



## Caregiving and TV – the Second Annual CARE-Y Awards

By: Sherri Snelling

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Being the TV junkie that I am (thank goodness I don't own TiVo or I'd never get anything done!), last year I introduced my caregiving version of the annual Emmy Awards – which I called the CARE-YS (I've got to trademark that!).

So, while I am a little behind this year, I would like to still acknowledge some stand-outs where TV's producers, directors, actors and writers have been stepping up to showcase this important "lifestage" of family caregiving in some of our recent small screen fare.

### **Award for Best Spousal Caregiver portrayed by a Female:**

Joely Richardson (playing Katherine Parr) caring for Jonathan Rhys Meyers (playing the ailing King Henry VIII) in Showtime's *The Tudors*.

### **Award for Best Spousal Caregiver portrayed by a Male:**

Reversing their roles and my awards where last year she cared for him, this year Rob Lowe (Robert MacAllister) was caregiver to his wife, Calista Flockhart (Kitty Walker MacAllister) who has cancer on ABC's *Brothers & Sisters*.

### **Award for Best Adult Child Caregiver Caring for an Aging Parent:**

The amazing Michael Emerson who plays Ben Linus on ABC's *LOST* cared for his older father in a "flash forward" segment on this show's last season.

I also thought it was interesting that so many of the nominated shows' titles evoked the essence of what caregiving is all about. While these shows don't necessarily portray caregiving in their story lines, they do bring to mind what we think about when it comes to caregiving. Here is how my mind is working on this:

**Modern Family** – what is a "modern family" these days? Blended, diverse, progressive, multi-generational? What this show demonstrates is that family takes care of family (no matter how wacky). And, that is what caregiving is all about – it's part of our "family make-up" and always will be. We know that 80% of the care needed to keep an older loved one aging in place at home is provided by a family member. So here's to those caregivers and their role in the "modern family."

**The Good Wife** – not only do I love Julianna Margulies (and while I also love Kyra Sedgwick in *The Closer* I was hoping JM would get the award...next year) – but the “good wife” reminds us of the 66% of caregivers who are women. Many of these caregivers are wives juggling families, careers and caregiving. Others are the kind of good wife who cares for an aging and ailing spouse.

**LOST** – yes, I am a devoted fan and while happy with the series finale, still sad that there isn’t some new twist and turn to the story still to come. When it comes to caregiving, LOST is how many of us feel – we don’t know where to turn, we may be a little fearful and most of us navigate this journey on our own. Don’t you wish Jack, Sawyer, Kate or Hurley were there to guide you through your caregiving adventure?

**Mad Men** – best writing on television – no question. When it comes to caregiving, we know that 34% of caregivers are men (but they’re not all “mad”). We also know that 10% of caregivers cope with their stress by misusing alcohol or prescription drugs (similar to Don Draper who is coping with losing Betty by imbibing in way too many Manhattans!).

**Glee** – now my favorite. Who doesn’t want to stand up and dance and sing along to this uplifting show? While caregiving is not always defined as “glee-ful,” this goes back to my May blog about finding the happiness factor in your caregiving role. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, stressed, exhausted, try turning on some music that motivates you (Madonna anyone?). Or better yet – give yourself a break and watch just one episode of this show – it is definitely a prescription for a smile (and you’ll get to escape for just a little while)!

*Thank you to all who help raise awareness for family caregivers!*

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#### About Sherri Snelling

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Sherri Snelling, CEO and founder of the Caregiving Club, is a nationally recognized expert on America’s 65 million family caregivers with special emphasis on how to help caregivers balance “self care” while caring for a loved one. She is also executive producer and host of the caregiving TV program *Handle With Care*. You can find more information at: [www.caregivingclub.com](http://www.caregivingclub.com).