



## ARA'S PILOT CHORUS: VOICES OF THE LAST FRONTIER--A HUGE SUCCESS!

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska (ARA) recently completed its pilot offering of a choral program to assist people living with dementia and their care partners in connecting and de-stressing through singing together. Singing can give a boost to brain functioning and slow the inevitable cognitive decline of people with dementia.

The choral program is based on the [Giving Voice Chorus Initiative](#) - "a worldwide movement aimed at building choral communities that foster joy, well-being, purpose and community understanding as they celebrate the potential of people living with dementia".



*Pictured: The Voices of the Last Frontier, in concert on November 22, 2019*

For ARA's pilot, the chorus practiced for 8 weeks, during which they sang songs and shared stories of living with dementia. Choral members also voted on a name for the chorus, choosing the aptly named: Voices of the Last Frontier! Ann Farris, ARA Education Specialist, and gifted musician oversaw all aspects of the chorus, including a final community

performance at Wilda Marsden Theater where the chorus sang and shared stories to a packed house on November 27, 2019.

Of her experience, one choral member shared, "Singing with this group of those who understand Alzheimer's validates that whatever else lies ahead I am still me. We have comradery. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the highest, I rate my skills at a 6. At this point, I do a pretty good cover-up... You can help people like me by listening and loving. No matter what follows, don't say, 'Don't you remember?'"

*(Cont.) page 3*

## FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT CONTROLLING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE CAN REDUCE DEMENTIA, ALZHEIMER'S RISK

Treating high blood pressure with medication not only improves older adults' cardiovascular health but also can reduce their risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, according to a thorough examination of long-term data from four countries.

A global team of scientists cross-referenced data from six large, longitudinal studies that tracked the health of over 31,000 adults over age 55 across several years of follow-up. They found that treating high blood pressure — no matter with which type of antihypertensive drug — reduced dementia risk by 12% and the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease

by 16%. The findings, coordinated by investigators in the Laboratory of Epidemiology and Population Science of the NIA Intramural Research Program, were published in *Lancet Neurology*.

This comprehensive look extends the evidence from the recent SPRINT MIND trial that showed lowering blood pressure levels reduced the risk for a combination of dementia and mild cognitive impairment. The scientists teamed up to analyze data from six comprehensive, community-based health studies conducted between 1987 and 2008 in the United States, France, Iceland and the Netherlands. They examined all five major types

of blood pressure medications — ACE inhibitors, angiotensin II receptor blockers, beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers and diuretics — and found that the type of medication did not make a difference.

Participant data was divided into two groups — 15,537 people with high blood pressure and 15,553 people with normal blood pressure. In all, 1,741 diagnoses of Alzheimer's disease and 3,728 cases

*(Cont.) page 3*

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## Letter From The Executive Director

Dear Friends,

With a turn of a single calendar page, we've changed the last two digits on the year and launched a new decade. We're hopeful that this will be the decade when promising new research improves our understanding of what leads to the kinds of brain changes that give rise to dementia. We're optimistic that this will be the decade when the barriers caused by stigma will come down dramatically so that anyone affected by Alzheimer's disease, related dementia or other disability will participate more fully in their communities – a prospect that would enrich all our lives.



The long view prompted by a new decade invites us to imagine important progress on many fronts: early and affordable diagnostics, disease-modifying treatments, effective interventions, and new remedies. Here at ARA, we're careful not to allow our imaginations to run too far when there is much we can do to enhance the daily lives of our clients and their care partners today.

One such practical, everyday enhancement will begin in our Anchorage office in January. There, we've partnered with the State of Alaska's Division of Senior and Disability Services to operate a two-year pilot project specifically for family caregivers. SDS obtained a major grant from the federal government to test whether earlier and expanded supports including case management, coaching, and education for family caregivers can reduce the burden they experience and extend their ability to maintain their loved one at home. This project has been long in development, and now Anchorage-based family caregivers may find there's a far more robust package of services available to them as a result.

If you know a family caregiver in Anchorage, even if they don't see themselves as a caregiver but rather simply as a spouse, partner or adult child, they may be perfect for this program. There is no cost, and too many beneficial services than I can list here. I think that if the State of Alaska garners the data they anticipate from this study, the result may change profoundly how we approach supporting Alaskans affected by dementia. Please call if you want to learn more about how to enroll or refer someone.

I recommend to you the article on the first page that describes the Voices of the Last Frontier chorus, the initial offering of a new group for support based around song. The local philanthropic group, 100+ Women Who Care Anchorage, made a sizeable donation to ARA in September which offset the expenses associated with the chorus. We're grateful for their generosity, as well as that of the many volunteers who provided musical accompaniment, assembled songbooks and served as "choral friends" in assisting choir members when needed. This wonderful event could not have occurred without these treasured community partners.

A new year. A new program. A new decade. We're so glad you're part of the Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska community, no matter where you live or why you've come to care. We are, as always, grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

Pamela Kelley  
Executive Director

**Donate**  
- click here -



## ARA'S PILOT CHORUS: VOICES OF THE LAST FRONTIER A HUGE SUCCESS *(Cont. from page 1)*

because I don't. Alzheimer's is a progressive disease. See what I can offer this world as I am, not as how I should be."

Kaylee Vardeman, a Choral Friend and Director of Operations for the Anchorage Opera, had this to say, "As the daughter of a music therapist turned music teacher and being a musician myself, I have seen time and time again how

music has the capacity to reignite muscular, mental, and emotional memory. This experience has been profound as I get to see yet again how deeply rooted music is in each and everybody, mind, and soul." We agree and can't wait for the next chorus' concert!

ARA is in the process of completing the evaluation process of the pilot but, based on the

feedback, it was a total success. If you want to know more about The Voices of the Last Frontier or are interested in becoming a member, please contact Ann Farris ([afarris@alzalaska.org](mailto:afarris@alzalaska.org)).

[Click here for a story by the Senior Voice magazine on our chorus and the effects singing and music can have on people living with Alzheimer's and related dementia.](#)

## Introducing Kay Papakristo, ARA's New Education Director

Kay Papakristo has 20 years of experience as an innovative leader, educator, and program developer. Her unique combination of professional experiences includes: teaching locally and abroad, managing a specialized library, advocating for individuals and families experiencing disabilities, as well as program development and expansion. She is skilled in creating, evaluating, and managing programs that foster growth and learning, including Special Needs, K-12, Adult, and ADRD curricula. Kay earned a Bachelor's in Sociology at the University of California San Diego and her Masters of Education from Capella University.

Welcome, Kay!



## FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT CONTROLLING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE CAN REDUCE DEMENTIA, ALZHEIMER'S RISK *(Cont. from page 1)*

of other dementias developed over time. People who controlled their blood pressure with medicine were found to have the same risk for developing dementia as individuals with normal blood pressure who did not require medication.

The investigators were pleased to work with a deeper data pool than previous studies, allowing them to look at specific medication types used to keep blood pressure at safe levels. The expanded study also gave them much longer-term follow-up data, which were helpful to observe the gradual onset of dementia and Alzheimer's symptoms. The large group of people studied also factored

in additional health conditions common to older adults, giving them a clearer picture of the multiple issues that come with aging that are typically seen by general physicians.

Still to be investigated is how long-term changes in blood pressure impacts dementia risk, and further research with more detailed information is needed on specific antihypertensive medications. Together with the SPRINT MIND trial, this latest data adds to the evidence base that treating and reducing high blood pressure can also help reduce the risk of dementia. The researchers hope their findings add urgency to

the need for better hypertension awareness among the rapidly growing global population of older adults, many of whom are at risk for developing high blood pressure or already have it but are not managing it properly.

*This study was supported by the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation and the NIA Intramural Research Program.*

*Reference: Ding J, et al. Antihypertensive medications and risk for incident dementia and Alzheimer's disease: a meta-analysis of individual participant data from prospective cohort studies. Lancet Neurology. 2019;pii: S1474-4422(19)30393-X. doi: 10.1016/S1474-4422(19)30393-X*

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*These contributions received between October 1 - December 31, 2019*

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# Classes & Events around the state

## ANCHORAGE

1750 Abbott Rd.,  
561-3313

### ABC Presentations

#### Challenging Behaviors

Monday, 1/6  
10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

#### Still Alice

Monday, 1/20  
10-Noon or 5:30-7:30 pm

#### AK Legal Services Presentation

Monday, 2/3  
10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

#### End of Life

Monday, 2/17  
10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

#### How Can a Long Term Care Ombudsman Help Me?

Monday, 3/2  
10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

#### Medicaid Waiver

Monday, 3/16  
10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

#### Alive Inside

Monday, 3/30  
10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

#### Savvy Caregiver

Saturdays, 1/18-2/22  
10-Noon

Fridays, 2/7-3/13  
2-4 pm

#### Virtual Dementia Tour

Wednesday, 3/4,  
10-3:30 pm

#### Brain Works

Tuesdays, 1/7-2/25  
Tuesdays, 3/17-5/5  
10:30-11:30 am

#### Mind Matters I

Wednesdays, 1/8-2/26  
Wednesdays, 3/18-5/6  
10-11:30 am

#### Mind Matters II

Thursdays, 1/9-2/27  
Thursdays, 3/19-5/7  
10-11:30 am

## MAT SU VALLEY

777 N. Crusey St.,  
St. B101, 746-3413

### ABC Presentations

#### Next Steps After a Diagnosis of Dementia

Monday, 1/13, 1-2:30 pm

#### Bathing Without a Battle

Monday, 1/27, 1-2:30 pm

#### Mouthcare Without a Battle

Monday, 2/10, 1-2:30 pm

#### Dining with Dementia

Monday, 2/24, 1-2:30 pm

#### What Is It Like to Have Dementia?

Monday, 3/9, 1-2:30 pm

#### The Power of Music

Monday, 3/23, 1-2:30 pm

#### Savvy Caregiver Reunion

Thursday, 1/9, 1-3 pm

#### Savvy Caregiver

Thursdays, 2/6-3/12  
1-3 pm

#### Virtual Dementia Tour

Monday, 2/17, 10-4 pm

#### Brain Works I

Wednesdays, 1/8-3/25  
1:30-2:30 pm

#### Brain Works II

Thursdays, 1/9-3/26  
10:30-11:30 am

#### Mind Matters

Wednesdays, 1/8-3/25  
10:30-12:30 pm

### Art Links

Anchorage  
1750 Abbott Road  
Every Friday, 11 am - Noon

Mat-Su  
777 N. Crusey Street  
Suite B101  
Every Friday, 1-2:00 pm

**\*Registration  
Required**

## JUNEAU

3225 Hospital Dr.,  
586-6044

### ABC Presentations

#### 20 Questions, 100 Answers - Part I

Wednesday, 1/22  
12-1:30 pm or 5:30-7 pm

#### 20 Questions, 100 Answers - Part II

Wednesday, 1/29  
12-1:30 pm or 5:30-7 pm

#### Downsizing and Decluttering

Wednesday, 2/26  
12-1:30 pm or 5:30-7 pm

#### Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

Wednesday, 3/25  
12-1:30 pm or 5:30-7 pm

#### Free Memory Screenings

Thursday, 3/5  
9 am-6 pm

### Memory Cafe

An opportunity for  
persons living with  
dementia and their care  
partners to socialize and  
enjoy entertainment with  
peers.

#### Anchorage

Anchorage Senior Activity  
Center  
1300 E 19th Ave  
Every 2nd Thursday  
1 - 2:30 PM

#### Wasilla

Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc.  
(WASI)  
1301 S Century CIR  
Every 3rd Tuesday  
1 - 2:30 PM

### Professional Webinars

Connect via Zoom; please register for link. To register,  
contact Amber Smith: 586-6044 or [asmith@alzalaska.org](mailto:asmith@alzalaska.org).

#### Behaviors that Challenge Us

Tuesday, January 21  
Noon - 1:00 PM

#### Dining and Dementia

Tuesday, March 17  
Noon - 1:00 PM

## FAIRBANKS

565 University Ave., #2,  
452-2277

### ABC Presentations

#### Driving and Dementia

Tuesday, 1/21, 5:30-7 pm

#### Decision Making

Tuesday, 2/18, 5:30-7 pm

#### Assisted Living Homes

Tuesday, 3/17, 5:30-7 pm

#### Savvy Caregiver

Wednesdays, 2/5-3/11  
5:30-7:30 pm

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### Caregiver Webinars

Connect via Zoom; please  
register for link. To register,  
contact Gay Wellman:  
822-5620 or  
[gwellman@alzalaska.org](mailto:gwellman@alzalaska.org).

#### Activities of Daily Living

Saturday, 1/18  
10:30-Noon

#### Legal Issues

Wednesday, 2/5  
10:30-Noon

#### Legal Issues

Saturday, 2/8  
1-2:30 pm

#### Challenging Behaviors

Wednesday, 3/11  
10:30-Noon

#### Challenging Behaviors

Saturday, 3/14  
1-2:30 pm

#### Savvy Caregiver

Saturdays, 2/22-3/28  
10-Noon

# Caregiver Support Groups around the state



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

Location	Date & Time	Contact
Statewide Telephone Support Group	Every 1st Saturday, 1-2 pm Every 3rd Wednesday, 1-2 pm	Dial in using 1-877-216-1555, Code #927989. For additional information, contact Gay Wellman, 822-5620 or 800-478-1080x5
<b>Anchorage</b>		
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, 1750 Abbott Road	Every 4th Thursday, 5:30-7 pm	Debbie Chulick, 561-3313
<b>Eagle River</b>		
Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, 17545 N. Eagle River Loop Road	Every 2nd Thursday, 5-6:30 pm	Debbie Chulick, 561-3313
<b>Fairbanks</b>		
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, 565 University Ave. Ste. 2	Every 2nd Tuesday, 5:30-7 pm Every 3rd Tuesday, 11:30-1 pm	Joan Adams, 452-2277
<b>Homer</b>		
Homer Senior Center	Every 2nd & Every 4th Thursday, 2:30-3:30 pm	Pam Hooker, 235-7655
<b>Ketchikan</b>		
Ketchikan Senior Center, Upper Level	Call for current schedule.	Bernice, 255-8080
<b>Kodiak</b>		
Kodiak Senior Center, 302 Erskine Avenue	Every 4th Thursday, 12:30-1:30 pm	486-6181
<b>Mat-Su Valley</b>		
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, 777 N. Crusey St., Ste. B101	Every 2nd Tuesday, 1:30-3 pm	Janice Downing, 746-3413
Palmer Senior Center, 1132 S. Chugach Street	Every 1st Friday, 10-11:30 am	Kim Jung, 746-3413
Primrose Retirement Community, 889 Elkhorn Drive	Every 3rd Thursday, 10-11:30 am	Janice Downing, 746-3413
<b>Seward</b>		
Seward Senior Center	Every 4th Thursday, 1-2 pm	244-5604
<b>Sitka</b>		
Brave Heart Volunteers 120 Katlian Street	Call for current schedule.	747-4600
<b>Soldotna</b>		
Soldotna Senior Center	Every 2nd and Last Tuesday, 1-3 pm	Judy Warren, 262-1280
Sterling Senior Center	Every 1st Tuesday, 1-2 pm	Judy Warren, 262-1280
<b>Talkeetna</b>		
Sunshine Community Health Center 34300 Talkeetna Spur Rd.	Every 1st Monday, 10-11:30 am	Kim Jung, 746-3413
<b>Willow</b>		
Sunshine Community Health Center 24091 Lake Long Rd.	Every 1st Monday, 1:30-3 pm	Kim Jung, 746-3413

Not seeing a support group that's right for you? Give our Education Department a call at 907-561-3313. We'll be happy to help you find the right solution for you.

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## Offices & Contact Information

### Anchorage

1750 Abbott Rd.  
Phone (907) 561-3313

### Mat-Su Valley

777 N. Crusey St., Ste. B101  
Phone (907) 746-3413

### Fairbanks

565 University Ave., Ste. 2  
Phone (907) 452-2277

### Copper River Basin

(907) 822-5620

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3225 Hospital Dr.  
Phone (907) 586-6044

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Toll Free within Alaska  
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Victoria N Baker

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Engerer

### Dorothy Magette

John & Jackie Brunton

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ALZHEIMER'S RESOURCE OF ALASKA

*Save the* **Sweet**  
**16TH**  
**ANNUAL**  
*Date*



**Amblin'**  
for Alzheimer's

Anchorage Golf Course on O'Malley  
Saturday, May 2, 2020

### FEATURING:

Music, Fun, And Sal's New York Grill Breakfast Burritos!

ADDITIONAL DETAILS: [WWW.ALZALASKA.ORG](http://WWW.ALZALASKA.ORG)