

15TH ANNUAL
**FAMILY CAREGIVER
GALA**

"ORDINARY PEOPLE
DOING
EXTRAORDINARY
THINGS."

NOVEMBER 20, 2021

VIRTUAL EDITION



**CELEBRATING OUR UNSUNG
HEROES**

Program

Welcome Address & Introduction of Mistress of Ceremonies	Diane Cooper
Mission & Vision	Shakira O'Kane, Esq.
*** Tribute to Joseph Brown Jr. ***	
Tribute to Caregivers	Dr. Nikki Stewart
Guest Speaker	Nathalie Clark
Musical Selection	Jackie Gage
Greeting from Senator Jamaal Bailey	
Recognition of Honorees	Shakira O'Kane, Esq.
Recognition of sponsors	
Williamsburg Raffle	Shakira O'Kane, Esq.
Letter to a caregiver	Diane Cooper
Recognition of honorees	Shakira O'Kane, Esq.
Musical Selection	Jackie Gage



Diane Cooper, R.N., M.Ed., GNP, AGCM
Founder and Executive Director

Ms. Diane Leona Cooper is a product of the New York City Public School system. She is a graduate of Hunter College School of Nursing. In addition, she holds a master's degree in nursing education from The College of New Rochelle. She has served as an adjunct professor and mentor at the College of New Rochelle and the College of Mount Saint Vincent. Her love for the elderly and their caregivers motivated her to attain a Postgraduate Certificate as a Geriatric Nurse Practitioner from New York University. She is a member of the Aging Life Care Association (ALCA) as an Associate Geriatric Care Manager. Ms. Cooper has 30 years of contact with family caregivers as a Community Health Nurse. She has been a member of the Christian Cultural Center in Brooklyn, NY, Pastor A.R. Bernard Sr. for over 35 years. She is an active member of the Bronx Borough President Clergy Task Force.

Ms. Cooper is the founder and president of Caregivers Outreach Mentorship Empowerment, Inc. (C.O.M.E.), a nonprofit 501 (C) (3) organization that supports and advocates for family caregivers. She developed a keen sense of empathy and compassion borne from her own experience in taking on the role of caregiver to her father, Mr. Leon David Simmons. The love concerns and sense of commitment that she felt towards her father were rooted in her role as a daughter. At times, the turmoil that she experienced resulted from the conflict of the role of a professional caregiver in relation to the role of a family caregiver. Prior promises and commitments that she had made to him were broken to benefit his safety, protection, and quality of life. She felt, understood, and had great compassion for what family caregivers were experiencing for the first time. It was through this experience that C.O.M.E. was founded on June 19, 2006. In 2015 the organization implemented a Youth Caregivers Initiative Program (SHARKS) (Students Helping and Assisting Relatives with Knowledge and Skills). The program supports youth caregivers by providing them with monthly support group sessions and respite activities.

Ms. Cooper is presently the caregiver for her husband, John Cooper, a recent Lung Transplant recipient. She often encourages caregivers to take time out for self-care to rejuvenate their body, soul, and mind. After all, caregivers are doing the toughest job ever. Caregivers Need Caring Too!

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Shakira O'Kane, Esq.
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Shakira is a graduate of Binghamton University and Emory University School of Law. She was admitted to the Illinois Bar and holds a Certificate in Nonprofit Management from Duke University. Shakira has worked in and for small and large non-profit organizations, foundations, and governments in a variety of capacities. She is not only a big idea person but also loves process and is a self-proclaimed data junky. She believes that her mission is to help as many people as possible who have ideas to change the world, go from idea to implementation, making sure that they continue to put the mission first. Shakira is also the Founder of Black Girl Flourish.

<https://blackgirlflourish.com>



Resilience

The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties

Caregivers Outreach Mentorship Empowerment (COME) is celebrating 15 years as an advocate for family caregivers. Daily, we empower caregivers with the necessary knowledge, resources, and confidence to navigate this journey of caring. Caregivers have endured the challenges of the COVID Pandemic and continue to play an essential role to those in need.

What's Happening, What's New, and What's Next?

- 1st Annual Youth Caregiving Symposium, scheduled for April 9, 2020, has been postponed secondary to the current pandemic. However, this initiative remains in the forecast. The Youth Caregiver Symposium's mission is to explore concerns facing youth caregivers and provide resources to those professionals working with this population. Don't hesitate to contact us if your organization would like to join us in this endeavor.
- COME weekly articles in the Co-op City Times have provided the Co-op City community with relevant information about caregiving, senior care, and available resources in the community.
- The Youth Caregivers Initiative Program (SHARKS) has relocated to Co-op City. We are in the office with AARP Chapter Peachtree 4997 , 177 Dreiser Loop RM Zero. However, the office has been closed for over one and a half years due to COVID.
- We are looking forward to that day to enroll youth into the program and reconnect with educators. We hope to enroll youth starting from middle school in the Bronx. If you know a youth caring for an ill, disabled, or older person, please give us a call.
- COME & AARP Peachtree Chapter 4997 will continue to host a Intergenerational summer youth technology program for seniors.



What's Happening, What's New, and What's Next?

- "Let's Talk" Informational Virtual Caregivers Sessions are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month and will continue to take place in 2022. The sessions are from 7:00 pm to 7:45 pm. Each session provides caregivers with emotional support, a listening ear, relevant information, and a non-judgmental environment.
"Only another caregiver knows."
- Essential workers' and family caregivers' affirmation cards are for purchase. Essential workers and family caregivers play a vital role in our community. The affirmation cards acknowledge and value the sacrifices of essential workers and caregivers. Sometimes you must encourage yourself.
- Keeping it together when the world is falling apart eBook provides information to cope with illness, loss, and unexpected challenges during COVID-19. The pandemic has forced us to stop, look, assess the old, and prepare and implement the new.
- Family Caregiver Resource Guide eBook This guide was created with the support of our 2020 sponsors. It provides family caregivers with a free, printable handbook of community services.
- Youth Caregiver Research Project. COME is looking forward to engaging in a significant research project with the hope of identifying the needs of youth caregivers in the Bronx. We believe this research will ensure our work is moving forward.

Please visit our website www.comeoutreach.org and like us on @comeoutreach Facebook.

Caregiver Honoree & Guest Speaker



NATHALIE CLARK

"I cared for my mother "

Nathalie is currently a third year medical student at St. George's University School of Medicine. She previously graduated from Pace University with a Bachelor's Degree in psychology. Nathalie has always known she wanted to work with people and after she graduated with her undergrad degree she decided that medicine was her calling. Understanding the importance of mental well being she has chosen Psychiatry as her future specialty. The social aspect of psychiatry along with being an advocate for patients influenced her decision to chose this field. As a caregiver for her mother, she has had to advocate and support her in ways she never knew she could; and her intention is to use these skills for her future patients. Her favorite saying is "if you wanna go fast go alone but if you wanna go far go together". Using that motto for support, her goals for the future is to develop a multi disciplinary practice that treats people not just for the presenting problem but for the person as a "whole" and that includes the most important people, those who care for them.

2021 Caregiver Honorees

"TIME TO EXHALE YOU
DESERVE A BREAK TODAY"



MIRTHA GARCIA

"I care for my husband."



JAHI MURRAY

"I care for my grandparents."



TIA JACKSON

"I care for my son."



LISA BENTON

"I cared for my mother."

2021 Caregiver Honorees

"TIME TO EXHALE YOU
DESERVE A BREAK TODAY"



LYDIA OLIVERA

"I care for my parents



CHEROKEE BLACK

"I cared for my sister



BEVERLY BRIGGS

"I care for my companion"



REV. FREDRICK MILLER

"I care for my mother."

2021 Caregiver Honorees

"TIME TO EXHALE YOU
DESERVE A BREAK TODAY"



NORMAN GRANT

"I care for my mother"



"Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things"

Letter to a Caregiver Taking Care of You!

Dear son, daughter, brother, sister, spouse, relative and friend,

When was the last time someone asked you how you felt? Does any one really care about you? Does it bother you that people walk up to you, hug and kiss you, and then say that it was for me? I know that it is not easy to look at me and imagine that there was a time that I took care of you. I know that there are times when I can be difficult, but this is how I deal with my losses. I often think about the good times in my life and may even speak them out loud; this is my attempt to hold on to the way I used to be.

I may not be able to speak, I may not be able to see, or even recognize you at times. But believe me; I can feel love, compassion, kindness, and patience you constantly and unselfishly give to me. You are not easily angered and have never kept an account of wrong doings. You have been there to protect me and keep me from harm. I want you to know that it is you that gives me hope. I can trust you and I know that your love will never fail me.

I care about you. I appreciate all you do. I love you with all my heart. You are so very special to me; in fact you are a gift from God. It would give me great joy to know that you take care of yourself just as well as you take care of me. I will be O.K. Just take time out for you. Treat yourself to something special; smell the flowers, watch the sunset, and listen to the birds sing and don't be afraid to ask for help. I know that you are doing the best you can and you are doing a great job. I just wanted to tell you that I love you and thank you so very much.

Taking Care of you, Author, Diane Cooper President/Founder COME © 2006

History

Caregivers Outreach Mentorship Empowerment, Inc. (C.O.M.E.) is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) charitable organization that was founded in 2006 by Mrs. Diane Cooper, a Geriatric Nurse Practitioner with over 30 years of experience in community health. She founded this organization as a direct result of her own experiences as a family caregiver to her father, Mr. Leon David Simmons. At times, the turmoil that she experienced was a result of the conflict between her role as a professional caregiver versus her role as a family caregiver. For the first time she felt she could empathize with what family caregivers were experiencing.

From her role as a family caregiver Mrs. Cooper realized that there was a need for caregiver education and support in local communities. So she decided to take part in the solution to provide family caregivers with accessible information, resources and support services. As well as educate legislators, public officials, and the general public about the implications of public policy and legislative proposals for the quality of life of family caregivers and their loved one. Most of all, through her organization C.O.M.E. she endeavors to promote the importance of self care while caring for others; because caregivers need caring too.

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