

For immediate release

VoiceAmerica's influential Family Caregivers Unite! talk show links with community engagement specialist, Recreational Respite.

Oakville, ON., January 12, 2012—Because of the growing importance of family caregiving in North America, Family Caregivers Unite! is teaming with community engagement specialist, Amy MacFarlane of Recreational Respite, to strengthen links with the family caregiver communities. Family Caregivers Unite! host, Dr Gordon Atherley, says that family caregivers are giving more and more to healthcare systems, but they are not yet receiving all the support they need and merit. “Which is why they need ways to communicate among themselves, to share experiences, and to get the information they need to help their family members”, he says. Amy MacFarlane, Director of Family Caregivers Unite!’s community engagement, says that connecting Family Caregivers Unite! more closely with family caregiver communities, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally is the next major step forward in family caregiving. “Then they’ll be helped to engage with each other and to make their voices heard with a new level of empowerment and advocacy for their roles, as caregivers”, she adds.

In the US, the National Alliance for Caregiving reported that there are 65.7 million family caregivers. Of them, 34 percent are men. The Canadian Caregiver Coalition estimates that there are over 4 million family caregivers in Canada, though some estimates are higher. In both countries, family caregivers subsidize the healthcare systems through their unpaid efforts, by enabling family members to stay at home, and by providing care that is exhausting physically, psychologically and financially for many family caregivers.

Thanks to North America’s aging cohorts, incurable diseases increasingly preoccupy healthcare system planners. For the care of incurable diseases the types of care delivered by healthcare systems are essential. But they are nonetheless insufficient: family caregivers constitute an increasingly necessary contribution to sufficiency of care. Some authorities hold that, without family caregivers, healthcare systems will be increasingly unable to cope with the challenges of the aging population.

Family Caregivers Unite!, <http://is.gd/00Q4Jl>, an internet-based social media project of international scope, now with over a hundred episodes, saw its audience grow by 600% through 2011.

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