



Caring for the Care Giver

Elevate Respite

Climbing That Mountain

- Colorado Mountains are often referred to as “14er’s” – they are 14,000+ feet above sea level.
- Mountaineering is dangerous, and those dangers are endless; quick-moving weather, unstable terrain, wildlife, mistakes of other climbers, any of these can equal disaster on the climb.
- What’s the reward? The incredible view, community with your fellow climbers, and the empowerment of the physical, mental and emotional strength!
- There is a direct parallel to being a caregiver.
- Story

Mount Massive



The Truth

Special Needs Parenting
is like looking both ways
before you cross the
street only to get hit by
an airplane

Demands of Caregiving

- As a caregiver, the demands can be exhausting and overwhelming:
 - Balancing schedules
 - Managing appointments
 - Compassion Fatigue
 - Financial stress
 - Emotional stress
 - Relationship stress
 - Physical stress
 - *"Many caregivers often neglect their own health so that they can care for a loved one. Our research has shown that caregivers often report that caregiving has worsened their health – nearly half reported that their health has gotten worse as a result of caregiving. Of those who say their health has declined, 53% report that declining health has made it harder to support their loved ones." - National Alliance for Caregiving*

Compassion Fatigue

- According to the Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary, *"the physical and mental exhaustion and emotional withdrawal experienced by those that care for sick or traumatized people for an extended period of time."*
- What happens to a caregiver experiencing Compassion Fatigue?
 - Increased risk of physical and mental illness
 - Substance abuse
 - Decreased sense of purpose
 - Isolation
 - Depression
 - Disconnect from family, friends, work and community
 - Poor outlook on life
 - Decreased adaptability
 - Increased risk of care recipient abuse or neglect

Taming the Compassion Fatigue Beast

- Self-care is *NOT* optional!
 - Mother Teresa required the nuns she worked with to take 1 full year off every 4-5 years.
- Creating a plan:
 - Eating healthy and regular exercise
 - Create space on your calendar for you each day
 - Attend church or community functions
 - Ask for help
 - Have a contingency plan
 - Accountability
 - Attend support groups
 - Maintain a sense of humor

Volunteer-Based Respite Care

- *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*
Margaret Mead
- People desire to have a purpose and to be part of something bigger than themselves.
- 3 Requirements
 - 1. Passion
 - 2. Volunteers
 - 3. Location

Volunteer-Based Respite Care

- Who is the target audience?
- What will the boundaries be (ages, diagnoses, siblings, number of times respite is offered, cost, etc.)?
- Safety (nurse, background checks, insurance)
- Programming (activities, relationships, paperwork)
- Funding (in-kind donations, business/strategic sponsors, donors)
- What is the vision for the organization?
- Volunteers (recruitment, retention and appreciation)

Volunteer-Based Respite Care

Faith-Based Models of Respite

- Why is a Special Needs Ministry necessary in churches?
 - Integration
 - Place of belonging and community for families
 - Brings value to everyone in the community, not just those that “fit the mold”
 - Provides a break for the caregivers
 - Builds relationships

Faith-Based Models of Respite

- Safety is the key
- Addressing the needs (medical vs. behavior/sensory)
- Buddy program
- Sensory Friendly space
- Point Person
- Training
- Asking for help!! People can't help if they don't know there is a need.
 - People want to be helpful, so help bring meaning to their time volunteering!