



Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

June 2025



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VOLUNTEERING: IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR!

By Craig and Deb Marshall

We started volunteering at Memory Café of the Red River Valley three years ago. Both of our moms lived with Alzheimer's and dementia, and while we did the best we could as caregivers, we often wished we had something like Memory Café during that time. A space like this, full of compassion, community, and understanding, would have helped us better grasp what our moms were experiencing and would have given us support from others on a similar journey.



Now, we show up each week because we've grown to love the participants and their care partners. One of our favorite parts is watching people come to life through music at Dine and Dance. (Con't p. 2)

Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

I had the opportunity to visit with and interview three of our participants who are in our weekly group called the Gathering. I was honored to have the opportunity to hear their story. I am so proud of our Gathering group members for their bravery to do something that isn't the typical "midwestern" approach when it comes to talking about changes they are experiencing to their cognition. It's by sharing our story, we can help others who may have a difficult time opening up about their own cognitive changes and to help our community understand how to best support you and others on this journey.

After these interviews, I thought back to my previous role at the Alzheimer's Association when I would sit one and one with individuals living early-stage memory loss. Almost every person I met in that role described wanting to be able to meet with others experiencing similar changes, to learn how to navigate life with their cognitive changes, to continue to stay physically and socially active, to find purpose, etc. I didn't have a group to send them to as this particular group was not started yet by Memory Cafe. I am so grateful **the Gathering was started one year ago** to holistically support the wellbeing of those living with early-stage memory loss.

This weekly group is a safe place to meet others navigating life with early-stage memory loss, learn how to live well with your cognitive changes, and to find hope on your journey. The group has grown to serving 20 individuals. On page 4, you will have the opportunity to read a few of their testimonials from being a part of this group.

Deb Kaul and Becky Spanier (Gathering Facilitators) - Thank you for your leadership and for creating a safe space to gather, share and learn more about how to live well with early-stage memory loss.

Gathering participants - We are so grateful you are a part of this group! Thank you for showing up. Thank you for growing with us and helping us navigate this new group to learn how we can best support you and others impacted by early-stage memory loss. Your voice and presence matters.

Memory Cafe supporters - Thank you for supporting our mission to help us create supportive and engaging programming to support those impacted by memory loss in our community and the surrounding region.

With gratitude,
Maggie Ness

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.

DOWN TO EARTH

By James Crews

*How to Love the World
Poems of Gratitude and Hope*

Edited by James Crews



The heart of a farmer
is made of muscle
and clay that aches
for return to earth.
And when the sky
releases a steady rain,
massaging each row
of sprouted beans,
my husband leans out
of the car window
and opens his hand
to hold that water
for a single instant,
his heart now beating
in sync with rain
seeping through layers
to kiss the roots
of every plant alive
on this living, breathing
planet on whose back
we were granted
permission to live
for a limited time.

VOLUNTEERING: IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR!

(Con't from p. 1)

These moments are such a powerful reminder of the joy
that still exists in the midst of memory loss.

An added blessing has been having our grandson,
Brady, volunteer with us when he doesn't have school.
He loves helping with name tags and welcoming guests,
and it's been so meaningful to share this experience as
a family. For us, volunteering here is more than giving
back. It's become a way of healing & connection, and
it's something we're grateful to be a part of.

In Loving Memory



Afton and Ron

Memory Cafe lost another
dear friend last month with
the passing of Afton (Podge)
Nellermoe. Our warmest
condolences to her devoted
husband of sixty-eight years,
Ron, and their loving family.

STILL HERE, STILL ME

Voices of Those Living With Memory Loss

By Bruce Hagen, Memory Cafe Participant

Two years ago I began to experience
memory issues and confusion. I'm a farmer
and I was having trouble with numbers.
What used to take me a few hours during
the spring and fall, turned into every day,
most of the day and then into the evening.
Mornings were a little better than
afternoons and evenings for book work but
I just couldn't compute or weigh out
numbers like I used to do. I knew
something was wrong.

My behavior and routines also changed, and that was hard on
my family. Last year, July 2024, I was diagnosed with Mild
Cognitive Impairment (MCI). There was a reason for all of the
changes.

Since then I traveled with my son on the Honor Flight to
Washington DC in April, 2024. I'm so glad he and my daughter
insisted we go. It was a good time to do it. Our daughter
graduates this month from UND, and I'll be celebrating with her
and my family.

I keep busy -seems like a lot of appointments now—and although
things have changed a bit—I'm retired now—I try and laugh a lot
and make time for my wife and kids.

I'm thankful for my family and the people of Memory Cafe. You're
doing it right Memory Cafe!

ATTITUDE MATTERS

Preview of slides from Angela Lunde,
Keynote speaker, RML (excerpted)



Hope is a cognitive-behavioral process. It is about having a goal
and a pathway to achieve a goal, its about a sense of agency
and an attitude of "my life can continue to
be meaningful" and "I can "

- Alzheimer's disease is a condition I have; it is not who I am.
- I will maintain a "can do" mindset.
- I believe in my ability to contribute, learn and live a meaningful life.
- I can accept that things will eventually change, and I will need more help and support from others.
- I will treat myself with kindness and know that I am doing the best I can - and that is good enough.

"I can still learn things.

*I can still do the things I enjoy doing.
Most importantly, I still have a voice."*

~Mike, living with Lewy body dementia



FOR OUR HEALTH

THE HIDDEN RISKS OF HEARING LOSS

alzheimersfdn.org



Hearing loss has been linked to an increase in cognitive decline, often related to depression, social isolation and reduced activity.

"If you have hearing loss you become more socially isolated," says Nicholas Reed, an associate professor and audiologist at the Optimal Aging Institute at New York University's Grossman School of Medicine. "We have evidence now from several studies that the sensory input to your brain really does affect atrophy over time. In a way, your brain's not exercising if it's not receiving sensory input so that affects atrophy and network structures."

The 2024 Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention, Intervention and Care identified hearing loss as one of the modifiable risk factors for dementia. Treating hearing loss could prevent up to seven percent of dementia cases globally, making it one of the most impactful areas for potential prevention, according to the commission.

Reed said the importance of the "cognitive load piece" can be seen on MRIs.

"We see that those with hearing loss have this prefrontal area lighting up that those with normal hearing do not have. It's quite literally evidence of your brain trying to compensate and make up for bad cell phone signals, if you will, the bad auditory signals."

He said social isolation changes inflammation and the immune system.

"It is a physical reaction in our body to be socially isolated, to be truly not engaged. Humans are just not meant to do that."

EFFECT OF HEARING AIDS

In response to this association between hearing loss and dementia in older adults, The National Institute of Health has funded research that found hearing aids slow cognitive decline in people at high risk. They enrolled adults aged 70 to 84 with substantial hearing loss to compare the rate of cognitive decline over a three-year period between people who did and didn't receive hearing aids.

Half of the study group members received hearing aids and instructions on how to use them. The other half was assigned to a health education program focused on promoting healthy aging. The people receiving hearing aids had an almost 50 percent reduction in the rate of cognitive decline.

JUST FOR LAUGHS

STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS



Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

I called the incontinence hotline recently. They asked if I could hold.

Bickering with your spouse is like trying to read the Terms of Use for a new service. In the end, you just give up and click "I agree."

Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind getting older, then it really doesn't matter.

An old man is in his living room telling a friend about a restaurant he went to, but he can't remember the name. "Hey what's that flower, with red petals and thorns, and men give it to women as a romantic gift?"

"A rose?" his friend asks.
"Yes, that's it, thank you!" He turns toward the kitchen and shouts, "Hey Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?"

I ran out of toilet paper and am now using lettuce leaves. Today was just the tip of the iceberg. Tomorrow romaines to be seen. (Covid 19 throwback joke)



"Good news.
Your cholesterol has stayed the same,
but the research findings have changed."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I want psychiatrists to put down their prescription pads for a moment and listen to me."

~Richard Taylor, Ph.D, lived with Alzheimer's disease
Author, *Alzheimer's From the Inside Out*



BUILDING SKILLS AND COMMUNITY



SOLD OUT

SOLD OUT

Redefining Memory Loss Conference - 6th Annual Tuesday June 3, 2025 | 8:00-4:30 | Holiday Inn | Fargo ND

We are THRILLED to announce that our 6th Annual Redefining Memory Loss conference sold out this year...weeks in advance! Thank you to our generous sponsors who share our concern for the health and well-being of those living within the memory loss community. Together, we are truly changing the way we think about and support memory loss!

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HAPPY 1ST BIRTHDAY TO 'THE GATHERING' GROUP!

"The Gathering is a group of people who are all experiencing early stages of memory loss. We are friends walking down a common path. Our leaders, Deb and Becky lead the group with kindness and insight."

~Barb Kemper



Erwin (and Karen)

"The leaders are the kindest people you can run into. They treat you like kings and queens. I encourage anybody to join Memory Cafe."

"It has been a blessing and I am glad I have a group like this to go to."

~Erwin Elker



"I love coming to meet with my 'Forgetful Friends' on Monday mornings at The Gathering! I felt at home right away and felt like I had something to offer which is kind of important. I will do anything to help Memory Cafe!"

~Ellen Johanson 4.



JUNE 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)

NOTE: JUNE SCHEDULE CHANGES:

JUNE 2nd - Morning programs only - 9:00 - 9:30 - Fitness and Friends Exercise with Coach Jake Heile
9:30 - 11:00 - Coffee and Conversation Support Groups (free respite care for your loved one provided by our well-trained volunteers). Bethel church
9:30 - 11 - 'The Gathering' - Support group for individuals experiencing early stages of memory loss for any medical reason.

NO afternoon programs

June 3rd - 6th Annual Redefining Memory Loss conference. Holiday Inn. **SOLD OUT**

June 9th - No morning or afternoon programs - Bethel closed.

June 16th - Morning programs only - 9:00 - 9:30 - Fitness and Friends Exercise with Coach Jake Heile
9:30 - 11:00 - Coffee and Conversation Support Groups (free respite care for your loved one by our well-trained volunteers). Bethel church
9:30 - 11 - 'The Gathering' - Support group for individuals experiencing early stages of memory loss for any medical reason.

NO afternoon programs

June 23rd - 9 - 11am - Regular morning programming (see above)

11:30 - 1:30pm - Dine and Dance with Tim Moser, Moorhead American Legion, 303 30th St. N.
Moorhead

6 - 7:30pm - Young Onset Dementia Support Group
West Fargo Rustad Center, 601 26th Ave E. West
Fargo

June 30th - 9-11am - Regular morning programming (see above)

NO afternoon programs

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

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

June 4th - No programs

June 11th - Implementing RML conference takeaways - Maggie Ness and Abby Husar, Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead.

June 18 - Music with the Dakota Brass Band, Hope Lutheran church, South Campus.

June 25th:

9:30 - 11am - Moving Ahead: Life After Loss Support Group.

1 - 2:30pm - Caregiver Cafe. Both groups meet at the Linger, Laugh and Learn Center, 1122 1st Ave N. Fargo

MOVING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

For widows/widowers who have lost their loved one from dementia. Call 701-404-6712 for more information
June 25th - 9:30-11am, Linger Laugh and Learn Center

YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP

West Fargo Rustad Rustad Center, 6 - 7:30pm, 601 26th Ave E. West Fargo Call 701-404-6712 for information.
Education - Planning for an Absent Caregiver

VOLUNTEER MEETING AND EDUCATION

Tuesday, June 10th 1 - 2:30pm. Education - "Looking Forward to Fall" with Abby

'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, Bethel church.

DINE AND DANCE

Dine and Dance with Tim Moser! June 23rd, 11:30-1:30, Moorhead American Legion. 303 30th St.N Moorhead



Sing From Your Heart Chorus



Sing From Your Heart Chorus Celebrates Two Years of Song!

This spring marks a joyful milestone for the Sing From Your Heart Chorus as we celebrate our second anniversary! What began with a small group of attendees from Memory Cafe in the spring of 2023, has blossomed into a vibrant chorus of approximately 28 singers, with room for more voices!

We recently wrapped up a successful fourth season, highlighted by our concert performance, "Let Your Spirit Sing," which truly reflected the joy and connection experienced through singing.

Sing From Your Heart would like to invite you to our annual **Summer Sing!** If you enjoy the simple pleasure of singing, we'd love for you to join us on **Thursday, June 26th, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM** at Bethlehem Lutheran Church (613 16th Street South, Fargo).

Come share your voice and experience the joy and fun of singing together! Visit our website, singfromyourheartchorus.org for more information about the chorus.

“DANCING WITH FRIENDS” – DANCE LESSONS

We are excited to partner with Courts Plus to offer a fun and engaging opportunity to explore the joy of dancing! This welcoming dance class is designed for all skill levels and abilities - no experience needed! We'll explore a variety of social dance styles such as one-step line dancing, the waltz, and the two-step, just to name a few. Come to one, a few or all classes! **FREE!**

Dates: June 17th, 24th and July 1st

Time: 1:00-2:00 pm

**Location: Courts Plus Community Fitness
(3491 University Dr. S. Fargo)**

Pre-registration Desired

Walk-ins Welcome

Call: 701-404-6712

CARE PARTNER CORNER

**By Teryl Clausen, LSW (retired)
Care Partner Support Group Facilitator**

I got to wondering one day if gratitude has any positive impact on the brain because it's relatively easy to be thankful and who doesn't want rewards for expressing it? I read an article from Positive Psychology and other sources that cited research studies done on this topic.

Here is some of what I learned:



Gratitude in any form can enlighten the mind and make us feel happier. It has a healing effect on us.

When we express gratitude and receive the same, our brain releases dopamine and serotonin, the two crucial neurotransmitters responsible for our emotions that make us feel good. In addition, studies also show that gratitude releases toxic emotions, reduces pain, improves sleep quality, aids in stress regulation, and reduces anxiety and depression.

Ways to enhance the impact:

- **Appreciate yourself:** Stand in front of your mirror and speak out five good things to yourself. It can be about your past achievements or your present efforts, your talents and your virtues.
- **Gratitude journal:** A gratitude journal is your personal place to write down all the little and big things in life that you are thankful for.
- **Find a gratitude buddy:** Set aside some minutes every day when you and your spouse or a friend sit together and share the things you are thankful for.
- **Keep a gratitude jar:** Keep a glass jar and some small pieces of paper beside it. Take up one paper every day and write about one thing that you are thankful for.
- **Send a note to someone in your life expressing how you are thankful for them or how they've blessed you. Or tell them in person!**

I found it interesting that gratitude can have such a powerful effect on the brain, feelings of contentment, and emotional wellbeing. Things we can all appreciate!

I hope this information encourages you to adopt an “attitude of gratitude” and reap its benefits. And I thank you for taking the time to read this article!

“Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude.”

A.A. Milne, “Winnie-the-Pooh”





TELL PEOPLE OR NOT (excerpted)

www.daanow.org

If you are still working, be especially careful about revealing your diagnosis. In her book, *The Spectrum of Hope – An Optimistic and New Approach to Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*, Gayatri Devi, MD, notes that employers and co-workers can begin to view you through “Alzheimer’s-colored glasses,” meaning they will overnight assume you can’t function, even if they had no previous problem with your job performance. “It is important to understand that a dementia diagnosis does not automatically disqualify a person from working. Depending on what type of dementia a person has and what skills are affected, he or she may continue working for many years.”

Richard Taylor, one of the first vocal advocates living with dementia in the United States and author of *Alzheimer's From the Inside Out*, concealed his dementia diagnosis from his employer and taught college-level psychology for three years thanks to considerable help from his teaching assistant. Others, including some of the Guides in this manual, had careers involving complex financial details and their symptoms soon affected their job performance.

“If you’re younger than 65 and very dependent on that job, it can be dangerous to reveal [a diagnosis of dementia],” says Tia Powell, director of the Montefiore Einstein Center for Bioethics and author of *Dementia Reimagined*. “The more people who are able to do it the more safe it will be for everyone to do it. We owe a huge debt to the advocates who say, “This is the face of dementia.”

Pia Kontos encourages people living with dementia to be open about their diagnosis. “How can you thrive in relationships if you’re hiding?” she says. “Of course disclosing this with the current culture that really is not supportive, we can see why there is fear, but we need to change that.”

MY PERSPECTIVE ON TELLING PEOPLE

“I had friends who disappeared, and my professional friends disappeared. That’s okay. It was painful at times, and it’s painful when you are newly diagnosed and people distance themselves.



Sometimes they’re afraid to face it, or what it means. They have this horrific view in their minds of what it could represent. I encourage people to talk with family and have an open discussion. Some of those fears are misfounded. You find new friends, if you’re willing to. I really feel sad for the person who locks themselves in their home and stops living. You prevent yourself from experiencing all kinds of things.”

John-Richard Pagan, Living with Lewy body dementia. Contributor, Pathways to Well-being With Dementia Guide

RML CONFERENCE PREVIEW: PRACTICING SELF-KINDNESS

Preview of slides from Angela Lunde, Keynote speaker, RML (excerpted)



- There is another way of understanding dementia that is real and truthful but also hope-filled and life giving.... we have to know what's wrong before we can figure out what to do next.
- Dementia is a medical condition and not an identity.
- A person who is diagnosed Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia is still the same person they were before their diagnosis.
- Even after a diagnosis, there is more right with you, than wrong with you, no matter what is wrong.

RML CONFERENCE PREVIEW: BEYOND MEDICATIONS

Preview of slides from Angela Lunde, Keynote speaker, RML (excerpted)



“Empathy is understanding that someone else’s world is just as real as mine.”

“Beneath every behavior there is a feeling. And beneath every feeling there is a need. And when we try and meet that need rather than focus on the behavior (often through a medication), we address the cause, not the symptom.”

“When we seek to enter the reality of a person living with dementia, things go better.”

Unmet Social and Emotional Needs:

- Need to feel respected
- Need for sense of security
- Need to feel worthy - have purpose
- Need to feel a sense of belonging
- Need for choice and control
- Need to feel joy

Root Causes of Most Distress:

1. Unmet social and emotional needs
2. Our Communication Style



“Don’t ignore ‘it’ or us. Ask us: How can I help?”

~Bonnie, living with dementia

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Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

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