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

Find more helpful stories and perspectives on our website blog @ alzalaska.org/blog
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: alzalaska.org/calendar/living-with-dementia-forum

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


For more information contact: Ann Farris, afarris@alzalaska.org or 907-561-3313
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 page 6 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 on our website, 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

The 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 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...
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

It’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 word-finding 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
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.

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.

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 dementia-friendly 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.

(Cont. on next page)
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 mind-opening, 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.

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-people-dementia-98246

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

Alice
Celia Koelsch

Amelia
Harry Prichard

Diane
Katie Moran

Gil
Catherine Coon

Karen
Heather Jacox

Sharon
Sherri Roberds

Teresa’s Mom
Keri Clark

Elva Amidon
Ronald & Sandra Amidon
Ann and Ray Rodgers

Chottie Angst
Susan Rymzo

Eubanks Barnhill
Rosalyn Barnhill

Josie Sutton Bills
Myrna Frantz
Milly & Steve Wilkins

Roger Birckhead
Robert & Wayne Helms

Adel Boucher
Diana L. Straub

Shirley Braspenninckx
Robert Barrett

Karen Carlson
ConocoPhillips High Octane
Jill Melland Simek*
Leslie Willocks
Marta Zamiska

(Cont. on next page)
Donations Made In Honor or Memory of
between January 1 - October 1, 2022 — alphabetized by honoree

Cheryl A. Carmona
Cesar Carmona
Delbert Cederburg
Dawn Deason
Gladys Coster
Candace Horter
Anna Deubelbeiss
Tekka Bedwell
Ruth Deubelbeiss
Doris Goodwin
Joanne Proefrock
Lynette DiBerardino
Angela DiBerardino
Jan and Larry Dinneen
Laurie Evans-Dinneen
Justine Beth Emerson
John and Joyce Smith
Len Ferucci
Patricia Ferucci
Geneve
Robert Galle
Peggie Galle
PRH
Wayne Helander
Jim & Denise Hansen
Mari Gibson
Karen Nadeau
Jim Hansen
James Hansen
Janet Margrave
Reydun & Steiner Hansen
Sandra & Edward Sanders
Reudan Hansen
S. Lynne Larson
Marjorie & Robert Paulson
Charles Helmick, Jr.
Jeff Helmick
Leiza Johnson
Debbie Hestes
William Hestes
Dorothy Hugg
Wayne Holmes &
Jonel Snook-Holmes
Jan Janzen
Rebecca Marinelli
Midge Keil
Keil Family
Anita Kirk
Joanie Kirk
Sandy Knight
Tyler Woznica
Preferred Care
Charlene Konestago
Pioneers of AK Women’s
Igloo #11
Victor LaForge
Cheryl Snyder
Lynne Larson
Robert & Marjorie Paulson
Judy Simonds
Dorothy Magette
John and Jackie Brunton *
Rev. Russell H. McConnell,
Beatrice McConnell,
& Robert McConnell
Ruth McConnell Benson
Rusty Moore
Michael Dunn
M. L. Morgan
Michele L. Berns
Dolores Morris
Cheri Clausen
Christopher Myrick
Betsey Myrick
Kim Peterson
Teresa Richards
Reid Pfannmiller
Barbara Halcro
Cheryl Ponder
SWONAP
Moveta Posma
Moveta Posma Trust
Charles Powers
Joan Cullinane
Irvine Pyett
Dennis Stock
Layne Ratcliffe
Caroline Ratcliffe
Sharon Roberds
Tanya French
Teri Kostka
Ed & Barb Marlow
Karen Misas
ConocoPhillips

(Cont. on next page)
Donations Made In Honor or Memory of, cont.

 between January 1 - October 1, 2022 — alphabetized by honoree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uncle Ralph and Aunt Mary</th>
<th>Werner Stutzer</th>
<th>Susan Reading Pozzi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carey Mills</td>
<td>Elena Hartford</td>
<td>Bruce Pozzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey Roberts</td>
<td>Katy Sutherland</td>
<td>Shawn Abel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan June</td>
<td>Abby McLane</td>
<td>Hobie &amp; Dawn Bannister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela Kelley</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leroy &amp; Suzanne Barker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna Piszczak</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stacy Barnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marta Zamiska</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rose M. Bridgeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macon Roberts</td>
<td>Werner Stutzer</td>
<td>Patricia Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elisabeth Fleischer</td>
<td>Elena Hartford</td>
<td>Jeanne Davis &amp; Leo Bustad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Rupert</td>
<td>Craig Thompson</td>
<td>M. David Cole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teri Kostka</td>
<td>Brad and Mary Reeve</td>
<td>Patricia E. Doyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Schowen</td>
<td>Alaskan Brewing Co.</td>
<td>Barbara &amp; David Ells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Pinter</td>
<td></td>
<td>James &amp; Marsha Fergusson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt Bev &amp; Bobbie Scribner</td>
<td>Patricia Versnick</td>
<td>Robert &amp; Carol Freeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Wilson</td>
<td>Rhonda S. Scott</td>
<td>Jill R. Friedman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobbie Adams Scribner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Richard &amp; Elizabeth Hansen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Adams</td>
<td>Larry W.</td>
<td>Darlene H. Hermes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim &amp; Phyllis Serfling</td>
<td>Evelyn White</td>
<td>Maryhelen &amp; Rodney Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krista Shelby</td>
<td>Louise Smith</td>
<td>Julie A. Korting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bette Shaver</td>
<td>Regina Wilgus</td>
<td>Marc &amp; Sandra Langland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathryn Stoltzfus</td>
<td>Oma</td>
<td>Bob Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Skvarch</td>
<td>Jim Wilgus</td>
<td>Stephen Peacock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacque Good</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel and Cecelia Regis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Sloan</td>
<td>Gene Williamson &amp;</td>
<td>Robert &amp; Melissa Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Bonin</td>
<td>Marlene Ronnie Williamson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoinette Rusted</td>
<td>Carrie Berrey</td>
<td>T.J. Sardy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce Snyder</td>
<td>Ann Farris &amp; Tom Williamson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Stewart</td>
<td>Joanne Younie</td>
<td>Mario Scampoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Shepard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carrie Schnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maribeth &amp; Griff Steiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Truman &amp; Roberta Struck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dolores Tamagni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Dieckgraeff &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Denise Thanepohn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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 Facebook Caregiver Support Group. This is a private group—you will need to request access.

**Grants Available**

Funding is available for services 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 ksilver@alzalaska.org
Classes & Events around the State

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

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

Professional Webinars
Contact: Amber Smith: 586-6044 or asmith@alzalaska.org

- **The GEMS®: Using Skills That Make a Difference**
  - Tue, 10/4, 1pm-2:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]
  - Wed, 10/5, 1pm-2:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER] — OR —
    - Wasilla: In-Person

- **Dining and Dementia**
  - Fri, 10/7, 1pm-2:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]

- **What Is Good for the Brain**
  - Wed, 10/12, 11am-12:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]

- **Dining and Dementia**
  - Fri, 10/7, 1pm-2:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]

- **What Is Good for the Brain**
  - Wed, 10/12, 11am-12:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]

- **Behaviors that Challenge Us**
  - Sat, 11/19, 10:30am-12pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]

- **Wandering and Dementia**
  - Mon, 11/21, 1pm-2:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]

- **Family Meeting**
  - Fri, 12/2, 1pm-2:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]

- **Dementia and Sensory Changes**
  - Tue, 12/6, 1pm-2:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]

- **Healthy Body, Healthy Brain**
  - Wed, 11/9, 11am-12:30pm
    - Webinar: [REGISTER]

- **SAVVY CAREGIVER**
  - Learn caregiver skills and knowledge to provide the highest level of care for loved ones and yourself.
  - For more information or registration contact: Janice Downing at 907-864-3408 or email: jdowning@alzalaska.org
  - Monday, 10/3–11/7
    - 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
    - Online meetings

- **MIND MATTERS**
  - Caregiver Support
  - Screening & Pre-registration required
  - For more info contact: Debbie Chulick at 907-561-3313 or email: dchulick@alzalaska.org

- **Living with Dementia Forum**
  - Monday, November 14, 2022
    - 1pm-2pm
    - REGISTER
    - 7pm-8pm
    - REGISTER
  - Join us on Zoom or by phone to hear from Alaskans living with Alzheimer’s or related dementia, as well as those who are currently caring for someone living with dementia.
  - Learn more about statewide resources.
  - Q&A session will follow.
  - Register for one or both sessions.
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 year’s 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.