

## STATEWIDE PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT | *Tara Giese*

### THE WORKING CAREGIVER

#### Caregiving takes many forms.

Every day many of us assist family members and friends who are chronically ill, have disabilities, or are becoming increasingly frail as they age. Often we don't think of ourselves as caregivers, but we are assisting with daily activities such as bathing, making trips to the doctor, managing medications or helping with meals. It is challenging to handle the caregiver role while trying to balance work and family. Over time, these demands can be overwhelming and may lead to physical and mental exhaustion.

At LSS, we offer services for the working caregiver so they can find balance between their job, their role supporting someone else and remaining healthy. Our respite care offers peace of mind to caregivers while they are at work, and allows them to take a break or run an errand. We also provide counseling, caregiver coaching, support groups, training and education.

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Former First Lady Rosalyn Carter said it best: "There are only four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers."

At some point in our lives, most of us will become a caregiver for a loved one. According to the National Alliance on Caregivers, approximately 34.2 million Americans have provided unpaid care to an adult age 50 or older in the last 12 months.

Caregivers come from all walks of life and may be our spouses, children, friends and neighbors. Many caregivers are juggling jobs, school, or child-rearing. While trying to "do it all" they may be jeopardizing their own well-being.

LSS Caregiver Support & Respite is here to help family caregivers by providing in-home respite care, group respite care, training and education, support groups, counseling, coaching and services utilizing technology.

We continuously make improvements to ensure high quality and innovative services to meet family caregiver needs. In 2017, we provided 9,191 hours of respite care for 119 families and 2,450 hours of caregiver coaching and counseling. Another 142 family caregivers attended our support groups.

We appreciate all who support and recognize the value of our work, including volunteers, families, staff, donors, congregations, and city and county leaders. It is a privilege to support caregivers who demonstrate extraordinary love, dedication and courage every day.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tara Giese".

**Tara Giese, MSW**

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In 2017, we brought caregiver services to the work place in several ways.

- We taught a Powerful Tools course at an organization where 12 employees were actively caregiving, and began a support group at their workplace over the noon hour to make it easier for them to attend.
- Through our technology program we continue to provide counseling, support groups, caregiver coaching, training and education. We offer services virtually so caregivers can conveniently access them right from their office.

In 2018, we will continue to expand services for working caregivers, to offer the support they need to remain healthy and effective.

ACTIVE.  
◆ HEALTHY.  
INDEPENDENT.

#### LSS Older Adult Services

With the right community supports, older Minnesotans are *'Abundantly Aging'*: staying healthy, choosing to live at home longer, giving back as volunteers and remaining as independent as possible.

**Senior Linkage Line:** 800.333.2433  
MinnesotaHelp.info

**MN Relay 711:** Dial 711 from anywhere in the country and you will be connected to the relay service in the state where you are located.



## HEARTFELT CARE & FRIENDSHIP



CAREGIVER RENEE & CAROL,  
WHO RECEIVES CAREGIVING  
RESPITE SERVICES

Dee became an instant caregiver after her father Donald passed away. Her mother, Carol, was experiencing memory loss from dementia and the family knew that she was not safe living at home alone. Dee quickly moved up to Brainerd to provide 24/7 care, but missed her own family and the life she left in Minneapolis.

With regular check-ins and support from LSS Caregiver Support and Respite in place, Carol was able to move to an assisted living apartment. This allowed Dee to move back to Minneapolis and be close to her family.

Renee is the extraordinary LSS Caregiver Support volunteer who greets Carol with a smile every Monday. Her kindness and help allow Carol to remain as independent as possible at age 84. The visits also provide peace of mind to Dee.

Caregiver Respite is a service that is customized to each person. "We do the grocery shopping, take a walk, fill the bird feeder, or sometimes go out to lunch," said Renee. Carol loves puzzles so we'll do things like that together."

Dee also utilizes support through the LSS Caregiver Technology program. She has attended "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" – a six week educational program. She receives caregiver counseling, coaching and attends a virtual caregiver group.

Dee, Carol and Renee have unique and special relationships. They now consider each other family. Renee says, "When I think of Carol, I think of 'Mom Carol'. I feel close to them and connected to them."

**"I really care about what happens in their lives,  
and I'm glad to be a part of that."**

~Renee, Caregiver Respite Volunteer

## Funding Statement

LSS Caregiver Support & Respite is funded under contract with the Minnesota Board on Aging and the following Area Agencies on Aging as part of the Older Americans Act: Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging, Central Minnesota Council on Aging, Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging.

LSS Caregiver Support & Respite is a service of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, which serves **all people** regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability or age.