

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE CAREGIVER'S SOUL (from www.ncoa.org newsletter)

Fans of the best-selling "Chicken Soup for the Soul" book series will be pleased to learn about a new one that provides spiritual nourishment to the millions of devoted wives, husbands, and family members who provide care to ill or disabled loved ones and to the people whose services support their efforts.

The stories in *Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul: Stories to Inspire Caregivers in the Home, the Community and the World* are told by the caregivers themselves, offering insight into the everyday difficulties such care imposes on them, but with an appreciation of the love that enables them to carry on. Several tell of caring for a spouse or parent with Alzheimer's Disease, and the pain of knowing they are now strangers to that loved one. To illustrate, one elderly gentleman caring for his wife explains that, "when all the ordinary things are gone, true spirit can still remain."

Tales told by social workers, nurses, and volunteers demonstrate how visits by non-family members to homebound persons offer welcome human contact. And, as one story comically illustrates, when the visit is between two old friends, both with a sense of humor, an awkward occurrence that might otherwise cause embarrassment and shame to an afflicted person instead becomes the source of shared laughter.

Mostly inspiring, many stories are instructive as well. "Waiting for Mother" tells of an elderly nursing home resident, Gretta, whose daily fantasy that her mother will arrive shortly is shattered by a fellow resident. Driven to accept her mother's death, Gretta sinks into deep depression, losing the will to live. In time, her normally cheerful and serene outlook returns, along with the fantasy that gives meaning to her life. "For Gretta," observes her caregiver, "the truth does not set her free. Fortunately, her sojourn into reality is brief."

With its forward by former First Lady, Rosalynn Carter, this book is recommended by the National Family Caregivers Association

and is available online or at bookstores everywhere, retailing for \$12.95.