



Lift Up Your Heart

A newsletter of the

WOMEN'S RESPITE PROGRAM

Volume 28, Issue 1

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Sponsored by the
Sisters of St. Francis
at Stella Niagara, NY

The Women's Respite Program provides women in need with opportunities for rest and renewal in a safe, comfortable and healing environment.

We have programs for mothers with low income, women with cancer, grandmothers raising their grandchildren, and mothers with children on the autism spectrum.

It's Spring!

Finally, Spring has arrived. Budding and blooming and fresh starts. Already in 2024, we've had three programs with wonderful women—our alums who started in the summer (some of them from many summers ago), grandmothers raising grandchildren, women with cancer, and some always-welcome new people. It's really great to see how our alums welcome women experiencing the Respite Program for the first time.

“ Courage is the complement of fear.
A woman who is fearless cannot be courageous.
She is also a fool. ”

Robert A. Heinlein, author



Talk about girl power. Although both these groups needed the respite, they are paragons of strength and courage.
Above: The women with cancer group was great, as always.
Below: Grandmothers raising grandchildren—such beauties!



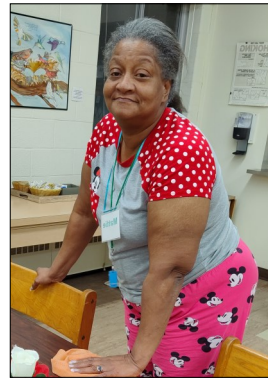
Above: Sr. Diane with Courageous Chris.

“ Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow. ”

Mary Anne Radmacher, author



GORGEOUS
GALS WHO
HAVE
ATTENDED IN
2024.



"I love this group of women. So uplifting!"

We asked the women to share birthday traditions. One woman always wears a crown on her birthday. She just happened to have it with her. Hmm . . .



"I think what you do is fantastic and much needed in caregivers' lives as self-care is often overlooked."



"I feel more relaxed physically and emotionally. Knowing I'm not alone in my experiences is both comforting and sad."



We Mourn Her Loss

In March, the Respite Program lost a great friend, Elvira Northington.

Elvira began attending the Respite Program in 2003. For many years, she served on the Coordinating Committee. Her loving heart and mature sensibilities were a welcome addition to any group.

Elvira was born in Buffalo, but a few years ago, she and husband Calvin moved their family to Sharpsburg, Georgia to be nearer to their adult children.

In addition to their ten children, six of whom were adopted, Elvira and Calvin fostered approximately 50 children. We could go on for pages about her acts of loving charity and organizational commitments.

S. Diane and Teresa are grateful that they got to see Elvira one last time in 2023 when she came from Georgia to attend a Respite Program after a difficult bout with cancer.

Rest in peace, dear Elvira.

“ Some people believe holding on and hanging in there are signs of great strength. However, there are times when it takes much more strength to know when to let go and then do it. ”



J & E Awareness

In 2019 and 2023, two babies in Olean died because the people caring for them were not trained to perform cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on infants. What to do in the face of such tragedy? Of course there is grief and mourning, but then what? Three women in Olean decided to take action to prevent such tragedies in the future. One of them was Anna who attended a Respite Program for the first time this spring. Anna, along with one child’s grandmother and the other child’s mother put their energy together to create J & E Awareness, a nonprofit organization named to honor Jace and Eveleigh, the children who died.

Jace, 8 months old, was found unresponsive late one night. His father did all that he could but didn’t know CPR procedures for infants. After first responders arrived, they did bring back a heartbeat but it had been too long, and Jace passed at Oishei Children’s Hospital later that day.

Last May, Eveleigh, 3 months old, was being cared for by her grandmother and aunt while her parents were at work. She was laid down to nap with a blanket under her head. Sadly, this created a blockage in her airway, and she was later found unresponsive. No life saving measures were taken until first responders arrived. They were not able to revive the baby who passed without her parents with her.

J&E’s Mission

The mission of J&E is to educate as many caregivers as possible on proper sleeping positions for infants and to provide these carers with CPR/AED (automated external defibrillator) training

to use for infants, children, and adults. J&E found that the expense is the reason more people do not know these skills, so J&E raise funds through donations and local events to pay for people to attend the otherwise too costly classes. J&E also will pay for babysitter classes which teach the CPR and AED along with First Aid and other important skills for sitters to know.

Located in Olean and serving surrounding communities, there is no age limit for applicants. To date, there have been two classes. The second class had three times the enrollment of the first. So far, the youngest sponsored child was 11 years old and the oldest person was 61.



J&E also holds an annual baby blanket drive. They attach their story on a card and dispense the blankets to Oishei’s pediatric wing where Jace was treated. His mother remembers that the blanket the hospital gave him was scratchy. She fixated on the fact that her child was not as comfortable as he could be while this awful event was happening. She does not want other parents to feel the same way.

We asked Anna what advice she had for Respite Program women. Here’s what she said: “Knowing CPR is a skill you never forget. If you never had to use it, that would be amazing, but that is not always the case. Whether it be your own child or a stranger who needs life saving measures, you could help keep them alive until first responders arrive. Not all heroes wear capes. Take the class and be a hero for your family and community.”

If you live in the near Olean and would like more information about J&E Awareness, you can find them on Facebook, or send an email to jeawareness@yahoo.com.

“Life is about finding yourself, embracing your strengths and weaknesses, and being true to who you are.”
Oprah Winfrey

Send us your new contact info.

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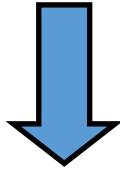


**The Weekend for
Women
Raising
Children
on the
Autism
Spectrum**

is coming up
from

November 1 to 3.

If you've been
before, expect an
application in the mail
in September.
If you've never
been and would like to
come, call for an
application:
716/877-6896



Stay-for-One-Night Offer

We've been publicizing this offer to stay one night at the Center of Renewal for several years, and very few alums have taken advantage. Maybe it's time you did, especially if you'd like some quiet time to yourself for a day and a night. The Respite Program will cover the cost of your room for one night plus up to four meals at the Center of Renewal (COR). It is possible that we could help with transportation depending on where you live. Two or three alums can come at one time. If you'd like to extend your stay, you can pay for a second night and additional meals.

Read This

This is NOT a Respite Program; you will have to entertain yourself. There are the beautiful grounds for walking and free wifi. We recommend making a reservation at least two weeks in advance. You can stay during the week or on the weekend as long as COR has a room. If you have a date in mind, call Teresa for a reservation: 716/877-6896.

