

# Pulse of The People: Not an easy job

*By Christine C. Damon, Acting Executive Director*

Caring for aging parents, friends and family members can be very rewarding; some caregivers even describe themselves as "blessed." However, for more than 65 million Americans caregiving can also be an exhausting and stressful long-term commitment. This month is National Family Caregivers Month, a chance to recognize and celebrate those who work each day to ensure a better quality of life for family members and loved ones. To honor family caregivers from around the region, Community Caregivers offers three keys tips:

- 1) Take care of you. If you are like many caregivers, you often become so involved in care that you sacrifice your own health. This can make you more likely than the general population to be at risk for colds, flu, depression, and chronic illnesses like cancer and heart disease. Caregivers who take care of themselves remain healthier, feel better about themselves, and find that they provide better care.
- 2) Encourage independence. Be certain to foster independence in the person you are caring for. "Overcare" may not only take an emotional and physical toll on you, it may also deliver a message to the person being cared for that s/he is incapable. Some physical therapists claim that it takes longer for a person with an attentive caregiver to regain his/her capabilities than for a person living alone.
- 3) Ask for Help. Make sure you receive needed and deserved breaks from time to time. Say "yes" to friends, family, support group members, and professionals who ask. The more specific you can be in your request, the more likely it is that help will be available.

Community Caregivers offers an array of services to help Capital Region residents maintain their independence, dignity and quality of life within their homes and communities. For more caregiving information, call (518) 456-2898, or visit [communitycaregivers.org](http://communitycaregivers.org).