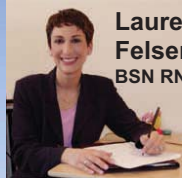


Summer/Fall  
2010

# The Illuminator



Laurel  
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## Agging Answers' Services:

- **Assessment** — to identify needs & support system
- **Referrals** — to services that best meet the client's needs, budget, personality and our high standards
- **Coordination** — arranging, evaluating, and revising the services
- **Transition Assistance** — for moves to assisted living or skilled care
- **Monitoring** — 24/7 on call support

## Meet the Founder!

Laurel Felsenfeld, company founder and president, is a certified rehabilitation RN and case manager in practice since 1990 with personal experience from family members affected by Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis. **2009 Recipient of the Oakland University Nightingale Award for Excellence in Community Nursing**



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## Don't Get Fried By Caregiver Burnout PART 2

*Knowing when and where to get help*

**Our last issue, Spring 2010 explained the physical and emotional effects of caregiving stress and provided a simple screening tool that caregivers can use to identify if they are experiencing "caregiver burnout". This issue focuses on what to do about it.**

**The greatest barrier to caregivers seeking help is guilt:** guilt about feeling overwhelmed, overworked, and underappreciated by the care recipient—and not wanting to burden others with hearing about it or helping with it. If you or someone you know is caring for someone, the message needs to be loud and clear—these feelings are normal and to be expected. They are a warning that it is time to accept support and assistance with the caregiving role. We all spend money for things to make ourselves look and feel good and consider them necessary, like haircuts, makeup, and deodorant. We find the money for these because of the value to our emotional health. Respite for caregiving needs to be viewed the same way—**using a person or service besides yourself to provide care for the greatest number of hours that you can afford will make you a better caregiver and able to provide care longer.**

Most communities offer caregiver support and respite programs at little or no cost, and private pay services can be found to fit every budget. Here are some examples of caregiver support typically available:

**Diagnosis specific support groups** meet on a regular basis for persons that share a common condition or need such as strokes, Alzheimer's disease/dementia, Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, brain injury, Parkinson's disease, male caregivers. They offer education on the condition, and often have speakers on various topics. Some have on-site caregiving services during meetings. In addition to valuable knowledge caregivers gain support of others who truly understand and have a nonjudgmental environment in which to ventilate. Caregivers share their experiences, network, and mentor each other in the caregiving role. These groups can be found through local hospital systems, skilled care and assisted living facilities, local chapters of disease organizations.

### Adult Day Programs

Many benefit from the stimulation and activity a structured program provides. Adult day programs are an excellent option for caregivers who wish to keep their loved one at home, but need respite for 4 or more hours a day, two or more days a week. Many offer transportation within a specified distance, breakfast and lunch, and personal care assistance (this may be at an additional charge). Programs vary in the nature and level of care they provide. Medical models provide medication administration including insulin shots. Social models for persons in the early to moderate stages of Alzheimer's/dementia provide

group activities and supervision. Some do not provide toileting or transfer assistance, but clients can attend with an aide. Most programs require an interview to determine appropriateness.

### In Home Respite

If your loved one cannot tolerate a change in environment bringing someone into the home, whether paid or on a volunteer basis, to engage him or her in activities that are appropriate for his or her abilities can slow the progression of dementia and give you a much needed and deserved break to do what you have been neglecting for yourself—seeing the doctor, lunch out with friends, going to the movies, etc. Finding affordable, quality, reliable help, and knowing what to have them do can be difficult. Most people will rely on word of mouth recommendations. This is risky, because Michigan does not license or regulate non-medical home care, so it's critical to ask the right questions and have a specific care plan — Geriatric Care Managers are experts in identifying the client's needs, budget, and referring to providers that meet the highest standards for screening and service delivery and that they have had positive experiences for other clients. Most important, care managers help you explore which options will best meet fit your needs, offer creative solutions, and prepare for future challenges. For more information on any of these options, please call for a complimentary telephone consultation.

*by Laurel Felsenfeld BSN RN CRRN CCM*

**Next Issue: Guidelines to In-Home Care**  
*Know what to look for, and what to avoid*