

## **Now What?**

A son took his mother to the adult day center for care during each weekday while he worked; she had had a stroke and could not be left alone. A mother brought her young son with Down syndrome for activities for him and a little time off for herself. Several days a week, a daughter-in-law brought her husband's mother, simply so that she would have socialization; she lived alone. Husbands brought wives and wives brought husbands with various maladies—physical or mental.

For many years the Lakefield Adult Day Center has provided an important service in a variety of ways to adults who could not be left alone or couldn't care for themselves. Located in St. John's Lutheran Church at the corner of Port Washington Road and Lakefield Road, right outside Grafton, the facility became well-known for the loving and professional care it provided. For a long while, a nurse and social worker oversaw the services offered by a well-trained staff who interacted with the Loved Ones in a devoted and attentive manner.

While Loved Ones received excellent care, the caregivers themselves received support from the day center's staff. As a Loved One's disease progressed, for instance, the nurse and her staff instructed the caregiver in how to provide specialized care at home. When caregivers had issues with either the Loved One or other family members, they could go to the social worker who listened and perhaps walked them through how to resolve their concern.

Soon the day center will close its doors, leaving a void for those caregivers who have needed this extra care for their Loved Ones. Lakefield Day Center is currently the only such resource in the area for this kind of necessary service. Those who have needed this assistance are faced with a quandary. Caregiving is exhaustive and stressful. The day center has made it less so.

An outgrowth of the day center, with the help of the Adult and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), is the Caregivers Connection. The ADRC has been providing a series of educational and informational forums for caregivers, often at St. John Lutheran Church. As time progressed, people who attended these meetings began to feel the need to get together for mutual support and practical advice. This led to Caregiver Coffees, casual gatherings of caregivers, at four different locations in the county and at four different times.

In March, groups will meet at the following times: Tuesday, February 6, at the Providence Place, 815 Washington St., Grafton, from 6:00 -7:30 p.m.; Tuesday, February 13, at the County Administration Building, Port Washington, from 10:15 – 11:45 a.m.; a men's group on Tuesday, February 20, at the

American Legion Post, 1540 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Grafton, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00; and Wednesday, February 28, from 9:30-11:00 a.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church, corner of Port Washington Rd. and Lakefield Rd., Grafton. Care for the Loved One is available at the latter site. Call Barbara Lindholm at 262 376-4328 for information.

Submitted by Rita Burfeind