

# CaregiverConnection

Welcome to the new version of the Caregiver Connection Ezine. We are hoping that by updating our look and technology we can better send you up-to-date information about caregiving events, conferences, and issues that are important to you.



Please consult our website for further information: [www.njcaregivers.org](http://www.njcaregivers.org).

## National Family Caregiver Month Update

After President Bush announced November as National Family Caregiver Month, and Governor Corzine announced Family Caregiver Month in the state of New Jersey, we felt we should extend the proclamations to the local municipalities of New Jersey. We asked all the counties and townships to declare November as a time of year when we recognize, thank and give back to those who are selflessly caring for a loved one with a chronic illness, disability, or mental illness. We received some beautifully written proclamations from 9 counties and 43 townships and boroughs from all across the state, although more communities may have approved the proclamation as well. To see the complete list, please visit [www.njcaregivers.org](http://www.njcaregivers.org).

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[Caregivers of New Jersey  
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[Join our Mailing List!](#)

## Caregivers of New Jersey's First Lobby Day a Success!



On the morning of November 13, many gathered at the State House in Trenton for Caregivers of New Jersey's first Lobby Day. There was a range of attendees from Division of Developmental Disabilities case workers, Alzheimers Association, and CNJ board members. Due to emergency committee meetings scheduled that morning, regarding the state's economy, many of the legislators that planned on attending were unable to do so. However, those that did stop by expressed great interest in our initiatives and about the importance of caregiving issues. Please stay tuned for information about future lobby days, as we intend to host more as we move into the new year.

Pictured: Eric Joice, Executive Director of CNJ (left) with Senator Anthony Bucco of Morris County.

## Bergen County Launches New Jersey's Newest Caregiving Coalition

We are proud to announce that Bergen County has successfully launched a caregiving coalition that will bring together the aging population, disability community and those who care for them in Bergen County. We look forward to working with this new coalition and continue to encourage other counties to consider creating their own coalition to better serve the individuals within your community.

Among the organizations represented are the Bergen County Office on Aging, Heightened Independence and Progress, Bergen County Office on Disabilities, Valley Hospital and Caregivers of new Jersey.

## How the Financial Meltdown Impacts Family Caregivers

By Carol Levine

First published in print: Friday, December 5, 2008

The volcanic eruption of global financial networks has been fiery and dramatic. For most Americans, however, the real impact will be its aftermath, the equivalent of clouds that travel far and shroud the horizon. Among the first to see the looming darkness will be family caregivers - the 34 million Americans who each year provide an estimated \$375 billion worth of unpaid care to aging and ailing relatives and friends.

Family members are the bedrock of the health care system in ordinary times, but these are extraordinary times. Unless policy makers address the economic threat to this invisible work force, the American health care system could undergo its own meltdown.

Hospital and nursing home resources would be further strained by patients whose family members are no longer able to provide or manage care at home. "Safety net" resources, especially Medicaid, would be hard-pressed to accommodate an influx of new beneficiaries needing expensive long-term care. Most people taking care of an older or chronically ill relative or friend already stretch their financial limits. Even when money comes in, more of it flows out for all the necessities of life and health care not covered by insurance... (To view the rest of the article, please click the following link: [www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=747056](http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=747056).)

## Menendez Pledges to Reintroduce the Caregiver Tax Credit

At the Center for Nonprofits' 25th Anniversary reception on December 9, 2008, Senator Menendez accepted the Outstanding Public Policy Leadership Award for his continued support of the nonprofit sector in New Jersey. Speaking with CNJ staff, the US Senator discussed his pledge to support the reintroduction of the caregiver tax credit, which would allow family caregivers who provide unpaid care to qualify for Social Security benefits for the time that they provided care. The Social Security "credits" would be equal to the 50% of the average wages and self-employment income for the time period when the caregiver provided assistance. He acknowledged the increase in need for support and the decrease of availability of this support and plans to assist in bridging the gap.



We thank Senator Menendez for his continued support of caregivers.

## Tips to Make Your Holiday Less Stressful and More Joyous



'Tis the season to be happy. Or is it?

While those facing Alzheimer's disease or a related illness in their family might question the sentiment, experts say that it is possible to not only keep the cheer in the holidays, but also to savor them.

Below are just a few tips written by Alzheimer's Family Services to help make the holidays more enjoyable for everyone:

**Communicate concerns:** In advance of the holidays, be candid with family and friends about your loved one's condition and your concerns, and enlist their support. In cases where resentment brews because one family member assumes the primary caregiving role, use this season of giving as an opportunity to discuss sharing family responsibilities and to strive for family togetherness.

**Pare down traditions:** With round-the-clock caregiving, it may not be feasible to juggle all of your religious and ethnic observances. You can still keep traditions alive; just reduce their number to avoid feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. Ask your loved one which traditions to choose.

**Enjoy yourself:** The greatest gift at the holidays: time. Ask a family member, friend or healthcare professional to keep your loved one company so you can relish some respite-time for some holiday shopping, a walk in the park, checkers with an old friend or whatever present you want to give yourself.

To view the full article, click here: [Caregiving Tips: Holidays](#)

## Another Great Resource: Lung Cancer Circle of Hope

Lung Cancer Circle of Hope is a New Jersey advocacy organization dedicated to dispelling lung cancer myths by dispensing the facts. The group was founded by the individuals whose lives were touched by the disease either as survivors or family members.

The group educates the public and members of the medical community with the latest facts, advocates on behalf of lung cancer patients, families and others at risk and influence public policy decisions related to lung cancer, specifically increasing research funding.

To learn more about Lung Cancer Circle of Hope, visit [www.lungcancercircleofhope.org](http://www.lungcancercircleofhope.org). To learn how you can get involved, please call 732-363-4426, or email [info@lungcancercircleofhope.org](mailto:info@lungcancercircleofhope.org).

## Join Caregivers of New Jersey Today!



Caregivers of New Jersey introduced a membership campaign this past fall, and has received feedback from many interested organizations, family caregivers and state workers. As a member, you will be kept up-to-date on all events, a chance for your organization to be featured in our newsletter and so much more. Please visit our website, [www.njcaregivers.org](http://www.njcaregivers.org) to become a member of Caregivers of New Jersey today!

Thank you for reading Caregiver Connection! If you have any information you would like included in our e-zine, or know of anyone that would like to be added to our listserv, please email me at [dgoldberg@njcaregivers.org](mailto:dgoldberg@njcaregivers.org) or click the "Join Our Mailing List" button on the top right side of the newsletter.

Thank you, and have a great holiday season!!

Sincerely,

Dana Goldberg, Administrator  
Caregivers of New Jersey