

# Caring Solutions

Caregivers  
Out of Isolation  
Newfoundland  
and Labrador

*Best Wishes  
for the  
New Year*



**Inside this issue:**

The Kitchen Calendar is a valuable resource.

Can you claim the Caregiver Amount on Income Tax?

New Year's Resolution—Reduce or Quit

Poem

## WINTER EDITION 2010

### Take Care—Self Care Over the Holidays

Holidays are a time for reflection, celebration and traditions.

Many of us admit that the holiday can have stressful moments; for some it is a stressful event.

Getting the house ready, shopping, cooking, baking or mailing cards can become challenging when trying to keep up with daily Caregiver responsibilities.

Unresolved family conflicts, trying to live up to others' expectations, or feeling guilty for not

feeling full of "holiday cheer" can add to the stress.

**From Stress to Success** - If you are anticipating holiday stress or it sneaks up on you, here are a few things to consider:

**First, remind yourself that holiday stress is natural and normal.** Stress tells us to STOP, assess the situation and adjust plans if needed.

**Ask yourself - what are my personal coping strategies?** What choices did I make in the past that reduced my stress?

**Talk to the person**



**you are caring for.** Ask about their expectations and hopes for the holiday. If your care-receiver is not able to communicate, you know what will work best to make him or her feel comfortable.

**Do what you can.** Simplify traditions or make new ones. Delegate if possible. There is no "right" way - celebrate your way!

**Find ways to enjoy the holidays.** Talk to friends and family.

*continued on top of page 2*

## The Caring Solutions Newsletter

The "Caring Solutions" Newsletter is on our website and is widely distributed to caregivers, libraries, government officials and professionals. We welcome comments, including helpful tips for caregivers. If you no longer wish to receive this Newsletter, please contact the Caregiver Line.

**Share the "Caring Solutions" Newsletter — pass it on to another caregiver, or leave it in a public place, for example, a doctor's office.**

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## continued from p. 1 **Take Care - Self Care - Over the Holidays**

Encourage them to reach out to both you and the care-receiver so that everyone gets a break and a change of company. One idea is to ask someone to visit or take your family member for a drive to look at Christmas lights while you spend time doing something that you enjoy.

**Take care of yourself.** Find ways to rejuvenate and “recharge your batteries.”

Avoid a cold by washing hands frequently; and if at all possible, exercise and get enough sleep.

**Practice the power of positive self talk.** Say nice things to yourself. Be kind to yourself.

**Reach out for support.** It is natural to have emotional reactions to the challenges and responsibilities of caregiving. Be aware of your

thoughts and feelings because they influence your behavior and judgment. Sharing your feelings with someone you trust, a professional (including your family doctor) or with other caregivers can help.

**For more information phone the Caregiver Line.**

Inspired by and adapted from the Caregiver Times, Fall 2010, Caregiver Support Program, Vancouver, BC.

*Many of us get a calendar for Christmas. They are \$1 or \$2 at some stores. The best ones have big, white blocks for writing in. Calendars give you “at a glance” information.*

## **The Kitchen Calendar is a Valuable Resource**

Use a calendar to make “jot notes” that concern your care-receiver. This record of information is a valuable resource. Take it to doctors’ appointments or take it with you in an emergency situation that might require an ambulance. If a health care provider asks a question, you and the person you are caring for will have the answer.

Talk to your care-receiver about what to include in the calendar. Some ideas are doctors’ appointments, new medications or any changes to prescriptions. Keep track of injuries, infections or getting the flu. Record changes in behavior or mood. Trust your instincts and record what you think is important.

For care-receivers who are not able to communicate, it is important to record their food & fluid intake, urine output and bowel functions. Take note when a person is not eating enough food or not passing urine. Watch for dehydration or constipation. Get medical attention should any of these occur.

There is so much to remember in the run of a day - a calendar helps!  
To share tips that make your role as caregiver easier,  
send an email or call the Caregiver Line.



## Claim Caregiver Amount on your Income Tax, Line 315

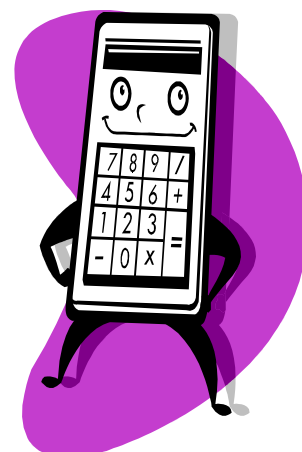
Do you provide care in your home to a person due to an impairment in physical or mental functions? As a caregiver you were able to claim a maximum amount of \$4,198 (2009)\* for each dependent. A dependent must:

- be your or your spouse's or common-law partner's child or grandchild, brother, sister, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, parent, or grandparent.
- be 18 years of age or older.
- have had a net income for 2009\* of less than \$18,534.

Birth dates of a parent or grand-parent must be before 1944.

For details, phone the Caregiver Line, talk to the person who does your income tax, or go to the Canada Revenue Agency website, [www.cra.gc.ca](http://www.cra.gc.ca).

(\*2010 amounts not yet published).



## New Years Resolution - Reduce or Quit

A popular resolution in Babylonian times (2000 BC) was the returning of borrowed farm equipment. Popular modern resolutions include promises to lose weight or quit smoking.

Do you have a desire to reduce or quit smoking? You only have to be thinking about it. Would you like to support your care-receiver in their efforts to live smoke free?

Phone the Smokers' Helpline, **1-800-363-5864** or **[www.smokershelp.net](http://www.smokershelp.net)**.

The Seniors Resource Centre NL has a GUIDE with information to support an older adult or senior to reduce or quit smoking. Phone 1-800-563-5599.



## I heard a Bird Sing

I heard a bird sing  
In the dark of December  
A magical thing  
And Sweet to Remember

"We are nearer to Spring  
Than we were in September,"  
I heard a bird sing  
In the dark of December.

~ Oliver Herford ~



## NL Caregivers Out of Isolation

Information and  
Emotional Support for  
Unpaid Caregivers

Monday—Friday,  
8:30 am—4:30 pm

[www.seniorsresource.ca](http://www.seniorsresource.ca)

**1-888-571-2273**

  
**709-726-2370**

24-HR Mental Health

Crisis Line -

“For anyone

who needs to talk.”

1-888-737-4668

Caregiving is often a full time  
commitment.

There are joys and challenges.

Caregivers are teenagers and  
adults including seniors.

Caregivers provide care for a  
spouse, partner, parent, adult  
child, relative or friend.

**The Caregiver Program offers:**

Phone Line

Referral

Caring Solutions Newsletter

**Provincial Networks &**

**Support Groups:**

Springdale, Twillingate, Humber Valley Region,  
Happy Valley– Goose Bay, Spaniard's Bay,  
Clareville, St. John's, Mount Pearl

Find out how to start a support  
group in your community.

Call the Caregiver Line.