Sleep and Alzheimer's Disease
Can improving sleep help delay or prevent Alzheimer’s? Researchers gain new insights

Studies confirm what many people already know: Sleep gets worse with age. Middle-aged and older adults often sleep less deeply, wake more frequently at night, or wake too early in the morning. Could these problems be related to risk of cognitive decline or Alzheimer’s disease? Scientists are beginning to probe the complex relationship between the brain changes involved in poor sleep and those in very early-stage Alzheimer’s. It’s an intriguing area of research, given that both risk for disturbed sleep and Alzheimer’s increase with age.

“Nearly 60 percent of older adults have some kind of chronic sleep disturbance,” said Phyllis Zee, Ph.D., a sleep expert at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago.

It’s long been known that people with Alzheimer’s often have sleep problems—getting their days and nights mixed up, for example. Now scientists are probing the link between sleep and Alzheimer’s earlier in the disease process and in cognitively normal adults. They wonder if improving sleep with existing treatments might help memory and other cognitive functions—and perhaps delay or prevent Alzheimer’s.

Which comes first, poor sleep or Alzheimer’s?

The chicken-and-egg question is whether Alzheimer’s-related brain changes lead to poor sleep, or whether poor sleep somehow contributes to Alzheimer’s. Scientists believe the answer may be both.

“We’re gaining new insights, primarily in animal studies, about a possible bidirectional relationship between sleep and Alzheimer’s disease,” said Mack Mackiewicz, Ph.D., who oversees sleep research for NIA’s Division of Neuroscience. Findings show that brain activity induced by poor sleep may influence Alzheimer’s-related brain changes, which begin years before memory loss and other disease symptoms appear.

Sleep, Page 4

The Checkbook War: One Family’s Solution

My mother always kept the checkbook and ran the household accounts while she raised her family and through my parents’ retirement years. She continued to manage her money after my father died.

As Alzheimer’s claimed its terrible price, she continued to control her checkbook with my sister’s assistance. My sister was added as a signatory to the account, given a financial power of attorney (POA) and took over the task of supervising the account.

Then, her anxiety over my mother’s financial vulnerability skyrocketed.

She noticed things like the increasing number of checks voided out because of errors Mom made in writing out the sum. There were suspect purchases. Checks were written out of sequence.

Mom studied and worried and perseverated over that checking account throughout the mild stage and into the moderate stage of her disease. She captured my sister in Checkbook, page 7
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Greetings,

Supporting Alaskans affected by Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementia’s (ADRD) is central to our mission. So, I would like to express a profound sense of gratitude to our statewide community of partners and supporters for their participation in making our 13th annual Amblin’ for Alzheimer’s a resounding success. For every Alaskan affected by ADRD there is a unique story of difficulty and often heartbreak. Amblin’ for Alzheimer’s helps us support caregivers, the unsung heroes who take on the crucial and necessary tasks of not just caring for vulnerable persons, but of educating themselves to insure those persons attain the highest possible quality of life. It was an honor and a pleasure to spend a beautiful Saturday in May and walking with people who support our cause by raising awareness and advocating on behalf of so many vulnerable Alaskans.

Events like Amblin’ for Alzheimer’s make clear how vital a role generosity, and community partnerships play in supporting Alaskans affected by ADRD. This is possible through the support of partners like the Alaska Neurology Center, Alaska Airlines and the Anchorage Golf Course and many others, all of whom made this year’s Amblin for Alzheimer’s an event that brought together Alaskans from all walks of life. It is great news that Amblin’ for Alzheimer’s is expanding to Kodiak this year, due in large part to recently forged partnerships with Providence Health Systems Kodiak Island, Kodiak Senior Center and Sun’ami, Inc.

Supporting Alaskans also includes sharing stories of success. I encourage you to read the enclosed contribution from Pam Kelley, our Education Director. Pam shares how she and her family came up with a wonderfully innovative strategy for caregivers who find themselves needing to take control of a loved one’s finances – without upsetting that loved one’s sense of control or making them feel disempowered. Pam’s story was born from experience caring for her mother and is a testament to the power of compassionate, creative caregiving.

I wish you all a great summer and we look forward to continued growth and to meeting the needs of Alaskans across the state.

Best Regards,

Karl Garber
Executive Director
NIA-funded scientists are studying the biological underpinnings of this relationship in animals and humans to better understand how these changes occur. Although evidence points to certain sleep problems as a risk factor for Alzheimer’s, “it is not known whether improving sleep will reduce the likelihood of developing Alzheimer’s,” Dr. Mackiewicz said. He adds, “There is no scientific evidence that sleep medications or other sleep treatments will reduce risk for Alzheimer’s.”

**Effects of good and bad sleep**

At any age, getting a good night’s sleep serves a number of important functions for our bodies and brains. Although our bodies rest during sleep, our brains are active. The process is not totally understood, but researchers think that sleep might benefit the brain - and the whole body - by removing metabolic waste that accumulates in the brain during wakefulness. In addition, it has been shown that some memories are consolidated, moving from short-term to long-term storage during periods of deep sleep. Other sleep stages may also influence memory and memory consolidation, research shows.

Disturbed sleep - whether due to illness, pain, anxiety, depression, or a sleep disorder - can lead to trouble concentrating, remembering, and learning. A return to normal sleep patterns usually eases these problems. In older people, disturbed sleep may have more dire and long-lasting consequences. Scientists long believed that the initial buildup of the beta-amyloid protein in the brain, an early biological sign of Alzheimer’s, causes disturbed sleep. Recently, though, evidence suggests the opposite may also occur - disturbed sleep in cognitively normal older adults contributes to the risk of cognitive decline and Alzheimer’s disease.

For example, in a study of older men free of dementia, poor sleep, including greater nighttime wakefulness, was associated with cognitive decline over a period of more than 3 years. Sleep was assessed through participants’ reports and a device worn on the wrist that tracks movements during sleep.

Sleep disorders such as sleep apnea may pose an even greater risk of cognitive impairment. In a 5-year study of older women, those with sleep-disordered breathing (SDB) - repeated arousals from sleep due to breathing disruptions, as happens in sleep apnea - had a nearly twofold increase in risk for mild cognitive impairment (a precursor to Alzheimer’s in some people) or dementia.

In addition, certain types of poor sleep seem to be associated with risk of cognitive impairment. These include hypoxia (low oxygen levels that can be caused by sleep disorders) and difficulty in falling or staying asleep.

**What’s the connection between sleep and Alzheimer’s?**

Evidence of a link between sleep and risk of Alzheimer’s has led to investigations to explain the brain activity that underlies this connection in humans. Some recent studies suggest that poor sleep contributes to abnormal levels of beta-amyloid protein in the brain, which in turn leads to the amyloid plaques found in the Alzheimer’s brain. These plaques might then affect sleep-related brain regions, further disrupting sleep.

Studies in laboratory animals show a direct link between sleep and Alzheimer’s disease. One study in mice, led by researchers at Washington University, St. Louis, showed that beta-amyloid levels naturally rose during wakefulness and fell during sleep. Mice deprived of sleep for 21 days showed significantly greater beta-amyloid plaques than those that slept normally. Increasing sleep had the opposite effect—it reduced the amyloid load.

A subsequent study, also by Washington University researchers, showed that when Alzheimer’s mice were treated with antibodies, beta-amyloid deposits decreased and sleep returned to normal. Mice that received a placebo saline solution continued to sleep poorly. The results suggest that sleep disruption could be a sign of Alzheimer’s.

*continued on next page*
Sleep (from page 4)

disease beginning in the brain, but not necessarily its cause.

Studies in humans have also addressed the relationship between sleep and biomarkers of Alzheimer’s disease. One study found that in cognitively normal older adults, poor sleep quality (more time awake at night and more daytime naps) was associated with lower beta-amyloid levels in cerebrospinal fluid, a preclinical sign of Alzheimer’s. Another study, by researchers at NIA and Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, found that healthy older adults who reported short sleep duration and poor sleep quality had more beta-amyloid in the brain than those without such sleep problems.

Emerging insights—stay tuned

How exactly do poor sleep and Alzheimer’s influence each other? Research so far suggests a few possible mechanisms:

- Orexin, a molecule that regulates wakefulness and other functions, has been found to affect beta-amyloid levels in mice.
- Chronic hypoxia, insufficient oxygen in blood or tissue that is a feature of sleep apnea, increased the level of harmful beta-amyloid in brain tissue of mice.
- Reduced slow-wave sleep leads to increased neuronal activity. Other factors may also be involved. For example, it has been shown in laboratory animals that the glymphatic system, the brain’s waste removal system, removes beta-amyloid during sleep. A recent mouse study suggests that sleeping in different positions impacts waste removal from the brain. Sleeping on the side cleared beta-amyloid more efficiently than sleeping on the back or belly, researchers found. They pointed to the glymphatic system as a possible pathway for intervention.

Further biological and epidemiological studies and clinical trials should cast more light on the mechanisms behind the sleep-Alzheimer’s connection, and whether treating poor sleep might help delay or prevent cognitive decline in older adults.

“Sleep is something we can fix, and people with sleep problems should consult a doctor so that they can function at their best,” Dr. Mackiewicz said. As for Alzheimer’s, for now, he said, improving sleep is “not the same as preventing Alzheimer’s disease. Researchers are committed to achieving a better understanding of this complex dynamic in hopes of making a difference in the lives of older adults.”

National Institute on Aging

*Participants Require Pre-Screening
This year’s 13th annual Amblin’ for Alzheimer’s was held at the Anchorage Golf Course on May 7th, it was an opportunity to take an easy amble on the behalf of a loved one or in memory of someone special. The weather was perfect and if you were an early arrival a local moose welcomed us to the “greens”.

Our sponsors have been incredibly generous and we would like to thank them and everyone who helped make Amblin’ such a success. We raised $68,000.00 and the contributions continue to arrive. Our contributors are listed along with other generous individuals on page 8 and we would like to acknowledge our business partners as well.

Kodiak Island joined the walk this year with their inaugural walk held at the Woody Way Field. Along with our Education Director, Pam Kelley, about 55 souls braved the pouring rain to walk in a show of support for our community - the group raised $5,300.00.

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ceaseless conversations about her money. She spoke to me on the phone for hours about her frustration with my sister’s intrusion into her financial privacy.

Our family eventually arrived at a solution to the problems surrounding Mom’s money obsession.

Rather than staggering from one problem or battle to the next, a depleting process that occupied far too many months, the phony checkbook was born. My sister took a box of checks from a closed account, checks bearing my mother’s name, address, and proper bank. Only the account number differed, and the sequence of checks. She substituted the dummy checks for the negotiable ones, and started a new register with my mother’s accurate current balance.

Immediately, this accomplished one important benefit. The checkbook wars between my sister and my mother ended. Now, my sister could pay the bills, reconcile the account, and keep Mom’s financial house in order – all offsite and online at my sister’s house rather than at my mother’s kitchen table.

A huge charade ensued – all of my mother’s experience of managing the checking account remained the same: receiving the bills into her home, sitting down with my sister to write the checks and enter them into the register, recording her Social Security and other deposits.

The difference was that my sister was no longer striving for accuracy. She could relax into the charade and simply be with my mother through the process, validating Mom’s decisions and actions rather than “correcting” them. The reduced conflict was beneficial to Mom, and the lessened stress was a boon to my sister. Perseverating over money and the checkbook was much less noticeable in our daily phone calls.

This simple decision – to substitute checks from a dormant account for the real McCoys – eliminated a trigger for upsets.

When my mother moved across the country to live with me, her faux checkbook came along. We continued the practice my sister established without deviation.

There were fewer entries; she was not running a household any longer. Yet every month there were regular deposits recorded, and checks written.

My mother accepted the fact that Alaska stores would not take her “out-of-town checks” and didn’t try to tender them. Instead, she used cash or let me pay. If the latter, she wrote me a reimbursement check from her phony account.

It pleased her that she continued to control her own checking account.

The only problem we had with this system occurred in the first month Mom lived with us. She’d written me a dummy check to reimburse me for an expense. I left the check on my working table, only to be discovered by my husband – a kind soul who works hard in a financial institution. He saved me the effort of having to deposit the check, taking it with him one day. I received the call from the bank later, informing me that this check wasn’t legal tender.

I’d overlooked sharing the chronicle of the fake checking account with him!

My mother continued to benefit from her familiar role of controlling her own money, even though she would concede that she needed my help. She magnanimously said, “Honey, you can look at my book any time you want.” She was secure. Her accessible money safe.

And there was an armistice in the checkbook wars.

This article appears courtesy of the author, Pamela R. Kelley, and Alzheimer’s Reading Room, where it originally appeared. (alzheimersreadingroom.com)
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Monday, 9/19
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**Behaviors That Challenge Us**
Monday, 9/26
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**Savvy Caregiver**
Thursdays
8/18 to 9/22
3-5pm
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**Mind Matters I**
Wednesdays
7/20-9/7; 9/28-11/16
10-11:30am

**Mind Matters II**
Thursdays
7/21-9/8; 9/29-11/17
10-11:30am

**Brain Works**
Tuesdays
7/19-9/6; 9/27-11/15
10-11:30 am

**Virtual Dementia Tour**
Thursday, 8/4
12pm-5 pm
By appointment.

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Fridays
11-12:00 pm

*Participants Require Pre-Screening*

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10355 Palmer-Wasilla Hwy.
746-3413

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**Finding Health Info. You Can Trust**
Wednesday, 7/20
1-2:30 pm

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Thursday, 7/21
5:30-7pm
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1363 W. Spruce Ave.,
Wasilla, AK)

**The Dementias**
Tuesday, 8/16
1:00-2:30pm or 5:30-7pm

**Meaningful Activities**
Tuesday, 9/13
1-2:30 pm or 5:30-7pm

**Honoring Connections: Communication and Dementia**
Thursday, 9/22
5:30-7 pm
(Mat-Su Health Services
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Mondays, 7/18-8/22
5-7pm
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Wednesday, 7/27
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By appointment.

**Mind Matters**
Wednesdays
8/3-9/21;
10:30-12:00am

**Art Links**
Fridays
11-12pm

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3225 Hospital Dr.
586-6044

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**The Related Dementias in ADRD**
Thursday, 7/21
12-1:30pm

**Meaningful Activity and Purposeful Days**
Thursday, 9/22
12-1:30 PM

**Making Visits Positive**
Thursday, 9/29
12-1:30 PM

**Savvy Caregiver**
Wednesdays, 10/5 – 11/9
5:30-7:30 PM
Registration is required.

**Virtual Dementia Tour**
Wednesday, 7/18
9am-4 pm
By appointment.

**Mind Matters**
Thursdays
7/21-9/8; 9/29-11/17
10-11:30am

**Virtual Dementia Tour**
Tuesday, 8/16
12-1:30 pm
By appointment.

**Savvy Caregiver Webinar**
Contact Gay Wellman
907-822-5620
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Registration is required.

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**Activities of Daily Living**
Tuesday, 8/16
5:30-7 pm

**Assisted Living Homes**
Tuesday, 9/20
5:30-7 pm

**Healthy Body, Healthy Brain**
Tuesday, 10/18
5:30-7pm

**Mind Matters**
Thursdays, 9/7-10/20
1:00-2:30 pm

**Virtual Dementia Tour**
Wednesday, 9/27
9am-4 pm
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**Art Links**
Fridays
11-12pm

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Contact Gay Wellman
907-822-5620
Thursdays, 8/4-9/8
2-4pm
Registration is required.

**STATEWIDE PROFESSIONAL WEBINARS**
Contact Amber Smith
907-586-6044

**Legal Issues**
Tuesday, 7/19
12-1pm

**Meaningful Activity and Purposeful Days**
Tuesday, 8/16
12-1pm

**Honoring Connection**
Tuesday, 9/20
12-1m
## Support Groups around the state

A safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to share experiences and solutions.

### Statewide Telephone Support Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Days/Time</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1st and 3rd Wednesday 2-3 PM</td>
<td>Gay Wellman 822-5620 or (800) 478-1080 x5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dial in 1-877-216-1555, Code 927989</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anchorage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd Thursday 12PM-1:30 PM</td>
<td>Debbie Chulick 561-3313</td>
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<tr>
<td>1750 Abbott Rd.</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>4th Thursday 5:30-7:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chester Park Cooperative</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Friday 10-11:30 AM</td>
<td>Kim Jung 561-3313</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020 Muldoon Rd.</td>
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<td>Eagle River</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Spirit Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd Thursday 6:30-8:00 PM</td>
<td>Linda Shepard 746-3413</td>
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<tr>
<td>17545 N. Eagle River Loop Rd.</td>
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<td>Fairbanks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Tuesday 11:30-1:00 PM</td>
<td>Joan Adams 452-2277</td>
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<tr>
<td>565 University Ave. Suite 2</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday 5:30-7:00 PM</td>
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<td>Homer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homer Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2 &amp; 4th Thursdays 2:30-3:30 PM</td>
<td>235-7655</td>
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<td>Juneau</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeast Senior Services</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>Call for more information</td>
<td>463-6177 or (866)746-6177</td>
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<tr>
<td>419 Sixth Street</td>
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<td>Ketchikan</td>
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<td>Ketchikan Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>Call for more information</td>
<td>Bernice 225-8080</td>
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<td>Upper Level</td>
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<td>Kodiak</td>
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<td>Kodiak Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>4th Thursday 12:30-1:30 PM</td>
<td>486-6181</td>
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<td>302 Erskine Ave.</td>
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<td>Mat-Su Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd Wednesday 1-2:30 PM</td>
<td>Linda Shepard 746-3413 Janice Downing 746-3413</td>
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<tr>
<td>10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AK Veterans &amp; Pioneer Home</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>First Fridays 10:00-11:30 AM</td>
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<td>Seward</td>
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<td>Seward Senior Center</td>
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<td>4th Thursday 1-2 PM</td>
<td>224-5604</td>
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<td>Sitka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brave Heart Volunteers 120 Katlian Street</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>Call for more info.</td>
<td>747-4600</td>
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<td>Soldotna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soldotna Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd &amp; Last Tuesday 1-3 PM</td>
<td>262-1280 or (800) 776-8210</td>
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<td>Sterling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sterling Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1st Tuesday 1-2 PM</td>
<td>262-1280 or (800) 776-8210</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
YOU CAN HELP ALZHEIMER'S RESOURCE OF ALASKA EARN DONATIONS JUST BY SHOPPING WITH YOUR FRED MEYER REWARDS CARD!

JUNE WAS RE-ENROLLMENT MONTH FOR ALL CURRENT CARD HOLDERS DONATING TO THEIR CHARITY OF CHOICE.

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- You still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points, and Rebates, just as you do today.
- If you do not have a Rewards Card, they are available at the Customer Service desk of any Fred Meyer store.
- For more information, please visit www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING ALZHEIMER'S RESOURCE OF ALASKA!