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4th Annual Workshop for Dementia Caregivers & Friends: Communication When Words Don't Work – Practical Tips for Positive Outcomes

Free Workshop on October 30 – Burnsville Town Center, 10am – 2:30pm

Dementia Caregivers & Friends will hold its 4th Annual Dementia Caregivers Workshop on Thursday, October 30, 2025 at the Burnsville Town Center, 10am – 2:30pm. The program is free thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Community Foundation of WNC / The Yancey Fund. The program features keynote speaker Dr. Heather McKay and includes lunch and resource tables. To register contact April Henkel, (850)228-1228, or by email, henkelag@outlook.com.

This year's workshop, *Communication When Words Don't Work—Practical Tips for Positive Outcomes*, features award-winning occupational therapist and dementia care specialist, Dr. Heather McKay. "Dr. McKay is an incredible speaker and trainer," shares April Henkel, program coordinator. "She brings her first-hand family caregiver experience and professional skills as a teacher and occupational therapist to the podium. She makes it so real and her tips come to life as she presents." Dr. McKay is a professor at Appalachian State University in the Occupational Therapy department, and her research includes dementia caregiving strategies.

Dr. McKay explains the significant changes in the brain of a person living with dementia and how those changes in turn impact communication in huge ways. "Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia are challenging conditions for both the person with the disease and their caregivers," shares Dr. McKay. "Even in the early stages of the disease, communication between dementia caregivers and the people they support is difficult as the person's brain changes in areas of memory, language comprehension, language production, judgment, and impulse control. Broken communication affects all aspects of life, and in the case of dementia, it's always changing."

In addition to Dr. McKay, the program includes a round-table interview with caregivers and available resources for support and encouragement. Representatives from state and local resources will be on hand to provide information and assistance.

All are invited to attend, and especially dementia family caregivers who will benefit greatly from the training and meeting other caregivers on the same journey. Attendees will leave the program with a better understanding of why communication (and behavior) changes with dementia and new strategies to improve interactions when communication is a challenge. This program is geared toward all dementia caregivers, including family, friends, and professionals.

To register for this free workshop, call or email April Henkel, (850) 228-1228, or email Henkelag@outlook.com. Information also available on the Dementia Caregivers & Friends website, www.DementiaCaregiversWNC.org (click on EVENTS). Please register by October 24.

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