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Caregivers of Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease Find Support and Hope

Woodburn, Ore. – The costs of caring for people with Alzheimer's is well over \$100 billion a year. More than five million people in the United States live with Alzheimer's disease and 80,000 of them are in Oregon. Far more are affected as spouses, families and friends live with the consequences of this devastating disease.

Country Side Living hosts an Alzheimer's support group at the Woodburn Internal Medicine on Cascade Drive for family, friends and caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease or other memory related disorders.

Mary Reitan, who is the Administrator of Country Side Living in Canby, facilitates the group and has 10 years experience working with people who have dementia. Country Side Living specializes in the care of individuals with Alzheimer's or other dementia. "So often, a grown child is thrust into the role of caregiver upon the death of a mother or father and they've had no time to prepare themselves for the awesome responsibilities of taking care of someone with Alzheimer's." says Reitan. "Even a spouse who's seen a gradual decline in the health of their husband or wife has a very difficult time understanding the behavioral changes. They become absolutely exhausted

physically, mentally and emotionally. Studies show that with support, counseling and education it not only eases the caregiver's burdens and they experience improved health but they are able to give better care to their loved one for a longer period of time.”

Watching a loved one travel through the stages of Alzheimer's is heartbreaking. Caring for them during this time is one of the hardest jobs imaginable. It requires an abundance of physical and emotional energy. For a caregiver, attending a support group provides a safe place for people to share their worries, guilt, fear, and frustration with people who truly understand what it's like to live day in and day out with someone who has Alzheimer's. The Alzheimer's Support Group, sponsored by Silverton Hospital, serves as a community resource to help caregivers realize they are not alone and there is help for them.

The Support Group meets the third Monday of each month from 2 -3 PM at Woodburn Medical Center at 974 N. Cascade Drive (next to Dr. Frank Golden's office). Everyone with an interest in Alzheimer's is welcome. For more information, call Mary Reitan at 503-502-4509.

Common warning signs of Alzheimer's:

- Difficulty performing familiar tasks
- Forgetting recently learned information
- Disorientation to time and place
- Changes in personality/behavior