

The Twin Cities Jewish Community Presents:

# KEEPING THE SPIRIT ALIVE

*The Conference for Caregivers and Those Supporting a Loved One with Dementia*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2025**  
**8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

Adath Jeshurun Congregation  
Moe & Esther Sabes Campus  
10500 Hillside Ln W  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

This conference seeks to explore what “we can do” as we move into what we are capable of, and how to nourish ourselves and others on a care journey.

Register at

[jfcsmpls.org/event/ktsa](https://jfcsmpls.org/event/ktsa)  
or call 952-417-2107

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL



This conference is a collaboration of



Jewish Family and Children's  
Service of Minneapolis



JEWISH FAMILY  
SERVICE OF ST. PAUL

## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE



8:30 a.m.	Registration Resource Fair
9:15 a.m.	Welcome & Introductions
9:35 a.m.	Keynote Panel Presentation
10:45 a.m.	Transition Time/Break
11 a.m.	Breakout Session #1
Noon	Lunch Resource Fair
1 p.m.	Breakout Session #2
2 p.m.	Transition Time/Break
2:10 p.m.	Closing Ceremony Giving Voice Chorus



### ADDITIONAL INFO

- When you register, you will receive a confirmation email with any additional instructions for the day of the conference.
- Transition times allow you to get to the next scheduled opportunity, but also to meet self-care needs of stretching and staying hydrated. Please bring a water bottle with you.
- Individuals in need of **American Sign Language interpretation** for the keynote or breakout sessions should contact Tabitha Benci DeRango, Community Conferences Manager, at [TDeRango@jfcsmpls.org](mailto:TDeRango@jfcsmpls.org) or 952-417-2107 **by April 7**.
- The in-person and virtual Resource Fair, available in the Resource Fair section of the conference homepage, offers you the opportunity to check in with representatives and/or browse websites and contact agencies that can best suit your needs.
- **Certificates of Attendance** will be available on the conference homepage by May 5.
- **“Take us with you”** This year ALL breakout sessions will be audio recorded and available online **by May 5**. You will be able to listen to any of the sessions as you go for a walk, drive or wherever you go, and you can “Take us with you.”



# KEYNOTE PANEL: GRIEF IN EVERY CHAPTER: THE STORIES THAT SHAPE US

In today's world, we recognize that grief is an area that affects us all and has an impact on us that needs care and resources. Grief does not just show up when someone is gone; it shows up throughout our lives, and it has no time limits.

In this session, this panel will share and acknowledge many types of grief; how it affects our minds, our hearts, and our bodies; and tools to support you on your own grief journey that we hope will be the support needed in caring for a loved one.

## MODERATOR



**Rosie Gaston**, MSW, LICSW, APHSW-C, is a passionate and energetic clinical social worker with over a decade of experience supporting individuals, families, and professionals through the intricate journey of end-of-life care. She has a master of social work degree and has worked in oncology, palliative care, and hospice, while also leading and collaborating with exceptional interdisciplinary teams. Rosie has also contributed to the field through research and speaking at local and national levels. In 2022, she founded A Better Ending to focus on personalized support, community education, and fostering professional development in the end-of-life care domain.

## PANELISTS



**Nina Guertin** is a trained end-of-life/death doula, trained and certified interfaith spiritual director, certified grief support specialist, a mentor, a ritualist/celebrant, aromatherapist, and an angel artist/ceramicist. Nina also serves as a chaplain and spiritual support team member with Shalom-Johnson Hospice. Nina has more than 25 years' experience in clay work and facilitates Healing Heart Experiences with clay in her studio in Northeast Minneapolis. Nina has been practicing death, grief, and bereavement work since 2017.



**Brittany Squillace**, MA, LMFT, is a mental health therapist and founder of Best Self Therapy. Brittany's mission through Best Self Therapy is to instill hope in grieving adults to change the way they view, talk about, and navigate grief, allowing them to live a better life as their best self. Brittany guides clients in making meaning of their losses. Her specializations also include guiding clients in ambiguous healing and living losses. Brittany values creating a safe and welcoming space, allowing clients to discover how to live as their best selves while honoring their unique grief journeys.



**Kelly Grosklags**, LICSW, BCD, FAAGC, FT, is a distinguished clinical psychotherapist with over 29 years of experience, specializing in grief, oncology, palliative care, and hospice. As the founder of Conversations with Kelly, she facilitates a platform for interactive speaking engagements, sharing her profound insights on grief and end-of-life care. Kelly holds fellowships in thanatology and grief counseling and is recognized internationally as a speaker, two-time author, and executive producer. She is committed to enhancing compassionate communication and offering transformative guidance, empowering healthcare professionals, patients, and caregivers through the challenges of serious illness, grief, and loss.



**Karla Hult** is an Emmy, Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite award-winning journalist. Her favorite stories include those touching on international, political and social issues, and of course, stories shared from the heart - including her award-winning documentary of her family's own Alzheimer's journey. In 2021, Karla launched So Many Goodbyes, a mission to support and educate families, caregivers, the long-term care community, and the greater community about the dementia crisis and how families can cope and find joy on the journey. She also produces and hosts a powerful podcast, "Hello Alzheimer's," and continues to report and anchor for KARE 11.



### 1. Providing Support with Confidence

In this thoughtfully designed presentation, you will learn to recognize signs of dementia, along with a focus on approaching sensitive topics, navigating challenges with empathy, and collaboratively developing plans to minimize difficulties. Whether you're a family member, caregiver, or professional, this session equips you to handle conversations with clarity, compassion, and will leave you prepared to confidently navigate the challenges of caregiving.

**Tracy Keibler** is the founding director of START Senior Solutions. She holds a master's in gerontology and is a certified teacher holding multiple certifications through Teepa Snow's Positive Approach to Care.



**Lynn Bergren** is a registered nurse with over 40 years of experience in behavioral health, as well as extensive experience in coaching and communication. In her current role as outreach nurse for START Senior Solutions, she uses these skills to advocate for seniors and their families.

### 2. Empowering Perspectives of Youth with a Parent with Younger-Onset Dementia

In this session, you'll hear from a panel of inspiring young voices as they bravely share their personal stories and experiences with having a parent with younger-onset dementia. They'll discuss their journeys, the impact on their families, and how they have found strength, community, and support along the way.

#### *In Person Moderator*



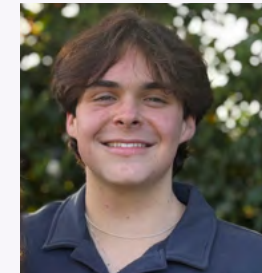
**Patti LaFleur** is the former care partner to her mom, who had younger-onset mixed dementia. Patti brings a wealth of knowledge through caregiving and teaching for 10 years; volunteering with people living with neuro-cognitive disorders in art classes; and serving as a community educator for the Alzheimer's Association. Patti also has a master's in instructional leadership and is a Certified Dementia Practitioner. She is a member of the Lorenzo's House team, leading their vision as the youth and lighthouse outreach lead, where she connects with families, designs and implements youth programming, and leads their ambassadors who are valued volunteer leaders.

#### *Online Youth Panelists*



**Olivia Louise Compton** is 15 years old and in the 10th grade. Her father developed Lewy Body Dementia six years ago and was looking for a community who understood. Olivia is a member of the Teen Light Club and was a youth lead at the 2023 Youth Summit. She uses her beautiful voice to lead mindfulness breathing techniques, shares her story openly, and welcomes others to our Lorenzo's House

family through playdates. Olivia likes being a Lorenzo's House Youth Lead because she wants to help other kids who are experiencing the same hardships as she is. She wants to make the best of it by ensuring other youth have methods and strategies for things they can do to help themselves and their parents.



**Colby Nunn** is 16 years old and a junior in high school. His dad has been walking with younger-onset dementia for the past 2+ years. He is a member of our Lorenzo's House Teen Light Club and has been a youth lead at the Youth Summit. Colby always shows up so beautifully for himself and others in this space. He would like to help other youth start or continue their journey for support in Lorenzo's House.



**Paige Censale** is 23 years old, born in El Paso, Texas, and grew up in Bellingham, Washington. After graduation in 2019, she returned to El Paso, capturing stories of people seeking asylum on the U.S./Mexico border and later in Europe. In 2023, her mother was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's at 59 years old, the same year Paige was awarded a full scholarship to Brown University. Now a sophomore in college, she is dedicating her studies to platforming the voices of young caregivers and highlighting how a diagnosis of dementia must no longer mean pushing lifesaving care onto untrained family members.

### 3. Joyful Engagement: Fostering Connections Through Meaningful Activities

Discover the power of joyful engagement through hands-on activities that inspire connection and creativity. This session features a guided experience alongside an uplifting choral activity led by Giving Voice Chorus. Learn how these meaningful interactions can cultivate joy, strengthen community bonds, and enhance the well-being for participants of all abilities and backgrounds. Join us to reconnect with what brings joy and meaning through shared experiences.



**Jenna Fink, LSW**, has been a licensed social worker since 2007. Jenna has been working for the Alzheimer's Association® since 2010 and is currently the associate director of community services. In her position, Jenna oversees education and outreach programs, and metro based early-stage programming for the MN-ND Chapter. Jenna meets with corporate businesses and community-based organizations to discuss how dementia education can positively impact employees and the greater community. Jenna also manages chapter support for the 24/7 Helpline.



**Eyleen Braaten** has a master's degree in public policy and joined Giving Voice in 2017 and has been instrumental in the growth of the organization. Since becoming its executive director in 2021, Eyleen's focus has been on creating unique and innovative opportunities to expand the Giving Voice mission across the world while keeping our local choruses strong. Eyleen believes that music is an expression of our humanity and connects us all. Eyleen's favorite thing about Giving Voice is that "we are a family."



**Vladimir Garrido-Biagetti**, artistic director of diverse partnerships, Giving Voice Initiative. In addition to directing our Sabios Cantor's partnership chorus, Vladimir Garrido-Biagetti is an active Twin Cities-based musician. He is a music performer, folk dancer, and community activist, living in the Twins Cities since 2005. Vladimir produces, engineers, and directs musical projects and studio recordings as well as live sound events and multicultural festivals. Vladimir currently directs the Latina band Alma Andina and the mother-and-son singing duet Ina-Yukka.

#### 4. Navigating Life's Transitions: Essential Tools for Building a Strong Support Network to Support You and Your Loved Ones

This informative session will guide you through the complexities of planning for the future. Learn about essential legal documents and strategies, such as healthcare directives, wills, and trusts; and how you can protect your assets while building a lasting legacy. Gain valuable insights into accessing vital resources and support services such as guardians, conservators, healthcare agents, and rep-payees, as well as steering through the systems of benefits and resources. This session is designed to empower you with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate life's challenges with confidence and gain the peace of mind that comes from knowing you and your loved ones are well-prepared for the future.



**Sarah Breiner**, The Legal Mama®, is a seasoned estate planning attorney and Certified Personal Family Lawyer®. As the founder of Breiner Law Firm, she leverages her 22 years of experience, guiding families to navigate the complexities of estate planning while providing comprehensive Life and Legacy Planning solutions. Sarah empowers families to make informed decisions around protecting their future and assets through legal and financial education. Sarah is dedicated to ensuring that everyone has the security of knowing their wishes are honored and their loved ones are protected.



**Rebecca Reich** is a registered nurse and member of the Minnesota Association for Guardianship & Conservatorship (MAGIC). She owned and operated Minnetonka Assisted Living and Hospice from 2005-2012, specializing in general care, geriatric care, diabetic management and memory care. She is also an educator with 12 years of experience. Rebecca's professional geriatric experience has proven invaluable to community families in need of specialized care for their loved one. She also serves as a consultant to individuals who are struggling with issues of parent care and in need of finding elder care programs or professional caregivers to meet their needs.

#### 5. Building a Better Brain – it's never too early (or too late) to start working on brain health

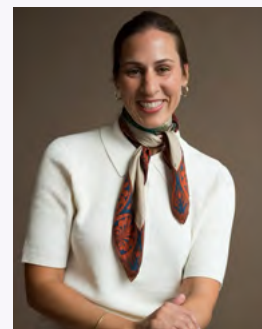
In this session, you will explore strategies for enhancing cognitive function throughout the lifespan. Brain health isn't often a topic of everyday conversation – many of us haven't intentionally learned about brain health and performance since high school. This discussion will highlight the connection between brain health and overall physical well-being, with practical tips on using nutrition and exercise to prevent cognitive decline. Rather than waiting for cognitive decline to happen, let's take a proactive approach to understand how we can "update" and optimize the complex computer between our ears.



**Zach Parlier** has worked in the world of geriatrics and memory care for more than a decade. He is first and foremost a caregiver, since the beginning of his career as a certified nursing assistant C.N.A. at 16. Zach has held various leadership roles and is a licensed assisted living director. He has six years of experience as a dementia educator, having had the honor of being mentored by some of the brightest minds in dementia consulting during his time at Mayo Clinic and English Rose. He is a proponent for a well-being-focused and holistic approach to memory care and hopes to motivate dementia care partners to seek out the uniqueness of the individual rather than marginalize their care based on the finality of diagnosis.

#### 6. A Care-Full Ending: Perspectives of a Death Doula

Through non-medical approaches to diagnosis, healing, and dying itself, death doulas do not replace existing systems, but rather complement them to create a better end. When the end of a life draws near, seeking medical care is the most evident course of action—and even then, this step is often taken only when an individual's ability to communicate has been diminished. Death is not a medical failure and there are many more sides to this process. A good death is not always possible, but achievable with time, conversation, and education, no matter what the medical situation may be.



**Cori Levin**, an elder advocate and public educator, aims to erase the cultural stigma around death, as well as prepare members of the community for situations where they may need to provide or receive care. Cori's educational content covers a multitude of subjects, including care resources, care plans, self-care for caregivers, Alzheimer's and dementia care, and family communication. Cori takes a multi-dimensional approach as she works to equip those around her with knowledge, resources, comfort and guidance. Drawing on her 18 years of advocacy; personal experiences as a private care provider; and training as a birth and death doula and Red-Cross certified nurse assistant, she engages with others in a way that is both personal and professional. Cori founded Navigating Elderhood over five years ago with the intention of providing care to elder members of the community.



### 7. What's New: Ask the Doctor



In this session you will learn about the latest research on Alzheimer's and dementia and be able to ask questions from research expert Dr. Jonathan Graff-Radford from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

**Jonathan Graff-Radford, M.D.**, is a behavioral neurologist at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, where he evaluates and treats patients with cognitive disorders, including dementia. A professor of neurology at Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science, Dr. Graff-Radford currently serves as division chair for Behavioral Neurology.

### 8. Understanding the Role and Importance of Family Meetings



What is a family meeting and why is it helpful? This session will allow discovery of the ways to communicate, delegate, and support those involved to make a plan for caregiving and care receiving. The session will include small group discussion focused on best practices for successful family meeting implementation.

**Roni Falck** serves as the program manager for Senior Services at Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis (JFCS), providing direction and oversight to the department. She has served in the aging field for 15 years and focuses her work on centering seniors and supporting caregivers.



**Jennifer Koontz** is a senior services case manager at Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis (JFCS), where she supports seniors and their families with accessing resources and information; identifies and helps prioritize goals for seniors so they can live their best lives; and coordinates delivery of JFCS services. Jen has a combined 27 years of experience in social services and higher education academic advising. Jen facilitates Dementia Friends training around the Twin Cities and is a trained class leader for Powerful Tools for Caregivers, co-leading sessions around the metro.

### 9. Truths on the Other Side of Dementia: A Candid Look into Care-Partner Fatigue



In this session, Myrna Marofsky, keynote speaker at the 2023 "Keeping the Spirit Alive" Conference, will shed light on the emotional and mental strain faced by those supporting a loved one with dementia. This Care-Partner Fatigue often goes unrecognized, and whether a loved one is at home or in a care facility, its cumulative weight can feel overwhelming. Using personal stories and real-life examples, Myrna will introduce The Five Fatigues that care partners commonly face, shedding

light on the challenges and emotions that come with this journey. The session will help care partners put words to their experiences, empowering them to express their needs, seek support, and be kinder to themselves. Professional caregivers, friends, and family members will leave with a deeper understanding of how to lighten the load for others with Myrna's Five Cs of Compassion.

**Myrna Marofsky** is an entrepreneur, consultant, mother, and grandmother. She has served on local boards and as a volunteer for various community organizations. Myrna owned a nationally recognized consulting company before she began facilitating groups of women business owners. Having previously written two business books, it was her husband's dementia diagnosis that resulted in her writing a memoir called "To the Last Dance, A Partner's Story of Living and Loving Through Dementia." She frequently speaks to audiences, encouraging them to redefine "caregiving" to Care-LIVING.



### 10. Supporting Each Other as Caregivers

Come and join a discussion circle where all of us are the presenters and all of us are the learners. We will explore how everyone's journey towards caregiving is different and how we can all learn from each other by sharing experiences, resources, and active listening. In this space of thoughtful questions and answers from all of the experts in the room, we will discover ideas and ways to support ourselves on the journey of caregiving.

**Alex Locke** is the Director of Community Services at Jewish Family Service of St. Paul (JFS). As a non-profit professional of over 20 years, he has extensive experience with the aging population. As part of his current role, he supervises the Aging and Disability department at JFS. In addition to his professional work, Alex has first-hand knowledge of being a caregiver for his mother, who had Alzheimer's. Two of his grandparents also suffered from the disease. Alex's background in TV news will serve him well as he facilitates this discussion.

### 11. Caregiving in the Home vs. a Facility

The definition of quality care is different for everyone and should consider the well-being, needs, and concerns of the care receivers, as well as the caregivers. This session will explore thought-provoking questions that can help you identify quality care, resources, and recommendations for caregiving in a facility versus the home.

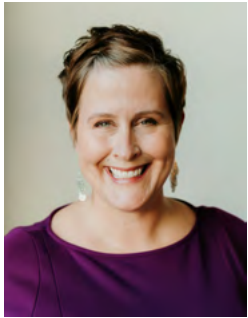


**Bonnie Jaffe** is a registered nurse with many years of hospital experience prior to joining Jewish Family Service of St. Paul (JFS) in 2008. In her current position at JFS, Bonnie advocates for best care practices for her care coordination clients to enable them to age in place using appropriate services in the home and community. Bonnie is presently working with people that have all forms of dementia. Her daily practice also includes caregiver coaching, family consultations, and leading the JFS grief and caregiver support groups. She is trained in Powerful Tools for Caregivers, Reach Community for Caregivers and Dementia Friends. Bonnie has also been trained by Honoring Choices of MN to assist people in completing advance care directives.



## 12. Preparing for Ethical Challenges and Decisions at the End of Life

As a caregiver, you may be faced with complex and emotional decisions surrounding the care of a loved one at the end of life. Ethical dilemmas are common and can be overwhelming in moments of crisis. This session, led by an experienced hospice social worker and physician, will provide a compassionate yet straightforward exploration of critical issues and ethical challenges that caregivers may encounter. This includes navigating difficult decisions around life-sustaining treatments, identifying the appropriate decision-makers, and ensuring that your loved one's wishes are honored. Our goal is to equip you with the knowledge and confidence to make informed, thoughtful decisions before crises arise, allowing for a more peaceful and dignified end-of-life experience.



**Rosie Gaston** MSW, LICSW, APHSW-C, is a passionate and energetic clinical social worker with over a decade of experience dedicated to guiding individuals, families, communities, and fellow professionals through the intricate journey of end-of-life care. Her path began as a hospice volunteer, igniting her pursuit of a master of social work degree. Throughout her career, Rosie has worked alongside exceptional interdisciplinary teams in diverse healthcare settings, specializing in oncology, palliative care, and hospice. She has also made significant contributions to the field through research and presentations at both local and national levels. In 2022, Rosie established A Better Ending, her own venture, driven by her three core passions – providing personalized support, community education, and fostering professional development in the end-of-life care domain.



**Dr. Joseph Sicora** is a highly-respected physician with nearly four decades of experience, serving patients through the North Memorial Health system since 1985. He is triple board-certified in geriatrics, family medicine, and hospice and palliative care, reflecting his deep commitment to providing comprehensive and compassionate care across the lifespan. For 17 years, Dr. Sicora has served as a hospice

medical director, where he supports patients and families through some of life's most challenging moments. He has also chaired the North Memorial Ethics Committee for 15 years. Dr. Sicora is well known for his ability to navigate difficult conversations with a balance of directness and empathy. His dedication to patient-centered care, coupled with his expertise in ethics and end-of-life care, has made him a trusted leader and mentor within his field.

I never expected this diagnosis. What will happen to me? To my family?

How do I balance their needs with my own? I want to be hopeful, but should we talk about end of life?

My spouse is my whole world. What will I do without him?



I don't know where to begin.

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