

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska

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Purpose in life may protect against harmful changes in the brain associated with Alzheimer's disease...

By Nancy Di Fiore, Rush University Medical Center

Greater purpose in life may help stave off the harmful effects of plaques and tangles associated with Alzheimer's disease, according to a new study by researchers at Rush University Medical Center. The study, published in the May issue of the Archives of General Psychiatry, is available online at www.archgenpsychiatry.com.

"Our study showed that people who reported greater purpose in life

exhibited better cognition than those with less purpose in life even as plaques and tangles accumulated in their brains," said Patricia A. Boyle, PhD.



"These findings suggest that purpose in life protects against the harmful effects of plaques and tangles on memory and other thinking abilities. This is encouraging and suggests that engaging in meaningful and purposeful activities promotes cognitive health in old age."

Boyle and her colleagues from the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center studied 246 participants from the Rush Memory and Aging Project who did not have dementia and who subsequently died and underwent brain autopsy. Participants received an annual clinical evaluation for up to approximately 10 years, which included detailed cognitive testing and neurological exams.

Participants also answered questions about purpose in life, the degree to which one derives meaning from life's experiences and is focused and intentional. Brain plaques and tangles were quantified after death. The authors then examined whether purpose in life slowed the rate of cognitive decline even as older persons accumulated plaques and tangles.

Continued on page ... 4

Thank you for Amblin' 2012

For the eighth year in a row Anchorage's Amblin' for Alzheimer's had us tie our shoe laces and walk with purpose; supporting Alaska's elders. Amblin for Alzheimer's 2012 was a great success, together we raised over \$60,000 to support programs and services provided by Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska.

Team Red White and Blue, Think About it and Team Oil, and Gas (to name just a few) led the charge down the Kincaid trail. We are happy to say we had sneakers, strollers, wheelchairs, skateboards and roller-skates cruising together for the same cause.

Thank you again to all the individuals, businesses and volunteers who came out and supported Alaska's elders. We spread awareness by walking, raising money and

participating in an event that will contribute to create a stronger Alaska.



Director's Message	p.g. 3
Caregiver Corner	p.g. 5
Event Pictures	p.g. 7
Support Groups	p.g. 13



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Statewide

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Mat-Su Valley

Trinity Barn Plaza
10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy.
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Letter from the Executive Director

As another fiscal year goes by...

June 30, 2012 marked the end of another fiscal year for Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska. As I review the past 12 months, I find myself once again proud to be part of this organization and ever impressed by the work our staff does throughout Alaska.



As an Executive Director much of my time is spent planning for the road ahead, ensuring that we will be able to meet the growing needs of Alaska's aging population; so I welcome this time when I can reflect on the progress that has already been made and the impact we are having throughout the state. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a few of our highlights and accomplishments from the past year.

Thanks to our many dedicated in-home workers, we served more than 300 individuals and provided over 75,000 hours of in-home services to Alaska's elders. Families receiving respite services reported that, as a result of receiving these in-home services, they were able to keep their loved one at home, on average, 14 months longer.

We partnered with the Trust Training Cooperative to address training gaps in Alaska's workforce in the areas of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). Through our Education programs we trained over 400 professionals and direct care workers throughout the state on best practices in dementia care. In February, we offered a workshop "Dementia: Changing our Perspective", which was open to the public and featured national experts in the field. The workshop was "sold out" and received high praises. One participant may have summarized it best when she said, "This [workshop] takes dementia care to the next level".

Some of our greatest accomplishments can best be explained in the words of those we serve. Here are only a few of the many wonderful comments we received this year about our Care Coordinators:

- *"She is so generous with her time and assistance, she's made this very difficult time more bearable."*
- *"He understands the stages of Alzheimer's and is willing to share his knowledge as well. Very Important!!"*
- *"She goes above and beyond any other care coordinator that I know"*
- *"She has developed a close relationship with my mother and has been a neutral voice advocating for what would be best for my mom in difficult family dynamics."*
- *"She makes me feel like I have a very competent friend holding my hand."*

With Alaska's growing senior population, it is vital that we continue to look to the future and plan for the work we have ahead, so it is with pleasure that I get to share with you the work already being done, and progress already made. I thank you all for your support over the last fiscal year and look forward to a productive year ahead.

Kind Regards,

Purpose in life may protect against harmful changes in the brain associated with Alzheimer's disease

By Nancy Di Fiore, Rush University Medical Center

...continued from page 1

While plaques and tangles are very common among persons who develop Alzheimer's dementia (characterized by prominent memory loss and changes in other thinking abilities), recent data suggest that plaques and tangles accumulate in most older persons, even those without dementia. Plaques and tangles disrupt memory and other cognitive functions.

Boyle and colleagues note that much of the Alzheimer's research that is ongoing seeks to identify ways to prevent or limit the accumulation of plaques and tangles in the brain, a task that has proven quite difficult. Studies such as the current one are needed because, until effective preventive therapies are discovered, strategies that minimize the impact of plaques and tangles on cognition are urgently needed.

"These studies are challenging because many factors influence cognition and research studies often lack the brain specimen data needed to quantify Alzheimer's changes in the brain," Boyle said. "Identifying factors that promote cognitive health even as plaques and tangles accumulate will help combat the already large and rapidly increasing public health challenge posed by Alzheimer's disease."

About:

The Rush Memory and Aging Project, which began in 1997, is a longitudinal clinical-pathological study of common chronic conditions of aging. Participants are older persons recruited from about 40 continuous care retirement communities and senior subsidized housing facilities in and around the Chicago Metropolitan area. More than 1,500 older persons are currently enrolled in the study.



OTHER STORIES IN THE NEWS:

- *Supreme Court Upholds Affordable Health Care Act*
- *Another Parkinson's Disease Gene Identified*
- *Stress as Risk Factor for Alzheimer's Under Investigation*
- *Gene May Link Diabetes and Alzheimer's*

Do you have a question for our experts?
If so, write in to aging@alzalaska.org
All personal information is confidential.



Q&A

Question: I am retired and now a full time caregiver for my mother. Lately she has been displaying a number of difficult behaviors. She is argumentative about everything and has even pushed me. What do I do? Can I make this any better?

~At My Wits End

Dear AMWE,

I'm sorry, it sounds like you are in a very difficult situation. I would like to start by suggesting you talk with someone from Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska either in person or by phone as few details are given here and each case is unique. However, in the meantime here are some things to keep in mind while caring for your mother...

Experiencing a progressive dementia firsthand is an extremely confusing and scary process. Alzheimer's affects parts of the brain that allow an individual to reason and make sense of the world around them. So for someone going through these mental changes, being unable to logically understand what is happening can create an intense fear. This fear can come out as frustration or anger and it may be what you are seeing with your mother.

When a person loses the ability to make logical connections in their brain they begin to respond to the world around them on a more emotional level. Think about it as if you were talking to a teenager. A teenager runs on emotion, we often get frustrated because we can't appeal to their logical senses. Like in this case, you will not be able to effectively communicate with your loved one by using logic and reason because her mind may no longer work that way. Your mother has begun to experience the world on a more emotional level, whereas you are still operating on a logical one.

So if you find yourself arguing or trying to reason with her for whatever reason, stop. Stop whatever you are doing and walk away for a few minutes. Leave the room, take a deep breath and try to think of another way to approach it. When you come back pay attention to how you are communicating with her. Everything from the tone in your voice to the way you touch her will convey something to her. So now, instead of coming in the room in a hurry saying, "Mom, you need to take a bath now", you are coming into the room, bending down next to her and saying "I got everything ready for your bath now, it is just the way you like it. I even have your favorite perfume for afterward."

Again, these are just general, simplified suggestions. I highly recommend you contact Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska to find out what resources are available to you. We have support groups, consultations, classes on communication techniques and behaviors that are challenging to us as well as respite services if you need to take a break. Remember it is important to care for yourself as well.

Caregiver's Corner

Exhausted?

Don't forget you can ask for help. Sometimes we forget we don't need to go it alone. If you don't have family or a friend who can give you a break for an hour or two look into respite services. Organizations like Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska offer these services. You are not alone. Resources are available.

Community Support



Artists across Anchorage put together a show at L'Aroma's Southside Bakery and Cafe donating a percentage of the proceeds from pieces sold to Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska. The show was displayed throughout June and was organized by local artist Rhonda Scott. Thank you all for your wonderful contributions. It was a pleasure to be part of such a beautiful event.

Youth Dribbling for Alzheimer's

Full Force, an all-girls team in the United Anchorage Youth Soccer League (UAYSL), is giving back to the community by organizing a fundraiser in July to benefit Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska.

"We have done this kind of thing before to raise money for the team" says Coach Steve Day, "but we have never done one to give back. We think it's important that the girls give back to the community."

The idea came from Teres Fundeen, a mother of two players. Teres understands the impact Alzheimer's can have not only on the individual diagnosed but the entire family. Her father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and her mother has been his primary care partner ever since.

The team is currently fundraising by collecting pledges for a Dribble-A-Thon to be held at the Begich Middle School soccer field. Sponsors can donate a flat dollar amount or give per lap the player completes.

The girls hope to get in about 100 laps, a distance that will be just short of running a marathon. They, too, are excited to be giving back to the community, but have concerns about what happens if they need to use the bathroom in the middle of the event.

Half of all the proceeds raised will be donated to Alzheimer's Resource of

Alaska and go to help fund programs and services provided by the organization. The other half will go to the team. Good luck girls and THANK YOU!





2012 **AMBLIN'**for **ALZHEIMER'S**

Photos courtesy of Ross Homer

Find more photos of this event and others on Facebook! "Like" us to receive updates on classes and events across the state.

News & Events...

As a new fiscal year begins we have a few changes in our leadership. Please join us in thanking those who have selflessly served Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska over the years and also welcome our new additions to the team.



Becky Clement
Board Member & Co-founder

Becky Clement, one of the co-founders of Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska has recently retired from the Board of Directors to spend more time with her family. Thirty years ago, Becky recognized a need in Alaska to support individuals with dementia and their family caregivers. With hard work and dedication, she and her sister Beverly created a grassroots organization that today has over 150 employees serving individuals, families and professionals throughout the state. Becky has been an integral part of the leadership of Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska since day one, and we thank her for her countless hours of guidance and support.

Jackie Brunton has sat on the Board of Directors since May of 2006. During her tenure she served as Vice-President and President. Jackie has been a tireless advocate on behalf of the organization and the individuals we serve. Now she is taking her first mandatory break from the board. We thank you Jackie for all your hard work.



Jackie Brunton
Board Member



Dawnia Clement
Board Member

We are happy to welcome Dawnia Clement as a returning member of the Board of Directors. Dawnia first joined the board in 1987 and has served off and on ever since. After taking a short break she has rejoined the team and we look forward to working with her over the next three years.

We would like to welcome Sue Samet as our new Care Coordination Supervisor. Sue has over 20 years of experience working in the field of senior care. She ran a care coordination program for seniors with Providence, then became director of Providence Horizon House for 13 years. She moved to Oregon and continued working in senior services as director of an Area Agency on Aging. With all of her experience and her passion for serving seniors, we are sure she will be a great addition to the team.



Sue Samet
Care Coordination Supervisor



Thank you to our Amblin' Sponsors

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Have you had a good experience with us?

If you have received services from Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska we would like to invite you to share your experiences with others by reviewing us online. Give us a rating using any of the online consumer tools such as Google Places or Yelp . Be sure to leave a comment and let others know how we are here to serve Alaskans.



Memorials & Tributes

Ed Arnold

Val & Jerry Ledbetter

Sara Joyce Cooper

General Teamsters Local 959
Marcella Hunt

Robert Dalzell

Angelus Memorial Park, Inc.

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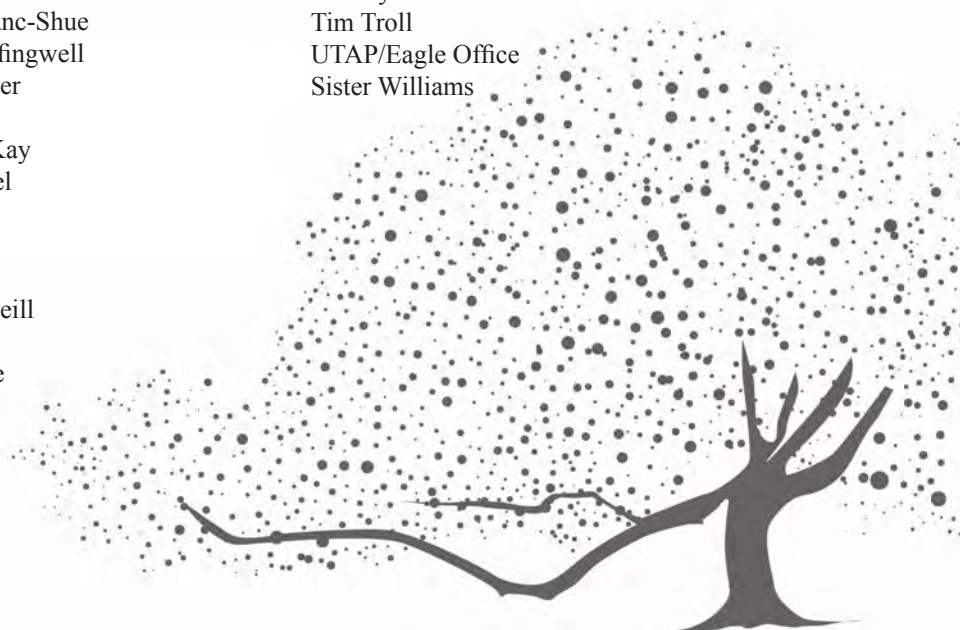
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Tammy Thiele
Tim Troll
UTAP/Eagle Office
Sister Williams



CLASSES & EVENTS

around the state

Anchorage

1750 Abbott Rd.
561-3313

- **What is Medicaid Waiver?**
10 - 11:30 AM
Monday, August 20
- **Family Meeting**
10 - 11:30 AM or 5:30 - 7 PM
Monday, September 17
- **Behaviors that Challenge Us**
10 - 11:30 AM or 5:30 - 7 PM
Monday, September 24
- **Savvy Caregiver**
Day & evening classes available
Starting in September
Call to register
- **Dementia Care Essentials for Direct Care Workers**
1 - 3 PM
Wednesdays, Starting October 3

Mat-Su Valley

10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy.
746-3413

- **Using Gentle Touch & Massage to Bring Comfort**
6:30 - 8 PM
Thursday, July 26
- **Is it Alzheimer's?**
11 - 12:30 PM or 6:30 - 8 PM
Thursday, August 23
- **Twenty Questions**
11 - 12:30 PM or 6:30 - 8 PM
Tuesday, September 25

Fairbanks

565 University Ave. Suite 2
452-2277

- **Savvy Professional**
8 :30 AM - 5 PM
Monday, August 6
- **Caring for Our Aging Selves**
5:30 - 7 PM
Tuesday, August 14
- **Twenty Questions**
5:30 - 7 PM
Tuesday, September 11

Juneau

3100 Channel Dr.
3rd floor Conference Rm.
586-6044

- **20 Questions**
12 - 2 PM
Tuesday, August 21
- **Savvy Professional**
8 AM - 5 PM
Monday, August 27
- **Savvy Caregiver**
Starting in August
Call to Register
- **Bathing without a Battle**
12 - 2 PM
Tuesday, September 18
- **Dementia Care Essentials for Direct Care Workers**
10 AM - 12 PM
Starting in September

Ongoing Programs

Mind Matters in Anchorage and Fairbanks!

Mind Matters is an education and support program for those with early memory loss and their caregivers. Participants learn strategies to adapt to this change with confidence and are encouraged to continue an active lifestyle.



For more information on any of these classes or programs visit www.AlzAlaska.org or contact the office nearest you.



SUPPORT GROUPS

around the state

Anchorage				
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska 1750 Abbott Rd.	General Caregiver	4th Thursday	5:30 - 7 PM	Mariel Fonteyn 561-3313
	Adult Child/Relative	2nd Thursday	10 AM - 12 PM	
	Spousal Caregiver	3rd Thursday	10 AM - 12 PM	
Copper River Basin & Prince William Sound				
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska	General Caregiver	Telephone support group. Call for more information.		Gay Wellman 882-5620 or (800) 478-1080
Fairbanks				
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska 565 University Ave. Suite 2	General Caregiver	1st Tuesday	11:30 – 1 PM	Joan Adams 458-2277
Homer				
Friendship Center	General Caregiver	3rd Thursday	5 - 6:30 PM	235-2295
Juneau				
KTOO 1st Floor Conference Room 360 Egan Drive	General Caregiver	2nd Thursday	12 - 1 PM	463-6177 or (866) 746-6177
Ketchikan				
Southeast Senior Services	General Caregiver	Call for more information		Bernice 225-8080
Kodiak				
Kodiak Senior Center 302 Erskine Ave.	General Caregiver	4th Thursday	12:30 – 1:30 PM	Kathy Drabek 486-6181
Mat-Su Valley				
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska Trinity Barn Plaza Mile 2.2 Palmer-Wasilla Hwy.	General Caregiver	2nd Wednesday	1 - 2:30 PM	Linda Shepard 746-3413
Seward				
Seward Senior Center	General Caregiver	4th Thursday	1 - 2 PM	262-1280 or (800) 776-8210
Sitka				
Brave Hear Volunteers Pioneer Home Managers House 120 Katlian St.	General Caregiver	2nd Wednesday	12 - 1 PM	747-4600
Soldotna				
Soldotna Senior Center	General Caregiver	2nd & Last Tuesday	1 -3 PM	262-1280 or (800) 776-8210
Sterling				
Sterling Senior Center	General Caregiver	3rd Tuesday	1 -2 PM	Dorothy Westphal 262-6061



**Alzheimer's
Resource
of Alaska**

1750 Abbott Rd.
Anchorage, AK 99507

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Get Updates on News and Events

Like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter @AlzAlaska to stay up to date on latest research events and opportunities throughout the state.

Coming up in September:

September 15: The New 35+ Singles Club will host "A Night to Remember" a formal dance to benefit Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska. Join us for food, dancing and fun for a good cause. Stay tuned for more information.

www.AlzAlaska.org