Caring for the Care Giver

Elevate Respite
Climbing That Mountain

- Colorado Mountains are often referred to as “14er’s” – they are 14,000+ feet above sea level.
- Mountaineering is dangerous, and those dangers are endless; quick-moving weather, unstable terrain, wildlife, mistakes of other climbers, any of these can equal disaster on the climb.
- What’s the reward? The incredible view, community with your fellow climbers, and the empowerment of the physical, mental and emotional strength!
- There is a direct parallel to being a caregiver.
- Story
Mount Massive
Special Needs Parenting is like looking both ways before you cross the street only to get hit by an airplane.

Hat Tip: Single Dad Laughing

www.prayingforparker.com
Demands of Caregiving

• As a caregiver, the demands can be exhausting and overwhelming:
  • Balancing schedules
  • Managing appointments
  • Compassion Fatigue
  • Financial stress
  • Emotional stress
  • Relationship stress
  • Physical stress
  • “Many caregivers often neglect their own health so that they can care for a loved one. Our research has shown that caregivers often report that caregiving has worsened their health – nearly half reported that their health has gotten worse as a result of caregiving. Of those who say their health has declined, 53% report that declining health has made it harder to support their loved ones.” - National Alliance for Caregiving
Compassion Fatigue

- According to the Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary, "the physical and mental exhaustion and emotional withdrawal experienced by those that care for sick or traumatized people for an extended period of time."

- What happens to a caregiver experiencing Compassion Fatigue?
  - Increased risk of physical and mental illness
  - Substance abuse
  - Decreased sense of purpose
  - Isolation
  - Depression
  - Disconnect from family, friends, work and community
  - Poor outlook on life
  - Decreased adaptability
  - Increased risk of care recipient abuse or neglect
Taming the Compassion Fatigue Beast

• Self-care is NOT optional!
  • Mother Teresa required the nuns she worked with to take 1 full year off every 4-5 years.

• Creating a plan:
  • Eating healthy and regular exercise
  • Create space on your calendar for you each day
  • Attend church or community functions
  • Ask for help
  • Have a contingency plan
  • Accountability
  • Attend support groups
  • Maintain a sense of humor
Volunteer-Based Respite Care

• “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

• People desire to have a purpose and to be part of something bigger than themselves.

• 3 Requirements
  • 1. Passion
  • 2. Volunteers
  • 3. Location
Volunteer-Based Respite Care

- Who is the target audience?
- What will the boundaries be (ages, diagnoses, siblings, number of times respite is offered, cost, etc.)?
- Safety (nurse, background checks, insurance)
- Programming (activities, relationships, paperwork)
- Funding (in-kind donations, business/strategic sponsors, donors)
- What is the vision for the organization?
- Volunteers (recruitment, retention and appreciation)
Volunteer-Based Respite Care
Faith-Based Models of Respite

- Why is a Special Needs Ministry necessary in churches?
  - Integration
  - Place of belonging and community for families
  - Brings value to everyone in the community, not just those that “fit the mold”
  - Provides a break for the caregivers
  - Builds relationships
Faith-Based Models of Respite

- Safety is the key
- Addressing the needs (medical vs. behavior/sensory)
- Buddy program
- Sensory Friendly space
- Point Person
- Training
- Asking for help!! People can’t help if they don’t know there is a need.
  - People want to be helpful, so help bring meaning to their time volunteering!