

PRIME TIMES

AN ELDER CARE PUBLICATION | August 2026

Issue 8
Volume 35



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



Volunteer Spotlight: Jessica Swan-Warlick

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

When you ask Jessica why she volunteers at Elder Care, her answer is simple: "The people."

Originally from Lancaster, California, Jessica moved to Bartlesville when she was just three years old. Growing up, she often heard her mother and great-grandparents talk about Elder Care. Watching her great-grandparents enjoy the friendships and sense of community they found here left a lasting impression.

"We all age," Jessica says. "I saw how Elder Care kept them active and connected. When I became a stay-at-home mom, I wanted to find a way to give back to our community."

Since then, Jessica has become one of Elder Care's versatile volunteers, lending a hand wherever it's needed. Whether she's welcoming visitors at the reception desk, assembling informational brochures, filing paperwork, helping with Dinner with Friends, or joining participants for bingo and dominoes at the EC Active Center, Jessica brings enthusiasm and kindness to every task.

"It's fun spending time with the seniors who come to Elder Care," she says. "They have great stories and so much life."

One story, in particular, still makes her smile.

"One participant shared a story about having an encounter with a pygmy rattlesnake while gardening," Jessica recalls with a laugh.

"Apparently, you should always wear gloves when gardening!" Moments like these remind

her that volunteering isn't just about giving, it's also about learning from the incredible experiences of others.

For Jessica, the greatest rewards have been building relationships and experiencing the joy of helping others. Her commitment is rooted in a deep love for Bartlesville and the belief that caring for one another makes the entire community stronger.

"I want Bartlesville to thrive," she says.

"That means making sure the people in our community are cared for."

Her encouragement to anyone considering volunteering is heartfelt.

"Aging happens to all of us. Volunteering helps make Elder Care stronger and allows more people to receive the support they need. Someday, we'll all want a community that's ready to cheer us on, care for us, and celebrate us."

Thank you, Jessica, for your compassion, generosity, and the difference you make every day. Volunteers like you help ensure that Elder Care continues its mission of helping aging adults live happy, healthy, independent, and active lives.



Elder Care Announces Elonda Tucker as Community Engagement Coordinator

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

If you've visited Elder Care over the past few years, chances are you've been greeted by Elonda Tucker's warm smile and friendly personality. Since joining Elder Care as receptionist in 2022, Elonda has welcomed thousands of visitors while helping connect aging adults, caregivers, and families with the services they need.

Now, Elder Care is excited to announce Elonda's promotion to Community Engagement Coordinator, a newly expanded role designed to strengthen connections between Elder Care and the community.

In her new position, Elonda will coordinate volunteers, support community outreach, assist with events and educational programs, manage social media communications, and serve as a key point of contact for individuals seeking Elder Care's services. She will also help lead Elder Care's Volunteer Chaperone Program, recruiting and training volunteers who provide transportation for aging adults attending medical appointments and accessing essential community services.

"We are absolutely thrilled for Elonda to join our Community Relations and Outreach team," said Claudia Dilbeck, Director of Community Relations and Outreach. "She brings an incredible background of service, a wealth of knowledge about our organization, and an amazing ability to connect with people. More importantly, she has a heart of gold and a genuine passion for helping others. Anyone who has walked through our doors knows how welcoming and compassionate she is, and I can't think of a better person to help strengthen Elder Care's relationships throughout our community."

Development Director Michael Colaw added, "Elonda has long been one of the first faces people associate with Elder Care. Her compassion, professionalism, and servant's heart make her a natural fit for this role, and I know she will continue to build meaningful relationships that advance our mission and strengthen our community."

Elonda looks forward to building partnerships with local organizations, churches, schools, businesses, and volunteers while helping share Elder Care's mission of empowering older adults to live happy, healthy, independent, and active lives.

Please join us in congratulating Elonda on this exciting opportunity. Whether you're interested in volunteering, attending an event, or learning more about Elder Care's programs, Elonda is ready to help you get connected.



Aging in Place: A Room-by-Room Home Safety Tour

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

For many aging adults, there is no place they'd rather be than home. Aging in place allows individuals to remain in familiar surroundings, maintain independence, and stay connected to their community. Fortunately, a few simple changes throughout the home can make daily living safer and more comfortable.

Front Entrance: Start at the front door. Ensure walkways are level and free of cracks or clutter. Install sturdy handrails on both sides of steps and consider motion-activated lighting to improve visibility after dark. A secure, non-slip welcome mat can also help prevent falls.

Living Room: Arrange furniture to create wide, clear walking paths. Remove throw rugs or secure them with non-slip backing. Keep electrical cords tucked away from walkways and place frequently used items within easy reach to avoid unnecessary bending or climbing.

Kitchen: Good lighting is essential. Store everyday dishes, cookware, and pantry items between waist and shoulder height to reduce reaching or stooping. Wipe up spills promptly and use non-slip mats only if they are securely fastened to the floor.

Bathroom: Bathrooms are one of the most common locations for falls. Install grab bars near the toilet and inside the shower or bathtub. Use non-slip mats or adhesive strips in the tub, and consider a handheld showerhead and shower chair for added comfort and stability.

Bedroom: Make it easy to move safely at night by keeping a lamp or flashlight within reach of the bed. Remove clutter from pathways, and consider installing nightlights between the bedroom and bathroom. A bed that is too high or too low can also make getting in and out more difficult.

Small improvements today can help prevent injuries tomorrow. If you have concerns about balance, mobility, or safely navigating your home, talk with your healthcare provider or a physical or occupational therapist. They can recommend personalized strategies to help you remain safe and independent.

With thoughtful planning and a few practical updates, your home can continue to be the comfortable, welcoming place you've always enjoyed.

If you'd like more information on Elder Care's home services, call us at (918) 336-8500 or email care@abouteldercare.org.



Caring for the Caregiver

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

When a loved one begins to need extra help, family members often step into the role of caregiver without giving it a second thought. They manage medications, coordinate appointments, prepare meals, provide transportation, and offer comfort through life's many challenges. While caregiving is an act of love, it can also be physically, emotionally, and mentally exhausting. At Elder Care, we believe caregivers deserve care, too.

Our Caregiver Support Group provides a safe, welcoming place where caregivers can share experiences, ask questions, learn from one another, and find encouragement from people who understand the unique challenges of caring for an aging loved one. Whether you are caring for a spouse, parent, sibling, friend, or neighbor, you will find compassion, practical resources, and a community of support.

The group meets every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. at Elder Care and is led by Joanie Elmore, whose compassionate leadership helps create an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable sharing their experiences. Joanie provides helpful information, facilitates meaningful discussions, and ensures that each participant knows they are not facing their caregiving journey alone.

Many participants tell us that the friendships they have built through the support group have become just as valuable as the information they receive. It is a place where people celebrate victories, navigate difficult days together, and

discover practical solutions to common caregiving challenges.

One of the most important lessons caregivers learn is that caring for themselves is not selfish; it is essential. Taking time to recharge allows caregivers to continue providing the best possible care for those who depend on them. If you are caring for an aging loved one, or know someone who is, we invite you to join us. There is no cost to attend, and newcomers are always welcome.

For more information about Elder Care's Caregiver Support Group or any of our programs and services, please call us at (918) 336-8500 or visit us at 1223 Swan Drive in Bartlesville.

You don't have to walk the caregiving journey alone; we're here to help.



Myths About Growing Older

by Claudia Dilbeck, Director of Community Relations & Outreach

Growing older comes with many changes, but it also comes with a surprising number of myths. Unfortunately, believing these misconceptions can discourage older adults from staying active, seeking help, or enjoying life to its fullest. Let's separate fact from fiction.

Myth #1: Memory loss is a normal part of aging.

While it's common to occasionally forget where you left your keys or someone's name, significant memory loss is not a normal part of aging.

Persistent confusion or changes that interfere with daily life should be discussed with a healthcare provider, as they may signal an underlying medical condition that can often be treated or managed.

Myth #2: Older adults should avoid exercise.

In reality, regular physical activity is one of the best ways to maintain strength, balance, flexibility, and overall health. Even moderate activities like walking, stretching, swimming, or chair exercises can reduce the risk of falls, improve heart health, and boost mood. Always consult your healthcare provider before beginning a new exercise program.

Myth #3: Falls are just an unavoidable part of getting older.

Many falls can be prevented. Improving balance and strength, reviewing medications, having regular vision and hearing checks, and making simple home safety improvements can significantly reduce the risk of falling.

Myth #4: It's too late to learn something new.

The brain continues to learn throughout life. Whether it's mastering a new hobby, learning to use technology, volunteering, or taking a class, challenging your mind helps keep it active and engaged while building confidence and social connections.

Myth #5: Feeling lonely is simply part of aging.

Although some older adults experience loneliness, it should never be accepted as inevitable. Staying connected through family, friends, volunteer opportunities, community programs, or senior centers can improve both emotional and physical well-being.

Growing older doesn't mean giving up independence, purpose, or opportunities to thrive. By challenging common myths and focusing on healthy habits, older adults can continue living active, meaningful lives. The truth is that healthy aging isn't about avoiding change; it's about embracing the possibilities that come with each new stage of life.



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
Foundation Therapy Director
Shelia Tucker
DayBreak Director

Board Members
John Ford
President
John Gorman
Vice President
Dale Copeland
Treasurer

Kelli Blair
Stephen Colaw
Bob Fraser
Shelley Koster
Susan Krall
Debbie Mueggenborg, CPA
Virginia Sawyer
Steve Smith
Karen V. Waddell
Mark Wilburn

Programs and services are
partially funded by



DayBreak Scholarship Fund

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

For decades, Elder Care has been blessed to receive a block grant from Oklahoma Human Services that allowed us to provide scholarships for individuals attending DayBreak Adult Day Health Center. These scholarships have helped aging adults and adults with disabilities receive the care, supervision, meals, activities, and social connection they need, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Unfortunately, in July, we were notified that this longstanding grant will sunset at the end of 2026. While we understand that funding priorities change over time, the impact on local families will be significant.

The scholarship program has served as a lifeline for many participants. Some families have relied on these funds because they simply could not afford the cost of care. Others have used scholarship assistance as a temporary bridge while waiting for approval of Veterans benefits or Oklahoma ADvantage Medicaid services. Without this assistance, many individuals could face delays in receiving the care they need, while caregivers are left with few options.

At Elder Care, we believe that no one should be denied the opportunity to participate in DayBreak because of

financial hardship. That is why we are launching the DayBreak Scholarship Fund.

This new fund will ensure that financial assistance remains available for those who need it most. Every gift, large or small, will help provide meaningful days filled with friendship, nutritious meals, engaging activities, health monitoring, and compassionate care for participants while offering peace of mind to their families and caregivers.

As our community continues to age, the demand for affordable adult day health services will only grow. Together, we can ensure that DayBreak remains accessible to everyone who could benefit from it.

If you would like to contribute to the DayBreak Scholarship Fund or learn more about how your gift can make a lasting difference, please contact Michael Colaw at mcolaw@abouteldercare.org or call (918) 336-8500. Your generosity will help ensure that financial circumstances never stand in the way of receiving compassionate care, meaningful social connections, and the support that makes DayBreak such a special place.

This Month's Donors

In appreciation of contributions to Elder Care in July 2026

Bill Knight Ford of Bartlesville
Darrell Coe
Karen L. Goins
Joe & Charolette Hawkins
Terry & Mary Jane Plunk
Henry Rennick
Richard & Kathleen Rutledge
Frances Salih
Sandra Skinner

Eddie R. & Lavon Tolbert
Truity Credit Union
Dennis & Norajean Wegener
Tom & Carol Whitacre

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

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/