



## Boundless benefits of the great outdoors

Its 70 degrees, the sun warms your face and radiates down through the rest of your body. You hear birds chirping, rustling leaves, and a gentle breeze passing by your ears. Your shoes are off and the grass is cool and crisp beneath your feet.

The outdoors have a special power – lifting spirits, bringing focus, and improving health. However, routines can all too easily take over and before we know it, we were only outside during the time between getting in the car and a building.

Reaping the benefits of the outdoors can be especially elusive to caregivers due to their many responsibilities. Caregivers experience higher levels of stress, depression, poor sleep, and various chronic health conditions than their non-caregiving peers. Stress impacts our ability to sleep, focus, problem-solve, and more. As caregivers, we want to combat those effects.

Recent studies indicate that just 20-30 minutes outdoors can decrease cortisol, your body's stress hormone. Ultimately, the environment around us is important to our overall health and wellbeing, for both caregiver and care receiver. While challenging, there are many ways you can enhance your outdoor experiences even when you are a busy caregiver.

Getting outside:

- Start a container garden.
- Be outside each day – even 15 minutes helps.

- Many local and state parks have accessible spaces and/or designated times when they are less busy.
- Join a formal walking group – or make your own!
- Do deep breathing outdoors – even if just for a minute. It may help you reset and move forward.
- Adapt outdoor activities as needed.
- Seek support from others in achieving your outdoor goals whether in the form of encouragement, someone to do the activity with you, or someone to spend time with the person for whom you provide care.

Bringing the outdoors in:

- Keep indoor plants.
- Look into the possibility of a sun lamp during winter months. Some insurance providers may cover the cost with a qualifying diagnosis.
- Consider indoor parks and gardens to visit. Again, there may be adaptations that can be made for the person you care for if you would like to bring them with you or designated hours that are less busy or sensory friendly.
- Consider listening to guided imagery or engage in virtual reality programs that “transport” you or the person you are caring for to another place. We found a wonderful website called [Explore.org](https://www.explore.org) that has live camera feeds from places all around the world. It's completely free for anyone to watch.

Breathe in and out, be mindful of the moment and the connection to all that surrounds you.

*Einstein once said there are two ways to live life:  
“One is as if nothing is a miracle; the other is as if everything is a miracle,”*

## FamilyMeans facilitates four Memory Cafes in Washington County

A welcoming place for those with memory loss and their caregivers to come together, socialize and connect with others each month.

<b>First Tuesday</b> 10:00am - 11:30am  <b>Hy-Vee</b> 7280 E. Pt. Douglas Rd. S. Cottage Grove, MN 55016	<b>Second Monday</b> 9:00am - 10:30am  <b>Lake Elmo Inn</b> 3442 Lake Elmo Avenue N. Lake Elmo, MN 55042	<b>Second Tuesday</b> 1:00pm - 2:30pm  <b>R.H. Stafford Library</b> 8595 Central Park Place Woodbury, MN 55125	<b>Fourth Wednesday</b> 1:30pm - 3:00pm  <b>Walking: Rice Lake Centre</b> 6900 137th Street N. Hugo, MN 55038
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### Power of Attorney & Caregiving with O'Neill Elder Law

**Tuesday, May 14**  
**2:00pm to 4:00pm**  
**FamilyMeans**  
**1875 Northwestern Avenue S**  
**Stillwater, MN 55082**

Join us for education on Power of Attorney and Caregiving. We will discuss the benefits and limitations of this role and the legal implications in the caregiving relationship. This presenter is licensed in Minnesota and Wisconsin for Elder Law. There will be time for questions.

Register by calling Sarah Gavin at 651-789-4004 or email her at [sgavin@familymeans.org](mailto:sgavin@familymeans.org)

### Caring for a Person with Memory Loss

**Saturday, June 1**  
**8:00am to 4:30pm**  
*New location this year:*  
**U of M McNamara Alumni Center**  
**200 SE Oak St., Minneapolis, 55455**

Join experts in a lively, informative discussion related to memory loss, caregiving tips, and what you can do to help. The goal of this conference is to provide information, support, and education to family, friends, and professionals concerned with caring for persons with memory loss.  
*Free. Pre-registration is required.*

Register at: <http://www.sph.umn.edu/events-calendar/caring-for-person-with-memory-loss-conference/>

### Caregiving & Beyond

Thursday, June 13 | 3:00pm - 5:00pm | FamilyMeans Desch Room

Caregiving is full of rewards and challenges. When the person we care for dies, much of our caregiving role lingers on. It has a lasting impact on identity, interests, relationships, and more.

Join us for resources, facilitated discussion, reflection, and support about life after caregiving. Register by calling Sarah Adams 651-789-4027 or email her at [lmcgaffey@familymeans.org](mailto:lmcgaffey@familymeans.org)

Produced by Caregiving & Aging at FamilyMeans. Caregiving services include support groups, education, coaching and respite care. FamilyMeans also provides Counseling & Therapy, Financial Solutions, Youth Development and educational programs that strengthen and support families and the community.