



Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULDN'T BE FORGOTTEN

February 2024



Members of Sandy's 'Circle of Six'!

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TESTIMONIAL



Mike and Kim Vannett

Mike and I support Memory Cafe because we love the people and the mission. The programming and education are top-notch. It is a heart-filled organization that truly brings people in our community together.

~ Kim

Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

My name is Maggie Ness, I recently joined this incredible team at Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley as the Executive Director. I spent the past five years with the Alzheimer's Association MN-ND Chapter. In this role, I enjoyed attending Memory Cafe events and watching this organization grow to better serve the memory loss community in the Fargo-Moorhead area. I feel so blessed to have now joined this organization!

In my first two weeks here, I have met some really amazing people, I participated in wonderful programming and was able to learn from this outstanding team of staff, board members and volunteers. I have noticed one trend throughout all of these encounters, and that is the joy this organization brings to all. While I was sitting at a table with a lady who is living with dementia, I observed her look around the room during our Wednesday afternoon program and share with a smile, "everyone seems really happy here." I was thinking the same thing!

Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley was started by Deb Kaul and Beth Ustanko to create a safe and supportive community for people impacted by memory loss in Fargo/Moorhead and surrounding communities. One huge benefit to Memory Cafe that I see is the benefits of being connected to others and socializing. There is even scientific based evidence of benefits to socialization. Per the Alzheimer's Association website, "social engagement is associated with reduced rates of disability and mortality, and may also reduce risk for depression. Remaining socially active may support brain health and possibly delay the onset of dementia." Memory Cafe offers you the opportunity to meet others impacted by memory loss and reap the benefits of social engagement.

I hope to see you soon!

With gratitude,

Maggie



The mission of Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is to recognize the intrinsic beauty and value of individuals living with memory loss while inspiring in them and their loved ones hope, joy, and a sense of empowerment.



WINTER'S REAL DEAL

by Mark Bratlie

Most things contract to trap some heat
but does not work for hands or feet;
When they contract they start to shake
and feel as though they just might break.

When "cold as ice" does not suffice,
try "cold as iron"... "cold as steel"
So cold I cannot touch or feel
this must be winter's real deal.

Add the wind with edge so sharp
that cuts through clothing like a blade
While layers seem of little help
as body's heat begins to fade.

Are we meant to live on frozen land?
How much cold torture can we stand?
As some go south in search of heat,
I dream of their warm hands and feet.

"STILL HERE, STILL ME"

Voices of Those Living With Dementia

Comments by Sandy Blomquist



Paul and Sandy

Sandy and her husband, Paul live in the FM area with their three children, Brett -19, Jaden-17, and Nick-15. Sandy was diagnosed with Young Onset Dementia two years ago at the age of 48.

When my Alzheimer's disease showed up my life went crazy. It really turned my life and our family life upside down.

The most frustrating part of living with Alzheimer's is the memory loss...not being able to predict what my brain will allow me to remember in each moment. So many times I'm trying to remember something but it just won't come to me. It's very frustrating, and embarrassing.

I really miss my job and the opportunities it gave me to get out of the house, interact with my co-workers and have a reason to get up each day. And of course we miss my income. I also really miss having my driver's license and the independence it gave me.

But as difficult as this is I try my best to stay upbeat. I'm not going to just sit around! When I get up in the morning I try to ask myself, "What can I do to help others?" I have a lot of great friends and enjoy going out and socializing as much as I can. They have been so good to me throughout this difficult time. I also try to exercise on our treadmill.

Paul and I are so grateful for Memory Cafe and the support they offer us and others who are living with Young Onset Dementia. The emotional support we receive from them is phenomenal and it's so nice to know you aren't alone! I tell everyone I know about Memory Cafe and will do whatever I can to help them raise the funds they need to meet the needs of the memory loss community, including using my voice and our story to help others.

I never thought I'd get Alzheimer's disease and living with it has been really difficult. But I want to help others and do what I can to ensure my children don't get it.

Trust Your Instincts

By Jody Ackerman, Care Partner

Trust your instincts. My husband, Rick was so smart that the first 3-4 doctors we saw kind of shamed me for thinking anything was wrong with Rick. But I knew what he was capable of, and that he had lost much of his brain function. He was still really capable with conversation (because he was a salesman). But his technical skills had been lost.



Keep pursuing your options. And write down any unusual behavioral glitches or changes you notice in your loved one.

Apparently great minds think alike when dressing for Memory Cafe gatherings! Meet Karen #1 and Karen #2!



If you or your loved one is living with memory loss, NOW is time to visit Memory Cafe. You will never feel more 'ready.'

FOR OUR HEALTH:

LEEZASCARECONNECTION.ORG

Leeza created The Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation in 2002 as a promise to her mother Jean to "tell her story and make it count" after her mom's diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. Jean Gibbons died in 2008 but her legacy of optimism through empowerment and education lives on.

At Leeza's Care Connection, our personal philosophy of caring is that you can hold on to yourself, even while letting go of someone you love. Our mantra is "**Call on Your Courage, Summon Your Strength.**" But how do you do that?

We often talk about the things that care partners can do to protect themselves, and one of the most powerful things is knowing what is ours and releasing expectations over things we can't control. Boundaries are the key to maintaining separateness and letting go of unrealistic expectations. It's unrealistic to expect, for example, that you can create a stress-free experience or that others will always help in the same way you do. What you can do is advocate for yourself. Here are some life lessons I've observed or learned along the way:

LESSON 1: Just because someone asks you to do something doesn't mean you should do it. Sounds simple, right? Next time, try saying what you could do or want to do, not just what you're asked to do.

LESSON 2: It's not your job to make everyone else comfortable all the time. Experts agree that solving problems that aren't yours is called "enabling." Try noticing the difference between what's your problem and what isn't.

LESSON 3: Guilt won't kill you. Guilt is a normal emotion as a caregiver. So, acknowledge guilt when you feel it, let it roll over you, and then move on.

LESSON 4: Set boundaries with yourself. Respond to that little voice in your head as you would to someone else who deserves a firm "no."

LESSON 5: Your being is more important than your doing. Doing more won't help you feel more worthy. YOU are already enough.

Sometimes it seems that those who care are perceived as both priceless and worthless at the same time. Yes, most recognition that care partners give hundreds of billions of dollars in unpaid care by showing up is admirable and noble. Yet, all too often, the voices of caregivers and their role in care plans are minimized, silenced, or dismissed.

JUST FOR LAUGHS!

Content Provided by
Steve Froslic and Friends!



A hunting party was hopelessly lost. "I thought you said you were the best guide in Maine!" one of the hunters angrily said to their confused leader. "I am," replied the guide. "But I think we're in Canada now."

If you can't look back on your younger self and realize you were an idiot, you are probably still an idiot.

I'm responsible for what I say, not for what you understand.

The best way to get back on your feet is to miss two car payments.

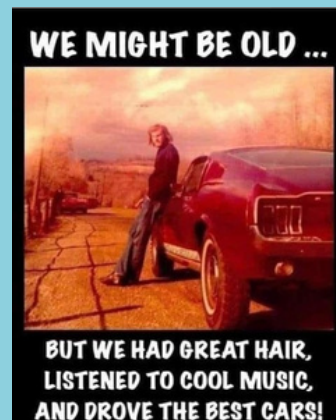
I like making lists. I also like to leave them laying on the kitchen counter and then guess what's on the list when I get to the grocery store.

Chocolate has many preservatives. Preservatives make you look younger.

It only takes one slow-walking person at the grocery store to destroy the illusion that I'm a nice person.

If a bottle of poison reaches it's expiration date is it more poisonous or no longer poisonous?

Did you hear about the Director of the Department of Motor Vehicles who resigned on Tuesday? He tried to resign on Monday, but found he'd been standing in the wrong line.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I believe that every human being feels pleasure in doing good to another."

~Thomas Jefferson



Goal: \$200,000!

Memory Cafe Needs a Home!



Goal: \$200,000!

\$100,000 has been raised for our GHD Match!



OUR GHD CHOIR DEBUT - 2023

Let us know if you'd like to be part of our GHD Choir this year! No singing experience or musical talent required...only your smiling presence! We also need lots of other help this month so please let us know if you are available!

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As old and new friends learn more about the mission and growth of Memory Cafe it is common for them to ask, "Who is on your board of directors?" It's a question I'm always delighted to answer! Our board is composed of ten incredibly well-respected and experienced business leaders, medical providers, community members and Memory Cafe participants!

Board members include:

Maggie Ness - Executive Director
Deb Kaul - Co-founder and Director of Programming and Community Outreach
Mike Slette - President
Dr. Taylor Mertz - Vice-President
Amy Bro - Secretary
Steve Miller - Treasurer
Jean Anderson
Paul Finstad
Rock Messerschmidt
Lonna Whiting

Special thanks to **Sam Olson** who is stepping away from our board. Sam has served on our board since the board was founded in 2019 and has been such a valuable part of our team! Thank you for your dedicated service as our treasurer for all these years, Sam! We appreciate you!

We are very encouraged with the outpouring of support we've received over the past several months from you, our generous friends and community partners! **THANK YOU!** Each gift, no matter how small or large, is vitally important to helping us meet our financial goals and bring our mission to life.

As many of you know, we are currently meeting at FIVE locations throughout the FM area. This is confusing, even for the best of us, but especially so for our friends living with memory loss. And, it is also preventing us from providing an inclusive, consistent, familiar gathering place for members of the rapidly growing memory loss community to gather with others who are traveling a similar journey.

We are committed to finding a permanent home for Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley this year! Will you help make our dream a reality by donating generously to Memory Cafe during GHD this year? It provides our largest influx of income each year! Thank you!

Here are your giving options:

- Visit www.givingheartsday.org anytime before or on Feb. 8th
- **Write a check** - checks may be written out to **Memory Cafe** and dated **2/8/24** with **GHD** written in the memo line. Your check needs to be RECEIVED on or before February 8th! Our address is Box 883, Fargo, ND 58107.
- Deliver your check to our Memory Cafe office at 1122 1st Ave North, Fargo - please call before stopping by.
- Drop off your donation at Dakota Medical Foundation located at 4141 28th Ave S. Fargo anytime on or before Feb. 8th.

Deb and Memory Cafe recognized by DMF 2023 Helping Hearts Award



"HELPING HEARTS AWARDS ARE PRESENTED ANNUALLY TO INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT EXEMPLIFY CARE, KINDNESS, AND COMPASSION FOR THEIR NEIGHBORS. THROUGH THEIR SERVANT LEADERSHIP, THEY ACT AS A MODEL FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW AND EMULATE." - DAKOTA MEDICAL FOUNDATION



MEMORY CAFE FEBRUARY MEETING SCHEDULE

Questions? Call 701-404-6712

MONDAY SCHEDULE

Meet at Bethel Church (2702 30TH Ave S. Fargo)

February Monday Schedule:

9:00-11:00 am - Coffee and Conversation
Six breakout groups; something for everyone!

1:00 - 2:30 pm - Afternoon Programming:

- **5th** - Music, Memories & Musings with Music Therapist Deb McTaggart
- **12th** - Education Dementia Simulation - experiencing some of the feelings & challenges an individual with memory loss may face; Woodburning with Jerry & Janine; Joyful Moments with Val
- **19th** - Creative Therapies with Kristen Young
- **26th** - Dine and Dance - 11:30 to 1:30
Moorhead American Legion, 303 30th St N

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

All meetings are 1-2:30pm at the specified locations

February Wednesday Schedule:

7th - Neuropsychology Assessment Advancements Related to Dementia, Dr. Rodney Swenson, Neurophysiologist
Hope Lutheran Church South, 3636 25th St S, Fargo

14th - Valentine's Day Vinyl Listening Party with Dan Cushing PLUS Intergenerational Art with local artist Emily Brooks and 7th graders from Capstone Classical Academy!
Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead

21st - Fall Prevention and Safety for Seniors, Nicky Holzworth, OTR, Essentia Health/Valley Christian Counseling Center.
Hope Lutheran Church South, 3636 25th St S, Fargo

28th - Caregiver Cafe, Call 701-404-6712 for details
Laugh & Learn Center, 1122 1st Ave N, Fargo

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS

Thursday February 15, 2024 1-3pm

Kick-off rehearsal for our SECOND season!

Location: Bethlehem Lutheran Church
613 16th St. S. Fargo

Young Onset Dementia Support Group

Monday, Feb. 26th, 6:30 - 8pm

Linger Laugh and Learn Center
1122 1st Ave N. Fargo. (use west entrance)

VOLUNTEER MEETING AND TRAINING

February 13th, 1 - 2:30 pm

Linger Laugh and Learn Center

Education - Dementia Simulation Exercise - experiencing some of the feelings and challenges an individual with memory loss may face.

'DINE AND DANCE'

February 26th

11:30 - 1:30pm

Moorhead American Legion

303 30th St. N. Moorhead (north of Frying Pan)

The Cropdusters were a HUGE hit in January so we asked Duster to come back again this month as a DJ! "We got more dancers here on a Monday afternoon than we typically get on a Friday night!", Duster reported! Join us for a delicious lunch and two hours of dancing smiles!



Duster

CHANGE IS GOOD

January, 2024 was a watershed month for me (Deb) and Memory Cafe! On Jan. 8th we extended our famously warm Memory Cafe welcome to our new Executive Director, Maggie Ness! I couldn't possibly be more pleased with how well this transition is going! Maggie is smart, pleasant, hard-working and most importantly, totally dedicated to the memory loss community and the mission of Memory Cafe! We're now a powerhouse team of THREE! Yep, Change IS Good!





THE MAGIC OF MUSIC

SUBMITTED BY DEB MCTAGGART

TAKEN FROM GIVING VOICE CHORUS WEBSITE

Listening to music is magical. A song can make us laugh, smile, cry, and even give us chills.

Making music takes it one step further. And, the most accessible way to make music is by **singing**. Even if you've been told you can't sing, you were meant to sing! Singing is amazing! But, do you know what's even better?

Singing in a chorus!

Scientific research shows that singing in a chorus helps promote wellbeing and social connections with positive effects on physical, mental, and brain health. Many people with Alzheimer's can enjoy choral singing and gain health benefits from it well after other opportunities for creating, learning, and enjoying friends seem out of reach. The areas of the brain that recall music and nurture singing are among the last to be affected by Alzheimer's disease. Care partners benefit from singing as well.

Sing From Your Heart will begin its spring season Thursday, February 15th and we would love to add more singers! For information about the chorus, please visit our website singfromyourheartchorus.org.

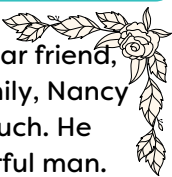
Check out Our New Website!

After months of dreaming about re-designing our website we are thrilled to announce the project is completed! Thanks to the skilled assistance of Amanda Schilling and her team at Mint Brand Marketing our new site is easy to navigate, bright and full of photographs and useful information! Check it out at:

MemoryCafeRRV.org



We enjoyed our dear friend, Dewey and his family, Nancy and Cliff so very much. He was such a wonderful man. Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they mourn his passing.



Dewey and Val (volunteer)

SAVE THE DATE!

REDEFINING MEMORY LOSS CONFERENCE
TUESDAY, JUNE 4TH, HOLIDAY INN, FARGO
SHARON JOHNSON IS RETURNING!



We received RAVE reviews from last year's RML conference with dozens of accolades for our keynote speaker, Sharon Johnson. Great news...she is coming back! Sharon works with the Hearthstone Institute and Abe's Garden based out of Nashville, TN.

Sharon will build on the training she shared last summer while incorporating new material and engaging interactive learning strategies to the conference. Here is a sneak peek...

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES PART 1 -- VERBAL / NON-VERBAL, COMMON CHALLENGES

- **EXERCISE: PEANUT BUTTER**
- **EXERCISE: THREADING (THREADING AND BRANCHING ARE HEARTHSTONE TECHNIQUES FOR COMMUNICATION ADAPTATIONS)**
- **EXERCISE: BRANCHING**

Stay tuned for more details!

Caregivers

By Sue Curley, Memory Cafe Care Partner

Compassionate companions

Amazing angels

Respectfully responsible

Encourage

Grateful

Incredible individuals

Valuable voices

Empathetic

Resilient

Someone special



KINDRED PHILANTHROPY AND YOUTH (PAY)

A PROGRAM OF THE BARRY FOUNDATION



Budding Philanthropists

We were recently honored with a visit from this fine group of students from Kindred High School! Their mission to "support the emotional and mental health of elderly and children through special services" is a very close match to our mission. Future leaders of Memory Cafe, perhaps?



NORTHLAND PACE

By Theresa Simon, Northland Pace Outreach Director

I would like to thank all of you for the opportunity to speak to you on Wednesday, January 17th. I would just like to mention a couple things:

1) In our brochure it states that individuals need to be eligible for nursing home level of care. That is not completely correct. When we submit Levels of Care to the state, we are asking for PACE level of care approval, rather than Nursing Home level of care. This basically means that if someone has medical diagnoses that require ongoing medical oversight by a medical provider and have medications that need to be managed in some way, they will qualify for PACE.

2) If you have any interest in pursuing possible PACE enrollment for your loved one, we strongly encourage you to contact us sooner. We often see situations where an individual would have been a good fit for PACE but because of waiting too long, we were not able to enroll them because they were not safe at home alone for any length of time. Because we do not provide 24 hour care, this can be a barrier to enrollment for some people.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact us at 701-412-2081. Thank you so much! And remember to take care of yourself too during this journey in life. It is a marathon, not a sprint!

FRIENDSHIP LINE



Are you feeling lonely, isolated or depressed? Give the Friendship Line a call – because sometimes we all need a friend. 888.670.1360

The Friendship Line is a signature program of Institute on Aging, and has never gone unanswered since it was founded in 1973 by Dr. Patrick Arbore. Dr. Arbore's observation that "connection to others binds us to life" led him to establish the Friendship Line, which is both a "warm line" and a crisis intervention center for routine – even daily – phone calls that provide emotional support and friendly conversation.

Institute on Aging's staff and volunteers field approximately 11,000 inbound and outbound calls per month. The nationally-known Friendship Line is a program of Institute on Aging's Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention and Grief-Related Services, and is accredited by the American Association of Suicidology.

HOW TO PLAN FOR DECLINE IN ALZHEIMER'S DEMENTIA:

A 5-Step Approach to Navigating Difficult Decisions & Crises with Less Stress (Excerpted)

by Leslie Kernisan, MD MPH

www.betterhealthwhileaging.net

The following five steps will give you a foundation for anticipating, processing, and reacting to the complications and problems of later-stage Alzheimer's with less anxiety and more confidence. These steps are:

1. **Be aware of what kinds of declines and crises to expect, as your loved one's Alzheimer's and other health conditions progress.**
2. **Think about what he/she would want, and what your family would want for him/her.**
3. **Consider and discuss goals of care with your health care providers.**
4. **Learn to use a benefits-and-burdens framework to navigate particular decisions.**
5. **Consider when and how you might dial back on "usual" medical care.**

You'll be ahead of the curve and better able to make informed and realistic decisions along the way if you have an understanding of three things:

1. **The basics of how dementia progresses.**
2. **What kinds of problems and crises might come up due to other chronic conditions your aging parent has.**
3. **Typical problems and health crises that often come up for people with dementia.**

If you haven't already done so, you should become familiar with the broad trajectory of how people decline due to Alzheimer's and related conditions.

It's especially important to pay some attention to what happens in the late-stage of dementia, and how people die from dementia. Honestly, most people find it sad and upsetting to learn about this, so many avoid it. You don't have to think about this every day, but by having peeked ahead and focused on it at least once, you'll be able to draw on that knowledge when important decisions have to be made.

(Note: many older adults with Alzheimer's and related dementias do end up dying before they reach the "can't walk, can't talk" stage of advanced Alzheimer's...because it usually takes several years to reach that stage, and they die of some other health problem first.)

CONTACT US: MEMORY CAFE RRV

- PO Box 883, Fargo, ND 58107
- 701-404-6712
- www.MemoryCafeRRV.org
- hello@memorycaferrv.org
- Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley
- memorycafe_rrv



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