



# NOW

Your Update from AgeOptions

November 2015

## **\$150,000 Grant Will Help Faith Communities And Social Service Agencies Support Family Caregivers**

Like many recent college graduates, Manuel Andre Beltran, of Cicero, had been searching for steady employment. But his search was complicated by his need to care for his father, who was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. "My attempts to find available resources were discouraging," Manuel said. "I grew up in a Latino family, and whenever a family member needed assistance, especially when they were older, everyone did their part to help care for them." But that support system was no longer available and he was caring for his father on his own.

Manuel is one of 90 million family caregivers in the U.S., according to the Caregiver Action Network, which spearheads National Family Caregivers Month each November. Those caregivers suffer health, emotional and financial stress, which, without support, puts them and those they care for at risk. "Respite: Care for Caregivers" is the theme of this year's National Family Caregivers Month.

Manuel found help for himself and his father through respite care offered by the Cicero Area Project, which he had initially contacted for legal advice.

"Arcadio Delgado (executive director of Cicero Area Project) informed me about a project they were putting together," he said. "He explained that trained volunteers would go to my home and help care for my father while I was at work. I was hesitant at first because my father can be quite difficult to be around at times, but after seeing the outcome I was very happy.

"When I got home the first day I noticed my father was much more outspoken, instead of finding him staring into the television. The volunteers also went out with him for a walk, which is one of

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my greatest concerns since his balance has deteriorated and he has fallen on the street in the past. He told me how they helped him clean the house and even cook.”

The [Cicero Area Project](#) is one of the west suburban partner agencies in [Caring Together, Living Better \(CTLB\)](#), a volunteer-based program in which churches and community organizations work with AgeOptions to develop and provide services to support family caregivers in the south and west suburbs. CAP has served more than 60 caregivers in the past year alone. It will provide faith-based caregiver training in November and December.

CTLB started in the south suburbs in 2009 with seven African-American churches and a community organization collaborating to provide relief for community members who care for older adults. It recently expanded to the western suburbs, where the partner churches and organizations are Cicero Area Project, Faith Cathedral Church, Neighborhood United Methodist Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church and Vida Abundante.

As Manuel sees it, “The volunteers are important to the residents they serve because they are from the same communities and also speak the language.”

### **Grant Will Help Expand and Improve Services for Caregivers**

A \$150,000 grant to AgeOptions from The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc., will support continuing development of the west suburban Caring Together, Living Better Partnership. It will meet the needs of local caregivers like Manuel through volunteer-based programs at partner churches and organizations, increase access to services through culturally appropriate outreach, provide caregiver training that meets the needs of Latino and African-



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American caregivers, increase respite options and use innovative evaluation techniques to continually improve and plan for successful sustainability.

“By expanding and improving services for caregivers in this low-income area, CTLB will enhance the communities’ ability to provide essential supports that caregivers cannot afford to purchase on their own, “ said Karla Ortiz Flores, AgeOptions caregiver coordinator.

**For more information and statistics on caregiving**, go to [Caregiving in the U.S. 2015](#), a joint research study by the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP.