According to www.caregiving.com, there are 65 million people in the United States who are caring for a loved one with a disability or medical condition this Valentine’s Day. If you’re one of them, don’t forget to take care of yourself as well. “You can only give with love and care when you are refreshed and refilled,” said former CPD employee Connie Pehrson in a Facebook post. “Take the time you need for yourself and then give from your heart.”

Up to 3 program coordinator Marla Nef suggested a few stress-reducing tips that would be useful for anyone, but can be particularly helpful for caregivers. —When you start to feel overwhelmed, sit down, take a deep breath and try to find a moment of calm. Then you can focus on what needs to be accomplished. —Prioritize your daily tasks so you can target your energies in the right direction. —Try to eat healthy food. Your body can’t function at peak performance when it’s fueled by chips and soda. —Take a brisk walk, even if it’s only around the yard, or up and down the stairs a few times. Physical exercise will raise your endorphin level and help you focus. The National Family Caregivers Association also offered some ideas to help caregivers cope. —Watch for signs you’re depressed, and get help when needed. —Accept help when offered and give helpers specific things to do. —Educate yourself about your loved one’s condition and learn how to communicate with healthcare providers effectively. —Promote your loved one’s independence. —Trust your instincts. —Grieve your losses and then allow yourself to dream new dreams. —Seek support from other caregivers. There is strength in knowing you are not alone.