

# Memory Moment

## Highlighting the Family Caregiver Support Program

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As a dementia caregiver, it can be challenging to know all of the available resources and services that might be able to help reduce the stress and burden of this role. This month, I'm highlighting the Family Caregiver Support Program, which provides incredible support to not only dementia caregivers, but all family caregivers.

Created in response to the growing need of older adults wanting to age in place in their homes, the Family Caregiver Support Program helps unpaid family or friend caregivers who provide a variety of support including housekeeping, transportation, meal preparation, or personal care/hygiene needs. This program was originally created in 2000, and is operated through the national network of Area Agencies on Aging. Every county across America has this program which families can access by contacting their local Area Agency on Aging.

This month I spoke with Trisha Ratliff, Caregiver Advisor with Heartland Human Services, which administers the Family Caregiver Support Program to Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jefferson, & Marion counties to learn more about what services are available.

### **What are the eligibility requirements to enroll in the program?**

To be eligible for the program the care recipient must be at least age 60, reside in one of the 5 counties (Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jefferson, Marion), and meet qualifying guidelines in activities of daily living through a face-to-face assessment with the Caregiver Advisor.

### **Is there any cost to enroll in the program?**

The Family Caregiver Support Program has no fees for services due to grant funding by Midland Area Agency on Aging and donations generously given to the program.

### **What kind of services are offered?**

The services provided are designed to give the caregiver a break. Services range based on the individual's needs and can include light housekeeping, bathing assistance, running errands, meal preparation, companionship, etc. Once the assessment is complete, there is a specific amount of respite hours provided for each client to use at their discretion. These hours can be used all at once, spread throughout the year, or on a schedule.

### **How do you sign up for the program?**

If you are a caregiver in Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jefferson, or Marion counties and interested in the program, you are encouraged to contact Trisha, the Caregiver Advisor, at 618.347.7179 x1062 to set up an assessment. If you live in a different county, you can find your local Area Agency on Aging at [www.eldercare.acl.gov](http://www.eldercare.acl.gov) to sign up.

*Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness (EAAA) is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organization founded to provide education and support to all families, caregivers, and people with*

*Alzheimer's disease and related dementia in Effingham County and the surrounding area. For more information about Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness, check out their website at [www.effinghamalz.org](http://www.effinghamalz.org). If you are a caregiver & have specific questions or situations you would like information on, please feel free to call Shannon Nosbisch at 217-663-0010 or Amy Sobrino at 618-363-8372.*