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## WHY WE SUPPORT MEMORY CAFE

By Paul and Debbie Finstad

"We have family and friends that dealt with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The programs and services Memory Cafe provides have been so helpful. The volunteers and staff are so caring and supportive. They provide support groups, education, exercise classes, connections and much more at no cost. We are proud to support Memory Cafe and encourage others to contribute to this valuable community organization."



Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

The holiday season is officially here! As my Son, Griffin would say, "Santa coming to town!?" We are working on completing full sentences. And I add the question mark as it is always a question for Griffin after we play the song Santa Claus is Coming to Town. He takes this song very literally. Each time we play this song we get to remind him that he won't be coming until Christmas Eve. This boy LOVES Santa! There is something very special about observing the magic of the holidays through a child.

I understand that the holiday season can be a stressful time for many; with multiple events to attend, calendars to juggle, food to make, a house to clean, gifts to buy, unpredictable weather, the list goes on and on. For someone living with memory loss or caring for someone, this can add to the layer of stress.

In this newsletter, we hope to provide you with some tips to help manage some of the stress that the holiday season can bring, especially for those impacted by memory loss. I hope that through these tips, you can reduce some of the stress of the holiday season. I also hope you are able to enjoy the magic of the holidays (even just a little bit), like you did when you were young.

If you are considering a gift to Memory Cafe this year, I encourage you to consider looking into the FM Area Foundation Catalog. See page 4 with more information.

From all of us at Memory Cafe, we wish you a happy and healthy holiday season!

With gratitude,

Maggie Ness



(Griffin's picture w/ Santa last year)

## STILL HERE, STILL ME

Voices of Those Living With Memory Loss

Living With a New Diagnosis

By Janelle Berg, Memory Cafe participant



**Stained glass by Mark Bratlie**

**Submitted by his wife, Jean Anderson**

*"This was my husband Mark Bratlie's favorite year-round ornament. It holds the message of the best gift we can give to everyone!" ~ Jean*



**Janelle and Brian Berg**

My name is Janelle Berg. Approximately one year ago, I was diagnosed at the age of 44 with Alzheimer's disease. The doctors were unsure of the type of dementia I had but they felt it was Alzheimer's type even though they said they had never met someone with dementia at such a young age. Sanford recommended I go to Fairview Health in order to receive a medication that would hopefully slow down the progression along with taking the medications Aricept and Namenda.

The news of being told you have Alzheimer's disease at age 44 is not something you want to hear. Also, being told you cannot work anymore is very upsetting to say the least. It felt like someone and something was putting holes in my heart and life.

Because of my rapidly progressing disease I was able to see a Sub-memory specialist at Fairview in June. This specialist informed us that I did not have Alzheimer's disease but rather, long-term Covid with moderate cognitive abilities. He told me I was able to continue driving and eventually work part-time. I was pleased with this news. I thank God for the many blessings bestowed upon me in my life.

But my cognitive challenges still had a major impact on my life. I felt socially isolated, as so many of my friends were still working. To fill the gaps in my life, I joined Memory Cafe a couple months ago. This group has been so supportive and it alleviates the gaps in my life that were missing. I enjoy talking about my remaining strengths and also my weaknesses with my Memory Cafe friends. This group plays such a positive place in my life. I also enjoy hearing about other people's struggles, as I then don't feel so alone or socially isolated.

I continue to work on areas of weakness in order to enhance the quality of my life. Maybe for the first time in months, I feel more optimistic with my future.

Thank you, Memory Cafe, for giving me hope again.

~ Janelle

## WELCOME TO OUR BOARD SARAH!



We are delighted to announce that Sarah Nupdal is now a member of our Board of Directors! Sarah is the Senior VP, Director of Banking Legal at Bell Bank. She earned her undergraduate business degree and her law degree (cum laude) from the University of North Dakota. She is a graduate of the United Way's 35 under 35 Women's Leadership Program and was named to Prairie Business Magazine's Top 25 Women in Business in 2022.

*"I learned about Memory Café from a work colleague I greatly respect. As I met Maggie and learned more about the mission, I felt a profound sense of hope. A hope that I wish my family and I would have had when we needed it most and a hope that I am grateful exists now in our community. They say it takes a village to raise children, but it also takes a village to care for those impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia. A village to empower them and to provide a quality of life they would not otherwise have. My grandma Shirley was my biggest cheerleader growing up and had a significant impact on the woman I am today. Losing her to these brain altering diseases was incredibly difficult. I am looking forward to the ability to play a small role in the village of others in similar situations and to ensure the legacy of Grandma Shirley lives on."*



### FOR OUR HEALTH

Ten Stress Relieving Tips for the Holidays (excerpted)

Dailycaring.org



#### 1. Make time for yourself

It's easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of extra tasks and hassles that the holidays bring. Make it a priority to take time for yourself to sit quietly, relax, recharge. This isn't a waste of time.

#### 2. Know your priorities

Taking time to consider what gives you the most meaning and fulfillment helps you prioritize activities, events, and even people. That helps you focus your time and energy so you won't feel so overwhelmed and drained.

#### 3. Take care of yourself during difficult family interactions.

The holidays often means spending time with people you may not see the rest of the year. That can mean spending time with family or others who criticize your caregiving, don't help out, or are unsupportive or unkind. Since you can't simply avoid these people, the best way to protect yourself is to keep contact as minimal as possible and stay neutral and civil.

This isn't the time or place to hash out bigger issues or vent frustrations. If you do have run-ins with unpleasant people, walk away as soon as you can and give yourself a little time to cool off and calm down before rejoining the group.

#### 4. Make room for grief

The holidays can be tough when you're missing someone important to you. Consider setting a place at the table, having a moment of silence, or sharing favorite memories as a way to honor them. If you're feeling sad, remind yourself that it's completely natural and that you don't have to pretend to be cheerful. Give yourself permission to feel your emotions as they are and don't feel obligated to participate in activities if the emotions are too overwhelming.

(Continued p. 7)

### THANK YOU MICROSOFT!



We are so encouraged by the continued support we receive from the Microsoft Fargo team! Thank you, Morgan and team for your time, joy and helpful service last month! It was GREAT!

### JUST FOR LAUGHS

#### STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS



Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

Your hand and mouth agreed many years ago that as far as chocolate is concerned, there is no need to involve the brain.

~Dave Barry

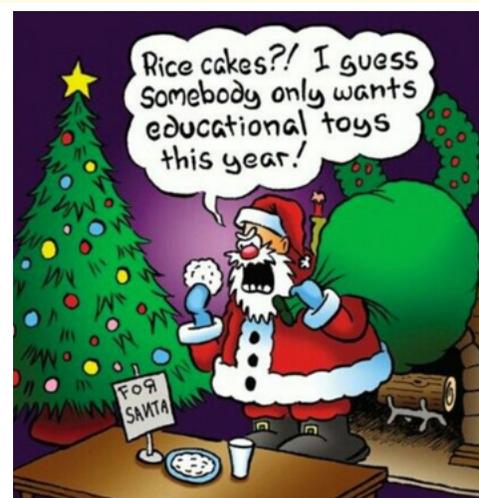
What is a vegan favorite Christmas carol? "Soy to the World!"

What did the Gingerbread Man put on his bed? "A cookie sheet!"

Knock, knock  
Who's there?  
Honda.  
Honda who?  
Honda first day of Christmas my true love sent to me ...

What is red, white and blue on Christmas Eve? A very sad candy cane!

"My wife Mary and I have been married for forty-seven years and not once have we had an argument serious enough to consider divorce; murder, yes, but divorce, never." Jack Benny



### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait until Christmas to do that?"

~Bob Hope



## **CREATING JOY-FILLED MOMENTS THROUGH YOUR GENEROUS GIVING**

**By Mike Slette, MC Board President**

Joy is defined by my online dictionary as that “emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying.” Joy may be sometimes hard to describe but easy to know when you see it. Can I give you an example?

Here’s a picture of our youngest grandchild, Eloise, whose newfound crawling skills recently got her to her mommy’s legs from across the living room. I don’t know about you, but her face looks like pure joy to me!



A deep sense of joy recently wrapped its arms around me at Memory Café’s annual Caregiver Celebration held in November at Hope South. The afternoon included warm greeters welcoming every special guest, volunteers hosting those living with memory loss for fun activities, and a wonderful program for caregivers including pre-Thanksgiving pumpkin pie and fabulous door prizes. It was a joyous gathering for the Memory Café family and like all weekly Memory Café programming, all were invited to attend at no charge.

Living out our mission statement’s call “to inspire hope, joy and a sense of empowerment” takes on many forms over the year, none of which are possible without the generous support of people giving of their time and resources.

As you consider your year-end giving, please remember Memory Café along with other charities important in your life. Your gifts make all things possible at Memory Café. And know with confidence that you bring joy to life in beautiful ways for the Memory Café family we serve together.

Thank you and Merry Christmas!

## **TESTIMONY**

“The atmosphere at Memory Cafe is as close to heaven as we will get on this earth.”

~Lily, MC participant living with Mild Cognitive Impairment



## **BE THE SECRET SANTA OUR MEMORY LOSS COMMUNITY NEEDS**

Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley does not receive any state or federal funding to support our programs and services which we distribute free of charge to our participants and community members. This is made possible through the generous financial support we receive from our community friends, local businesses, participants and our dedicated team of volunteers. Please consider a gift to Memory Cafe during this year’s FM Area Foundation Caring Catalog December 2nd - December 13th. Thank you!



### **How to Donate:**

- Write a check made out to FM Area Foundation.
- Write 'Memory Cafe' in the memo line. Send the check to: Memory Cafe, PO Box 883, Fargo, ND 58107 (check needs to be received by Dec. 13th)
- **OR**
- Visit [www.areafoundation.org/caringcatalog](http://www.areafoundation.org/caringcatalog), locate Memory Cafe and click the 'Donate' button.

## **TESTIMONY**

**By Kerwin and Flora Borgen**



“Memory Cafe is helpful to me. I didn’t think I needed it but it is helpful to hear from others in the men’s caregiver support group. There is a lot of variance of what the others are going through and I think it will prepare me for what is probably next.” ~ Kerwin

## **TESTIMONY**

“Memory Cafe has been a game changer for me. I can’t imagine where I would be without these marvelous women and their constant support. No one understands our situation totally unless they have lived it. The love and friendships will be with me forever.”

~ Marlys Verwey



**DECEMBER MEETING SCHEDULE**



**ALL MEMORY CAFE GATHERINGS ARE FREE.  
NO RESERVATIONS OR DOCTOR'S ORDERS ARE REQUIRED.  
NEWCOMERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**

**MONDAY SCHEDULE**

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

9:00 - 9:30 - Fitness and Friends with Coach Jake

9:30 - 11:00 am - Coffee and Conversation Groups

Separate caregiver support groups for men and women care partners with a monthly education session. NOTE: trained volunteers engage with your loved one in a separate room during these support groups.

Dec. 16th Morning Caregiver Education - TBA

The Gathering: A support group for men and women experiencing early stages of memory changes from advancing age or any medical reason.

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

Dec. 2nd - Music, Memories, and Musings with Music Therapist, Deb McTaggart

Dec. 9th - Effective Communication Strategies, Carolina Zammaron, Alzheimer's Assoc Sr. Program Manager

Dec. 16th - Creative Therapies with Kristen Young

Dec. 23rd - No afternoon or evening programming

Dec. 30th - No programming

**'DINE AND DANCE'**

No 'Dine and Dance' this month.

**'THE GATHERING' SUPPORT GROUP**

Support group for individuals experiencing early stages of memory loss caused by aging or any medical reason. No diagnosis or reservation necessary. Every Monday, 9-11am, (except during the holidays), Bethel church.

**WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE**

All meetings are held from 1 - 2:30pm at various locations as noted below:

4th - Annual Intergenerational fleece blanket project - 'Tie 90 blankets in 90 minutes!' Hope Lutheran church, South campus.

11th - Home Safety and Scam Prevention Strategies, West Fargo Fire and Police Dept. Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead.

18th - Christmas Concert with Sarah Morrau and Rebekka DeVries and the Moorhead High School Carolers, Hope Lutheran church, South campus.

25th - No Programming - Merry Christmas!

**MOVING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER LOSS SUPPORT GROUP**

No meeting this month.

**YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP**

No meeting this month.

**VOLUNTEER CHRISTMAS PARTY!**



All volunteers are warmly welcome to attend our annual Christmas party at the Kaul's home. Address will be provided upon your RSVP.

Tuesday, Dec. 10th from 11:30-1pm. Please bring an appetizer or plate of Christmas goodies to share with the group!

Last name A - N - Please bring an appetizer.

Last name O -Z - Please bring some sweet Christmas goodies.

**SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS**

**Carols and Cookies!**



Join us for a festive time of carol singing and cookies!

Thursday, December 12, 1:00-2:30

Bethlehem Lutheran Church 613 16th St. S. Fargo

Friends and family are invited!



## NEW FUNCTIONAL ALZHEIMER'S CLOTHING LINE

LindaLarsenNYC.com

Linda Larsen NYC is a functional and stylish women's adaptive clothing line thoughtfully designed to make living with Alzheimer's and dementia-related illnesses easier and safer for individuals, families & caregivers.



People who have Alzheimer's and their caregivers often face a loss of dignity and a challenging daily existence. The number of individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's increases every year, and yet a cure is a distant idea. Families quickly learn how crucial it is to create a day-to-day environment that makes living with Alzheimer's easier. Inspired by personal experience, the new clothing line, Linda Larsen NYC, was designed to address and lessen some of those challenges.

## MANAGING THE EARLY STAGES (Excerpted)

*The Science of Alzheimer's*, John Hopkins University Press By Nancy L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins

The diseases that cause dementia bring about many kinds of losses. Among them are loss of independence, skills, control over one's daily activities, and the ability to do the things that make one feel useful or important. Perhaps the most terrible loss of all is the loss of memory. Losing one's memories means losing one's day-to-day connections with others and with the past.

Even early in the disease, the person may completely forget recent events. Without a recollection of leaving the stove on or having a car accident, they may reasonably insist that they can take care of themselves or that they are still a good driver. They are not denying the reality of the situation - they just cannot remember the mistakes that are evidence of their impairment. If they are not able to assess their own limitations, it may seem to them as if things are unfairly taken from them and that their family is "taking over." By recognizing how the person may feel, you may be able to find ways to help them make necessary changes and still feel that they are in control of their life.

Three areas that are often most difficult are the loss of a job, managing his/her finances, and giving up driving.

With each of these situations it is important to listen, and to seek out professional advice and evaluations. Avoid getting into arguments but recognize that sometimes you may need to take a decision out of their hands.

## A WORD ABOUT "SHOWTIME"

Living With Dementia, Mayo Clinic Jonathan Graff-Radford, MD and Angela M. Lunde, M.A



Dr. Graff-Radford and Angela Lunde, MA  
2025 RML Keynote speakers (see below)

Sometimes people with dementia display higher functioning for a short period of time when relatives visit or when speaking to a health care provider. This is described as showtime.

**When it happens:** Showtime usually happens when people with dementia are with people who are outside their typical social circle. Showtime may happen when they are visiting with a friend or distant relative - or in a health care professional's office. It most often happens in the early stages of dementia.

**How it might feel:** Showtime can be frustrating for you as a care partner when you need validation. When showtime happens, you may think the health care team feels you are exaggerating the issues you are seeing.

**What you can do:** Just being aware of showtime can help you cope with it. Consider keeping a journal of your day-to-day observations. This can help you capture specific details to discuss with the health care team.

### 2025 REDEFINING MEMORY LOSS CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS - DR JONATHON RADFORD-GRAFF AND ANGELA M. LUNDE, MAYO CLINIC

Tuesday, June 3rd  
8:30 - 4:30 pm  
Holiday Inn, Fargo

## MEMORY CAFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE



Reminding our MC participants that they are *intrinsically* beautiful and valuable is central to the mission of MC. One of the ways we demonstrate this is by engaging in community service projects, such as our annual intergenerational fleece blanket project. With the help of area elementary students we make 90 blankets in 90 minutes which are then given to five area non-profits to distribute during the holiday season! Join us - Dec. 4th at Hope Lutheran South at 1pm!



Ten Stress Relieving Tips for the Holidays (Con't from p. 3)

- 5. Reflect on what you're grateful for**  
Practicing gratitude changes your perspective and helps you see that there is always some good in life, even in tough times. Jot down 3 things you're grateful for, do a quick gratitude exercise, or tell someone why you're grateful for them.
- 6. Remember that holiday stress will pass**  
When you're in the middle of a stressful situation, it can feel like it's never going to end. Remind yourself that this will be over soon, that you've successfully made it through every previous holiday season, and focus on noticing and enjoying as many positive moments as possible. You could even keep a countdown calendar and mark off each day as a visual reminder that you're getting closer and closer to the end of the festivities.
- 7. Try to understand why you might be feeling negative emotions**  
Negative emotions could be related to unrealistic expectations of yourself, too-ambitious goals, or just feeling overwhelmed. It may make sense to adjust your expectations or choose to do less.
- 8. Find reasons to laugh**  
Humor is a fantastic stress reducer and an effective way of coping. Take opportunities to laugh. And if funny things don't come up naturally, watch a funny movie or do something silly like playing charades or having a fun sing-a-long.
- 9. Take a few moments for deep breathing, meditation, or music**  
Breath, meditate for 2 minutes, listen to music or stretch.
- 10. Lean on a self care buddy**  
It can be helpful to talk to someone - in person, via phone, or even by text when you are feeling frustrated and need to vent.

REMEMBER THEIR GREATNESS (Excerpted) Creating Moments of Joy by Jolene Brackey



What has brought your loved one great joy throughout life? To create a moment of joy for them remind them of their greatness, "You are a great baseball player!" or "You are such a fabulous mother!" Let go of your expectations, change the rules to any game you might play together in order to let them feel like they win every time and SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY so they can still do what they are good at!

"BOB 1 AND BOB 2"

By Mary Schmidt, Bob's wife



There is a book about dementia called "My Two Elaines" written by the former governor of WI about his wife who lives with dementia. The title is self-explanatory.

I live with two Bobs. I call them Bob 1 and Bob 2. Bob 1 lives in my world & Bob 2 lives in his world. I try to keep Bob 1 in my world as much as possible but sometimes (and those times are much more frequent) it's not possible & even better to not only let him be in his world - but to join him there.

For example, we stayed in a cabin at Itasca State Park this past weekend. There was no TV, a high fire alert meant no outdoor fires, Bob can no longer read & it was too chilly for him to sit outside. Kris Kristofferson had recently passed so I pulled up his music on my phone along with Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson etc. Out came Bob 2 in his world. He was back in Aberdeen, listening to "his collection of music" surrounded by friends. He was so glad I stopped over and that I loved his "collection".

We shared a glass of red wine & dark chocolate and his music.

Mike and Cathy called and the conversation switched to pheasants, hunting and shotguns. After the phone call he remembered none of the day; not the walk along the lake, the music or Mike's call. The next day we left and he said what a wonderful place with all the colors etc. His heart was full of gratitude and joy.

On the way back to Fargo he thought he was in SD & kept asking if we were coming to Hecla - our old stomping grounds for hunting.

You might ask me "How's Bob doing?" How do I answer that? He is grateful, happy, declining & I am slowing losing him. He may be in my world or in his. Whichever one he is in he always tells me he loves me & is so blessed to have me in his life. How great is that? How very blessed I am to have him in my life.

# CONTACT US: MEMORY CAFE RRV

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hello@memorycaferrv.org

Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley  
memorycafe\_rrv



## Memory Cafe Holiday Open House!

Everyone Welcome!

Tuesday, Dec. 3rd  
3 - 6:30 pm

Linger, Laugh and Learn Center  
1122 1st Ave N. Fargo  
(Use west entrance on 12th St.)

## SPONSORS



The Marv Bossart Parkinson's Foundation

ALEX STERN FAMILY FOUNDATION