

Daughterhood the Podcast

Episode #58

Traveling with Your Care Partner with Carol Giuliani

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[Air Carriers Access Act \(ACAA\)](#)

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[Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) - A service of the Bureau of Consular Affairs - U.S. Department of State

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Wheelchair support attendant - check with each airline/airport for support

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Rosanne 01:07

Hello, and welcome to Daughterhood the Podcast. I am your host Rosanne Corcoran, Daughterhood circle leader and primary caregiver. Daughterhood is the creation of Anne Tumlinson who has worked on the front lines in the healthcare field for many years and has seen the multitude of challenges caregivers face. Our mission is to support and build confidence in women who are managing their parents care. Daughterhood is what happens when we put our lives on hold to take care of our parents. We recognize this care is too much for one person to handle alone. We want to help you see your efforts are not only good enough, they are actually heroic. Our podcast goal is to bring you some insight into navigating the healthcare system provide resources for you as a caregiver as well as for you as a

person and help you know that you don't have to endure this on your own. Join me in Daughterhood. Today, my guest is Carol Giuliani the owner of Senior Travel Companion Services. Carol provides customized trip planning and travel escort services for seniors and couples. She has planned and executed over 125 domestic and international trips through all 50 states and across the globe. In this episode, Carol and I discuss tips for traveling with your care partner, everything from how to plan your trip, which airlines and resources can assist best how to handle long car rides, traveling with medical equipment, and everything in between. I hope you enjoy our conversation.

Rosanne 02:33

There are so many responsibilities that inherently come with caregiving. And then a trip comes into play to add more stress. Carol, how do we prepare for this?

Carol Guiliani 02:42

Well, like any other trip, you have to first figure out your timing on it. And the sooner you get started on any kind of trip, the better prepared you're going to be with seniors especially or people with any kind of disability mobility issues, disabilities, whether they be physical or mental, the more preparation the better. So as I booked trips for seniors and disabled people, I get going as soon as I get the word that they need to be helped out. And I will start planning the logistics. And also you get a better deal when you're planning a trip, especially on airfare. If you plan it in advance. Even if you don't necessarily book up flight, the well in advance, you can find out what the airfares are going to be. And if you have some flexibility, it's even better because then you can look at some dates and figure out when the best time of year is to go somewhere if you've got that opportunity, or just what days of the week you want to go and, and work a little bit around that and get some some better pricing and figure out what it's going to cost. Some people who haven't traveled much have a kind of pie in the sky idea that you know, a couple \$1,000 are going to get them around the world. And I hate to be the bearer of bad news. But oftentimes that's not the case, right. So just having a little doing a little groundwork in advance, figuring out where you're gonna want to go, what it's going to involve, if you're going to do a large overseas trip, doing four or five countries is never a good idea. Maybe two, then certainly if you have I don't do any more than that anymore these days, and who you're gonna go with is very important also. So line up your your people line up your idea where you want to go, keep it limited, and that have some flexibility with it. And once you get started, the pieces will start to fall into place.

Rosanne 04:35

So that's interesting, and I love limited but flexible. I love that.

Carol Guiliani 04:40

Absolutely

Rosanne 04:41

What is the process of going through? You're looking at the website and then when it comes to booking, there's lots of options on the plane, right? So where where do you advise people when when they're traveling with someone who needs some sort of assistance? What do you advise them?

Carol Guiliani 04:56

Okay, well as a professional travel companion I'm a subscriber to a lot of different websites. And a lot of them say kind of the same thing to just get a general idea about the timing on your trip to plan that first. And once you have the flights down, don't get your dates locked in, and then book your hotels and everything else and then go, oh, now I'm getting my flights. So do it the other way around, find out you know, what is what is the goal and the purpose of your trip. And you've got to be focused on what you want to really accomplish with this trip, when you want this trip to happen, what you want to accomplish with this trip. So I have that a little bit of information. And then I start to find out what what needs need to be met. So if there's physical disabilities, and what's the accessibility of that place, some places I can do some research, find out whether or not that's going to be a good place. Some places are really surprising. I took a woman to Ecuador, and we were able to go whitewater rafting and strap her wheelchair to the raft, give her an order and take her down a river. So really, I mean, I hired an agency to help us do that. There are some incredible agencies out there that can do some, you know, scuba diving ziplining for people that have some disabilities, old and young. So I mean, you'd be surprised what is coming up in in Hospitality and Tourism. Now, for folks that have even dementia, dementia cruises are amazing. These days, the truth is designed for people with dementia and their caregivers. So, so that so find the purpose, find the people find an idea about the date and where you want to go. And then you start with that. And your budget, of course, what's it going to look like? Is this going to be a first class all the way? Or is this going to be, you know, let's explore nature and I we're not probably going to be camping generally, at this stage in your life. But, you know, I'm fine staying in, you know, modest digs. That's that's fine for me. And, and a lot of people want to do that. I've stayed in hostels before, during my trip, transportation back and forth, not youth hostels were in bunking with people and sharing a bathroom. But there are private rooms in private, you know, with private bathrooms think outside the box a little bit.

Rosanne 07:21

Right. Right. Well, and it's great that there is so much accessibility.

Carol Guiliani 07:25

Yeah, yeah, there is. And the world is blowing up. They know that folks with disabilities, mental or physical are out there. They want to travel and they're spending money, and especially some communities and states are really putting a lot of time energy and money into advertising and showing the world that they want you to come and visit Florida and Oregon is really going crazy on this. Yeah.

Rosanne 07:49

Well, it's about time.

Carol Guiliani 07:51

It is.

Rosanne 07:53

So when you're booking on the on the flight, obviously, do you want the bulkhead? Do you want that? Like how are you picking? How are you picking the best location in that plane for yourself?

Carol Guiliani 08:04

Well, first of all, you've got to find the airline that's going to accommodate you, you know, generally I look for an airline that's got a fairly good reputation. Delta is one of them. That is pretty good. United American, I've had mixed results. I mean, every airline can break your wheelchair if and cause problems, you have to know what to do about that I have a little more trouble. Of course, with the low cost carriers spirit and frontier and Allegiant, you know, sometimes they're, they can have the most wonderful people working for him, but they can be a little more challenging. Southwest can be fine. Southwest actually is interesting, because not only can you bring pretty much as much luggage as you possibly can carry with you for free, but they have something called a person of size policy. So if you're a larger individual, you can buy two seats in advance, and then let them know that you're subscribing to this policy. And then after the flight, you will ask for a refund and they will give you the money back for the second seat. Really, they don't really advertise this very much. But they Yeah, that's a interesting policy they have Alaska does that on a limited basis, they will refund the second seat if it wasn't going to be purchased by somebody else. Right. And on the Canadian airlines, you can actually have your caregiver be allowed to have a seat for free.

Rosanne 09:25

Really?

Carol Guiliani 09:26

So yeah, the United States doesn't do that. But in Canada, and I don't know what other airlines I think Air Canada does do some kind of service like that. So check those things out. You know, sometimes other countries do have some perks for carriers that go along.

Rosanne 09:42

That's wild That's great. What's the name of that program for Southwest again?

Carol Guiliani 09:46

It's um just person of size.

Rosanne 09:48

Okay.

Carol Guiliani 09:49

I believe they still have that last time I looked they did I have that on my website, one of those travel tips. So yes. And under the is it the Access to airlines AAC that it says that it's someone with a disability. When you contact the airline, you ask them for a seat, you call up as soon as you book your tickets, and you say I've got somebody with a disability, I'd like to see as close to the front as possible. So they will put you in a seat up front. And they do reserve those seats without you having to pay an extra fee for that. So not only do you board early, so you can always say on when they call for boarding and say people with a disability come up front, you go up front, and you board early on Southwest or delta or anybody, but you call immediately when you get your seat, when you get your seat or you when you get your plane ticket and say I'd like a seat up front and get your seat assignment. And if they give you any trouble talk to a supervisor but and you get seated next to your individual without having to pay the extra fee for that.

Rosanne 10:57

That's fantastic. Yeah, no, that's great. And it is called the Air Carrier Access Act.

Carol Guiliani 11:02

Thank you.

Rosanne 11:03

You're welcome ACAA Yep.

Carol Guiliani 11:06

Right.

Rosanne 11:06

Wow

Carol Guiliani 11:07

That always trips me up for some reason.

Rosanne 11:09

Wow. That's wild that's great.

Carol Guiliani 11:10

Anyways, that's a good one for you. I do like the bulkhead seats. Although if you have equipment like any kind of battery operated stuff, I took a gentleman who was a quadriplegic, and we could not put him in a bulkhead seat because he had equipment and you can't put that in a bulkhead. So you have to sit a roll back. And also the bulkhead seats do not have moveable armrests. So if you want to be able to transfer from an aisle chair into a seat with a transfer border, just slide over and you can't, you know, get up and transfer on your own, then you have to be aware of the fact that those bulkhead seats may not have a movable armrest. So find out what kind of seating they have. And you can talk to the folks on the plane, it depends on a lot on which airplane you're going to be on. A lot of times, it's worth it to pay for first class to get that good seat up front. Because sometimes your wheelchair can get even right on to the to the airplane that all you have to do is pivot and get on to the first class seat. Oh, wow, not worry about it. On an on a couple of occasions, I've purchased an extra seat on especially on American Airlines where it was kind of tight and getting to first class seats was going to be very expensive. So I purchased an extra seat when I was on board with a woman who needed the extra space. And I'm not a skinny mini myself. So I wanted some room to be able to move around. And that was the cost of three seats was a lot less than two first class seats up front. Yeah. So there's ways to get a good seat assignment on an airplane.

Rosanne 12:43

That's great to know. And then and you just call the airline and talk to them about this beforehand. You're calling and and specifically saying this is my situation? And how can you help me?

Carol Guiliani 12:53

Yes, uh huh, I would do that as soon as you book your flight.

Rosanne 12:56

Okay

Carol Guiliani 12:57

You can do some of it online, you can get wheelchair assistance online. But there's always a special needs line for folks that they can call immediately. I was just on the phone today to make arrangements for a flight next week with a woman who's going to need oxygen on the plane. So they talked me through what exactly I needed. And I knew I needed a form. And I had the form filled out by the doctor a while back, but they wanted to make sure that that information was to them two days in advance. So that's what's happening now with that.

Rosanne 13:28

That's great. That's great. And and it's not I know some people would would be hesitant to call and say we have special needs. And I'm thinking you need to put that aside, correct?

Carol Guiliani 13:39

Oh, absolutely. I mean, if you're special, you're special. And aren't we all a little bit special? Yes, we are. Yes. And they want to know they want to know what's going on.

Rosanne 13:50

That's great information, Carol.

Carol Guiliani 13:51

Thanks. And the other thing before I get going on much of anything else is I want to talk a little about a bit about the sunflower lanyard system.

Rosanne 13:59

Absolutely.

Carol Guiliani 14:00

We're talking about people with physical disabilities. But there are so many people out there with cognitive disabilities, people with dementia, people with Parkinson's or vision loss or disabilities that are hidden disabilities. And I've been working now for many years, with on an international committee called defund the dementia friendly airport working group. It's based in Minnesota, but we are part of a larger international organization that works with the group out of England called the sunflower lanyard scheme. In the United States. We don't call it a scheme because I got kind of a bad rap a few years ago. Thank you Bernie right. But the sunflower lanyard system is an idea that came about out of London where folks that have a hidden disability will wear a green lanyard that they can get at participating airports or online that has a record on it that doesn't say what's going on but just says I have a hidden disability just have kind of a signal to the people at TSA, or the airlines or participating participants that know what the system is that says I've got something going on. So please treat me

with care, dignity and respect. You don't get to push to the front of the line for any reason you don't get special considerations. But you should get special, special care. And we've been training the TSA for several years with videos with briefs so that they've been trained to understand when people come through security, that maybe they are slurring their speech a little bit that might be aphasia, that might be Parkinson's, maybe they're not following instructions as quickly as the TSA wants, maybe that has to do with dementia. So if you've got one of these lanyards on and the TSA understands that because SFO or Atlanta or MSP airports have been trained in this system, they will recognize that and understand that their caregiver has to stay with them through the process, they're not going to be whisking away your family member with dementia to go pat them down outside your range of view, they're not going to be you know, slamming that purse through the security porthole. And when your mom is saying, where's my purpose, when you're saying Don't worry about it and bomb and freaking out? And you know, yeah, because it looks like it's going into a black hole. So, you know, the folks are trying to understand this. Hopefully, we're working on it constantly. It's one of my goals in life is to get everybody to know about this. So these lanyards, you can get at the information booths at the airports before you go through. And you can also get them online, but it's the sunflower lanyard system. And the airlines are starting to find out about this JetBlue as a subscriber. Lots of airlines and lots of agents, the pilots, the gate agents are starting to recognize these and understand that folks do would perhaps need a little more attention and should be following the the program to provide a little more TLC. Okay.

Rosanne 17:14

That's yeah, that's, that's fantastic. And I often wonder about that, because, you know, you see, you see what happens with TSA. I mean, you're getting yelled at for, like, get stuff, open your open your bag, and especially with anyone with a cognitive issue, I mean, that that it amps up the anxiety for both the person who has the condition and their care partner. I mean, you don't need that extra anxiety.

Carol Guiliani 17:38

Yes, absolutely. Children with autism.

Rosanne 17:40

Oh, yeah.

Carol Guiliani 17:41

Anything like that. I mean, there was a woman who, I got a call once in Montana, and they said, We need your help. You have to come to Phoenix, there's a lady who was not allowed to board an American Airlines flight because she was slurring. And they said, unless you can articulate how you can self evacuate in case of an emergency, you are not allowed to board this airplane. And, you know, that's against the rules. But what is she going to do on her own, so I wasn't able to help her. But because I train other people to become travel companions, I was able to line her up with one of the people that I have trained and certified and say, Hey, I'm putting somebody from Denver on a plane to Phoenix tonight, and she will be able to get you to Portland tomorrow. Best I could do.

Rosanne 18:23

Thank goodness. I mean, thank goodness that you have those people. So that's, I mean, that's really the logistics of getting you on the plane and getting you to where you're going and then getting off the

plane where your destination is. So I'm thinking you have to have the same logistical thinking for both ends.

Rosanne 18:40

That's right. That's right. And it's, it's going through the airport to plan that whole route. I always have Plan B in my head. So when I put together a trip first I get the airline figured out I get the seating figured out. I figured out where I'm going to how I'm going to do the transportation, the ground transportation, I'm usually bringing my own wheelchair when I have my own wheelchair, I can fold it up. I usually leave the person I have I take a wheelchair even if they don't need it because it's just so much easier getting through the airport. I traveler is contained. I can take her into the or he into a companion care bathroom. I look for those. They're all over the airports now. They're nice. Some of them have adult changing tables now, Minneapolis hasm Wow, that's great. And I make sure that they're used as often as I need them to be. I get to the airport in plenty of time. I go nice and slowly through the airport.

Rosanne 19:43

Yeah, yeah. Well, I'm getting from your car into the airport. That's a process as well.

Carol Guilliani 19:50

Well, that's the thing if I have a rental car or my own car, I have to have a wheelchair because wheelchairs are not provided at the parking ramps and they're now put If I did at the rental car agencies, so that's always a tricky thing is to get that individual to the terminal from there. So I have to figure that route out. And then once I get to the end, that's where I'll use an Uber a lot of times or if I'm using a shuttle, then I have to make sure that's accessible if I need that service, right? Yes, so and then that person has to stay with me at all times to if there is some kind of dementia or some situation where I have to have eyes on them at all times. Because the bad things have happened when you let people go for a little bit even. So once I get to the airport, sometimes in advance, I'll call TSA because they have somebody called the passenger support specialist. And you can call and arrange to have an individual from TSA meet you and go with you through the airport. And that's especially good for people that are not professional travel companions, because they can walk you through the system when you're not used to doing it. For me, I don't need it so much, because I've done it 127 times now, I've been doing this for nine years. So Wow. So but and, and I like and I can move forward myself fairly quickly. And sometimes they don't show up as quickly as you want them to. But otherwise the passenger Support Specialist called TSA cares. TSA cares is the outfit that lines you up with the passenger support specialist who was supposed to be specially trained, and sometimes even trained in the sunflower lanyard system sometimes not to take you through the airport and the TSA and get you through the other side. Nice wheelchair attendants are trying to iffy whether they aren't trained in the sunflower system. So the passenger Support Specialist isn't a wheelchair attendant, but a professional TSA agent. And we'll go with you with that wheelchair attendant. Okay, wonderful. That's great. And once you once you get through, and I usually keep people in the chair all the way instead of trying to walk them through, even if it means a little bit more of a pat down just because it's easier and and then to get to the gate and time to let the gate agent know that I've got somebody here that's got an issue. And a lot of times I'll say to them, my individual has a sunflower lanyard on this is for folks that have a cognitive disability, or other hidden disabilities and then usually throw out and you know, I'll say arthritis or something that because I don't necessarily want to say dementia right in front of you. No, no, no,

Rosanne 22:31

Right. No, I get you it's not in front of your care partner. Right. You want them to feel good about going through not feel like a singled out. Yes, yeah.

Carol Guiliani 22:40

Dignity and respect. That's, that's it all the way along. Yep. And then pre boarding and you know, a nice comfortable flight, making sure that I have something that's going to be good to do with that individual, making sure that, you know, the staff understands that they can continue to speak to my, my traveler, like a grown up just because they have something going on doesn't mean that they're talking to a child. And all the way through having a good experience as much as possible, making sure that they have something. And maybe there's, they don't speak English, a lot of folks with dementia lose their recent language and they revert back to Chinese or Spanish. So I have a translator, I can get Chinese Mandarin on my delta movie screen, you know, there's, you know, ways to make it really nice. That's great. And then on arrival, making sure that I have transportation lined up, that's going to be reliable to get me to whatever, if I'm going to meet family, I've got a communication system set up. So the family is going to meet me at the airport, that I have a wheelchair attendant hold on to your boarding pass because they're gonna want to see that at the big airports. Even if I have my own wheelchair, they, you know, they a lot of times if they're going to take you from the gate to on the jetway, they want to see your boarding pass. So hold on to those silly boarding pass down to the baggage claim. So yeah, so then that pretty much ends the trip.

Rosanne 24:09

What do you do with the wheelchair so it doesn't get damaged?

Carol Guiliani 24:12

I usually take the pedals off, I mean, I always take the pedals off, and I put it in a bag and I put it in the overhead compartment because those otherwise can fall off. If they if you gate check it I always gate check it. It does not count as any kind of luggage, right? Anything that's medical doesn't count as luggage. So say you're going on a cruise and you're going to have a CPAP machine. I'm bringing with me some distilled water, you can usually get that on a cruise or I'm going on, you know, to any place that I have to have a CPAP you can bring distilled water through TSA even if it's more than 3.4 ounces. As long as you tell TSA okay, I've got that I've got an oxygen machine. I've got a wheelchair, any of that is medical equipment. And as long as TSA knows it, you can bring it on. It's not it's not something that's going to PAL against you as a carry on. or luggage. Delta has gotten really good about saying fold your wheelchair up here and put it in our closet. Because they there's they know that there's been so much problems with damage to chairs, especially with power chairs, and the amount of press that they've gotten bad press, not them. But airlines in general, right or damaging people's legs otherwise known as their wheelchairs, because they are their legs, right? Yeah. So, gait, check those wheelchairs, I take the pedals off, I try not to have pads or anything else on him. I use my wheelchair seat belt to wrap it up tightly so that it's not coming and done and getting banged up. That's the best that I can do. Yeah, all lit up in smallest possible mind weighs 30 pounds. Yeah, that's great. If you have a power chair, that's a whole nother thing. But there's a website that I Facebook page that I belong to called accessible travel Facebook page. And everyday there's several people that get online talking about their wheelchairs,

and how they're packaging them up. These people travel all over the world constantly with all sorts of equipment.

Rosanne 26:06

Okay, what do you bring in your carry on that you're not going to check what's important?

Carol Guiliani 26:11

You have to have your medications in your carry on. If you have, if you're moving cross country a couple of days ago, I took a couple from San Francisco to New Jersey to Newark. So in their large suitcases, they had a baggie full of pills full of their pill bottles, but in the carry on, I had their bubble packs for the next several days for several days have extra days. But those are what you're going to have with you because you're going to be possibly overnight, even if you don't think you're going to be for several days, you need that. You're also going to have some extra incontinence products, perhaps extra change of clothes, you know, maybe a couple of toiletries, nothing over 3.4 ounces. I don't care if that giant tube of toothpaste only has a little bit of toothpaste in it. It's still too big. You know, there's the TSA does get a little bit weird about things like jellies or you know, any anything that you don't think is as liquid but they might think it is I actually got busted for having sharp cheddar cheese not too long ago. Liquid or sharp anything like what are sharp? And I said no. And they said What's this and I got busted in Vermont for having sharp cheddar, so you never know what you're gonna get in trouble for. Just go with the flow, just relax. And if they pull something aside, don't get too freaked out about it. But yeah, just, you know, some snacks. Sometimes they don't want you they want you to claim what foods you have. Lately, that's been just weird. So just whatever is gonna make your yourself what's going to be a comforting thing for you on the airplane, comfortable clothes, those kinds of things. I always travel with a first aid kit, because you never know when you're going to need a shoehorn in a pair of rubber gloves and you know, those kinds of things. But that's, that's me as a professional. But bring a few things along for contingencies, a few snacks. You never know when you're going to be sitting on the tarmac for an extra hour like I was two nights ago, because there was a lineup of planes that couldn't take off on time. But make make sure you have your medications with you have a set of headphones, I bring the over the ear ones for folks that have hearing aids.

Rosanne 28:23

Okay, you know, again, planning but be flexible.

Carol Guiliani 28:27

Right.

Rosanne 28:28

You're you're you're anticipating you're trying to anticipate how do you handle bathroom requirements, because it's going to be tough getting to people in those little bathrooms,

Carol Guiliani 28:36

Right, and you don't have to have both of you in the bathroom. I mean, I they're so small I am the screen, you know, when the flight attendants stand in front and block for the for the pilots using the bathroom, I'm blocking for my traveler. And so all you need to do is get someone into the bathroom and

help them pull down whatever they need to do use the toilet and show them where the flushes and everything else if that's or do it for them. That's if they can walk to the toilet if they can't use the toilet, and some folks, you know, I ended up moving people that cannot actually transfer at all they cannot walk to get on an airplane. So they go from a wheelchair onto what's called an aisle chair, which is the skinny little thing that they can bring on to a to a plane, which is really it's important to be on the front of the plane because who wants to go all the way through to the back row on this little aisle chair, bumping their hips and everything else so the aisle chair will take you to your seat with the flight attendant or the wheelchair attendants getting you to your seat and then you'll they'll transfer you to your seat. Now I have a sling which is like a nylon on hammock, which I can lift up with some handles on it and like a hammock and and just slide you into your seat lift you slide you into your seat and that's waterproof. A waterproof pad is useful to okay depends on cabinet's products. And then hopefully you have a short enough flights, there's not going to be a problem. And you've used the bathroom, of course, at the family companion bathroom before you get on. And then when you get off immediately, so but if you can use the bathroom on the flight, and you're close enough, and I hold on to that individual and carefully dance them up to the, to the restroom, then that's the way that that usually works.

Rosanne 30:23

And then when it comes to hotels, and lodging, you also have to plan ahead for that.

Carol Guiliani 30:29

Absolutely. I use hotels more than VRBO's these days, because of the extra fees. And because you don't know what those hosts are going to hit you with, at the end or accuse you of doing at the end, I've had some poor experiences. And I like concierges who can handle things and set fees and hotels can be more predictable on what's accessible, although you don't really know what's an ADA room and what's not. Right. So if they say it's Ada, but it's sometimes the handrails are behind the toilets, that doesn't make any sense to me, it's important to perhaps maybe check the room up before you get there. You can call the hotel, ask for photos, get that information upfront check on some of the websites of people that have been to these hotels to see what they have to say about them and get reviews on those. There are some good some VRB o's and some other different kinds of lodging that you can find me that would be that would be good. Also, you know, like I said, there's specialty things coming out all the time for folks that are starting to be advertised. You know, if you want to go to Hawaii, there are people out there in the hospitality industry that are starting to advertise, hey, you know, here's a resort that's specially made for you. You know, here's accommodations, cruise ships, you know, you can get equipment on board, especially for you, you know, it's held Ship to Shore, you can get hospital beds, and you know, raise toilet seats and Hoyer lifts and stuff. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Rosanne 32:03

Really?

Carol Guiliani 32:04

Oh, right. It's great. I mean, I took I took a quadriplegic on a week long cruise to the Caribbean. And man, we had a great time.

Rosanne 32:14

Really, and all the equipment was was shipped there, and they got it all set up for you and absolutely

Carol Guiliani 32:20

Everything we didn't have they brought along for us.

Rosanne 32:23

Wow, that's wild.

Carol Guiliani 32:25

Yeah, you can have your dreams come true on these trips. And as I was talking about before, these folks need to be able to travel and should travel. I mean, there's an article that a gentleman from Australia wrote a doctor. And it's called tourism as a treatment for dementia, because family members want to have their seniors with them want to have their family members with them. Even if they are starting to suffer from cognitive decline. They want to have that person at a wedding to be in the pictures and to enjoy that opportunity. I mean, some people may not be right for that situation, there needs to be an assessment done. If they have some acting out, it might not be appropriate. But if it is a situation where that person might enjoy it, and the family wants them there, it could be a good thing for them, as long as they're physically active and able to do it. And the family wants them to go on a trip. And they can keep enjoying and living life to the fullest. There's no reason why that can't happen. And people with any kind of physical disabilities, Parkinson's, things like that. I took a gentleman on a trip to Mexico a few years ago to his favorite resort. And his vision loss is macular degeneration was really starting to get the better of him. And he couldn't go with his girlfriend anymore, but we had a terrific time. So there's no reason why with the trip can't and can still be safe and comfortable. If you have a good caregiver that's with you. And there are more people I've trained 50 people in this business so far, or will be soon to do these trips that safely and comfortably because there's so many people out there that want to travel, and they can do it affordably. And it gives these folks that are they companions a trip to see some new places, and to have these experiences and it's just overall better for folks to have an opportunity to have new experiences to enjoy their lives. And for other people on the outside to see folks traveling to you know, when I brought this gentleman to the Fontainebleau in Florida, and he's in his power wheelchair, and you know, he's sitting at dinner with me and he's he's a normal quote unquote, gentleman, you know, it's all good.

Rosanne 34:49

Yeah, no, that's it's beautiful. And it's of course it's case by case recommendations and depending on of course with dementia depending on how far along you are and and The entire thing, but it has to be looked at. And it's one of those things where it can bring some joy.

Carol Guiliani 35:05

Certainly and you know, even when it goes wonky, like this one woman I took to the airport, and she was the former minister and choir director. And she had a little bit of a freakout at the gate. And I tell you, the gate agents, and even the other passengers, it was towards the end of the boarding process, they were all wonderful and kind. So you know, don't be embarrassed if there is a little something going on. Just because you know, your family member may not be following along with the program, and may have a little bit of acting out, you know, have a good sense of humor about it, you know, if you can go

along with the flow, you'd be surprised how many people aren't going to necessarily make that nasty comment, or roll their eyes, but just kind of give a little smile, or maybe even help out a little bit, you know, right. People will be much kinder and unpleasant that more than you think.

Rosanne 36:06

Now, obviously, you have a little more control with driving or taking a train or anything, but you can still adapt all of this to a car ride or a train ride.

Carol Guiliani 36:14

Right?

Rosanne 36:15

It's still the same type of logistical planning.

Carol Guiliani 36:18

Certainly, yep. I've done both. I'd have done a long distance train, right? I didn't prefer that. Because number one, they're very expensive. And actually from Minnesota, the best viewing is going west. And those those trains go at night, and so you can't see anything. I don't know why, um, track does it that way. And there's a lot of stops. So it takes a long time. But yeah, there's there's accommodations on trains that can be made that work for people that want to do that kind of route. And I do have some of the trainees and certified travel companions that have worked with me, and for me have done long distance drives. I've done a few of them, too. I've taken a couple from Minnesota down to Sanibel, and just drove them through the beautiful country of Tennessee. Yeah, just, you know, if you can find accessible bathrooms along the way, if you need them, make sure you're going at the right pace, you know, the smell the roses along the way.

Rosanne 37:17

No, absolutely and you know, you should stop every few hours, because it's important to get out and walk around. And

Carol Guiliani 37:23

Absolutely same with on the airplane, you know, I make sure that my people have compression socks, that they're keeping their feet up that they're walking around the plane, get get those get that blood flow on the whole time, make sure your doctor knows how far you're going. And make sure you know it's medically required to make this trip as safe and prepared as you can have it.

Rosanne 37:45

Yeah well, and that was lead me right into it, Carol, it's important to discuss these things with your doctor, depending on the condition your care partner is living with, correct?

Carol Guiliani 37:55

Absolutely. Yeah. Right. So I have this, I don't know, nine page assessment form that I go through with the family. I send it to them. I usually do a lot of questions up front. I mean, I need to know if they're speaking English, what their weight is, whether or not they have ID. I mean, just because you don't

have an ID anymore, because you lost it doesn't mean you can't fly someplace. Who knew a lot of people think oh, you're stuck someplace because you don't have an ID and trying to get one. Is it possible? Yeah. No, that's not a problem. Actually, the TSA doesn't really care that much. As long as you have a bottle of pills and a photograph on something or the other. You're okay. Yeah. And you want to talk to the whoever's been recently taking care of this individual, if possible, and see what their behavior is, if there's some issues about that, what their medications are just habits, food, things that are going on, all of that stuff, medical clearances, especially all of that stuff, it's important to get all of that down to as much as humanly possible. So you can be prepared. And so you can set up your plan B, in case there is a situation, right? What made you get into this? Oh, well, I was a professional guardian and conservator for 28 years. So I was managing the health care decisions and the finances of seniors, which I started doing when my dad had a stroke at age 56. So I started with him, after I got done practicing law for 10 years, which was really boring for me. And I did that for many people for many years. And then I just decided I wanted to start traveling when my kids grew up, and I wanted to do it with seniors, because they really needed the help. And my, my parents did, and so I thought other parents need to have this help. So I just started out in my communities and Minnesota and found out that there were a lot of people that I knew that thought this was a great idea. So I started small and the next thing you know, I was getting calls from all over the place and I started with a website and I'm getting calls from Helsinki and Tasmania and you name it. Well, I got a call from some Be in Denver saying go get my husband in Bulgaria, he's kind of stuck there and his visas running out. So, you know, 14 countries and 43 states. And yes, I've done 127 trips, but I just saw a real need there, a need for people with a seniors and people with disabilities to have a professional, caregiver, professional companion to do these trips, because there's family members. But sometimes there's not, you know, sometimes people forget to have kids or their kids don't get along with them, or their kids have lives and dogs and children and you know, things like that.

Rosanne 40:39

If you had one thing to say to a caregiver, in this situation, what would you say?

Carol Guiliani 40:44

I say do some do some research, you know, look on my website, look on the dementia friendly airport website, there's a lot of information out there, you do not need to invent the wheel. You know, people really want to make this easier for you. There's, it's, it's becoming a really big thing now for the world to recognize that folks want to need to and should be out traveling, enjoying life making the most of their golden years, as we say, so just go for it. And I think everybody should go out and do whatever it is that makes them happy. And if it's traveling, they should do it. And I think that it's a wonderful way to see the world to experience life and to get to know different cultures and to keep making memories. And the world's just a better place for travel. And it gives you something to talk about with everybody all the time. So there's no reason not to do it. I mean, a little bit of fear, and some people don't want to okay, I get that. But, you know, go on and take the chance. It's, you know, some people aren't gonna really be ready for it anymore. But if you can, why not?

Rosanne 42:03

A big thank you to Carol Giuliani for being my guest today. For more information about Carol, her travel companion services, travel tips and resources, visit seniortravelcompanionservices.com I hope you

enjoyed our podcast today. Head over to [Daughterhood.org](https://daughterhood.org) and click on the podcast section for Show Notes including the full transcript and links to any resources and information from today's episode. You can find and review us on Apple podcasts or anywhere you listen to your podcasts. We are also on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at Daughterhood the Podcast. Feel free to leave me a message and let me know what issues you may be facing and we'd like to hear more about or even if you just want to say hi, I'd love to hear from you. Also a very special thank you to Susan Rowe for our theme music, the instrumental version of her beautiful song Mamas Eyes from her album Lessons in Love. I hope you found what you were looking for today, information, inspiration or even just a little company. This is Rosanne Corcoran. I hope you'll join me next time in Daughterhood.