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Technology for Remote Family Support for People with Cognitive Disabilities:

A growing body of scientific research confirms that connection to ‘social support networks’ – most importantly, family and friends – delivers **compelling therapeutic benefits**, including enhanced physical and mental health and, ultimately, **longer life spans**.

To that end, CaringFamily's innovative service enables **professional caregivers** to encourage **active daily dialog** between elders and their families, regardless of location – with virtually **no additional effort**.

Grants from the **National Institute on Aging** and the **National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research**, along with growing interest from leading senior care providers, underscores the potential CaringFamily's system represents to transform elder care.

An elder’s regular communications with their social support network (typically family and friends) is therapy. Studies have shown that this communication has even more effect on well-being and longevity than does physical exercise.

The CaringFamily service combines two elements to produce the first truly simple online caregiving system.

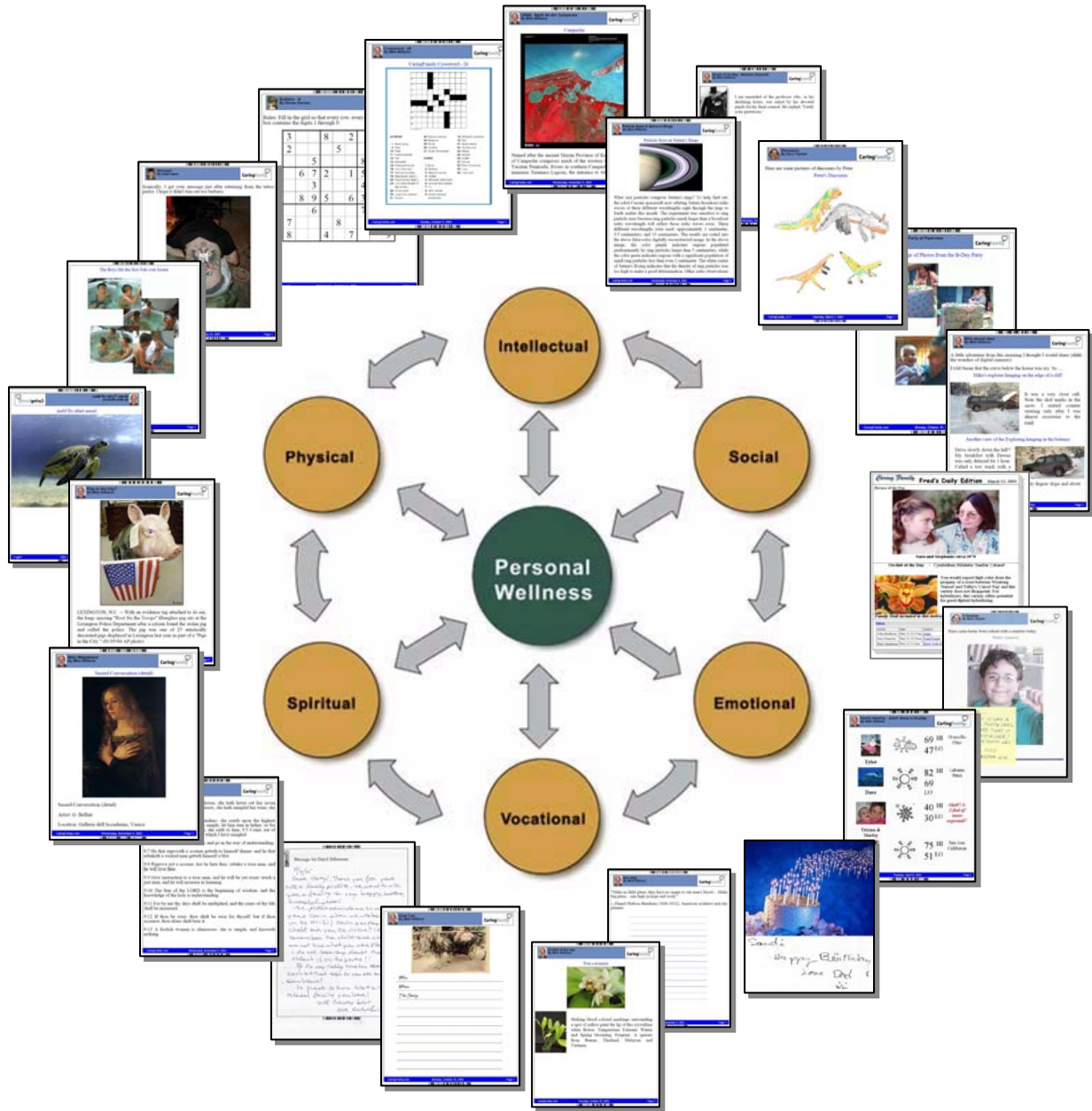
☐ For elders, CaringFamily's **Digital Mailbox**, a customized, full color, Internet-connected printer/scanner, enables the exchange of colorful messages with caregivers. Both incoming and outgoing messages are handled entirely on paper—no PC required. Simple to set up, use, and maintain, the Mailbox features a single button, requires only an existing phone line to operate, and is completely spam-, virus-, and outsider-free.

☐ For caregivers, a **Private Care Network** unites professionals, families, friends, and other participants. The elder's written messages are converted to electronic format for delivery to caregivers; the service transforms incoming digital messages to paper and prints them automatically. Spam, viruses, and other Internet challenges are prevented from ever intruding.

An NIA-funded study of individual elders living at home and commercial trials of elders in assisted living facilities demonstrate the effectiveness of this form of communication. In addition to observing the ready adoption of reply and custom stationery by elders we have seen the emergence of what the anthropological community refers to as kinkeepers (family members who take on a role of leading and inducing communications between family members).

Our RERC-ACT project is beginning a longitudinal trial with early stage Alzheimer patient-spouse couples to determine well-being effects on both partners.

THE KEY TO WHOLE PERSON WELLNESS



Sample mailbox communications to and from elders are presented. They impact the full range of personal wellness factors.