October 2022 Volume 49 alzalaska.org

## Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska

# Living with Dementia and the Rhythm of Life

The power of rhythms can help relieve the stresses of daily living

How to Reduce Stigma and Empower People Living With Dementia p.5

New Caregiver Resource Guide

Find more helpful stories and perspectives on our website blog @ alzalaska.org/blog

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#### **Offices & Contact Information**

Anchorage 1750 Abbott Rd. Education (907) 561-3313 CCRA\* (907) 677-6789

**Fairbanks** 565 University Ave., Ste. 2 Education (907) 452-2277

#### **Mat-Su Valley**

777 N. Crusey St., B101, Wasilla, AK Education (907) 746-3413 CCRA<sup>\*</sup> (907) 746-3445

#### Juneau

2354 Mendenhall Loop Rd. Education (907) 586-6044 CCRA\* (907) 500-7456

**Copper River Basin** (907) 822-5620

#### **Statewide** Toll Free within Alaska outside of Anchorage

(800) 478-1080

\* <u>Care</u> <u>Coordination</u> <u>Resource of</u> <u>A</u>laska

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November is National Alzheimer's Awareness Month

### **Living with Dementia Forum**



Join us on Zoom or by phone to hear from Alaskans diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD), as well as those who are currently caring for someone living with ADRD.

Learn more about statewide resources and supports from Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska. Q&A session will follow. Register for one or both sessions.

Details: <u>alzalaska.org/calendar/living-with-dementia-forum</u>

#### Monday, November 14, 2022 @ 1 PM—2 PM and/or 7 PM—8 PM

*Live-streamed and hosted by Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska – available to view and participate in Statewide throughout Alaska.* 

For more information contact: Ann Farris, <u>afarris@alzalaska.org</u> or <u>907-561-3313</u>



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#### Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I know everyone is busy, readying for the change in seasons and the holidays on the horizon. But I want to take a moment to acknowledge that November is Alzheimer's Awareness Month and Family Caregiver Month. The commitment and challenges confronting family caregivers who support someone experiencing dementia are momentous.

That's why I encourage all who are themselves in that role, or know someone who is, to look to the news on <u>page 6</u> about the Caregiver Resource Guide. If you're reading this newsletter online, there's a live link to take you right to it. This Guide is phenomenal. It was put together



by one of the Dementia Action Collaborative's working groups, with the financial support of the Alaska Mental Health Trust and AARP-Alaska. There's a link to the 41-page guide <u>on our website</u>, and it can be downloaded as a PDF. In November, a hard copy will be inserted in every copy of the Senior Voice as well.

As we grow more comfortable gathering together, ARA has been the beneficiary of a few wonderful social evenings and events. First, the Anchorage Social Dance Clubs' annual formal, A Night to Remember, was a lovely benefit that increased awareness of our mission amid the fun. Special thanks are due to Michele Berns.

Heritage Place in Soldotna holds a yearly Walk and Roll event and decided to 'keep it local' because of the important services our education team provides their residents. We applaud the efforts of Aud.

We were also fortunate this year to be able to participate in the Mayor's Charity Ball in Anchorage, after two years of delays resulting from the pandemic. There were so many friends of ARA attending, volunteering, and donating silent auction Items! We are full of gratitude for each and every one of them. A special thanks goes to Woody Angst who spoke on behalf of ARA, lauding services that he and his family have received in the recent years.

Thank you for all your support, Sincerely,

Pamela Kelley Executive Director

## Living with Dementia and the Rhythm of Life

The power of rhythms can be harnessed to help us through many illnesses, including dementia and other neurological disorders and can help relieve the stresses of daily living.

#### By: Ann Farris

he human relationship to sound and rhythm starts early. In fact, even before you were born, you began to develop an auditory system. Already, you were in a world of sound: breath and heartbeat, of rhythm and vibration. When you heard a lullaby as a toddler, it offered comfort and a feeling of happiness. As a young adult, songs that provided a beat and rhythm offered you meaning and enjoyment. As an older adult these are the special songs stored in your brain and bring back fond memories.

There is a strong connection between music and the mind. This powerful connection explains why a man in the later stages of dementia, barely able to communicate, will liven up when listening to his favorite music. Closely related to music is rhythm, "a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound". In fact, rhythm is as elemental to breathing and other bodily functioning as it is to singing and dancing. Our lives are driven by rhythm.

In her Master's Thesis, "Music Therapy and Percussion for People with Dementia", Jaclyn Bell focuses on the potential of percussion and other rhythm-based music therapies. She writes, "People with dementia may gradually lose the ability to sing as the disease progresses and the use of percussion may allow for continued musical participation... Studies have shown that rhythm interventions can sometimes elicit more of a response than singing."

There are a variety of ways to utilize rhythm to enhance the quality of life for someone living with dementia: start a drum circle with friends, keep the beat while listening to music, dance, exercise. Creating homemade instruments is always fun: fill an empty medicine bottle with rice and you have a maraca; books, pots, and tables make great drums. Finally, utilize rhythm to assist in the desired outcome of an activity: soft music before bed; relaxing music while bathing, upbeat music while folding laundry or cleaning.

There are ways to incorporate music into activities for everyone. The key to assisting



The Alaska Jumping Flea Society performing at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center's Memory Café, presented by Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska — August 25, 2022

those living with dementia is selecting music that meets the need. For those in later stages of dementia, a more measured approach can be helpful. In her article, "How to use music to help a loved with dementia", Jan Maier suggests starting slow and tailoring the activity to the response of the person living with dementia: "Keep sessions short, perhaps up to a half hour. Tailor the length of the sessions to how much your loved one enjoys them."

A powerful visual of how rhythm can assist those with dementia or other neurological disorders is the video of a man living with Parkinson's disease. During physiotherapy sessions, the man's gait is enhanced first



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by the therapist counting "1. 2, 1, 2...", and secondly by listening to a favorite song. These rhythmic cues assist the brain in going through the motions of walking.

(video can be found at: https://youtu.be/oTjIEtpR4yU published by: Parkinson: Recherche au Luxembourg)

The beat of our hearts, the

rise and fall of our breathing, the movement of our bodies through each day demonstrate the natural rhythms of life. The power of rhythms can be harnessed to help us through many illnesses, including dementia and other neurological disorders and can help relieve the stresses of daily living. In his book Musicophilia, renowned neuroscientist Oliver

Sacks writes that rhythm is one of the most basic and fundamental parts of the human experience and remains with us until the very end. We agree, and to quote from the musical Sweet Charity, "The rhythm of life is a powerful beat!"

### How to Reduce Stigma and Empower People Living With Dementia

By Esther Heerema, MSW — Medically reviewed by Huma Sheikh, MD reprinted from verywellhealth.com

t's been well-established that a diagnosis of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia carries a stigma, and this stigma can have harmful and debilitating effects for those already coping with the challenge of the disease. So, how can you help? Here are 13 ways to help reduce stigma and empower those with cognitive challenges such as dementia.

#### SHARE YOUR STORY

If you're dealing with dementia, stop thinking of memory loss and confusion with shame, as if it's a fault you have. Are people ashamed of having a broken leg or cancer? You're still you, and sharing your diagnosis and symptoms with others can be freeing to you and educational for them.

#### SHARE YOUR LOVED ONE'S LIFE STORY

If your family member with dementia significantly struggles with wordfinding difficulty, help her share her experiences and her story. Put a face on the challenge of dementia. It is much harder for others to remain detached from the fight for effective treatment and a cure when they have a personal connection to someone living with dementia.

#### **EDUCATE YOURSELF**

The more you know, the better equipped you'll be to share information about dementia with others. Learn the facts, what you can expect as the disease progresses, and how you can use complementary and alternative



approaches to improve your overall functioning (or that of your loved one).

#### DON'T ASSUME IMMEDIATE MENTAL INCAPACITY

Just because someone has a dementia diagnosis, it doesn't mean the cognitive ability switch has been flipped from "on" to "off." In



# Caregiver Resource Guide

We're excited to have a new resource to offer care partners – family members, friends, and neighbors – who care for someone with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

The new Alaska Caregiver Resource Guide was published by the Dementia Action Collaborative, a coalition of public-private partners committed to preparing Alaska State for the growth of the dementia population.

Find out more and download the guide at <u>https://www.alzalaska.org/</u> <u>caregiver-resource-guide/</u>

#### How to Reduce Stigma and Empower People Living With Dementia (Cont. from previous page)

the early stages of dementia, there are enough times that the person living with dementia will doubt herself. She doesn't need to add you to that list. Give her the benefit of the doubt unless doing so would be harmful to herself or others.

#### DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS

Don't just write off your friend or loved one just because they have dementia. Unfortunately, many people let the uncertainty of what to say or do, stop them from doing anything, adding the loss of friendship to the other losses in dementia. Even in the middle and later stages, your visits can be a gift to both of you.

#### **ADVOCATE FOR OTHERS**

Those with power (in many cases, that's those of us without dementia) need to speak up. Whether it's reminding others that the person with dementia can still express her personality by choosing her own clothes for the day, or asking that the avid gardener is able to plant some flowers outside, advocating for others can make a difference in their quality of life.

Advocating also goes beyond the individual. It's important to use your voice to share with those in government about the challenges of dementia. For example, an initiative that began in 2015 urges communities to become dementiafriendly and is successfully raising awareness and empowering those with dementia.

#### **EMPOWER BY LISTENING**

Ask the person living with dementia how they're doing, and then be prepared to listen without judgment. Don't try to fix anything right now. Maybe later, you'll have the opportunity to follow up on something she said that could be helpful, but for now, just ask a few questions and listen.

#### USE COGNITIVE TRAINING TO COMPENSATE

One way to empower people with dementia is to provide additional cognitive exercises where they can learn and practice strategies to remain independent longer. For example, one study found that people with early-stage dementia benefited from procedural memory tasks, such as cooking classes.

#### **BE PROACTIVE ABOUT PUTTING SUPPORTS IN PLACE**

Connecting with community resources can empower people to live safely in their own homes for a longer period of time. If your family member has dementia, encourage them to seek our which resources are available for the future. Although this step may be a difficult hurdle, the appropriate supports can allow for more independence.



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### **How to Reduce Stigma and Empower People Living**

With Dementia (Cont. from previous page)

#### **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN** SIMULATIONS OF **DEMENTIA**

Simulations such as virtual dementia tours or a visual imagery of life with dementia can be an eye-opening (and heart and mindopening, as well) experience. After "experiencing" what it's like to live with dementia, it's difficult for the person to gloss over the person who is living with dementia's challenges.

#### PARTICIPATE IN MEMORY **CAFES AND SUPPORT** GROUPS

Stigma can have the effect of keeping the person indoors, safely at home so as to not become stressed or make others uncomfortable. Memory cafes and support groups provide a great opportunity to enjoy getting out of the house and connecting with others in the same situation. This, in turn, can make you more comfortable and confident in sharing your challenges with others. This is true both for the person with dementia, as well as the caregivers.

#### WATCH THE LANGUAGE YOU AND OTHERS USE

Rather than describing someone as "demented" or "senile," emphasize the person. The Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Program recommends using "the person with dementia" or "the person living with dementia" instead.



#### **USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO INCREASE AWARENESS**

Consider sharing small pieces of information on social media from time to time. The more we all talk about it, the more attention dementia will receive from society and those in positions of influence. 🕇

Reprinted from verywellhealth.com/ ways-reduce-stigma-empower-peopledementia-98246

## Donations Made In Honor or Memory of between January 1 - October 1, 2022 — alphabetized by honoree

Alice Celia Koelsch

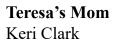
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Other donors are noted in our Annual Report.

### Caregiver Support Groups throughout Alaska

Groups are free to join. ARA logo 🕇 indicates an ARA facilitator. Contact facilitator in advance for zoom link or call-in phone number.



Support groups can be an important source of social and emotional support, as well as a great way to see what works for others and learn about local services and resouces.

Most groups are currently available statewide over the **\$** phone or via **\$** Zoom. For these, most people find it helpful to identify groups that fit your schedule, regardless of location.

You might consider joining our <u>Facebook</u> <u>Caregiver Support Group</u>. This is a private group—you will need to request access.

#### **Grants Available**

Funding is available for services and and to support the needs of people with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias (ADRD).



Details at:www.alzalaska.org/mini-grant For more information contact: Kevin Silver at 907-561-3313 or email <u>ksilver@alzalaska.org</u>

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska Trust Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

Statewide Telephone Support Group	و	Every 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday, 1–2:00 pm For additional info, contact <b>†</b> Gay Wellman, <u>822-5620</u> or <u>800-478-1080</u>
Dial in using: Code 927989# No registration required	و	Every 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 1–2:00 pm For additional info, contact T_Debbie Chulick, <u>561-3313</u> or <u>800-478-1080</u>
Statewide Care Partner Support	<u>۔</u> ور	Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday, 1-2:30 pm Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Saturday 10:30am-12 pm CONTACT:  Gay Wellman, gwellman@ alzalaska.org 822-5620 or 800-478-1080
Grieving Caregiver Support	<u>ا</u> ور	Every 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 1-2:30 pm CONTACT: T Gay Wellman, gwellman@ alzalaska.org 822-5620 or 800-478-1080
Anchorage	<u>ا</u> ور	Every 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday, 5:30–7 pm CONTACT: 🕇 Debbie Chulick, <u>561-3313</u>
Eagle River	<u>ا</u> ور	Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 5:30–7 pm CONTACT: TDebbie Chulick, <u>561-3313</u>
Fairbanks	و	Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 4:30–6 pm Every 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 1:00–2:30 pm CONTACT: 🕇 Joan Adams, <u>452-2277</u>
Homer		Call for current schedule CONTACT: Pam Hooker, <u>235-7655</u>
Juneau / Southeast AK		Call for current schedule CONTACT: Aimee <u>463-6177</u>
Ketchikan		Call for current schedule. CONTACT: Bernice, <u>255-8080</u>
Kodiak		<b>Every 4</b> <sup>th</sup> <b>Thursday, 12:30–1:30</b> pm CONTACT: <u>486-6181</u>
Mat-Su Valley	<u>ا</u> ور	Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 1:30–3 pm CONTACT: 🕇 Janice Downing <u>746-3413</u>
Seward		Every 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday, 1–2 pm CONTACT: <u>244-5604</u>
Sitka		Call for current schedule CONTACT: 747-4600
Soldotna		Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> and Last Tuesday, 1–3 pm Every 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday, 1–2 pm CONTACT: Dani Kebschull, <u>262-1280</u>
Sutton, Palmer, Chickaloon, Glacier View	ور	Every 1 <sup>st</sup> Friday, 10–11:30 am CONTACT: <b>†</b> Kim Jung, <u>746-3413</u>
Talkeetna, Willow, Trapper Creek		Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 1–2:30 pm CONTACT: <b>†</b> Kim Jung, <u>746-3413</u>



### Classes & Events around the State

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

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# A BIG THANK YOU!

We couldn't have the community impact that we do without the support of our donors and organizations that step up to support us.

Thank you to the Anchorage Mayor's Charity Ball for selecting us as one of the organizations to benefit from this years auction. A special thank you all of our amazing volunteers, donors, staff and board members for your uplifting support in making this event come together!

Thank you to the Wells team at ConocoPhillips for hosting a silent auction that benefited Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska!

Thank you to Heritage Place in Soldotna for their Walk and Roll fundraiser.

Thank you to Riverview Senior Living in Juneau for their fundraiser that benefited Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska.

Thank you to Anchorage Social Dance Club who held their annual formal, A Night to Remember, that benefited Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska. Thank you for helping to increase awareness of our mission amid the fun. Special thanks to Michele Berns.







