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## 2021 Year in Review

At Spectrum Generations, we work strategically throughout the year to help serve a community where adults with disabilities and older adults are valued, engaged, and living with dignity. In this first Wicked Aging of the year, we would like to share some of our achievements in FY20 (services were delivered between 10/1/20 – 9/30/21).

Spectrum Generations **served 10,225 people** throughout our area – many of whom are your friends, family, and neighbors. We are proud of the many people whose lives our services change and that we are able to aid so many in their desire to age in place!

**Through our Meals on Wheels program, 2,455 people** received **351,985 meals** and **799 people** enjoyed the socialization and nutrition that congregate dining offers.

We provided **439 people** and their families with caregiver support, training, counseling, and respite. We know the importance of educating caregivers in what can be a difficult role, as well as promoting self-care for the caregiver. This also represents **5,235 hours of respite care**, which provides care for a homebound loved one while the caregiver can leave the home to take care of other matters. We also provided **1,210 Information and Assistance** contacts to **863 people seeking resources** to care for a loved one.

Our Bridges Home Services division provided **21,950 hours of care** to adults with memory diagnoses or intellectually and/or developmentally disabled adults through the Adult Day program.

These are just a few of the ways we help our communities, and we are grateful to the many volunteers and supporters who help us fulfill our mission.

Thank you for trusting us to provide the care you need!



Who we are



**Our Mission:**

to promote and advance the well-being and independence of older and disabled adults, with the support of their care partner, to live in their community of choice.

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**A Message from the CEO**



The National Institute on Aging describes being a caregiver as a labor of love but warns that it can also be incredibly stressful. It is important that family caregivers have the necessary support to be able to take care of themselves as well as their family member.

As the Network Lead Entity of the state's Community Integrated Health Network, Healthy Living for ME™ (HL4ME) is working to enhance the state's No Wrong Door (NWD) system in such a way that it could efficiently connect Maine's 180,000 family caregivers with much-needed resources and programs.

Here is a **case study** for how HL4ME envisions a strong No Wrong Door system that works to benefit both caregivers and patients:

*A family member is caring for a person in southern Maine who has suffered a stroke and has insurance through MaineCare/Medicare special needs insurance.*

*At 1:00 AM on a Thursday, the caregiver is worried and looking for more information about how to help their family member. They go to the Brain Injury Association's website where they complete an intake questionnaire that connects them to the No Wrong Door system.*

*The results of the questionnaire identify their situation as critical and needing immediate action. The caregiver is told that a Community Resource Specialist (CRS) will be in touch within 48 hours.*

*The caregiver is also immediately informed of a virtual evidence-based program called Building Better Caregivers that starts in two weeks, and the caregiver signs themselves up to attend. People Plus in Brunswick, a subcontractor with HL4ME, is hosting the caregiver class. A member of their staff contacts the caregiver and confirms class enrollment.*

*The CRS from Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging (also a subcontractor with HL4ME) contacts the caregiver within 48 hours and performs a Health Risk Assessment of the patient to identify the healthcare and social services that would best support their ability to remain in the community.*

*The CRS also performs an assessment of the caregiver. Over the next few weeks, the caregiver attends a virtual class and learns how to be an effective caregiver while simultaneously taking better care of themselves. The caregiver is identified as suffering from depression and starts treatment through their workplace Employee Assistance Program.*

*Continued on next page.*

Meanwhile, the CRS develops a person-centered care plan for both patient and caregiver to address, coordinate and solve social and environmental barriers that are adversely affecting their health. The CRS assists the caregiver in the enrollment process for public and private programs for the stroke patient.



Additionally, together, the CRS and the caregiver:

- Address medical bills and ensure the insurance company is covering required services and providing the most effective treatment;
- Identify eligible Long-term Care insurance benefits previously unknown: i.e., Personal Support Services;
- Enroll patient in an upcoming virtual EBP falls prevention program;
- Ensure the D-SNP plan covers home delivered meals and transportation solutions; and
- Schedule a visit to a near-by Adult Day Care facility as a potential alternative respite option.

Under this ideal situation, HL4ME's data system is integrated with Maine's health and community information exchange. As a result, the caregiver's and the patient's primary care doctors and specialists are kept informed of the actionable steps that have enabled their patients to re-engage in the community and take back some semblance of control in their lives. Overall, health costs are reduced through less frequent hospitalizations and improved communication between caregiver/patient.

This emerging network of community-based organizations, with HL4ME as the Network Lead Entity, is well-prepared to take the statewide lead in building out a strong NWD system that improves Mainers' access to medical and behavioral healthcare, as well as social services.

With proper support by state government, foundations and private donors, and payments for services from health systems and insurers, HL4ME will strengthen Maine's Long-Term Services and Supports system through a coordinated network of community-based organizations working in tandem with healthcare to empower individuals to take control of their health.

Our ultimate goal is to turn the dream that was the aforementioned case study into the reality that every Maine citizen who is experiencing distress in their life due to an illness, a chronic disability, or just the aging process can expect.

**We all have a stake in making HL4ME a success in our state.  
Thank you for your support!**

Gerard Queally  
President & CEO Spectrum Generations  
Managing Partner, HL4ME

## No Wrong Door



How do I get help?  
How do I know where to go?  
Why do services send me to other services?

# Healthy Living for ME Program Flourishes Building Better Caregivers



The Building Better Caregivers Program was designed for caregivers of all types to better understand and navigate the changes their care partners are experiencing. This program helps caregivers who are assisting loved ones through memory loss or dementia, as well as those providing care to individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Participants of the workshop learn how to identify and manage care partners' behaviors and triggers. Additional topics include managing caregiver stress, making decisions, planning for the future, communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals, legal issues related to caregiving, hiring help, and much more.

## Rebeccas' Story

*Hi, my name is Rebecca and I was a participant in the Healthy Living for ME Building Better Caregivers Program. I was referred to the course by the Brain Injury Association, six years ago, after my partner had a massive stroke during a routine surgery. Directly after the stroke, he spent a few months in a nursing home and I'm now his sole caregiver. He is severely depressed, wheelchair bound, and in need of a lot of care. We also were having some new issues that I felt were just insurmountable and I was truly at the end of my rope as to if I could even continue to have him in my home and care for him. I was lost as to where to turn next or how to keep going on with him. I did not see ANY possibilities as to how to proceed or even if I should try. Overwhelmed, tired, and worn out from his care, I joined the workshop as a last ditch effort.*

*I have to say the workshop and the book Building Better Caregivers has given me a whole new outlook on our situation. To begin with, huge problems are made smaller by breaking them down by identifying the real problems, problem solving as to addressing the problems, and having help to open my mind to possible solutions or letting them go if not possible to change at that time. I was also able to not only spot the triggers for my partner's behaviors (and figure out ways to deal with them) but to also look inward to my own issues of anxiety, anger, and resentment that had led to many unpleasant emotional times for me. I was the only one in the group that was a caregiver for a stroke survivor as most of the others were dealing with dementia and alzheimer issues. Everyone in our group was very friendly and open to the group. Interacting with the participants and instructors was very helpful, it kept us focused and made us appreciate each other and our individual situations.*

*As we move forward with what we learned in the workshop, we have both become more aware of our emotions, conduct rational conversations, and problem solve as a couple. During this time, I have learned more about our individual needs and it has been a REALLY healthy experience for both of us and our relationship. I continue to read the workshop book provided, and participate in practices that help lower my anxiety.*

*Thank you so much for making it possible to gain this knowledge and bless you for caring for those of us that are daily caregivers. I sometimes feel invisible and this course is spot on for changing lives!*

This workshop is **free** and open to the public but **registration is required**.

Call us at 1-800-620-6036 or email [info@healthylivingforme.org](mailto:info@healthylivingforme.org) for more information or to register.





Spectrum Generations' Community Services Director, Katie Carlson (R), with her mother Laurie.

*"I cannot stress enough how important it is to plan early on. It may be stressful in the moment to have to face a disease, but it will bring peace of mind for the course ahead. Self care has been key, and what self care means has changed for me," said Katie.*

## Family Caregiver Katie Carlsons' Story

I'm a mother, daughter, sister, aunt, and a caregiver. All of my roles have a special meaning to me, but my role as a caregiver has had the greatest impact on my relationship with my mother. I have evolved from the child she protected, to the adult she watched over from afar, to a person who protects her as her care partner. Care partner is the best term that fits our situation, because I don't make decisions without her input.

Being a care partner to someone with Alzheimer's isn't easy. Alzheimer's is often associated with memory loss, however, it is brain failure. I cannot stress enough how important it is to **get "diagnosed" as early as possible**. This is a disease that does not discriminate, and it can appear in the brains of intelligent, creative, and respectable people. It is not a disease that should be hidden, and identifying it early, allows friends and families to plan on how to keep one with Alzheimer's home as long as possible, while maintaining their quality of life.

**We have the opportunity to complete Advance Directives** (must be at least 18 years old). Sitting around the dining room table with my Mom and brother discussing Mom's wishes was extremely helpful for all of us. She was able to tell us how she wanted to be cared for when she is unable to advocate for herself, and future decisions my brother and I need to face will be easier knowing we are following her wishes.

**Learning about the legal steps** from an Elder Law Attorney has been beneficial. I have learned that not all lawyers are familiar with estate protection, so we made sure our lawyer was an expert in elder law. They educated Mom on what was needed in order to allow my brother and I to assist with her finances and medical support and avoid the costly process of guardianship. He also shared steps that we could take in order to protect her assets and estate.

As the care partner, I take time to **create memories**. The memories are for the children in Mom's life, while the pictures and videos are for her joy.

**Utilizing a network of help** has been the only way I have been able to continue working. It wasn't easy realizing I needed a support system, and had to ask for help. I am fortunate to have supporting friends and family who spend the day with her while I'm at work. They help her stay on track throughout the day, and their companionship helps to keep anxiety levels down. In addition, Mom spends a couple afternoons at my brother's house; these are the days I am able to go to the grocery store, and take my daughter to her baton twirling class. I can work with peace of mind that Mom is happy, safe, and well.

My thoughts are with the other care partners who are helping someone navigate their process and plan for their future. The work you do is important, and many of you may be in situations where you have less support than I do. Take advantage of the services Spectrum Generations offers. The staff will work hard to help you find the resources to build a support system. Remember to take a moment to focus on you, breath, and stretch. Your health and wellbeing are important to those who rely on you.

*Katie*





ADULT DAY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

## Unique Form of Caregiving Growing a Bond

Bridges Adult Day and Community Support Services provides a safe and stimulating environment for a variety of different people. Clients may include Veterans, clients with alzheimer's and dementia, wheelchair bound clients, and clients with intellectual disabilities.



*William Hackett (L) and Gary French (r), Cohen Community Center Adult Day participants improving the well-being of each other.*

We find that many of our clients grow a unique and unexplainable bond while at Adult Day program. Our veteran in the picture gravitates towards our wheelchair bound client to help soothe and improve his interpersonal skills. They continue to learn from each other daily and enjoy seeing each other when they are at program.

If you or someone you care for could benefit from the services Bridges Home Services offer, call 1.800.876.9212.

## Meal Prep Simplifying for Caregivers

Being a Care Partner means you are not only responsible for our own quality of life, but you are responsible for the quality of life of those we care for. This can be challenging for those with multiple health issues, or when caring for someone who's taste changes and they only want sweet foods.



### Class participant feedback

"I took an evidence-based class called Living Well with Diabetes through Healthy Living for ME. My intention was to learn how to prevent getting diabetes, knowing that I am at risk. Instead, I found myself taking the class from a Care Partner's point of view. After the second session, I realized this class was making it easier for me to prepare healthy meals that the household would enjoy, I could use what I learned to create a healthy relationship with food for my child, and I could prepare easy and healthy meals for my mother. The great thing is, I don't have to prepare multiple meals for one dinner; we all eat the same foods together."

"It feels great knowing that the meals I am preparing for my mother don't have to be time consuming, and the food I am choosing to put on our plates is helping her maintain her health."

In class, you create sample meals and learn about the plate method to help simplify it even more. No foods are off limits, and you learn how to adjust portions. Call us at 1-800-620-6036 or email [info@healthylivingforme.org](mailto:info@healthylivingforme.org) for more information or to register.

## Caregiving Journey

### Respite Program

At Spectrum Generations, our Caregiver Specialists work with caregivers to help them meet their goals. Whether it's finding a support group, locating training, or connecting with resources to help fill their gaps in their support network, our team is there.

### Almas' Story

*I became a care partner when my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. At the time, I didn't know what to expect, or how much our lives were going to change. In the beginning, being a care partner simply involved taking over the finances, attending his doctor's appointments, and managing his medication. With time, it turned into assisting with everyday tasks, and being creative with how I could help my husband maintain his independence.*

*I think every care partner experiences a time when their creative juices seem to run a bit dry, or when they need to brainstorm with an outside source to help them find a way to make things a bit easier for the person they are caring for, as well as themselves. For me, Spectrum Generations' Alzheimer's Respite program has been that outside source. Their Caregiver Specialist, Teah, listened to what my goals were with my husband, and found a way to help. My husband and I met in the 50's, and spent our time going to old honky-tonk concerts together. Our favorites are Hank Williams and Johnny Cash.*

*I knew, that my husband would most likely dance with me again, if I could replace the CD player in my home, and play the old music we always appreciated together. Teah, let me know the Respite Program could reimburse me for the cost of assistive technology, such as a CD player. I was ecstatic! I immediately ordered the device, so we could start dancing together again.*

*When the player arrived, I put on Ol' Hank Williams. Just as I had hoped, my husband held me and swayed with me in our home. It was wonderful, for both of us, to enjoy that time together. We have always enjoyed dancing with one another, he is still my favorite dance partner. In the words of Hank Williams, "If you're going to sing, sing'em something they can understand."*

Caregivers often become isolated, overwhelmed, exhausted, and need time with those who understand the situation they're in.

Spectrum Generations facilitates Caregiver Support Groups in order to bring Care Partners together, share experiences, and learn from others who have been in similar situations.

**You are not alone on this journey.** Contact our Aging and Disability Resource Counselors (ADRC) at 1.800.169.1553 to learn more about the support groups available to you.

care·giv·er

noun | \ˈker-,gi-vər\

One who gives the tremendous gift of love and aid to another

Symbol of strength and dedication



Alma with her husband Les



One Weston Court  
Augusta, ME 04330  
spectrumgenerations.org



Home Office  
One Weston Court  
Augusta

## Volunteer with us! Future Caregivers

There are many benefits people experience when they volunteer. For teens especially, volunteer work can help them broaden their horizons, meet new friends, experience different cultures or learn a new language, all while contributing to society's needs.

We are thankful to the children of our employees who volunteer with us! If you are interested in volunteering, please email our volunteer coordinator at [volunteer@spectrumgenerations.org](mailto:volunteer@spectrumgenerations.org).

