Sharon: Today on the first episode of the Family Caregiver Matters Podcast Dr. Judy Phillips and Dr. Sharon Hamill discuss what it means to be a family caregiver. This podcast is brought to you from California State University San Marcos.

Welcome to the Family Caregiving Matters podcast a podcast dedicated to providing information and support to family caregivers with a special focus on college students and other young people who fill this very important role.

Judi: We also share tips that are useful for caregivers of any age and our goal is to promote the highest quality of life possible for caregivers in our community and the loved ones they support

Sharon: I'm Dr. Sharon Hamill developmental psychologist

Judi: And I’m dr. Judy Phillips gerontologist and we're both faculty members in the psychology department at CSUSM. We're excited to share this time together so we can provide support to you, our family caregivers.

Sharon: Welcome to episode 1 where we're really laying the foundation for our podcast. Judi I'm so happy to get to do this with you we’ve talked about doing this for years so exciting. I thought we might start out with setting a foundation so Judi what is this answer to the fundamental question of what is a family caregiver.

Judi: Well, a caregiver is an individual who helps family members of any age when these family members might have some type of physical or mental disabilities. But the family caregiver is one who will be handling some of their support whether it is going to pick up groceries for them whether it's cooking dinner for them whether it is taking them to the doctor's office they could also be bathing them they could also be feeding them they could be taking them in and out of bed or helping them in and out of bed.

Sharon: Judi when you're talking about people that provides this kind of help where in your professional life are you seeing family caregivers

Judi: I think you see family caregivers all over you see older adults who are providing Family Support to their husbands and to their wives you see adult children who are providing support to their parents but you also see college students who are providing support this family support heling out their parents helping out they're siblings helping out their grandparents many of my students are family caregivers they actually live with their grandparents and they are providing support for them they're taking care of them the support can be somewhat minimal as they are the ones who go to the grocery store so that their grandparents do not have to do that or it could be more detailed in which they are actually bathing their a grandparent they could be giving the medicine

Sharon: so you're saying that that we see family caregivers everywhere and you are seeing them definitely in your classes at Cal State San Marcos and at Mira Costa

Judi: Yes, Sharon I know you focus on a special group of family caregivers young people could you tell us a little bit about what you have found and what your focus is on

Sharon: Well I think it’s really following quite well with what you just said you’re talking about the college students that we all see who are in our classes who are trying to maintain their family responsibilites and certainly in this time of COVID, we are seeing many more of our students focusing on this. My research does focus on these young adults but it also focuses on individuals under age 18 who are providing this care and in our country we don't really recognize that kids and families, teenagers are often engaged in family caregiving but they don't tell anybody or they don't even recognize that they’re caregivers. That’s something I've noticed I don't know about you Judi but in my classes when I start talking about family caregiving I often have the students say to me afterwards I didn't realize I was a family caregiver because I've been doing it so long. So we wanted to make sure that in this podcast we're giving some space to people who are family caregivers in the Cal State San Marcos Community and to help them to understand the little bit more about their role what supports are available and you know how we can help them to get to graduation

Judi: Our goals for this podcast are to provide easy access for our caregivers so that they can listen to them at their convenience. we're committed to producing multiple episodes of this podcast focusing on topics that are relevant for college caregivers and those who are younger.

Sharon: We'll bring in experts from Cal State San Marcos and some of our friends that we have from around the country who do this kind of work so we can discuss key issues facing people who’ve assumed a caregiver role while they’re trying to complete a college degree. We hope that these short podcasts will provide will give you the information you need to be able to pursue your own goals in a healthy way still providing to care that your loved one needs you're also going to learn that you are not alone.

Judi: Please be sure to check out our website where you will find some great materials for young caregivers and others it's www.csusm.edu\youthcaregivers

Sharon: Our next episode will focus on two recent National reports that highlight the challenges that college student caregivers are facing and I’m sure that some of our listeners are going to recognize themselves in those reports.

Judi: thanks so much for tuning in today Be kind to yourself remember you're providing valuable support to your loved ones.