

Invitation to Provide the Gift of Presence

Our Health Ministry recognizes that some of our members have a critical need for relief from caregiving. We have parishioners who are serving their loved ones as the sole caregiver in the home. We have parents who cannot have an evening away from home because of child or elder parent responsibilities. Constant caregiving without a break for months or even years takes a toll on the caregiver’s physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

A recent article in the News Tribune quoted a study by the non-profit National Alliance for Caregiving. The article states that more than 2.5 million family caregivers who are isolated in homes across America suffer from depression, stress and rapidly declining health. They often have nowhere to turn for help. America’s public health and medical systems are not designed to provide relief from caregiving in the vast majority of families who choose to care for their loved ones at home.

Our congregation will have the opportunity to provide the ‘gift of presence’ to a fellow member who desperately needs respite from caregiving. Having learned about the success that another church experienced when a respite program was established, our Health Ministry is planning to set up a program that will enable trained volunteers to give caregivers a chance to leave home or the bedside for a few hours.

Would you like to give the ‘gift of presence’ to a fellow member? You will not be asked to provide the kind of care that professional or home health workers provide. With some minimal training provided by the parish nurses and others, you will simply be available to talk, play games, or be a companion to the care receiver. This can truly be an act of Christian love and caring for both the care receiver and the caregiver.

On the reverse side of this sheet, please check all the situations in which you would be willing to give the ‘gift of presence’.

When completed, please place in the Respite Care Program collection box in the narthex or the Health Ministry postal box.

I prefer to: (Check all that apply.)

Enable a couple with a special needs child to have an evening away.

Enable a mom or dad with a special needs child to leave the home for 2-4 hours once per week for errands during the day.

Enable a mom or dad with 2 or more children under 5 to have a break of 2 hours during the day once a week.

Enable the caregiver of a person with dementia, Alzheimer’s or a chronic disease to have a break of 2-4 hours during one day per week.

Be present for at least an hour once or twice a week. for a mom whose pregnancy requires bedrest.

Be present at the hospital or nursing home for 2 hours to prevent a confused person from getting out of bed.

I prefer: (Check all that apply.)

- mornings (7a.m.—12 noon) summer season
- afternoons (12 noon-5 p.m.) fall season
- evenings (5 p.m.-11 p.m.) winter season
- nights (11 p.m.-7 a.m.) spring season

I prefer limiting my ‘gift of presence’ to: (Check all that apply.)

- one hour once a week
- two to three hours once a week.
- four hours once a week.
- variable number of hours one time only
- variable number of hours once a week.
- variable number of hours more than once a week.

I prefer: (Check all that apply.)

- Sunday
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday

Please print name above

Phone #