

Your Trusted Partner for In-Home Care Across
Montgomery County, MD, and D.C.



NATIONAL CAREGIVERS MONTH



November Spotlight: Plug-in to Care: Connecting Caregivers to Support

Each November, National Caregivers Month recognizes the dedication of family and professional caregivers across the country. In November, we celebrate the

compassion, resilience, and daily efforts of those who make aging at home safer and more meaningful for older adults. This year's theme, "Plug-in to Care," emphasizes the importance of staying connected to the right resources, support networks, and professional services. As caregiving responsibilities grow more complex, connection is key to ensuring both caregivers and their loved ones thrive.

The Importance of Connection

Caregivers who are linked to reliable supports often experience positive outcomes, including:

- Reduced burnout and stress
- Earlier access to medical guidance
- Safer environments at home
- Better long-term planning
- A stronger sense of community

Without these supports, caregivers can become isolated, overwhelmed, and unsure where to turn when needs change.

What It Means to Plug-in

Caregivers can stay plugged in to care by:

- Accessing trusted guidance from professional care managers
- Sharing responsibilities with trained caregivers
- Participating in educational programs focused on safety and wellness
- Joining community support groups and activity programs
- Utilizing respite care to rest and recharge

Staying connected ensures that care remains sustainable and compassionate.

Technology's Role in Caregiver Connection

Innovations in home-based technology now offer added peace of mind. Remote monitoring, medication reminders, safety sensors, and virtual health check-ins help caregivers support their loved ones while maintaining balance in their personal lives.

How SmithLife Homecare Keeps Families Plugged In

SmithLife Homecare's Continuum of Care model strengthens the care network for both caregivers and older adults by offering:

Care Coordination

Communication with families, physicians, therapists, and senior living partners keeps everyone aligned.

Professional In-Home Support

Trained caregivers assist with daily tasks such as mobility support, bathing, dressing, meal preparation, and medication reminders.

Hospital-to-Home Transition Support

Guidance during discharge and recovery helps families coordinate therapies, home safety modifications, and follow-up appointments.

Resource Navigation

We connect families to dementia care programs, caregiver counseling, safety evaluations, and community wellness activities.

Respite Services

Short-term coverage gives family caregivers time to rest, travel, and recharge without interrupting care.

Ongoing Communication

Regular updates and recommendations help prevent avoidable crises.

The Power of Community

When caregivers are connected to support, education, and professional guidance, their loved ones experience better outcomes. Caregivers also benefit emotionally and physically when they are not carrying the entire load alone.

A Message of Gratitude

To every caregiver supporting a parent, spouse, neighbor, or friend: thank you. Your compassion and commitment are the foundation of safe aging-in-place. During National Caregivers Month, take time to connect with programs, professionals, and resources designed to make care safer and more sustainable. SmithLife Homecare stands with you in staying Plugged Into Care, today and every day.

Tips from SmithLife Homecare

HELPFUL HINTS

Family Caregiver Checklist



☒ Get
enough
rest

☒ Take
breaks

☒ Ask for
help

Helpful Hints: Am I Plugged-In?

Caregiving is one of the most meaningful roles a person can take on, but it often comes with physical, emotional, and logistical challenges. In the rush to support a loved one, caregivers frequently overlook their own health and wellbeing. This brief self-checklist is designed to help caregivers pause, reflect, and identify

small areas where additional support could make a big difference. By staying plugged in to resources, education, and professional assistance, caregivers can provide safer, more sustainable care while protecting their own quality of life. SmithLife Homecare is here to help every step of the way.

Caregiver Self-Checklist: Staying Plugged In to Care

Use this quick checklist to reflect on your wellbeing and identify areas where additional support may help. Caregiving is meaningful, but no one is meant to do it alone.

Daily Well-being

- I am getting enough rest to feel alert and safe while providing care.
- I am eating regular meals and staying hydrated throughout the day.
- I take breaks when I feel mentally or physically exhausted.

Emotional Health

- I have someone I can talk to about the challenges of caregiving.
- I feel supported by family, friends, or community resources.
- I allow myself to ask for help when I need it.

Safety & Confidence

- I feel confident helping with mobility, transfers, and fall prevention.
- I have clear instructions about medications and routines.
- I know who to call if something changes suddenly.

Care Coordination

- I am up-to-date on appointments, therapy schedules, and follow-ups.
- I understand the care plan and feel comfortable asking questions.
- I track changes in mood, mobility, appetite, or cognition.

Respite & Relief

- I schedule time for personal errands, rest, and relationships.
- I know how to access respite care when needed.
- I take breaks without feeling guilty.

Education & Resources

- I stay informed about available caregiver support programs.
- I know where to find caregiver education and training.
- I'm aware of community wellness activities for older adults.

Home Safety

- The home environment is free of fall hazards and clutter.
- Necessary adaptive equipment is in place and being used correctly.
- I reassess needs when mobility or behavior changes.

If You Notice Three or More Items as “Needs Attention”

You may benefit from additional support, care coordination, or respite services. Reaching out is not a sign of weakness. It's a sign of planning, care, and sustainability.

How SmithLife Homecare Can Help You Stay Plugged In

Our Continuum of Care model can support you with:

- Respite and temporary caregiving coverage
- Discharge and hospital-to-home transition support
- Dementia-specific guidance and communication strategies
- Personalized care coordination
- Home safety recommendations
- Professional help with daily activities

Our team helps ensure you are never navigating care alone.

A Final Reminder

You matter.

Your health matters.

Your rest matters.

Your voice matters.

Staying plugged into care means caring for yourself, too.

Please reach out to SmithLife Homecare to find out how we can help. Visit smithlifehomecare.com or call us at 301-816-5020.

Happy Thanksgiving!



Thanksgiving as a Family Caregiver: Balancing Traditions, Roles, and Support

Thanksgiving is often a time for family connection, gratitude, and celebration. For many family caregivers, however, the day can feel overwhelming. Behind the scenes of a festive meal, caregivers may be juggling meal preparation, household hosting, medication schedules, mobility assistance, toileting needs,

and emotional support for an aging loved one. When caring for someone with cognitive decline or physical impairment, the holiday can add physical, mental, and logistical pressure. This year, remember that caregivers deserve support too. With planning and the right resources, Thanksgiving can remain a meaningful and positive experience for everyone at the table.

The Caregiver Reality During the Holidays

Family caregivers often find themselves managing multiple roles simultaneously, including:

- Host, chef, organizer, and cleaner
- Companion and emotional support
- Healthcare advocate
- Personal care assistant
- Mobility or transfer helper
- Navigator of family expectations and schedules

While others rest, caregivers keep moving. It's common to feel torn between honoring family traditions and providing safe, attentive care. That tension can lead to fatigue, stress, or feelings of guilt.

Talking Points for Preparing Relatives Ahead of Time

Preparing family members in advance can prevent confusion, unrealistic expectations, or hurt feelings.

Consider sharing:

- **Changes in Behavior or Abilities**-“Dad may repeat stories. It's best to respond warmly and redirect if needed.”
- **Communication Tips**-“Please introduce yourself and speak slowly. Loud backgrounds can overwhelm him.”
- **Physical Limitations**-“Mom tires easily. We may head to a quiet room after dinner.”
- **Conversation Boundaries**-“Let's steer away from stressful topics. Gentle, familiar subjects work best.”
- **Emotional Sensitivity**-“She may become anxious if too many people speak at once.”
- **Support Offers**-“If you see her standing without support, please ask if she needs help.”
- **Realistic Expectations**-“We may need to leave early depending on how she's feeling.”

Setting the tone ensures everyone is focused on comfort, connection and time together.

Strategies for a Successful Thanksgiving

- **Simplify the Environment-** Reduce clutter, remove throw rugs, and ensure pathways are clear.
- **Create a Quiet Retreat Space-** A calm room can prevent overstimulation.
- **Honor Routines-** Serve meals at normal times, maintain medication schedules, and ensure hydration.
- **Offer Inclusive Activities-** Small, simple tasks help maintain dignity and purpose.
- **Watch for Fatigue-** Plan shorter visits and flexible start/stop times.
- **Use Adaptive Seating-** Stable chairs with arms and wide aisles reduce fall risk.
- **Avoid Cooking Hazards-** Keep individuals with dementia away from hot surfaces and sharp tools.
- **Assign a “Holiday Buddy”-** Rotate the responsibility to avoid exhausting one caregiver.

Special Considerations for Cognitive Changes:

Aim for connection, not perfection

For an older adult living with dementia:

- Avoid correcting memory lapses publicly
- Introduce guests calmly and individually
- Focus on feelings, not facts
- Celebrate small moments of joy

Special Considerations for Physical Limitations

For mobility challenges:

- Minimize stairs
- Reserve accessible seating
- Provide grab bars in bathrooms
- Keep rooms well-lit
- Offer smaller food portions to prevent choking risks

Small adjustments can prevent major safety concerns.

Self-Care Reminder for Caregivers

During the holiday:

- Ask for help with cooking and cleanup
- Take short breaks to breathe
- Set kind boundaries when emotions run high
- Accept offers of support

SmithLife Homecare's Continuum of Care: Holiday Support

SmithLife Homecare can provide:

- Hourly support during gatherings
- Personal care before and after travel
- Safety supervision in busy environments
- Dementia-trained caregivers to redirect and comfort
- Respite coverage so you can rest, host, and connect

Our team helps ensure comfort for your loved one while protecting the joy of your holiday traditions.

A Thanksgiving Perspective

This holiday, remember:

- Your presence matters more than perfection
- Asking for help strengthens families
- Traditions can evolve without losing meaning

Caregiving is an act of love, and you deserve the support to experience gratitude and connection too. SmithLife Homecare is here to keep your family plugged into care, today and always.

Nurse's Corner

NURSE'S CORNER



Recognizing Family Caregivers: The Heart of Homecare

Written by: Essy Gurevich, BSN, RN

National Family Caregivers Month is a time to acknowledge the dedication of family members who care for loved ones living with chronic illness, disability, or the effects of aging. Their compassion allows countless individuals to remain safely at home, surrounded by the people and routines they cherish most.

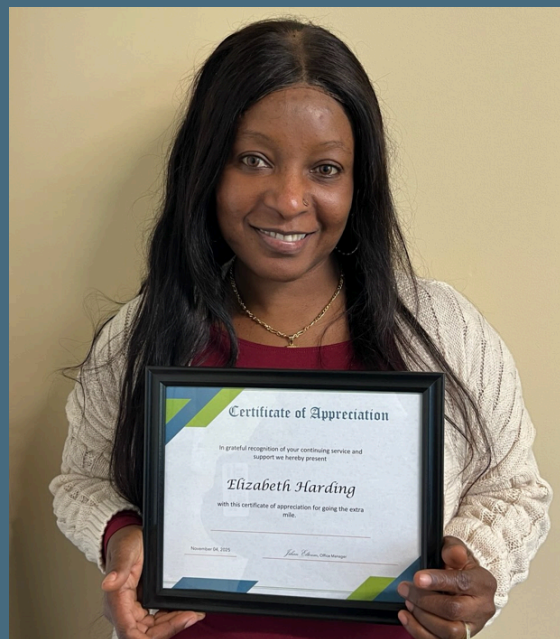
As a nurse in homecare, I understand how caregiving can be both rewarding and exhausting. Many family caregivers give endlessly without pausing for themselves. Yet even the most devoted caregiver needs time to rest and recharge. Self-care isn't selfish, it's essential for sustaining health and patience. Taking regular breaks, maintaining good sleep and nutrition, and simply stepping away for a few hours can prevent burnout and restore balance.

At SmithLife Homecare, we partner with families and community organizations to support those who give so much of themselves to others. Honoring your own well-being is an important part of the care you provide every day. There are resources available that can make a real difference. Though they may take a little time to explore, the rewards for your health and peace of mind are immense.

For example, look into respite programs in your area to see if you qualify. These services ensure that loved ones receive quality care while you have a chance to regroup, whether that means running errands, visiting friends, or simply resting at home. We encourage you to reach out to us to learn about available options. Whether you choose to hire homecare support or take another path, we're here to empower you and help you find the approach that's right for you and your loved one.

If you have questions, concerns, or simply need some encouragement, we're always here for you. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our team at SmithLife Homecare by calling [301-816-5020](tel:301-816-5020).

Caregivers of the Month



Pictured: Salem Weldeabizghi and Elizabeth Harding

November Caregivers of the Month Salem Weldeabizghi and Elizabeth Harding

This month, we're honored to recognize two outstanding caregivers, Salem Weldeabizghi and Elizabeth Harding, for their incredible dedication, professionalism, and compassion. Both exemplify what it means to provide care with heart, integrity, and consistency qualities that make a lasting difference in the lives of our clients and their families.

Salem is known for her gentle, patient approach and her willingness to go above and beyond in any situation. She approaches every shift with kindness and reliability, ensuring her clients feel comfortable, respected, and supported. Her positive attitude and sense of responsibility shine through daily, and she's always ready to step in to help. Salem's commitment reflects the true spirit of SmithLife Homecare dependable, caring, and client-centered in every way.

Elizabeth brings a quiet strength and steady dependability that make her an essential part of our caregiving team. She consistently delivers high-quality care and follows through on every task with focus and professionalism. Known for "getting things done," Elizabeth takes initiative, communicates clearly, and ensures each client's needs are met with precision and compassion. Her calm demeanor and strong work ethic set an example for others and make her deeply trusted by both clients and colleagues.

Together, Salem and Elizabeth represent the best of who we are as a team, compassionate professionals who take pride in their work and genuinely care about those they serve. Their consistency, teamwork, and commitment inspire us all.

We're proud to celebrate Salem Weldeabizghi and Elizabeth Harding, our November Caregivers of the Month. We're so grateful for all you do to make SmithLife Homecare a place where compassion truly leads the way.

With appreciation,
The SmithLife Homecare Team

The Latest from Our Blog



The Benefits of Aging in Place With Help From Professionals

When many people think about aging, they picture years spent in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. While there's nothing wrong with these options, growing older doesn't have to mean giving up the comfort and familiarity of your own home. More older adults are discovering that aging in place, or remaining in their own homes while receiving professional care, offers an excellent alternative to assisted living. Here are six reasons why long-term care at home is a top approach to aging in place. [\[Learn more about why long-term care at home is a top approach to aging in place on our blog.\]](#)

Easy Recipes



Warm Harvest Roasted Carrot–Apple Mash

A family-friendly side dish older adults can help prepare. This colorful Thanksgiving dish offers natural sweetness, warm flavor, and a soft consistency that's gentle on teeth, digestion, and swallowing. Carrots and apples roast together to create aroma and engagement without complicated steps.

Why It's Older-Adult Friendly

- Soft, mashable texture
- Easy to chew and swallow
- Naturally sweet (appealing if appetite is low)
- Can be eaten warm or room temp (safe for slower eaters)
- Easy for older adults to stir, season, and taste-test
- Anti-inflammatory spices support joint comfort

Ingredients

- 6 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 medium apples, peeled and chopped (Honeycrisp or Gala)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Pinch of nutmeg (optional)
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup (optional)
- Salt-free seasoning or very light salt
- 1–2 tbsp softened butter
- Fresh chopped parsley (optional garnish)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (204°C).
2. Toss carrots and apples in olive oil, cinnamon, and a small pinch of seasoning.
3. Spread evenly on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
4. Roast for 25–30 minutes until fork-tender and fragrant.
5. Transfer to a large mixing bowl.
6. Mash gently with a potato masher or fork.
7. Stir in softened butter and (optional) honey/maple syrup.
8. Taste together and adjust seasoning.
9. Serve warm, topped with fresh parsley if desired.

Tasks Older Adults Can Help With

- Sprinkling cinnamon
- Drizzling olive oil
- Stirring gently
- Mashing softly
- Choosing parsley leaves
- Taste-testing seasoning
- Helping plate with a serving spoon

Each step builds purpose, sensory engagement, and joy.

Variations

- Add sweet potato for a deeper flavor
- Swap apples for pears
- Add a pinch of ginger for memory-boosting benefits

Avoid (if there are chewing/swallowing concerns)

- Raw apple chunks
- Nuts or seeds as garnish
- Thick, sticky marshmallow toppings

Serving Tip

This dish pairs beautifully with turkey, stuffing, or as a warm snack for guests who arrive early.

Conversation Starter While Cooking Together

“What foods did we always serve at Thanksgiving when you were growing up?” These questions promote memory recall and emotional connection.

Join the SmithLife Community!

Have you connected with us on social media yet? If not, we'd love to see you there! Dive deeper into our community, follow us for updates on events, useful resources, and community highlights.

Never miss a moment - **follow us today!**



What's Happening



National Family Caregivers Month

Each November, we recognize National Family Caregivers Month, a time to honor the more than 53 million Americans who provide care to loved ones living with chronic illness, disability, or the effects of aging. Supported by national aging organizations like the National Council on Aging (NCOA), this month raises awareness of the responsibilities caregivers carry and the support they deserve. This year's theme, "Plugged Into Care," encourages caregivers to stay connected to resources, community programs, respite services, and professional support.

Caregivers often manage complex medical tasks, emotional needs, and daily activities—frequently while balancing work and family responsibilities. We encourage caregivers to explore local services, take breaks when needed, and reach out for assistance. No one should have to navigate caregiving alone. This month, we say thank you to all who selflessly support the wellbeing, dignity, and independence of others. Your efforts make a lasting difference every day.

Caregiving is love in action—yet no one should have to do it alone. National Family Caregivers Month encourages every caregiver to stay connected, ask for help, and use available supports. Because when caregivers thrive, everyone benefits.

[National Council on Aging](#)

BUILT TO LAST: YOUR ROADMAP TO A STRONGER, MORE BALANCED IMMUNE SYSTEM

Hosted by Hirsh Health Center

December 3, 2025 • 11:30 a.m.

Ring House | Evelyn Auerbach Social Hall



Built To Last: Your Roadmap To A Stronger, More Balanced Immune System

December 3, 2025

11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Ring House
1801 East Jefferson Street
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Internal medicine and lifestyle medicine physician Dr. Marsha Seidelman will explain the immune system's role in protecting against infections and cancer, and the influence of vaccines on our short- and long-term well-being. Dr. Seidelman will focus on the balancing act between having your immune system ready and willing to fight infections and cancer, but not constantly revved up and causing ongoing generalized inflammation.

She will also present options to improve your ability to fight infections within the framework of lifestyle medicine pillars. These include nutrition, physical activity, sleep, personal interactions, stress management and avoidance of toxins.

Objectives:

After this program, you will be able to explain:

- The relationship between healthy immune function and harmful inflammation.
- How lifestyle measures can be used to boost immunity.
- How to interpret labels on supplements.

The event will begin with tours of Hirsh Health Center. Lunch will be served.

Complimentary valet parking will be available. CE credit is available for social workers.

[Register here](#)

A Special Note From Our Team

As the holiday season approaches, we recognize that Thanksgiving can be both joyful and demanding for family caregivers. Between cooking, hosting, traveling, and making sure loved ones feel included and supported, the day often comes with added responsibilities that can feel overwhelming.

This month, we also honor National Family Caregivers Month, a nationwide observance dedicated to recognizing the strength, dedication, and compassion of those who provide care at home. This year's theme, "Plugged Into Care," encourages caregivers to connect with supportive services, resources, and communities that can lighten the load and improve emotional well-being.

We want to gently remind you that you do not have to do it all alone. Small moments, inviting someone to stir a bowl, mash vegetables, share a memory, or simply sit together, create connection, dignity, and joy. These shared activities are just as meaningful as the meal itself. And when traditions feel different this year, that's okay. What matters most is time together.

If you find yourself needing an extra hand, guidance, or respite, our team is here to support you. Whether that means preparing for a holiday gathering, providing supervision to keep everyone safe, or offering care so you can rest, we are honored to be part of your support system.

This season, we encourage you to:

- Ask for help when you need it
- Include loved ones in simple, safe tasks
- Schedule breaks to recharge
- Focus on connection, not perfection
- Explore respite resources and community programs

As we celebrate National Family Caregivers Month, we want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to every caregiver, your quiet acts of service make an immeasurable difference.

From all of us at SmithLife Homecare, thank you for the care, patience, and love you give every day. You are the heart of the holidays, and the heart of homecare. We wish you and your family a warm, safe, and meaningful Thanksgiving.



SmithLife Homecare is a leading provider of in-home care services in Maryland and Washington, D.C., specializing in senior care, dementia and Alzheimer's care, companion services, support for aging-in-place and support for complex medical recovery.

We are also the premier agency for nurse staffing, serving hospitals, rehabilitation centers, memory care facilities, and assisted living communities.

Contact us today to learn how we can help you or your loved ones.

Telephone: 301-816-5020

Website: smithlifehomecare.com

Email: info@smithlifehomecare.com



SmithLife Homecare is proudly owned by Charles E. Smith Life Communities, a trusted leader in senior care for over 115 years. Backed by a century-long legacy of excellence in healthcare, SmithLife Homecare provides compassionate, professional in-home support that empowers older adults to live independently and safely at home, or wherever they call home.

Licensed as a residential service agency by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Health Care Quality and Washington, D.C. Department of Health as a Home Support Agency. MD #RSA-01265 | DC #HSA-0014



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