Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

Changing The Way We Think About Memory Loss

October, 2022

October/Nov. Wednesday Meeting Schedule
All meetings held from 1 – 2:30 pm

Oct. 5th - Legal Planning for Seniors, Susan Johnson-Drenth. At Bethel

Oct. 12th - Bring and Brag - 'This is My Story' Bring your favorite memory, photo, hobby/craft, story. Hjemkomst Center

Oct. 19th - Behavioral Changes with Different Dementias, Dr. Donald Jurivich; Coach Jake. At Bethel

Oct. 26 - Caregiver Cafe - Call 701-404-6712

Nov. 2nd - Medication Mgmt for Seniors, Dr. Jinal Desai, VA/UND Medical School. At Bethel

Nov. 9th - Moorhead High School Music. At Hjemkomst

Nov. 16th - Intergenerational Fleece Blanket Project. At Bethel

Nov. 23rd - Caregiver Cafe. Call 701-404-6712

Nov. 30th - No Memory Cafe

In This Issue

Mission Statement

The mission of Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is to enhance the quality of life for individuals living with memory loss and their loved ones through socialization, education, the creative arts, community service and community engagement.

Hi Memory Cafe!

Kids have the wildest imaginations – they can turn any household object into a toy and every wall and driveway or sidewalk is their canvas. Their innocence as they attempt to figure out this confusing world and their sometimes brutal honesty can be hilarious!

Do you remember Art Linkletter? He was the master interviewer of children and was able to elicit such unexpected comments from children between the ages of five and ten during his TV program, "House Party" and "Kids Say the Darndest Things." During the show's 27-year run, Linkletter interviewed an estimated 23,000 children. One of his favorite interviews was when he asked a little boy what animal he wished to be. An octopus, the boy said, so that he could grab the many bullies in his school and hit them with his "testicles."

My husband and I have been blessed richly with nine grandchildren, seven boys and two girls. Over the course of the past month here are a few of the rich conversational nuggets we've captured from several of them:

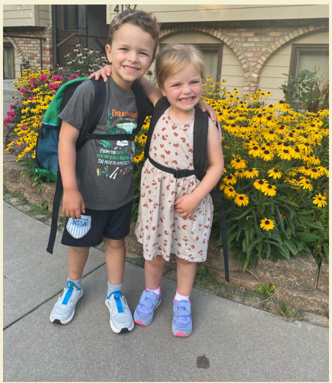
"Hi Nana. Did you know your hair looks like silverware?" Thank you Ellis. I've never quite thought of my hair color in that way before but you're right, it does closely resemble a fork.

This suggestion came from Brad, our 11 year old grandson, "My dad and I were talking about what a good baker you are. If you weren't quite so old you could open a bakery."

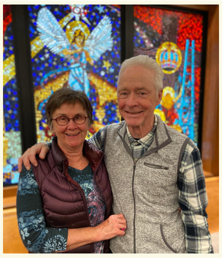
But, one of our favorite stories came from six year old Ellis and his three year old sister, Leona who live in the Twin Cities. Their mommy was tucking them into bed recently and they were reading a story from their Childen's Bible when Leona wondered, "I wonder where heaven is?" "Maybe up in the sky." Ellis suggested. "Or maybe it's up in North Dakota." Leona proposed.

Maybe so, Leona! During the beauty of this glorious autumn season your idea doesn't seem so far stretched!

With joy,
Deb



Ellis and Leona



Praire Spirit

by

Mark Bratlie

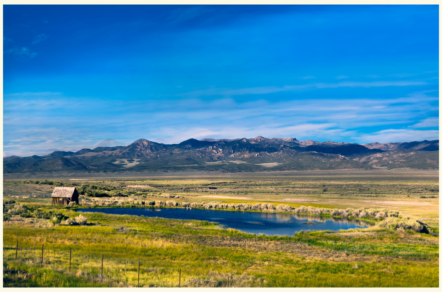
I gaze on vast spaces
not empty
not disturbing
but settled and inviting

I gaze on vistas of stillness
not rushing
not anxious
but calm softness

I gaze on distant treelines
not unruly
not intrusive
but green contentment

I gaze on endless sky
not threatening
not overwhelming
but bluer than blue

I gaze with awe and wonder
as my inner spirit expands
not to compete
not to fill
but to be with
with vastness
with stillness
with Praire Spirit



Dementia Grief Support Group
Moving Forward - Life After Dementia Caregiving
(Virtual)

This group is designed for spouses who have recently lost their partner due to Alzheimer's and all types of dementia. Although grief and loss are discussed at this group, this is not a typical grief group. The group focuses on building connections with others who understand the unique challenges of losing a spouse due to dementia and moving forward with life after this unique journey.

2nd & 4th Tuesday (Recurring each month)
9:30 a.m - 11:00 a.m.
Jenna Pogorels | 218.722.4335 / jpogorels@alz.org

"Still Here, Still Me"
Voices of Persons Living With Dementia

Excerpted 'Still Living Well with Dementia'

by Roger Marple

2018 Dementia Alliance International

I was diagnosed with younger onset dementia, more specifically, Alzheimer's disease in 2015. I am happy to say I am still living well with dementia in my life. I find as time goes on, seeing thousands of people worldwide still living well with dementia despite any challenges they may experience, gives me hope for continuing to live well with this disease.

Often, I speak about what hope and living well looks like with dementia. Alzheimer's isn't the end. Every human lives with a terminal condition called life. Although dementia is different for everyone, it is not uncommon to live well with this disease and enjoy life for some time to come. Something I do every day...

Something I see too often, that I want changed is, I often see jokes about memory loss. I see derogatory comments. This is one of many faces of stigma with dementia. If you are not sure what I mean by this I encourage you to Google "Alzheimer's jokes". You will find hundreds of them not to mention many websites with more jokes on them.

When I look for jokes about other serious diseases in our society like ALS or cancer, I cannot find any. It is just not okay to joke about these conditions, and usually, if we hear of a joke about this, people are furious at comments made. So I pose the question, why is it fair for people to make fun of people with a form of dementia? Why can't people see how fundamentally wrong this is? What if the role was reversed? What if people with dementia posted thousands of jokes poking fun at your weakest points that you may experience living with your terminal condition called life? What if thousands of people shared jokes about you and the challenges you may experience on public media, like Facebook, or in your community? What if you opened a birthday card with a joke about your struggles? Would you feel like crawling under a rock and hiding your challenges from the masses making fun of you and not engaging in life to the fullest, regardless of your challenges? Often this is the case for people living with dementia. I see it all the time.

As a person living with dementia, here is a promise I will make to all of you. I promise I will not make fun of any challenges you may have with your terminal condition called life. I will see who you are regardless of any challenges you may have. I will recognize and support you to live your life to the fullest regardless of challenges you have. I promise to recognize what hope looks like for you living your life to the fullest, with the time you have left, so you can live a good quality life. And most of all, I will respect who you are.

(Con't on p. 7)

For Our Health
What The Vagus Nerve Is and How to Stimulate it For Better Mental Health

Forbes, April 15, 2021

By Sarah Jeanne Browne

The vagus nerve is the body's superpower and it's used to counteract your fight/flight system. It's how you develop a healthy stress response and become resilient. When stimulated, you feel calmer, more compassionate, and clearer. Stimulating the vagus benefits your autonomic nervous system and mental health. Healthy vagal tone means emotional regulation, greater connection, and better physical health as well. You are more resilient and able to pull yourself through trauma and troubles.

The vagus nerve is activated when you are feeling compassion and empathy. A person with a strong vagal nerve profile is more altruistic. Stephen Porges calls it the "love nerve" because when activated, you are loving. It is caretaking in nature.

The vagus nerve also manages fears. According to Medical News Today, "The vagus nerve sends information from the gut to the brain, which is linked to dealing with stress, anxiety, and fear–hence the saying, 'gut feeling.' These signals help a person to recover from stressful and scary situations." The vagus nerve helps you to remain calm when you are stressed and to know when you are no longer in danger. It helps you to "rest and digest."

Restore self-regulating vagal function through grounding and mindfulness. Frontiers in Psychiatry says, "The vagal tone is correlated with capacity to regulate stress responses. It can be influenced by breathing, meditation and yoga which likely contribute to resilience and the mitigation of mood and anxiety symptoms."

Clinical psychologist Dr. Glenn Doyle puts it this way: "The vagus nerve is deeply plugged into our heart, our guts, and our voice. Whenever we turn inward to check in with our true feelings and to check in with our intuitive wisdom, we're lighting up the vagus nerve. Whenever our face reflects what we're really feeling or experiencing, the vagus nerve is at work. When we speak, shout, sing, the vagus nerve is lit up like a Christmas tree— which is one of the reasons why those activities can be so cathartic and emotional for so many of us."

Ways to stimulate the vagus nerve include: Breathwork-diaphragmatic breathing; connecting to others and the world around you; stimulate the diving reflex by washing your face or showering with cold water; humming, singing or gargling; probiotics; omega 3 fatty acids; yoga; meditation and mindfulness; chanting; and positive self-talk.

Advice from Dana Reeve,

Author of *Care Packages: Letters to Christopher Reeve from Strangers and Other Friends*

"It is so important as a caregiver not to become so enmeshed in the role that you lose yourself. It's neither good for you nor your loved one."

Just for Laughs!

Content Provided by Steve Froslie and Friends!

George Burns punctuated this story with a flick of his cigar. "A woman said to me, 'Is it true that you still go out with young girls?' I said yes, it's true. She said, 'Is it true that you still smoke 15-20 cigars a day?' I said yes, it's true. She said, 'Is it true that you still take a few drinks every day?' I said yes, it's true. She said, 'What does your doctor say?' I said, 'He's dead.'

The first bottle of Coco-Cola in 1894 contained 3.5 grams of cocaine. This explains how our grandparents could walk to and from school uphill, both ways, in the middle of winter, barefoot.

I finally figured out why I look so bad in pictures. It's my face.

The irony for mankind is that a computer program asks them to prove they aren't a robot.

Why do eggs come in flimsy styrofoam containers and batteries come in a container only a chainsaw can open?

Women often have two problems: 1. They never have anything to wear and 2. They don't have room for all their clothes.

As the Kardashians finish their 20th season I would like to congratulate myself on never watching a single episode.

The doctor told Uncle Fudd that if he ran five miles a day for 300 days, he would lose 75 pounds. At the end of 300 days, Uncle Fudd called the doctor to report he had lost the weight, but he had a problem. "What's the problem?" asked the doctor. "I'm 1500 miles from home."

MARRIAGE IS...

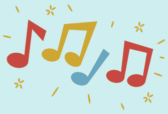
Marriage is not about a beautiful wedding, fancy homes, cute kids, nice cars and white picket fences. Marriage is hospital stays, working long hours, fighting through struggles, paying bills, keeping the faith and staying together through all of it.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Whatever you are, be a good one."
~Abraham Lincoln

MUSIC THERAPY AND DEMENTIA

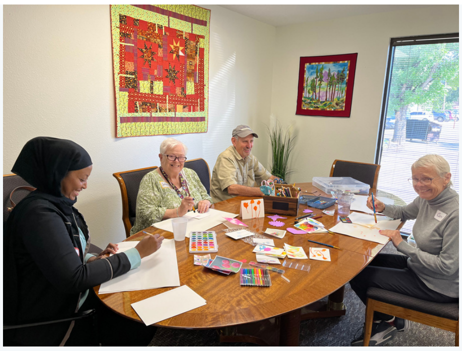
By Deb McTaggart



Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. Music therapy interventions can address a variety of healthcare and educational goals and many can benefit from music therapy services. The role of music therapy in memory and dementia care is to provide structure and meaningful engagement, enhance daily living in an individual or group setting, promote communication and self expression through singing and active music making, improve mood and increase energy, encourage physical movement through active music making, decrease stress and agitation through predictable, pleasurable experiences. (Information cited from the American Music Therapy Association **https://www.musictherapy.org**)

Our first Music Therapy class was terrific!
Join us for our next class on October 24th from 1:30-2:30pm. Thanks Deb!

If you are interested to learn more about music therapy or getting a Dementia Friendly Chorus started, please email Deb McTaggart at:
deb@sagemusicservices.com



Creating beautiful thank you cards in our Creative Arts room. Thank you Hermes family for supporting our creative art fund!

WHAT WE DO AT MEMORY CAFE MATTERS

The fear of developing Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia is one of the greatest fears people from around the world experience as they age. Some individuals report they fear it more than death.

This is largely due to the devastating stigma associated with this disease. It prevents people from honestly addressing concerns regarding the health of their brain. It causes them, their spouses and family members to hide their concerns and pretend there is nothing wrong. Often, professionals in the faith, business, and even medical community minimize or ignore signs of concern when they notice them in these individuals. As Roger Marple points out (p. 2), the stigma of dementia also tragically causes society to marginalize individuals like himself who are living well with the disease.

Memory Cafe is rapidly changing how we think about memory loss. Our mission is to inspire hope, joy, and a sense of empowerment in people and their care partners living with the impact of mild to moderate memory loss. We are reaching deeply into the memory loss community to shift this crippling paradigm from lonely despair to enlightened education, encouraging companionship, and hope.

In order to elicit significant change it's going to take ALL of us! With your involvement and financial partnership we can do it! Please let us know if you'd like to learn more about Memory Cafe or how to support our mission with a financial pledge or gift.

Thank you!

A LARGE Thank You From CrossFit Fargo!

Deb K, Jasmine Joy, Coach Jake, Leeora W.

"I am truly just reaching out to personally thank your organization for welcoming the FM community into what you are doing on a regular basis. I had the opportunity to come with Coach Jake Haile today as part of CrossFit Fargo to learn what you all are about and I immensely enjoyed my short time with you. I now follow you on Facebook and intend on continuing to stay involved with you all in any way that I/we can. So again, this is just a personal and large thank-you from me!"

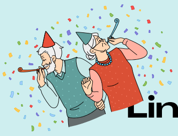
Jasmine Joy, CrossFit Fargo

Caring Catalog
FM Area Foundation

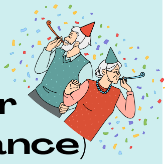
November 28
-THROUGH-
December 9

Memory Cafe is deeply honored to be one of the 25 nonprofit organizations chosen to participate in the FM Area Foundation Caring Catalog this fall! We are excited to partner closely with them as they help us deepen awareness of the critical role Memory Cafe plays in providing a healthy and inclusive home for the memory loss community and meet our robust goal to raise $200,000 to support our long term financial sustainability!
Thank you FMAF!

SAVE THE DATE!
Memory Cafe Care Partner REUNION !!



Monday, Nov. 14th
1 - 2:30 pm
Linger Laugh and Learn Center
1122 1st Ave N. Fargo (west entrance)



This celebration will honor **ALL** current and former care partners who have participated in Memory Cafe since our inception **FIVE** years ago! If this involves YOU, please mark your calendars and join us! This celebration is just one of several ways we will be celebrating our care partners throughout the month of November which is National Family Caregiver Month!

Why are Memory Cafes Important?

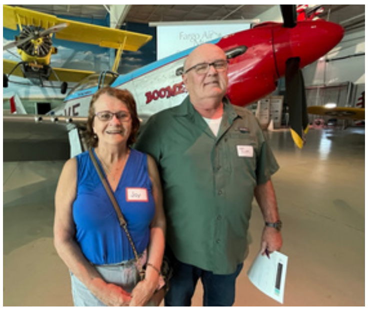
Often, people experiencing cognitive impairment and their care partners become socially isolated. Social isolation can negatively impact the physical and mental health of people living with dementia and their care partners. Memory cafes help to reduce social isolation by allowing care partners and people living with dementia to form meaningful connections with other people and create new friendships. Memory Cafes also allow care partners and their loved ones to engage in activities together and can help improve he quality of life for both the person living with dementia and their care partner.

Why is Attending Memory Cafes Important for Care Partners as Well as People with Dementia?

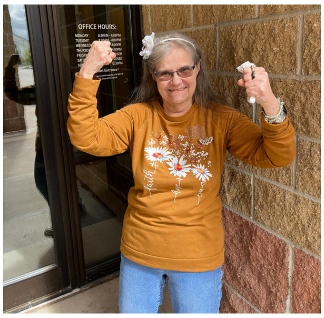
Memory Cafes benefit a care partner just as much as the person with dementia. Memory cafes can help reduce care partner stress, provide informal support, and improve their mental and physical health. Memory Cafes also provide knowledge and resources about caring for someone with dementia.

Is There Any Connection Between Various Memory Cafes?

No, every memory cafe is structured, operated, and sustained completely independently from every other memory cafe. There is no financial support, organizational assistance, or oversight from any governing body.



Joy and Tim M.



A FIRED UP Linda F!

Northern Plains Conference on Aging
"Optimal Aging and Wellness"
October 12 - 13
Avalon Events Center
Topics include: Professional Boundaries, Self-Care and Safety
Healthcare Directives
AARP Homefit Guide
To register or for more information, visit NorthernPlainsConference.com or contact Concordia College Conferences & Events at 218.299.3566.

MONDAY PLEASURES

Coffee & Converstion
MONDAYS
9:00 - 11:00 AM

LINGER LAUGH & LEARN CENTER
memory cafe
1122 1st Ave N, Fargo

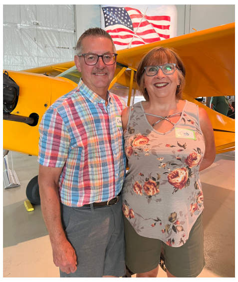
We have been very pleased with the response to our new Monday programming at the Linger Laugh and Learn Center! **'Coffee and Conversation' from 9am - 11am** has offered our participants an opportunity to become better acquainted and has also been a lot of fun!

Programming
MONDAYS
1:30-2:30

Programming on Monday afternoons is for BOTH the person living with memory loss and their care partners. Bring your 'Circle of Six'!

Oct. 3rd - Creating Moments of Joy book review (p. 60-105) - Leeora
Oct. 10th - Introduction to Healing Touch -Karen Pausch, Sanford Integrative Health
Oct. 17th - 'It Takes a Village' Art project with Tia
Oct. 24 - Music, Memories and Musings - Deb McTaggart
Oct. 31st - Halloween vinyl record listening party - Dan Cushing. Wear your favorite costume!

A FEW OF OUR NEWEST VOLUNTEERS!



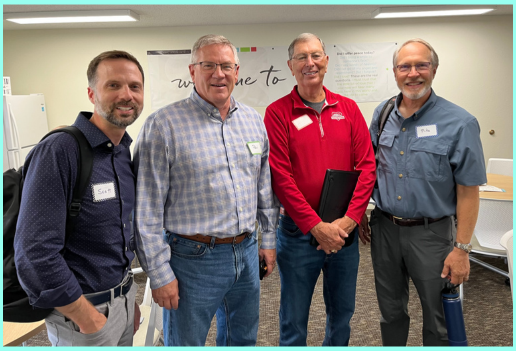
Craig and Deb M.

Val M.

Kim V., Artist Tia Permenter, Remi V.

Building Skills and Community

Community Partners!



Scott Holdman, Paul Finstad, Erv Inniger,
Mike Slette

We were privileged to welcome community leaders and DMF coaches Scott Holdman and Erv Inniger to our recent September board meeting. Thank you Scott and Erv for inspiring us to work smarter and dream bigger as we propel Memory Cafe into the future!

Check it out!
Spiritwoodfoundation.com

Spiritwood
Foundation
Forget Me Not
Fighting Alzheimer's Disease Through The Arts
Non-Profit 501(c)(3)

A Breaking Point
Daily Comfort for Caregivers

Life will be going along from day to day and I'm coping as best I can, and then one day something "small" happens - like the clothes bar in my closet suddenly snapping in two. Hangers and shirts and belts lie mangled in a clump on the floor. The mess reminds me of my whole situation: Since I've been caregiving, my life has snapped in two and I can't imagine enduring another minute of it.

This is a time to call the kindest person I know, the one I won't have to explain anything to. I'll just say that I'm struggling and this person will know what to do and will do it. And that act of kindness will sustain me until I can find a grain of strength in myself to go on. It will reassure me I'm not all alone. Supported by kindness from another, I will find it easier to recognize and admit that I've been 'enduring' too long. I'll be able to see that I need to make some adjustments in the way I'm living.

When it feels like too much, it is.

Note: Due to the generosity of our donors, copies of Daily Comfort for Caregivers is now available to our Memory Cafe care partners.

If a Hurting Person Asks About God's Love, Don't Answer...Yet

Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart by Kenneth Haugk, Ph.D.

If the person you are relating to asks whether God loves him or her, don't jump in with a quick reassurance. Wait. Listen. Now, I'm not suggesting you play games with a suffering person. But if the individual is asking about God's love, he or she probably is struggling and a hasty assurance of God's love may have the opposite effect from what you intend. One man shared his experience with hasty assurances: "I found many people who were ready to say their 'lines' to me, but few that asked about or listened to what my needs were." Another person said that assurances 'felt like pat answers.' Often people seemed unable to cope with my intense sadness."

When a suffering individual seems to ask for the assurance of God's love, the best reply may actually be another question: "I'd like to know more about what you are thinking right now. Can you tell me more about that?" Give the person an opportunity to talk about these thoughts and feelings. Then share an assurance, if it's still needed.

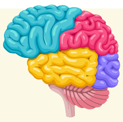
The best result occurs, however, when the suffering person can talk, maybe weep, perhaps even rant, but then comes to his or her own positive conclusion with you. They you'll know God's love is rooted deep in that person's heart.

Be God's Love

Words of assurance are not the only way to let people know that God loves them. You can *be* God's love to another. One person shared, "I have mostly *felt* God's love through someone's care and presence and acceptance, not from their words.

Both you and the hurting individual are objects of God's love. You know it to be true in your own life, and you can convey it to others by your caring actions.

Early Onset Dementia Education



Alzheimer's is not just a disease of old age. Early-Onset Dementia (also known as younger-onset) affects people younger than age 65. If you or your loved one was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's Disease or a related dementia before the age of 65, you may consider yourself part of the early-onset community. Families living with early-onset dementia have unique needs and challenges, and can benefit from education and information that is targeted to their age group.

The Longitudinal Early-Onset Alzheimer's Disease Study (LEADS) and the Alzheimer's Association are pleased to announce the 2022 Early-Onset Dementia Family Conference for patients, families and caregivers impacted by early-onset dementia. The conference will be held virtually on Saturday and Sunday, October 8 and 9th 2022 from 10:00am-2:00pm CST on each day. It will offer attendees information and opportunities to share insights and experiences with each other as well as with researchers in the field. On the second day of the conference, care and support will be provided to any interested participants.

The Family Conference is free and open to the public. We value your privacy and will ensure that everyone attending will be given the opportunity to maintain anonymity at the conference.

To register for the Family Conference: **https://alz-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_52xBR7wrQUuz3cRDpv9t_Q**

Did you know...

ALL of our Memory Cafe programs, events and educational resources are FREE to our community and participants?

Down Syndrome and Alzheimer's Disease

Many but not all people with Down syndrome develop Alzheimer's disease when they get older.

Middle aged adults with Down syndrome are born with an extra copy of chromosome 21, which carries a gene that produces a specific protein called amyloid precursor protein (APP). Too much APP protein leads to a buildup of protein clumps called beta-amyloid plaques in the brain. The presence of beta-amyloid plaques is one of the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease.

By age 40, most people with Down syndrome have these plaques, along with other protein deposits, called tau tangles, which cause problems with how brain cells function and increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's symptoms. Estimates suggest that 50% or more of people with Down syndrome will develop dementia due to Alzheimer's disease as they age.

Still Here, Still Me

(Con't from p. 2)

My hope is that someday all of us will recognize people with a terminal diagnosis of dementia, and people with a terminal condition called life, are both groups that have the same hopes and dreams. Perhaps with time we can walk in each other's shoes and have a better understanding for each other. People with dementia want to live a full life for as long as we can -- just as we all do. We may have to work a little harder at it that's all. We are all the same. I have a philosophy in life. I show my utmost respect to everyone I meet. Would it be too much to ask for the same in return?

Last but not least, all who live with dementia in your lives need to know this. One person by the name of Naquib Mabfouz said "Fear doesn't prevent death. It prevents life." Please do not let fear from stigma get in the way of living well with dementia. The problem is with the person perpetuating the stigma, not you. Remember that.

As I said, my name is Roger. I live well with dementia. My hopes and dreams in life have not changed.

"Alzheimer's is Not a Chicken Casserole Disease"

Martin J. Schreiber, Former Wisconsin Governor and author of *My Two Elaines: Learning, Coping, and Surviving as an Alzheimer's Caregiver*
(This book is available to our Memory Cafe participants)

There are some things I wish I would have done differently. I wish I'd gotten help. And I wish I had understood more about this disease.

Alzheimer's is not a "chicken casserole disease." For example, if I'm home recovering from a broken hip or surgery, friends will bring me a chicken casserole.

But, often with Alzheimer's, friends don't know how to act because they are ignorant about it and, maybe since I was too, I didn't help them understand. As result, they stay away; not out of malice or insensitivity, but because *they simply don't know what to do*."

Now, take an Alzheimer's caregiver and someone who knows they are losing their memory. Add the fear, anxiety, worry, frustration, and despair and, on top of that, have your friends of 30 or 40 years desert you both because they don't know how to act. One of the most important things that helped me was people just acknowledging what I was going through...that simple gesture was such a relief.

And for the person living with Alzheimer's, it's important to give them comfort by simply joining their world. Maybe a hug, singing a song, holding hands. What greater and simpler thing is there to make someone feel at peace?

PO BOX 883
FARGO, ND
58107
701-404-6712

www.MemoryCafeRRV.org
hello@memorycaferrv.org

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Remember to follow us on Facebook and Instagram. And be sure we have a current email address for you or your loved one. Thank you!

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