

# Caregiver Connection

Called to  
CARE

A program of Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

A publication that connects caregivers with resources, support and each other

March/April 2017

## Caregiver Cafés

Drop in to chat with fellow caregivers, meet health care providers and learn about community resources.

### Mar. 16 & Apr. 20, from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

The Soul Center at Beth El Congregation  
8101 Park Heights Ave., Pikesville, MD 21208

**Info./Register:** rachels@bethelbal.com or  
410-484-0411 ext. 1103

### Mar. 17 & Apr. 21, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Enoch Pratt Free Library  
3601 Eastern Ave., Baltimore, MD 21224

### Mar. 29 & Apr. 26, from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Johns Hopkins Bayview, 5th floor waiting room

### Apr. 26, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Mt. Pleasant Church and Ministries  
600 Radecke Ave., Baltimore, MD 21206

**Info.:** 410-550-1660 (*no registration is required*)

## Lunch & Learn:

### Handling Family Conflicts While Caregiving

Learn about mediation strategies and community resources available to help families and caregivers resolve disputes and develop long-term solutions that meet the needs of everyone involved.

#### April 13

12 to 2 p.m.

Knott Conference Center, Johns Hopkins Bayview

**Register by April 10:** 410-550-1660

## Community Events

### Yoga, Chat & Chew for Caregivers

Get rejuvenated with relaxation exercises, a healthy lunch and uplifting conversation.

#### March 9

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sollers Point Multipurpose Center  
323 Sollers Point Road, Dundalk, MD

**Info./Register:** 410-550-1660

## Community Partner Spotlight:



Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc. (CHAI) has provided housing and community-based services to seniors in northwest Baltimore for more than 30 years. Through CHAI's Aging in Community strategy, the organization promotes positive aging to help seniors at various stages of health and independence remain safely in their homes for as long as possible.

Programs and activities include:

- **The Myerberg Center**—helps adults ages 55 and over to remain active, healthy and engaged in the community; offers art and humanities programs, wellness, health screenings and community resources
- **Northwest Neighbors Connecting**—a member-led and supported village comprised of seniors living in the community who connect and support one another to age in place
- **Senior Home Repair Program**—helps low-income seniors maintain safety and prevent falls through home repairs and modifications; a trusted source for general repairs and home maintenance
- **Senior Home Benefits Program**—connects seniors to housing-related benefits to help manage the cost of maintaining their homes
- **16 Weinberg Senior Living**—safe, affordable housing for low-income seniors in northwest Baltimore; offers services and activities to enhance their lives

CHAI's mission is to strengthen neighborhoods with a significant Jewish presence by developing and enhancing housing, affecting community development, and supporting aging-in-community.

For more information about CHAI, visit [chaibaltimore.org](http://chaibaltimore.org) or call **410-500-5300**.

# The Surprising Health Bonus of Caregiving

With demands on time, energy, emotions and relationships, caregiving isn't easy. You might think it would take its toll on the physical health of those who care for family members with chronic conditions. But new research offers a positive surprise—family caregivers may live longer.



Johns Hopkins experts looked at six years of health data for 3,503 caregivers and an equal number of non-caregivers. Those who regularly tended to the needs of a family member enjoyed a nine-month extension in life expectancy—even if they felt some stress and strain. The researchers also saw no differences in chronic health issues between the two groups.

“Taking care of a chronically ill person in your family is often associated with stress, and caregiving has been previously linked to increased mortality rates,” says **David L. Roth, Ph.D.**, director of the Johns Hopkins Center on Aging and Health. But this study’s results painted a much more hopeful picture. “In many cases, caregivers reported receiving benefits like enhanced self-esteem, recognition and gratitude from their care recipients,” Roth adds.

If you are a caregiver—or know one—these smart strategies could help harness this advantage:

## Stay social.

In an earlier Johns Hopkins study, researchers found that caregivers who stayed connected with friends and other family members had better emotional health than those who felt isolated, says researcher **Peter Rabins, M.D., M.P.H.**, director of geriatric psychiatry.

Request specific help so you can get away, Rabins suggests: “Could Mom stay with you for a week in April?” or “Could you spend two hours with Bob next Wednesday while I take the afternoon off?”

## Make your own health a priority.

Eat well, carve out time for exercise (even in short bursts) and get the medical care you need, including checkups, tests and flu shots. About one in six caregivers say their responsibilities take a toll on their physical well-being. In one survey, three-quarters of caregivers who were in fair to poor health didn't see their doctors as recommended. More than half admitted to less-than-healthy eating and exercise habits.

## Draw strength from your faith.

Caregivers who found meaning in their work through their religion or spiritual beliefs also had better emotional health in our study, even if they didn't go to religious services,” Rabins says.

*Reprinted from [hopkinsmedicine.org/health/healthy\\_aging](http://hopkinsmedicine.org/health/healthy_aging)*

## Tax Time: Federal Tax Assistance for Caregivers



AARP Foundation Tax-Aide offers free, individualized tax preparation for low-to moderate-income taxpayers—especially those 50 and older—at more than 5,000 locations nationwide. To find a location near you, visit [aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp\\_taxaide](http://aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide).

Tax Aide also promotes MyFreeTaxes, an easy, safe, and free way to file your taxes online. If you or your family have a combined income of \$64,000 or less, you may be eligible for this benefit. Visit [unitedway.org/myfreetaxes](http://unitedway.org/myfreetaxes) to see if you qualify.

Special thanks to The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation for their generous financial support of Called to Care. *Caregiver Connection* is published 6 times a year by Johns Hopkins Bayview's Called to Care program. **W. Daniel Hale, Ph.D.**, director, Healthy Community Partnership; **Meghan Rossbach**, editor; **Tammy Marsh, Kimberly Monson, Candyce Norris, Linda Stewart**, contributors.

Phone: 410-550-8018; Web: [hopkinsmedicine.org/jhbmccalledtocare](http://hopkinsmedicine.org/jhbmccalledtocare)