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Contact: Alexandra Newman, Communications & Outreach Coordinator

Tel: 269-408-4369

Email: alexandranewman@areaagencyonaging.org

Website: areaagencyonaging.org

Region IV Area Agency on Aging Launches Free Caregiver Education Series This Fall

Together in Care offers six weeks of practical support for family caregivers across Van Buren, Berrien, and Cass counties

ST. JOSEPH — Many people who manage a parent's medications, help a spouse get through the day, or check in regularly on a neighbor don't think of themselves as caregivers. Region IV Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is launching *Together in Care*, a free six-week education series built for exactly those people: family and informal caregivers who are doing this work without a title or a manual.

"Family caregivers carry a load no one fully prepares them for," Amanda Drew, planning and community development manager at AAA, said. "*Together in Care* is here to help with the parts that feel impossible to figure out alone, and to connect caregivers with a community that understands what they're navigating."

The series begins Tuesday, Sept. 8, with sessions running weekly from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. through Oct. 13. Caregivers can join in person at the Campus for Creative Aging, 2900 Lakeview Avenue, St. Joseph or online, providing flexibility for busy caregivers.

Each session pairs a real topic with someone who knows it firsthand, from family caregivers who have lived it to professionals who work in the field:

- Sept. 8 — What I Wish I Had Known: A Caregiver Panel
- Sept. 15 — Navigating Health & Medical Care
- Sept. 22 — Caregiving with Confidence: Practical Tips & Techniques
- Sept. 29 — Preparing for the Unexpected: A Caregiver's Guide
- Oct. 6 — Strategies and Benefits of Self-Care
- Oct. 13 — The Best-Laid Plans: Avoiding Unintended Consequences in Estate & Long-Term Care Planning

To help recognize the time caregivers invest, participants who attend at least three sessions will receive a \$100 gift card, while those who attend all six sessions will receive a \$200 gift card.

Registration is free and open now at morethanacaregiver.org.

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About Region IV Area Agency on Aging

For more than 50 years, families across Southwest Michigan have trusted Region IV Area Agency on Aging to navigate the questions aging brings, starting with one question of its own: what's important to you? Region IV pioneered in-home care management in the 1990s, a model that became Michigan's MI Choice Waiver and has since

scaled across the country. The agency also operates the Campus for Creative Aging, a hub for lifelong learning and community connection, and leads the Southwest Michigan Community Care Hub, the first of its kind in Michigan. Region IV serves Van Buren, Berrien, and Cass counties.