Caregiver Programs Receive New Foundation Support

Two foundations recently provided AgeOptions grants to extend and replicate the Caring Together, Living Better (CTLB) program for caregivers.

After three successful years in the near south suburbs, the community-based program focused on community planning, partnerships, innovations, and support for family caregivers will be replicated in the western suburbs with support from the foundations.

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation surprised AgeOptions and the other 13 grantees of its National Family and Informal Caregiver Support Program with $20,000 final grants to continue or expand the work of their caregiver demonstrations. Weinberg officials invited the grantees to a reception before the March Aging in America Conference in Chicago where they made the announcement.

The Russell and Josephine Kott Memorial Charitable Trust granted AgeOptions $125,000 to support extending Caring Together, Living Better. The one-year grant will make it possible to replicate the program with minority communities in the western suburbs.

“Caring Together, Living Better is a great success,” said Jonathan Lavin, AgeOptions president and CEO. “It is with great appreciation and anticipation that we will continue many of the techniques and lessons learned from this remarkable program into new parts of the county with additional foundation funding for the western suburbs, and the testing of faith-based curricula for caregivers here and in Milwaukee. We are so thankful to the Weinberg Foundation and to our staff and community partners for making this an exceptional program.”
In addition, the Helen Bader Foundation of Milwaukee awarded AgeOptions $50,000 to further develop and test the caregiver training program “Paths to Faithful Caregiving” in Milwaukee (with the Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Institute) and in suburban Cook County. Micki Iris and Rebecca Berman of CJE Senior Life worked with the CTLB Leadership Council Committee to develop faith-based exercises to add to the University of Illinois Extension curriculum developed by Molly Hofer, a member of the AgeOptions Advisory Council, and her colleagues.

“AgeOptions is pleased that innovative community-based partnerships and programs continue to be developed with foundation support,” Jonathan Lavin said. “The most important element of these programs is the work of caregivers who provide so much time, support and, at times, sacrifice and love for their older loved ones and neighbors. They deserve the respect and support of all. AgeOptions is seeking ways to raise awareness and commitment across the region for caregivers and their loved ones. There is no substitution for their acts of kindness and care, and as a society we must honor them and find ways to sustain their help.”