

# ELDER CARE UPDATES



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[www.rochestereldercare.com](http://www.rochestereldercare.com)

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## **"Person Centered Care?"**

*by Karen Witkowicz*

I recently had the pleasure of attending a conference and hearing Wendy Lustbader, Medical Social Worker and Affiliate Faculty Member at the University of Washington, speak on promoting positive changes in the lives of elders. This got me to thinking a little differently about the person-centered care that we all strive to achieve.

How do professional caregivers find out who the elder really is? How does the elder try to let their caregivers know who they are? Disability starts slowly to obscure the person. Even seemingly small things, like a doctor speaking to a family member instead of his patient greatly affects the elder. The elder is overlooked and "not seen". The elder must fight to be seen as an individual worthy of care.

How would you feel if someday, you are "placed" in a nursing home? You are "put" in your wheelchair, lined up in the hall waiting to get to the dining room. You are then transported to the dining room to sit with others you may not particularly like. You overhear the staff discussing this one who needs their meat cut or that one who needs feeding. You may see yourself as an object and not a person. You have become one of those "who needs feeding". You need to have something done to or for you. You are not a person to talk with or who has a past and present life. In



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fact, you are seen more in the light of your disabilities and needs. Will the concept of being fed become more person centered if the one doing the feeding knows me, knows what food I like or if I like it hot or cold, or knows how much I usually eat. Would it make a difference if she knew in my earlier life I had hosted large dinner parties and loved to plan meals? Does she understand how much meal times mean to me? They are the main focal points of my day, where I see most of the people I live with in a social situation.

Most people in long-term care still want their preferences to be honored, no matter how disabled they are. They want their room arranged, pictures, curtains arranged the way they want them. They want to be seen as still vibrant people who are more than the sum of "needs" that they have. This is the true meaning of person-centered care. The elder exists in the present time and space

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. . . . . Peace of mind for you."*

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## New Alzheimer's Drug Goes to the Root of the Problem

A new drug for the treatment of Alzheimer's Disease shows promise as it enters its second clinical trial. The drug, known as Alzhemed, is designed to interfere with the formation of plaques in the brain. It does this by clearing the brain of beta-amyloid peptide, one of two troublesome proteins that is associated with Alzheimer's.

In the first trial a three month course of Alzhemed reduced beta-amyloid concentrations in cerebrospinal fluid by as much as 70%. In addition, the cognitive skills of patients who took the drug stabilized over a 20 month period.

If this second trial is successful, Alzhemed could be a very important leap forward in the treatment of Alzheimer's Disease. Current drug therapies for Alzheimer's Disease treat only symptoms. Alzhemed is an exciting new development because it will attempt to interrupt the progression of the disease itself, rather than treating only symptoms.

The initial trial was done on relatively few subjects. But a new study has just begun that will involve testing Alzhemed on 950 people.

### More information available at:

<http://www.pslgroup.com/dq/244952.htm>  
[www.alzinfo.org/news/11\\_10.aspx](http://www.alzinfo.org/news/11_10.aspx) □

## Help Wanted

If you know anyone who would be interested in working as a special sitter with a 35 year old young man with cerebral palsy, please contact me at 671-9702 or at Karen@rochestereldercare.com. Experience with persons who are developmentally disabled is preferred. Daytime availability, reliability and dependability needed. □

## Books for Caregivers

The Ageless Self: Sources of Meaning In Late Life by S.R. Kaufman.

What Are Old People For? How Elders Can Save the World by William H. Thomas

Savvy Seniors by Jim Miller

Jim Miller's book is based on his syndicated newspaper column of the same name. He also has a website - [www.savvysenior.org](http://www.savvysenior.org)

Making the Move: A Practical Guide to Senior Residential Communities by Lettice Stuart

This is a wonderful, easy-to-read book that goes into many aspects of moving.

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as a person with feelings, preferences, a past and present life first and someone who needs help second. Is not this how we, ourselves would like to be treated?

If we would stop for a minute to put ourselves in our client's shoes, how different care giving would be. It would be easier and more fulfilling. This process does not cost money or extra time. It only costs awareness and a willingness to get to know and value the person receiving the care. We can all do it. Starting now. □

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