

New 2014 Monthly Calendar serves America's 44 million informal caregivers

SARASOTA – With more than 44 million Americans providing unpaid, informal care for their ailing or chronically ill loved ones, a Sarasota resident has created a 2014 monthly calendar uniquely designed to empower caregivers.

The Caregivers' Comfort calendar includes eight unique features intended to simplify, ease, or brighten up the many responsibilities of adults who are caring at home for the elderly, disabled or chronically ailing of all ages.

"This is more than just a calendar," says Julie Cook Downing, who created the Caregivers' Comfort Calendar based on her own experience caring for a mother with Alzheimer's and a father with dementia. "It's a tool that provides solutions."

The calendar, also available as a Veterans' Caregiver version, includes several standout features to address caregivers' unique needs, such as pages for resources and patient observations. The calendar is also filled with inspirational sayings and suggestions for how to reduce stress.

Studies show informal caregivers suffer from higher incidences of depression and anxiety, get less sleep than non-caregivers, and face greater financial pressures, according to the American Psychological Association. Informal caregivers also suffer more often than non-caregivers from headaches, backaches and other physical ailments.

Downing says she aims to lessen the burden on caregivers through the Caregivers' Comfort Calendar. "Caregivers need inspiration, appreciation, recognition and organization," she says. "The Caregivers' Comfort Calendar provides all of those things."

The calendar has already attracted fans, including people in Florida and Illinois who have already found it useful. Willis "Skip" Bergoine says the inspirational sayings have provided him comfort and support since his wife died in April after a stroke.

"It's helped me through some tough days," he says.

To order the calendar directly, go to [www.caregiverscomfort.com](http://www.caregiverscomfort.com). Downing also offers a creative fundraising option to nonprofit organizations, who can raise money for both their own organization and Downing's by purchasing calendars in bulk from Downing.

In addition to being an experienced informal caregiver herself, Downing is a support group facilitator and frequent guest speaker on the topic of caregiving. She can be reached at [caregivercomfort@aol.com](mailto:caregivercomfort@aol.com) or 941-360-3580.

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