize and celebrate the valuable role they (caregivers) play. We hope those who know caregivers will take time to do the same,” said Annette Graham, Director of Sedgwick County Department on Aging/Central Plains Area Agency on Aging.

10 Ways to Celebrate National Family Caregivers Month 2008:

1. Offer a few hours of respite time to a family caregiver so they spend time with friends or simply relax.
2. Send a card of appreciation or a bouquet of flowers to brighten up a family caregiver's day.
3. Encourage local businesses to offer a free service for family caregivers through the month of November.
4. Invite family caregivers to participate in the National Family Caregivers Association's FREE national TeleClass to learn how to communicate more effectively with health care professionals. The free one-hour sessions will take place November 6 and 13 at 1 p.m. For more information visit www.thefamilycaregiver.org.
5. Help a family caregiver decorate their home for the holidays or offer to address envelopes for their holiday cards.
6. Offer comic relief! Purchase tickets to a local comedy club, give a family caregiver your favorite funny movie to view, or provide them with a book on tape.
7. Find 12 different family photos and have a copy center create a monthly calendar that the family caregiver can use to keep track of appointments and events.
8. Offer to prepare Thanksgiving dinner for a care-giving family in your community, so they can just relax and enjoy the holiday.
9. Take a few minutes to write a letter encouraging your mayor, county executive, or governor to issue a local proclamation establishing November as National Family Caregivers Month. Contact information for state government officials can be found at www.firstgov.gov.
10. Help family caregivers find information and resources on the Internet or locate a local support group.

Sedgwick County Department on Aging and Central Plains Area Agency on Aging is here to support older adults and caregivers, providing answers and options. For answers on aging contact 660-5120 or (800)367-7298 or visit us online at www.sedgwickcounty.org.

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