

## Caregivers Corner

by Regina DuBois

One of the things I like most about being a volunteer for Community Caregivers is the commitment by both the Board members and staff to the organization's mission. We enable individuals of all ages to maintain their independence, dignity and quality of life within their homes and communities.

As the debate continues on the need for a county nursing home, Community Caregivers sees requests for its services increasing not only within our service area, but also from other municipalities. We also are experiencing requests for additional services which we do not offer. As a Board member, I wrestle with how do we meet the changing needs of our clients as well as increase our volunteer base.

When I conduct my respite visits I see the additional services my caregiver requires as her spouse's Alzheimer's progresses. On my first visit, which was about a year ago, he was very articulate and mobile. On my most recent visit there was a hospital bed in the living room, an aide comes in the evening to put him to bed and he spends most of the day sleeping. My caregiver now attends a support group and is blessed with family members who are very supportive. I cannot express how important it is to her that all measures be taken to keep him at home for as long as possible.

A recent article in the October issue of AARP bulletin highlights the importance of caring for caregivers and how finding support services is vital to their livelihood. In addition, caregivers provide care worth about \$25 billion a year in New York, delaying or postponing nursing home care.

Our organization can help caregivers by referring them to the appropriate agency if necessary. In many cases, we are able to relieve the burden on the family when a serious illness strikes so they can concentrate on how to care for their loved one. What we try to do at Community Caregivers is let people know they are not alone.

What is great about Community Caregivers is that we have many areas for people to offer their expertise. I am also a member of the Public Relations/Marketing Committee and we are looking for volunteers who can assist us with developing a marketing plan and writing. While we are a volunteer organization, we do have paid staff and other expenses so raising money is also a priority. Our annual gala will be held on Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup> at Albany Country Club. There is a silent and a live auction and we will be honoring SEFCU and Commissioner Vince Colonno, Albany County Department of Social Services.

If you are a recent retiree, soon to be a retiree, or someone who wants to give back to your community, this is your chance! You tell us when you are available, be it an hour a week, or a month; we are flexible. I can guarantee you it will be a positive experience that will make you feel great.

For more information about volunteering and our gala please call 456-2898.