

# PRIME TIMES

AN ELDER CARE PUBLICATION | March 2026

Issue 3  
Volume 35



AboutElderCare.org | (918) 336-8500  
1223 Swan Drive, Bartlesville, OK 74006



# Recognizing the Signs of Caregiver Fatigue

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

If you are caring for an aging spouse, parent, or friend, you may be running on empty and telling yourself, “I’m fine.” Health researchers have a different message. Long-term caregiving stress has been linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and even frailty and cognitive decline among caregivers themselves.

Studies of dementia caregivers show that chronic stress can weaken the immune system, slow wound healing, and make vaccines less effective, leaving caregivers more vulnerable to illness. A landmark study of older spousal caregivers found that those who reported high emotional strain had a 63% higher risk of death over four years compared with non-caregivers the same age. More recent national data from the CDC show caregivers have higher rates of depression and other unfavorable health indicators than non-caregivers. In short, caregiver fatigue is not just “being tired”; it is a serious health risk.

What does caregiver fatigue feel like? You might notice constant exhaustion, trouble sleeping, getting sick more often, feeling irritable or numb, or losing interest in activities you once enjoyed. You may find it hard to concentrate, feel guilty when you take time for yourself, or feel like no one understands what you’re carrying. These are warning lights on the dashboard, not signs of weakness.

The good news is that help is available, and small changes make a real difference. Regular breaks, exercise you enjoy, staying connected with friends,

and sharing the load with family or trusted helpers all protect your health. Support groups and education programs also reduce stress and improve coping skills.

At Elder Care, we walk alongside caregivers. Our Caregiver Support Group, Savvy Caregiver education, DayBreak Adult Day Health Center, EC Active Center, and one-on-one support offer practical tools and much-needed breathing room. You are not alone in this journey, and taking care of yourself is one of the most important ways you care for the person you love.

If you feel like you are experiencing caregiver fatigue, call Elder Care at (918) 336-8500 and ask to speak to a professional who can point you in the right direction.



# Spotlight on DayBreak

by Sheila Tucker, Director of DayBreak Adult Day Health Center

At Elder Care, we talk often about caring for the whole person, mind, body, and spirit. Nowhere is that more evident than inside DayBreak Adult Day Health Center, where every day is built intentionally to support individuals living with dementia or age-related challenges while giving family caregivers a much-needed break.

A typical morning at DayBreak starts with warm greetings, a familiar routine that helps participants feel safe and grounded. After breakfast, prepared fresh and tailored to individual dietary needs, the room fills with gentle conversation and soft music as participants ease into the day. Morning activities often include art projects, cognitive games, music therapy, chair exercise, and social engagement designed to support memory, mood, and mobility.

Mid-morning, you'll find small groups gathered around the tables working on puzzles, reminiscing with staff, or enjoying tactile activities that nurture fine motor skills and creativity. Our team pays close attention to each participant's needs, preferences, and energy level, adapting activities to meet them where they are. This person-centered approach helps participants feel successful and valued, no matter their cognitive ability.

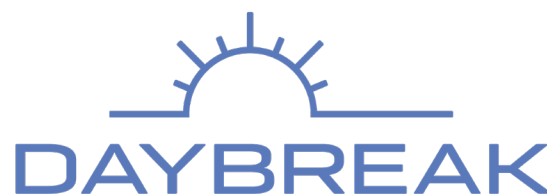
Lunch is served restaurant-style, with the dietary needs and preferences of each participant in mind. For many participants, mealtimes are a highlight, sharing stories, laughing with friends, and feeling a sense of belonging. After lunch comes a quiet period for relaxation or restorative rest, which helps prevent afternoon fatigue and allows participants to reset before the next round of engagement.

Afternoons at DayBreak are lively and upbeat. You might see a lively game of dominoes, a sing-along, a craft session, or an innovative themed activity created by our highly trained staff. These programs are more than entertainment; they are carefully designed to improve cognition, increase social interaction, and enhance quality of life.

For caregivers, DayBreak provides something equally important: peace of mind. Families know their loved ones are safe, engaged, and supported by the region's leading experts in aging services. This respite allows caregivers to work, run errands, rest, or simply breathe, all essential for their own long-term health.

DayBreak is a community filled with compassion, purpose, and joy. If you or someone you love may benefit from daytime support, we invite you to schedule a visit and experience the DayBreak difference firsthand.

If you would like to learn more about DayBreak or schedule a visit, please contact Sheila Tucker at [day@abouteldercare.org](mailto:day@abouteldercare.org) or call (918) 336-8500.



ADULT DAY HEALTH & ACTIVITY CENTER

# Restoring Strength, Confidence and Independence

by Baylor Reese, PT, DPT, Foundation Therapy Specialists

Staying independent as we age often comes down to one key factor: strength and balance. When mobility declines, even simple daily activities, such as climbing stairs, getting out of a chair, or walking safely across a room, can become challenging. That's where Foundation Therapy Specialists, a division of Elder Care, can help.

Our licensed physical therapists work one-on-one with individuals to restore strength, improve balance, reduce pain, and increase overall mobility. Whether someone is recovering from surgery, managing arthritis, rebuilding endurance after an illness, or simply noticing a gradual loss of strength, physical therapy provides a personalized plan focused on measurable progress.

Physical therapy is about more than exercise. It is about rebuilding confidence. When balance improves, the fear of falling decreases. When strength increases, daily tasks feel manageable again. When mobility returns, independence is protected. Early intervention can also prevent minor issues from becoming major setbacks.

Many people do not realize that Oklahoma is a direct access state for physical therapy. This means you do not need a physician referral to schedule an evaluation. If you are experiencing weakness, instability, or difficulty with movement, you can contact Foundation Therapy Specialists directly.



We invite you to contact us at (918) 766-0391 or [foundation@abouteldercare.org](mailto:foundation@abouteldercare.org) to schedule an evaluation. Our team will work with you to develop a customized physical therapy plan designed to restore strength, build confidence, and help you continue living life on your terms.

Regaining mobility is possible, and independence is worth protecting.

# When a Little Support Makes All the Difference

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

Life can change quickly. A fall. A hospital stay. A new diagnosis. In a matter of days, families can find themselves facing an urgent need for mobility equipment, along with unexpected financial stress

Elder Care's Medical Equipment Loan Program helps bridge that gap.

Through this program, we provide essential items such as walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs, bedside commodes, and other safety equipment at no cost to individuals and families throughout our region. For many aging adults, these items are not simply conveniences; they are critical tools that allow them to remain safely at home.

For individuals living on fixed incomes, purchasing medical equipment can be overwhelming. Even short-term recovery needs can carry significant costs. Our loan program removes that barrier, offering immediate access to the equipment needed to prevent falls, support healing, and promote stability.

The right equipment often determines whether someone can confidently move from room to room, bathe safely, attend follow-up medical appointments, or continue participating in family and community life. A walker can restore balance and confidence. A shower chair can prevent a dangerous accident. A wheelchair can ensure continued connection to the world outside the home.

Each piece of equipment is carefully cleaned, inspected, and prepared before being loaned. Because of generous donations from community members, we can maintain a ready inventory for those who need assistance.

While the program may seem simple, its impact is profound. It reduces preventable injuries. It eases financial strain. It supports aging in place, something many adults strongly desire.

If you or someone you know needs medical equipment, we encourage you to contact Elder Care. And if you have gently used equipment to donate, your contribution could make an immediate difference for a neighbor in need.

Sometimes, a little support truly makes all the difference.



## Why Your Monetary Gifts Matter More Than Ever

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

Every day at Elder Care, lives are touched in meaningful ways. A caregiver receives guidance during a difficult season, a DayBreak participant enjoys a nutritious meal and social connection, or an aging adult regains strength through outpatient therapy. Behind each of these moments is something simple yet powerful: the generosity of people who choose to invest in our mission.

Monetary gifts play a unique and essential role in sustaining Elder Care's work. While grants and program-specific funding provide valuable support, they often come with restrictions on how the dollars may be used. Unrestricted donations, gifts from individuals, families, businesses, and community partners, give Elder Care the flexibility to respond to urgent needs and emerging challenges across all service areas.

This flexibility has never been more important. Rising costs for food, supplies, and staffing are impacting programs across Elder Care, from DayBreak meals to therapy equipment, caregiver resources, and community outreach. At the same time, the demand for services continues to grow as more aging adults seek support, many of whom live on fixed incomes or below the poverty line. Monetary gifts help bridge these gaps, ensuring that essential services remain accessible and that no one is turned away due to financial hardship. Your donation has a ripple effect. A monthly gift can provide meals, activity supplies, or program materials that enhance quality of life. A one-time contribution can help expand community outreach



or support caregiver education. Larger gifts or legacy contributions can strengthen the Friends of Elder Care Endowment, providing long-term stability for future generations.

Beyond direct services, monetary gifts create breathing room, allowing Elder Care to plan proactively, strengthen staffing, expand programming, and innovate to improve lives. This stability helps Elder Care meet the growing needs of over 2,800 individuals each year throughout 11 counties.

Most importantly, monetary giving is a partnership. It reflects a shared belief that aging adults deserve dignity, independence, and compassionate care. It reflects trust in the work we do every day.

If you have ever wondered whether your gift truly makes a difference, the answer is yes — profoundly and consistently. We are grateful to every donor who stands with us. Together, we are building a stronger, healthier community for older adults and caregivers across our region.

# March Events at Elder Care

## Prime Times

Published monthly by  
Elder Care

## Program Management

Christina Bishop  
Executive Director

Michael Colaw  
Development Director

Claudia Dilbeck  
Community Outreach Director

Deanna Dodson  
Client Services Director

Jennifer Ennis  
Administrative Director

Josh Lindblom, PT, DPT  
Director of Therapy

Shelia Tucker  
DayBreak Director

## Board Members

Mark Wilburn  
President

John Gorman  
Vice President

John Ford  
Treasurer

Kelli Blair

Stephen Colaw

Dale Copeland

Bob Fraser

Susan Krall

Richard Mitchell

Debbie Mueggenborg, CPA

Virginia Sawyer

Steve Smith

Karen V. Waddell

Wayne Walthall

Kathy Zervas

Programs and services are  
partially funded by



Bartlesville Regional  
United Way

**BASIC  
LIFE SUPPORT  
& CPR  
TRAINING**

Join us for a Basic Life Support (BLS) CPR Course. Gain hands-on training in adult, child, and infant CPR, AED use, and choking relief techniques in this American Heart Association course designed for healthcare professionals, caregivers, and community members.

**\$55 PER PERSON  
LIMITED TO 12 PARTICIPANTS**

**TUESDAY  
MARCH 17  
START AT:  
8AM - 12PM**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE [abouteldercare.org](http://abouteldercare.org)

*Spring Refresh*  
**DINNER WITH  
FRIENDS**

**March 5th**  
5:30pm - 7:00pm

**\$15 PER PERSON**  
FOOD • LIVE MUSIC

Make reservation today!  
918.336.8500

SPONSORED BY

*Chick-fil-e*

**THE KOSTER**  
TEAM  
918-336-8500  
[www.kosterpartners.com](http://www.kosterpartners.com)

**PERSPECTIVE**  
ADVISORS, LLC

1223 Swan Drive, Bartlesville, OK  
[www.abouteldercare.org](http://www.abouteldercare.org)

**COOKING  
DEMO WITH  
Marjorie**

**March 10**  
5PM - 7PM

**\$40 PER PERSON**

**the eatery.**  
BY A WIFE & A COOK

**elder care**  
ABOUTELDERCARE.ORG | 918.336.8500

# This Month's Donors

In appreciation of contributions to Elder Care in February 2026

William and Sandra Bath  
Darrell Coe  
ConocoPhillips  
Tonya Deal  
Diversified Systems Resources  
Mel Lemmons  
James and Kathy Lucas  
Joel and Shirley Martin  
Gary and Patricia Parrish  
Gail Richardson  
Larry and Linda Shoemaker  
Pam Snelson  
Walmart Supply Chain

Thank you!  
TO OUR DONORS

Complete this form, and mail to Elder Care with your gift

**Yes. I want to support Elder Care's mission:**

*"To ensure mature adults live happy, healthy, independent lives in their own environment."*

Enclosed is my gift

\$200  \$100  \$50  \$35  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please make checks payable to Elder Care)*

First / Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**"The gift you give today may be the gift that impacts  
you and your family tomorrow."**

Please charge my credit card

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



1223 Swan Drive Bartlesville, OK 74006  
918-336-8500  
[www.abouteldercare.org/give-today](http://www.abouteldercare.org/give-today)

We sincerely apologize for any unintended error or omission. Due to publication deadlines, acknowledgment of gifts may take up to 60 days in Prime Times Publication.

Give online at:  
[AboutElderCare.org/giving/donate-today/](http://AboutElderCare.org/giving/donate-today/)