

WELCOME TO OUR

*Monthly Newsletter*

# 2026

Dear Caregivers,

As we welcome the start of a new year, we want to take a moment to recognize you. January often arrives with expectations to reset, improve, and push forward, but for caregivers, the work does not pause with the calendar. Caregiving continues through holidays, winter storms, exhaustion, and uncertainty, and your commitment does not go unnoticed.

A new year does not require reinvention. It can simply be an opportunity to move forward with intention, compassion, and support. This month, we encourage caregivers to focus on what is realistic and sustaining. Small steps. Gentle goals. Meaningful connections.

Throughout this year, the Idaho Community Care Program remains committed to supporting caregivers with resources, education, and community. You are not alone in this work, and help is available when you need it.

As we begin 2026, we thank you for the care you provide every day and wish you a year that offers moments of rest, connection, and hope.

**What  
you'll  
Learn:**

- Redefining Resolutions
- Dementia Capable Month
- Tech Talks w/ Tina
- Recipe of the Month

The start of a new year often comes with a familiar chorus of resolutions. Exercise more. Eat better. Do more. Be better. For caregivers, these messages can feel especially heavy. When your days are already shaped by someone else's needs, adding another list of expectations can quickly turn hope into pressure. This year, as a caregiver, you deserve a different approach to resolutions. One that is rooted in compassion, realism, and sustainability. Instead of striving for perfection, consider setting intentions that support your well-being alongside your caregiving role.

## **Redefining What a Resolution Means**

Traditional resolutions often focus on big changes, but caregiving rarely allows for major shifts or dramatic lifestyle changes. A more meaningful resolution might be smaller and gentler. Protecting your energy. Honoring your limits. Asking for help without guilt. These shifts may not look impressive on paper, but they can make an enormous difference in daily life.

## **Realistic Resolutions That Support Caregivers**

Here are a few caregiver-friendly resolutions to consider this year:

- Set one boundary a month. Whether it is declining an extra responsibility or protecting a few minutes of quiet time, boundaries help preserve emotional and physical energy.
- Prioritize brief moments of rest each day. Five minutes of stillness, a short walk, or a quiet cup of coffee can help reset your nervous system.
- Schedule your own health appointments. Caregivers often postpone their own care. Making yourself a priority supports everyone involved.
- Ask for help. Accepting support is not a sign of weakness. It is a strategy for sustainability.
- Simplify one caregiving task. Automate a refill, organize paperwork, or streamline a routine that causes stress.

## **Progress Over Perfection**

Caregiving is unpredictable. Some days will go smoothly, and others will feel overwhelming no matter how prepared you are. Resolutions should never become another source of guilt. Progress may look like showing up, adjusting plans, or simply getting through the day.

As the new year begins, remember that you do not need to become a new person. You are already doing meaningful, demanding work. The most important resolution may be allowing yourself the same care, patience, and grace that you offer others.



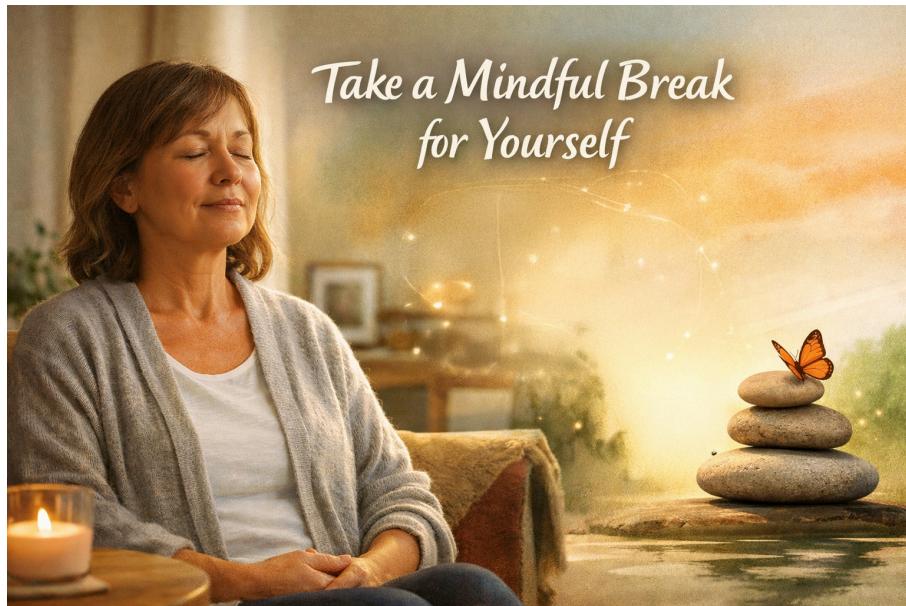
## Commission on Aging

The **Idaho Commission on Aging** has designated January as **Dementia Capable Month**, highlighting a statewide effort to build understanding, compassion, and support for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers. This campaign encourages all Idahoans to learn more about dementia, including the behaviors and challenges that can accompany it, and how informed responses can make a meaningful difference. By increasing awareness and promoting dementia-capable communities, Idaho aims to foster environments where individuals with dementia are treated with dignity, patience, and respect, and where families and caregivers feel supported and understood.

The Idaho Community Care Program and the Idaho Commission on Aging have partnered to develop specialized training videos for Idaho's First Responders. We especially want to acknowledge that the majority of First Responders across the state are volunteers who generously give their time to serve and protect their communities. These training videos were intentionally designed to be short and concise, allowing First Responders the flexibility to access and complete the training when their schedules allow, while still gaining valuable insight into supporting individuals living with dementia.

These training videos are currently in the final stages of editing and are expected to be available within the next few weeks. To mark their debut, we will be hosting a webinar on January 27, 2025, where the videos will be officially introduced. Following the webinar, the training videos will also be posted on the Idaho Community Care Program's YouTube channel.

If you are interested in attending the webinar, please reach out to your Case Manager to receive the link.



## **Tech Talks w/ Tina**

### **Setting Goals That Care for You, Too**

Caregivers are often skilled at setting goals for others—managing appointments, medications, and daily routines—but much less likely to set goals for themselves. A realistic caregiving goal might be something simple and restorative: taking a few minutes to pause, breathe, and reset. Caring for yourself is not separate from caregiving; it helps support your patience, clarity, and resilience.

In our new video on our YouTube channel, “Meditation & Mindfulness for Dementia & Alzheimer’s Caregivers,” we explore how brief moments of mindfulness can ease stress and support emotional well-being. One way to try this at home is by using the free Insight Timer meditation app, which offers short guided practices and quiet timers you can use anytime. Rather than aiming for a perfect or lengthy practice, consider a gentle goal—just three to five minutes of mindful breathing. Small, achievable moments of self-care can make the ongoing work of caregiving feel more manageable.

We have instructions available for downloading the Insight Timer meditation app. If you’re interested, please reach out to your Case Manager.

# RECIPE OF THE MONTH

FROM THE KITCHEN OF:

KERRY BECKMAN

COMMUNITY CARE MANAGER

COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM



## BEST POTATO SOUP EVER!

Growing up in Idaho, you learn one thing quickly – there's no such thing as too many potato recipes! This cozy soup is one of my favorites to make on a cold winter day. It's warm, comforting, and delicious.

### Ingredients:

- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 2 stalks of celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- Kosher salt
- 6 medium russet potatoes (about 3 1/2 lb. total), peeled, cut into 1/2" cubes
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 6 oz. shredded smoked Gouda
- Sliced chives, for serving
- Freshly ground black pepper

### Instructions

1. In a large (at least 6-qt.) pot over medium heat, melt butter. Add onion and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until very tender and translucent, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and thyme, season with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes more. Add potatoes and stir to combine. Stir in broth and increase heat to high. Bring to a boil and cook, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are tender, 5 to 7 minutes.
2. Reduce heat to medium-low. Using a ladle, transfer about 4 c. potato mixture and broth to a blender. Partially cover or vent lid and blend until smooth. Return to pot, stirring to incorporate. Add half-and-half and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally to ensure soup isn't scorching bottom of pot, until slightly thickened, 12 to 15 minutes.
3. Stir in Gouda until melted, season with salt.
4. Divide soup among bowls. Top with chives and a few grinds of pepper.

Funny story: I grew up on a farm in rural Idaho, and we had two gardens. One was for all the usual veggies – carrots, beans, peas, lettuce, radishes – you name it. The other garden? A full acre of nothing but potatoes. One of my summer chores was helping to plant, weed, dust, and dig up all those potatoes. On hot summer days, that acre felt more like ten! I used to tell myself I'd never eat another potato once I grew up. Well... turns out I've made peace with potatoes – especially when they end up in a soup this good! 🥔