

Thanks Project Underscores Why Caregivers Matter to Patient Care

By Paul DeMiglio | November 19, 2013

Although many people don't see themselves as caregivers, more than 65 million Americans provide care on a daily basis for their vulnerable loved ones. This statistic, highlighted by Jeff Foxworthy along with Peter Rosenberger in a video created by AARP, demonstrates the importance of caregivers as advocates work to raise awareness around National Family Caregivers Month.



To say “thanks to as many caregivers as [they] can,” AARP and the Advertising Council are partnering to empower patients and their families to show their appreciation for those who care for them by sharing a personal message, photo or video of gratitude through the Thanks Project. This online tool recognizes family members and friends who are dedicated to taking care of loved ones and makes caregiving resources more accessible so that individuals know they're not alone and that help is available.

According to a Nov. 5 *New York Times* story, most people who are caregivers do not identify as such, often feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities that can range from managing bills to providing transportation and preparing meals. To offer emotional support, AARP created a Caregiving site that provides everything from Planning and Resources to information addressing End of Life Care, as well as Grief and Loss. This web portal also enables visitors to chat with experts and ask questions, in addition to learning more about the experiences of those who care for loved ones.

“Since launching the Caregiver Assistance campaign with the Ad Council in August 2012, we have seen more than 10 million visits to AARP’s Caregiving Resource Center,” said Elizabeth Bradley, Strategic Communications Director of the Caregiver campaign. “Through the site, users are connected to valuable local resources and practical information, can find support to handle family dynamics

and life-balancing issues, and engage and connect with experts and other caregivers. We hope caregivers feel more appreciated for their hard work and inspired to do the best they can.”

The Caregiver Action Network (CAN), which sponsors National Family Caregivers Month, is also highlighting the difference caregivers make in the lives of those they serve every day. As the leading family caregiver organization working to improve the quality of life for the 65 million+ Americans who care for loved ones, CAN provides online tools to help caregivers handle the responsibilities that come with buying groceries, organizing mail, cleaning homes and so much more.

- On the Resources tab of their website a person can connect to other caregivers through the Family Caregiver Forum, Peer Network, and the Story Project.
- The resources section also includes tips and tools for caregivers like the Caregiver Toolbox, 10 Tips for Family Caregivers, and a list of other Agencies and Organizations that can help.

In a recent Presidential Proclamation spotlighting National Family Caregivers Month, the Obama Administration helped draw national attention to the value of caregivers, who “take up the selfless and unheralded work of delivering care to seniors or people with disabilities or illnesses...With caregivers already balancing their own needs with those of their loved ones, and in many cases caring for both young children and aging parents, our Nation’s caregivers need and deserve our support.”



Do you know a caregiver or provide care for a loved one? How do you think individuals, communities and industry stakeholders can collectively mobilize to demonstrate appreciation for caregivers and more effectively strengthen support networks? Share your story and let us know what resources and strategies you think would be most useful.

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