

## Researchers Use Flashlight To Test New Alzheimer's Therapy Method



The number of people with Alzheimer's disease is exploding. The worldwide costs associated with caring for patients with the disease are estimated to total more than \$600 billion. One in nine American seniors over age 65 have the disease, and 16 million more Americans will be diagnosed by 2050 if a cure isn't found, says Alzheimers.net.

No cure currently exists for Alzheimer's disease. However, scientists are racing against time to come up with effective ways to treat the condition.

A recent study led by Dr. Li-Huei Tsai at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has uncovered a promising technique for helping people with Alzheimer's disease. Researchers flashed a strobe light near rodents that had brain damage similar to that of Alzheimer's patients. When the mice were exposed to the light for an hour, protective cells in their brains swallowed up toxic proteins that are correlated with the disease.

### Symptoms Of Alzheimer's:

The disease is a type of dementia that's characterized by forgetfulness and confusion. It progresses over the years, causing memory loss that can affect everyday function. People with Alzheimer's may ask the same question over and over, forget where they placed objects, lose track of where they are and forget common words.

Although the disease itself is not fatal, the breakdown of brain functions can lead to serious complications. People with Alzheimer's may have trouble feeding themselves or moving around. This puts them at risk for falls, infection, dehydration, blood clots and pneumonia.

### Causes Of Alzheimer's:

To understand how the treatment works, it's important to comprehend what causes the disease. Doctors have noticed that people with Alzheimer's have significant changes in their brains. One of these changes is the development of plaques. The sticky clumps of beta-amyloid proteins get in the way of neural communication.

Experts aren't sure exactly how these plaques cause brain cells to die. They do know that they interfere with brain function and may eventually cause neurons to stop firing. When that happens, symptoms of Alzheimer's begin to appear.

*(Cont.) Page 4*

## Singing & Caring

My mother, Audrey, had a famously tin ear. She'd be the first to tell you that she couldn't carry a tune in a bucket. But she liked to sing, nonetheless. So when we began our partnership through the last five years of her life, we made a habit of singing every day.

Four songs. That was it. At any point in the day, if I heard Audrey hum a note in her distracted way, I would catch her eye and hold her glance and ask her,

"Do you want to sing with me?"

These were our songs:

- Let Me Call You Sweetheart.
- Oh What A Beautiful Morning.
- My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean.
- You are My Sunshine.

There was something about these songs that she loved, though I don't know what made them special to her. We made them ours. We hammed it up. We looked into one another's eyes while we sang them, whether from across the room or sitting side by side. We sang them in all sorts of places, and under all sorts of conditions. But there were very few days when we didn't sing our songs, each at least once before our day was complete.

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Fairbanks, AK 99709  
Phone (907) 452-2277  
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#### Juneau

3225 Hospital Dr.,  
1st Floor Conference Rm.  
Juneau, AK, 99801  
Phone (907) 586-6044  
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#### [www.AlzAlaska.org](http://www.AlzAlaska.org)

Stay connected via Facebook and Twitter  
@AlzAlaska

#### Mat-Su Valley

Trinity Barn Plaza  
10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla  
Hwy.  
Suite 110  
Palmer, AK 99645  
Phone (907) 746-3413  
Fax 746-3412

#### Copper River Basin

(907) 822-5620

#### Statewide

Toll Free within Alaska  
(800) 478-1080





## Letter From The Executive Director

Greetings,

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska has always been at the forefront of creating greater awareness of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. We are dedicated to ensure that Alaskans across the state have access to the very best knowledge, support and care possible. Raising awareness is important to both help support those who are impacted, including families, but also so that they know resources are available and that they are not alone.



Looking forward, November is the national Alzheimer's Awareness Month. We will be offering additional Memory Screenings and Virtual Dementia Tours across the state in an effort to raise community awareness. To see our offerings visit page 10.

Memory Screenings are a great way to check on concerns of cognitive impairment providing valuable information to help decide if someone needs further testing by a physician. The screenings are also a good comparison to future screenings as we age.

The Virtual Dementia Tour provides the opportunity for family caregivers, friends and professionals to better understand and experience dementia first hand. The tour can improve their ability to provide better care. Please contact our education team in your area if you would like to learn more about these programs.

Music and exercise are a powerful tool that can help us reach persons living with dementia and increase their quality of life. Please join us on November 5 at Alaska Dance Theater for a fundraising and outreach event - *So You Think You Can Give*. This is an opportunity to learn a new dance skill with over 15 classes being offered from beginner to expert. Visit our website for more information.

Our ability to accomplish much of our work is due to the generosity of our donors, partners and volunteers, proving again that Alaskans can always count on Alaskans in their time of need. It is important to note that all fundraising stays in the state to benefit Alaskans. Thank you for your commitment to our mission.

Best Regards,

Karl Garber  
Executive Director

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# Newly Discovered Disease Could Hold Key

*(Continued from page 1)*

The processes that cause the devastating disease may be at work for 10 to 20 years before an individual experiences any symptoms. By the time symptoms show up, your brain cells may have been damaged by up to 50 percent. The amyloid plaques that wreak havoc in the brain are also found in the retina.

Neurologists are trying to determine whether it's possible to predict the onset of Alzheimer's disease by detecting the protein in the eye, according to an analysis published in *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*. There is no conclusive evidence for the practice, but it offers promising insight. Scientists are saying that if you can test for markers of the disease in your 50s, you might be able to use certain therapies to protect your brain cells as you age.

**Brainwaves And Light Therapy:** The brain is always vibrating at a particular frequency. Neural oscillation occurs in waves. The role of brainwaves is not completely understood. However, researchers have noticed that altering the rhythm of gamma waves in the brain can prevent plaques from forming. Gamma wave activity may be im-

paired in brains that are predisposed to developing Alzheimer's disease, according to this MIT article. The strobe light used in the study regulated gamma waves at 40 hertz in certain areas of the brain. Other frequencies did not have the same effect.

Experts have tried to use medication to inhibit plaque buildup, but the results have been discouraging. The light therapy seems to work better, and it doesn't come with side effects. Moreover, light therapy is not painful or invasive.

Dr. Tsai's study involved using a light that flashes 40 times per second. That's a faster flicker than a strobe light at a disco. It's barely perceptible, yet it has dramatic effects. An hour of exposure resulted in a reduction in beta amyloid for up to 24 hours in the parts of the brain responsible for memory and vision. The outcome was more dramatic when the therapy was conducted every day for seven days.

The light works by stimulating an immune cell response, says BBC. Microglia are the primary immune defense cells in the central nervous system. They seek out and destroy

plaques, damaged brain cells, and infectious agents. When gamma waves were stimulated in rodents, the microglia was activated and cleared out more beta amyloid proteins.

The gamma waves also reduced the levels of Tau protein, which twist into tangles within brain cells. These kinks obstruct neural communication and may be partially responsible for brain cell decline.

Tsai's researchers are extending their research to investigate whether the light can affect other regions of the brain. However, the results have yet to be studied in humans. Also, some experts believe that targeting beta amyloid isn't the right course of action for Alzheimer's research, according to CNBC.

Still, there is a lot of excitement surrounding this work. If humans' brains respond to the light the way mouse brains do, there is a great deal of promise in this gentle treatment.

*Used by Permission from  
Caregiver Connection*

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## Support Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska through your workplace!

Workplace giving makes supporting Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska easy for you and helps us provide sustaining support and services to frail elders and their families across Alaska.

You can contribute to us through any workplace contribution program like the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC# 52943), Alaska Share, UAA, Anchorage School district or the United Way. If Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska is not included in your campaign list, include us in the "other" selection of your list.





## Singing & Caring (Continued from page 1)

When my mom stopped singing along, I kept singing them. She would hold my gaze with her eyes widened expectantly. Sometimes she would smile. Sometimes she would reach for my hand. Sometimes she would tap a finger or a foot.

*"Oh What A Beautiful Morning."* Thinking about it now, I realize what a great way this was for us to start our day. In the early days, it was a reminder to both of us that life was good.

*"I've got a beautiful feeling."*  
*Everything's going our way."*

We were together.

That was the definition of "everything's going our way" to me. She was often anxious, often frightened about what was happening to her memory. But we were together, after almost thirty

years of living across the country from one another. We were in it together to the end, come what may, and I would keep her safe. Our lives *were* good.

At one point, Audrey would not sit still long enough on the toilet to completely move her bowels. If she didn't finish the job in about 30 seconds, she would stand up and want to get out of there.

Enough back-to-back days of this and she would become uncomfortable. Inevitably. Once uncomfortable, her mood and behavior would take a downward turn. Our songs were part of the remedy.

*"My Bonnie lies over the ocean.*  
*My Bonnie lies over the sea..."* Audrey's favorite part of this tune was the bridge, and she could get caught contentedly in a repetitive loop:

*"Bring back, bring back, bring back my Bonnie to me, to me."*

As long as the last two notes ascended at the end, Mom would repeat the line. The song only ended when the last "to me" ended on a descending note.

Perhaps you can see how this worked with the bathroom issue. Five minutes is a long time to sing "Bring back, bring back, bring back my Bonnie to me, to me." Ten minutes seemed an eon.

Sometimes we'd take a break and try another tune. To stop the loop, I'd have to belt out that final descending line Ethel Merman-style. But singing (and a regular rotation of Miralax) got us through that problem in good humor.

When my mother moved into a facility, we kept up with our songs.  
(Cont. page 7)

### GRANTS AVAILABLE APPLY TODAY

Mini Grants (up to \$2,500) are available for individuals with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia (ADRD) to purchase items or services that are not covered by other funding sources.

Visit [AlzAlaska.org](http://AlzAlaska.org) or call 1-800-478-1080



*The* TRUST  
The Alaska Mental Health  
Trust Authority

 Alzheimer's  
Resource  
of Alaska



# Fall Events

Looking for ways to be involved this winter? Well, this fall, we're offering more than ever! Join us in November & December for Alzheimer's Awareness Month Activities and awesome fundraisers.

For more information, visit [www.AlzAlaska.org](http://www.AlzAlaska.org)

**11/1: Memory Screenings – Fairbanks\***

**11/3: Shop for a Cause at Grassroots – Anchorage\***

**11/5: So You Think You Can Give? - Anchorage**

**11/8: Movie: "Alive Inside" – Anchorage\***

**11/9: Movie: "Alive Inside" - MatSu\***

**11/15: Memory Screenings – Anchorage\***

**11/15: Memory Screenings – Juneau\***

**11/20: Virtual Dementia Tour - Anchorage\***

**11/30: Movie: "Looks Like Laury, Sounds Like Laury" – Juneau\***

**12/1: A Most Unusual Fundraiser: Join Us at 2 Friends Gallery! - Anchorage\***



Events marked  
with \* are  
free to  
attend







## Singing & Caring (Continued from page 5)

They became a rough gauge of her disease progression. Some days she didn't have every word, but she'd sing along with unformed words until she was back on the familiar chorus. Sometimes she would look at me with unmasked irritation when I'd start off. "Hmm. Maybe later," I'd think.

If we were singing in her apartment with the door open, we could count on one or two of her neighbors meandering down toward the sound, sometimes walking in. Whether out of curiosity or loneliness or the power of music, I'll never know.

I will never forget the sight of one tiny and shy lady with bright blue eyes standing outside Audrey's door, and singing along word-for-word to *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*. When we finished the song, she smiled and blew me a kiss and continued her habit of

wordlessly walking up and down the hall.

Over the last six months of Audrey's life, she really wasn't singing any longer. It was just me. I'd give her my 100-watt smile and I'd hold her gaze while I sang from the heart.

*"You are my sunshine. My only sunshine. You make me happy, when skies are gray. You'll never know dear. How much I love you. Please don't take my sunshine away."*

Three weeks before Mom died, we were sitting in the summer sunshine that was streaming through her window. I sang to her that sunshine song. Her sunken eyes followed mine and she was holding my hand. Quietly, so quietly, Audrey carried that tune with me for the first time in months, and the last time ever.

With viewing the film *"Alive Inside"* that depicts the wonderful effects of a personalized playlist for individuals with Alzheimer's Disease, I hope that the notion gains wider adoption – that meaningful music can have a place in our caregiving strategies. Meaningful music can be active expressions of love.

I know I'm glad to have found our songs.

By Pam Kelley  
Education Director.  
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska.

*This article was originally published in, and appears with permission from Alzheimer's Reading Room.*

### Alzheimer's Awareness Month Special Film Screening

*Alive Inside* is a joyous cinematic exploration of music's capacity to reawaken our souls and uncover the deepest parts of our humanity. Filmmaker Michael Rossato-Bennett chronicles the astonishing experiences of individuals around the country who have been revitalized through the simple experience of listening to music.

The documentary follows numerous visionaries in healthcare including social worker Dan Cohen, founder of the nonprofit organization Music & Memory, as he fights against a broken healthcare system to demonstrate music's ability to combat memory loss and restore a deep sense of self to those suffering from it. The film chronicles family members who have witnessed the miraculous effects of personalized music on their loved ones.

During November, special movie screenings will be held in the following locations:

**November 8 at 6:00 pm in our Anchorage office at 1750 Abbott Road "Alive Inside"**

**November 8 at 5:30 pm in our Fairbanks office at 565 University Avenue, Suite 2 "Alive Inside"**

**November 9 at 6:00 pm in our Mat-Su office at 10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla Highway "Alive Inside"**

**November 30 at 12 -1:30 pm and 5:30 -7 pm in our Juneau office at 3225 Hospital Dr. First Floor Conference Room "Looks like Laury, Sounds Like Laury"**

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# Individual & Business Contributors

*These contributions recieved between July 1 - September 30*

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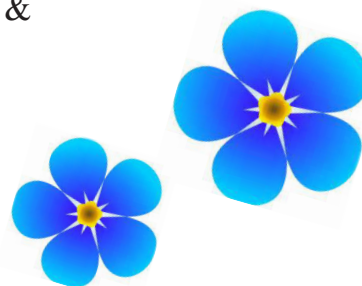
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David Thomas  
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## Stand Up For a Cause Sponsors

Our second annual Stand Up for a Cause took place on October 2 featuring Anji Stubbs of Black Sheep Comedy and writer Stefania Silvestri. It was a great success and we would like to thank all those in attendance as well as our generous sponsors that helped make this a memorial evening.

Ken Acton  
Aardvark Catering &  
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**Alzheimer's  
Resource  
of Alaska**

Our Care Coordination team provides you with the information you need to select your own health care, financial and social services, advocating for you to help you reach your goals and maximize your independence.  
[www.alzalaska.org](http://www.alzalaska.org)

### Wasilla Neighborhood Memory Café

Wasilla Area Seniors,  
Inc. (WASI)  
1301 S Century Cir,  
Wasilla

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm  
Tuesday, 10/17  
Tuesday, 11/21  
Tuesday, 12/19

## Classes & Events around the state

### ANCHORAGE

1750 Abbott Road  
561-3313

#### **ABC : End of Life**

Diana Seropian  
Monday, 10/9  
10-11:30am

#### **ABC: Caregiver TLC**

Kim Jung  
Monday, 10/16  
10-11:30am or 5:30-7pm

#### **ABC: The Dementias**

Debbie Chulick  
Monday, 10/23  
10-11:30am or 5:30-7pm

#### **ABC: Smart Phones**

Mary Wolcuff  
Monday, 10/30  
10-11:30am or 5:30-7pm

#### **ABC: Bathing without the Battle**

Jane Haiar  
Monday, 11/6  
10-11:30am or 5:30-7pm

#### **ABC: Incontinence Matters**

Kim Jung  
Monday, 11/13  
10-11:30am or 5:30-7pm

#### **ABC: Dining With Dementia**

Debbie Chulick  
Monday, 11/27  
10-11:30am or 5:30-7pm

#### **ABC: Dementia and the Holidays**

Kim Jung  
Monday, 12/4  
10-11:30am or 5:30-7pm

#### **ABC: Challenging Behaviors**

Debbie Chulick  
Monday, 12/11  
10-11:30am or 5:30-7pm

#### **ABC: Assisted Living Homes**

Jane Haiar  
Monday, 12/18  
10-11:30am or 5:30-7pm

#### **Brain Works\***

Tuesday, 11/28 - 1/16/18  
10-11:30 am

#### **Mind Matters I \***

Wednesdays, 11/29 -  
1/17/18  
10-11:30 am

#### **Mind Matters II \***

Wednesdays, 11/30 -  
1/18/18  
10-11:30 am

#### **Memory Screening Day**

Wednesday, 11/15  
9 am to 4 pm  
Walk in or by appointment

**Art Links:** Every Friday from  
11 am to 12 pm.

#### **Virtual Dementia Tour:\***

Monday, 11/20 - (20  
minutes)  
By appointment only

### MAT-SU

10355 Palmer-Wasilla Hwy.  
746-3413

#### **ABC Presentations Family Meeting**

Tuesday, 10/10  
1-2:30pm or 5:30-7pm

#### **The Dementias**

Thursday, 10/26  
5:30-7pm (Mat-Su Health  
Services 1363 W. Spruce  
Ave. Wasilla, AK)

#### **Is it Alzheimer's**

Tuesday, 11/14  
1-2:30pm or 5:30-7pm

#### **Mouthcare Without the Battle**

Tuesday, 12/5  
1-2:30pm or 5:30-7pm

#### **Mind Matters \***

Wednesdays, 11/18 to 12/6  
10:30am-noon

#### **Savvy Caregiver \***

Monday, 10/16 to 11/20  
1pm - 3pm  
Registration is required

#### **Art Links**

Fridays - Every Week  
1-2pm

### JUNEAU

3225 Hospital Dr.  
586-6044

#### **ABC Presentations Meaningful Activities**

Thursday, 10/26  
12-1:30pm or 5:30-7pm

#### **Planning Ahead for the Holidays**

Thursday, 11/9  
12-1:30pm or 5:30-7pm

#### **Movie: Looks Like Laury Sounds Like Laury**

Thursday, 11/30  
12-1:30pm or 5:30-7pm

#### **Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementias**

Thursday, 12/7  
12-1:30pm or 5:30-7pm

#### **Memory Screening Day**

Wednesday, 11/15  
5:30-7:30 PM  
Registration is required

### FAIRBANKS

565 University Ave. #2  
452-2277

#### **ABC Presentations**

Dementia With Dignity  
Joan Adams  
Wednesday, 10/18  
5:30-7pm

#### **Movie Screening Alive Inside**

Wednesday, 11/8  
5:30-7 pm

#### **Holiday Hints**

Wednesday, 12/6  
5:30-7pm

#### **Memory Screening Day**

Wednesday, 11/1  
9am - 4pm

#### **Mind Matters \***

Thursday, 11/2 to 12/28  
1pm-2:30pm

#### **Art Links**

Thursday,- Every Week  
11am-noon

#### **Virtual Dementia Tour \***

Tuesday, 12/12  
10am-4pm  
By appointment only

## Statewide Webinars

**Connect with us via GoToMeeting or by Telephone**

*Registration is required.*

### FOR PROFESSIONALS

Contact Amber Smith  
907-586-6044

Alzheimer's Disease  
& Related Dementias  
Tuesday, 10/17  
Noon-1:30pm

Person-Centered Care  
Tuesday, 11/21  
12-1:30 pm

The Power of Music  
Tuesday, 12/12  
12-1:30pm

### FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Contact Gay Wellman  
907-822-5620

Holiday Connections  
Thursday, 10/12  
7-8:30 pm

Bathing Witout the Battle  
Thursday, 11/9  
7-8:30 pm

The Power of Music  
Thursday, 12/14  
7-8:30 pm

Healthy Body/ Healthy  
Brain  
Thursday, 1/11/18  
7-8:30 pm

*\* Registration Required*

*Visit page 9 for location & time of Memory Cafe*



## 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

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska	Caregiver	1st Wednesday 7-8 PM 3rd Wednesday 2-3 PM Dial in 1-877-216-1555, Code 927989	Gay Wellman 822-5620 or (800) 478-1080 x5
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### Anchorage

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska 1750 Abbott Rd.	Caregiver	2nd Thursday	12PM-1:30 PM	Debbie Chulick
	Caregiver	4th Thursday	5:30-7:00 PM	561-3313
Chester Park Cooperative	Caregiver	2nd Tuesday	5:30-7:00 PM	Jane Haiar
2020 Muldoon Rd.	Caregiver	1st & 3rd Friday	10 -11:30 AM	Kim Jung
				561-3313

### Eagle River

Holy Spirit Episcopal Church 17545 N. Eagle River Loop Rd.	Caregiver	2nd Thursday	5:00-6:30 PM	Debbie Chulick 561-3313
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### Fairbanks

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska 565 University Ave. Suite 2	Caregiver	2nd Tuesday 3rd Tuesday	5:30-7:00 PM 11:30-1:00 PM	Joan Adams 452-2277
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### Homer

Homer Senior Center	Caregiver	2 & 4th Thursdays	2:30-3:30 PM	235-7655
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### Ketchikan

Ketchikan Senior Center Upper Level	Caregiver	Call for more information		Bernice 225-8080
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### Kodiak

Kodiak Senior Center 302 Erskine Ave.	Caregiver	4th Thursday	12:30-1:30 PM	486-6181
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### Mat-Su Valley

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska 10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy.	Caregiver	2nd Wednesday	1-2:30 PM	Linda Shepard 746-3413
AK Veterans & Pioneer Home	Caregiver	First Friday	10:00-11:30 AM	Janice Downing 746-3413

### Seward

Seward Senior Center	Caregiver	4th Thursday	1-2 PM	224-5604
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### Sitka

Brave Heart Volunteers 120 Katlian Street	Caregiver	Call for more info.		747-4600
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### Soldotna

Soldotna Senior Center	Caregiver	2nd & Last Tuesday	1-3 PM	262-1280 or (800) 776-8210
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