New Programs Designed to Strengthen Brains at Work
For Alaskans worried about memory loss who want to keep their mind fit.

Meet Our New Care Coordination Director

Care Coordination: Provides One Family Among Many with their “Posse”

Check Out Our Refreshed Website

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Jennifer makes the move to Director of Care Coordination after supervising the Mat-Su Care Coordination team since 2016.

She has worked in the social service field for 23 years and has a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Library Science from Western Kentucky University. Before joining our Care Coordination team Jennifer worked as an In-Home Services Specialist for ARA. Prior to that she was a Resource Navigator at Alaska Brain Injury Network. In 2016 Jennifer assisted management to establish our Care Coordination team in Mat-Su and served as its supervisor. Working with individuals and their support network to empower them in their decisions is something that Jennifer really enjoys. She is looking forward to directing our entire Care Coordination Department, from Juneau to Anchorage to Mat-Su, in providing excellent, person-centered services that can be depended on.

Please help us congratulate Jennifer on her recent promotion. We are excited to see what she brings to her new role. ★
Dear Friends,

There are still leaves on some trees, but we’re heading into winter apace. Our offices are open to individuals and families who need assistance, seeing them on an appointments basis. We’re not too formal about this – a call from the parking lot can be all it takes to make that appointment and be seen in real time. Yet we are continuing to take precautions around this pandemic, limiting walk-ins, requiring masks on site and entryway sign-in on the chance contact tracing would be needed. Every quarter when I write this letter, it’s with the sincere hope that we return to how things were before. Less Zoom. More “In the Room”.

Here’s some good news I’m happy to share: Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska was selected to receive one of 13 highly competitive federal grants from the Administration for Community Living, as part of their Alzheimer’s Disease Program Initiative (ADPI). The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Mat-Su Health Foundation are assisting with additional funding, for a project that will focus on the Mat-Su Borough. This 36-month project will address three known needs – providing services to persons living alone with dementia, improving programs and services dedicated to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are developing dementia as they age, and delivering behavioral management training and expert consultations for family caregivers.

Our Care Coordinators earn lots of kudos from the families they serve, although they’re not the sort who naturally boast. That’s why when we hear from a family like Jocie’s, we like to share their story with you. Don’t miss the article on p.4.

Mark your calendars: the Mayor’s Charity Ball will now be held on February 19, 2022 – postponed to allow Anchorage to recover from the current surge in COVID cases and the extremely high level of community spread. I’m looking forward to seeing friends there!

Lastly, we’re making some changes to the look of the quarterly newsletter. We’re interested in your thoughts about that. It’s all part of a freshening up of our publications, our website and our social media that is now underway.

With gratitude,

Pamela Kelley
Executive Director
Care Coordination: Provides One Family Among Many with their “Posse”

By: ARA Editorial Team

The relationships that develop among Care Coordination clients, their care coordinator and their family members often can be deeply meaningful to all. That was the experience of the Boisvert family, whose daughter with special needs is served by our Juneau-based care coordinator, Tiffany Schneider.

Michael and Jeannie Boisvert are Jocelynn’s parents. “Jocie” has great advocates in them. As Michael noted, “I am never at a loss for words. But when it comes to our daughter Jocie, it is so hard to put things down on paper. Maybe that’s why we are so lucky to have the great team at Care Coordination Resource of Alaska (CCRA) on our side.”

“Truly, we are not just lucky to have them but blessed to have them as members of our team. We think of them as advocates for us and our daughter and as members of our family,” Michael wrote.

“In the past three years, Tiffany (and before her others from CCRA) has been lifesaving and unconditionally supporting. They know how important our Jocie’s education is to me and my wife (I’m a former educator). They also know the issues the city and state create that can impede our forward movement and almost discourage us by slowing down our daughter’s progress.” Working through these challenges and impediments requires careful navigation.

CCRA delivers person-centered services informed by their deep understanding of the limitations of the various programs. That person-centeredness is described by Michael Boisvert very clearly, “I do not mean to imply that they are directing us or steering the ship. Instead, they are there with ready answers, support and assistance when it appears as if the seemingly overbearing powers of the school and school system are pushing us in a direction that is not in the best interest of our daughter’s education. Jocie’s special needs require a high level of knowledge about the workings of the public school system. We understand that my wife and I do not have the best nor the most up-to-date training to homeschool our daughter so we must look to the public school system for

(Cont. on next page)
that support. Luckily we have people like Tiffany who have the experience to help when we have questions about the school system.”

Together, the CCRA team serves these goals. “This team that we have affectionately called “Jocie’s Posse” has not only stood by us but encouraged us,” Michael wrote.

“There are so many examples where my wife and I felt like we were looking at a spinning compass not knowing which direction to go, but when we asked Tiffany everything became clear and we were ‘rescued’. One of the latest was when the school/department wanted to ‘push’ Jocie into the sixth grade. We understand she is special needs but we also know that given instruction, training, and proper schooling she can show progress. An example being right now she cannot hold a pencil correctly, but one of her therapists at the hospital got her doing it within minutes two years ago….but because the school did not continue or reinforce this skill she “lost” the ability.”

“We knew from simple observation our daughter was nowhere near ready for sixth grade, and to be honest, not even 5th grade. But the school wanted to push her forward, almost as if they were rushing her out of the system. When we questioned this, Tiffany explained the policies and our potential courses of action to us and Jocie is thankfully still in the 5th grade.”

“I could go on and on, and believe me, I would, but there are almost too many examples of the times I or my wife have called Tiffany, wondering if our daughter is getting the proper instruction from school, or Direct Service Professional benefits outside of school, to count. We don’t want to look like we are complaining… and Tiffany confirms that we ARE NOT, but we are thankful she is there with answers, support and encouragement.”

The experience of the Boisvert family is not uncommon among CCRA clients, who range from Alaskans experiencing developmental disabilities to older Alaskans living with dementia. CCRA strives to assure that each client we support has a posse, just like Jocie.

Our thanks to Michael and Jeannie Boisvert, who shared their experience of CCRA services in support of their daughter who lives with special needs.
This past Spring, Alzheimer’s Resource launched its newest program, Mind Aerobics™.

Anyone who goes to the gym to exercise knows the exhilaration of being physically fit along with the many benefits of paying attention to healthy living. Now, with Mind Aerobics™ folks can find the same satisfaction with exercising the mind.

ARA currently has three courses running, and more are scheduled. It’s wonderful to see the response and hear what the program has meant to the participants.

One of the best comments I’ve heard about our new Mind Aerobics™ program at Alzheimer’s Resource came from a staff colleague. She said she was very glad we have the new program because it’s so positive. As the program’s manager, I couldn’t agree more as I’ve heard much the same from our participants.

The twice-weekly classes move along at quite a clip and the exercises, although increasingly challenging, are always fun and enjoyable. It’s quite common to hear at the end of a session, “Wow, that went fast!”

It’s certainly true that no one is thinking about anything else but the exercises during that hour. Each exercise is absorbing, and involves lots of concentration and focus. Just like at the gym, participants typically let out a big sigh at the end of an exercise, getting their mental breath ready for the next one.

Another positive aspect of the program is that the groups quickly learn to enjoy one another’s company. The ideas and strategies shared by

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Volunteer & In-Kind Supporters
between July 1 - June 30, 2021

AK Bark
AK Wine Grotto
Alaska Big Bites
Guide Service
Alaska Blooms
Peony Farm
Alaska Raceway Park
Alaska Sealife Center
Alyeska Resort
Anchorage Log
Cabin Quilters
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Anchorage Yoga
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Caffe D’Arte Alaska
Chena Hot Springs
Copper River Fleece
Denise Daniello*
David Jensen
Photography
Denali Zipline Tours
Tom & Ann Farris
Gayla Designs
Rebecca Hanson
Kristin George*
Harbor 360 Hotel
Lynda Hutchins*
Jason Scott Photography
Jens’ Restaurant
Melissa Liebner*
Ketchikan High School Class of 77
Kincaid Grill
Krav Maga Anchorage
Peterson, Sabrina*
Premier AK Tours
Seattle Kraken
Simek, Jill*
Mae Ann &
Mark Smith
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Karen (Hollard) Scholz
Spoonline Bistro
Susan Dunsmore
Arctic Pups
Luann Strickland*
Fred Traber*
UAF Museum of the North
Rori Van Nortwick*

* Denotes current or former ARA board member. Other donors are noted in our Annual Report.

In Honor & Memory of

Lois Avery
Terri Atwell

Dorothy Magette
John & Jackie Brunton*

Paul L. Davis
Rick & Bobbie Baldwin

LeEllen Baker
Joyce L. Haugan

Dorothy Hugg
Wayne Holmes &
Jonell Snook-Holmes*

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Audrey Roberts
Pamela R. Kelley

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Linda & Allen Kiekhefer

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New ARA Programs Designed to Strengthen Cognition

ARA Has a New Brain Gym!

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participants about how they approach a particular exercise become a rich learning lab, full of encouragement, shared laughter, and growing appreciation for how our differences in thinking stimulate creative solutions for everyone.

The uniqueness of each class and its participants is enhanced by the virtual experience, with many different parts of Alaska represented. It’s common that we check in on the weather in Fairbanks, or Juneau, Kodiak, or “the Valley” before we start to exercise. No matter where we live, the class binds us all together in a common purpose of strengthening our minds.

One of the best examples of learning involve the sharing of strategies and ways of solving problems that occur after several of the exercises... especially ones involving memory. Participants also often share how the exercises have translated into practical ways of daily living. Remembering lists, appointments, to-do chores, names, and making important decisions all benefit from the exercises.

If you are interested in joining a Mind Aerobics™ class, you can find out more information at our website, www.alzalaska.org/mind-aerobics, or by calling or emailing me, Ken Helander – 907-561-3313, khelander@alzalaska.org. But, don’t wait too long...the classes fill up very fast!

Breaking News: We Refreshed Our Website

Check Out Our New Online Calendar

Our website is so much easier to use (and look at)! Not only does our site have an updated look but we’ve also made it searchable and reorganized the navigation menus, making it easier than ever before to find the resources you are looking for. We hope you’ll find these new changes welcoming and helpful. Take a look for yourself at www.alzalaska.org.
Classes & Events around the State

Classes and events are available statewide, online via Zoom. All classes listed below require registration.

For more information or registration assistance contact: 907-561-3313 from Anchorage, or 1-800-478-1080

CAREGIVING 101

**Common Challenges Faced by Dementia Care Partners**
Monday, 10/11, 1pm-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Family Meeting**
Friday, 10/15, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Guardianship Explained**
Saturday, 10/16, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Healthy Body, Healthy Brain**
Tuesday, 10/19, 5:30pm-7pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Nutrition and Aging**
Monday, 11/8, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**The Grieving Caregiver**
Monday, 11/15, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Fall Prevention**
Tuesday, 11/16, 5:30-7pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Assisted Living: If, When, and How**
Friday, 11/19, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Holidays and Traveling: Tips For a Loved One Living With Dementia**
Saturday, 11/20, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Sleep and Dementia: Promoting a Good Night’s Sleep**
Tuesday, 11/23, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**The Related Dementias in ADRD**
Friday, 12/3, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**The Memory Keeper**
Tuesday, 12/7, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Caring for our Aging Selves**
Wednesday, 12/15, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**How to Successfully Support a Loved One When They Live In a Facility**
Saturday, 12/18, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**The Grieving Caregiver**
Monday, 11/15, 1-2:30pm
[REGISTER HERE]

**Memory Café**
To register contact Ann Farris at 561-3313 or email: afarris@alzalaska.org
Thursday, 10/14, 1pm
Thursday, 11/11, 1pm
Thursday, 12/9, 1pm

**Art Links**
1-1:45pm
To register contact: Janice Downing at 746-3413 or email: jdowning@alzalaska.org
Thursday, 10/7 & 10/21
Thursday, 11/4 & 11/18
Thursday, 12/2 & 12/16

**SAVVY CAREGIVER**
Screening & Pre-registration required
To register contact: Debie Chulick at 907-561-3313 or email: dchulick@alzalaska.org
Saturdays, 10/2-11/6 10:00am-12:00pm

**Mind Matters | Brain Works**
Screening & Pre-registration required
For more info contact: Joan Adams at 907-452-2277 or email: jadams@alzalaska.org

Savvy Caregiver
6-week class for family members caring for a loved one living with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias.

Professional Webinars
Questions or registration assistance, contact:
Amber Smith: 586-6044 or asmith@alzalaska.org

Engaging People Living with Dementia: Redirection
Tuesday, 10/19, 12 pm - 1:00pm
[REGISTER HERE]

Best Practices for Providing Person-Centered Care for Individuals with Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities and Dementia Part 1
Tuesday, 11/16, 12 pm - 1:00pm
[REGISTER HERE]

Best Practices for Providing Person-Centered Care for Individuals with Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities and Dementia Part 2
Tuesday 12/14, 12 pm - 1:00pm
[REGISTER HERE]
Mind Sharpener™

For Alaskans worried about memory loss who want to keep their mind fit.

12-week session, meeting twice a week for 1 hour

A unique series of brain exercises based on the principles of neuroplasticity: our brains are capable of constantly rewiring and building stronger neural networks that enhance cognitive abilities. Such mental exercises can improve or help maintain:

- reaction time
- attention and concentration
- memory
- language
- problem-solving

$240 / 24-session course

*Scholarship Available for those in need

We also offer programs for people experiencing mild memory loss

Questions or more information
Call 907-561-3313 or 800-478-1080
or visit www.alzalaska.org/mind-sharpener