



Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

September 2025



SEPTEMBER

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Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

We are excited to announce that we were chosen to participate in the 2025 FM Area Foundation's Caring Catalog! We are incredibly grateful for the FM Area Foundation and their support towards our mission at MCRRV and for their fundholders that generously support our mission as well. Deb and I were honored to join the FM Area Foundation at their annual Summer Celebration to help them celebrate 65 years as a community foundation.

We invite you to join us **September 29 to December 2** as we raise funds to support our programs and resources at Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley. If it wasn't for our community's generous support, we would not exist. We invite you to be a part of our impact.

With your support, we can:

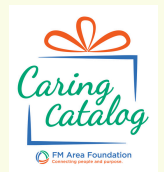
- Offer high-quality educational sessions, materials, resources, etc.
- Connect those impacted by memory loss through various weekly and monthly support group offerings.
- Provide a supportive community for individuals impacted by memory loss, surrounded by those who truly understand their journey.
- And most importantly, build moments that matter for the memory loss community in our region!

Information on how to donate can be found on page 4. Every dollar raised goes towards our free programs and resources!

Thank you for supporting our community members as they navigate their journey with memory loss. Your care and compassion for their health and well-being makes a meaningful difference in their lives.

With gratitude,

Maggie Ness



Remember Memory Cafe!

Our generous donors provided over 85% of our support last year! Please consider supporting us through your 2025 RMD this year. Thank you!



MEMORY CAFE IS A LIFELINE

By Marlys Verwey



Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you have done to make Memory Cafe what it is today. It is a lifeline for those of us living this memory loss life. I can't imagine what my life would be without this amazing organization. It gives us a safe place to gather with our dear friends and feel hope for the future when I feel like it is impossible to go on. Thank you!

ADVOCACY

"Dementia is the only disease where you're not supported to fight for your life." - Kate Swaffer and why she is demanding dementia rights.

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.

If God Invited You to a Party

If God invited you to a party and said,
“Everyone in the ballroom tonight will
be my special guest.”

How would you then treat them when
you arrived?
Indeed, indeed!

And Hafiz knows that there is no one in
this world who is not standing upon
(God's) jeweled dance floor.

— Hafiz (c.1320 - 1389)
Muslim poet, Persia (Iran)

*“If God Invited You to a Party,” from the Penguin
anthology, Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred
Voices from the East and West, by Daniel Ladinsky,
copyright 2002. Visit www.danielladinsky.com for
books and news! Reprinted with permission by the
author.*

I love this poem for two reasons:

- Our monthly Dine and Dance celebrates music and movement and welcomes and honors all people. This poem too, is a testament to the dance of life!
- And, in this time when we see people so easily discounted or dismissed, the more we can do to celebrate our cultural, racial, and ethnic differences, the better off and happier we'll be.

Jean Anderson, Memory Cafe Board Member

UNEXPECTED SCHEDULE CHANGES

After heavy rains and a flooded basement at Bethel we were recently reminded that sometimes unexpected things happen that require us to cancel or reschedule our Memory Cafe events at the last minute.

On the rare occasion that we need to cancel an event we will always communicate the change with you via email and on our facebook page. If you do not use email or social media, please let us know so we can add you to our call list. Call us at 701-404-6712 if you want to be added to that list. Thank you.

STILL HERE, STILL ME

Voices of Those Living With Memory Loss
By Bruce Dalager, Memory Cafe Participant

It was about 20 months ago when an annual physical exam involving a brain scan revealed I had had a mild stroke. Further testing determined a diagnosis of vascular dementia.

Prior to that scan I lived a generally healthy life. The dementia led to changes.

A friend of mine who had earlier had a similar diagnosis, had begun recently attending “the Memory Café of the Red River Valley.” I was invited and other friends and family encouraged me to attend.



My life work had involved a lot of contact and interaction with crowds of people. I assumed that retirement would involve more isolation and less visiting. Not so! I soon learned that my new partner (dementia) is best treated with the opposite of isolation. Crawling into a hole is not best treatment for the wounded brain. The “Memory Café” provides a better treatment!

This treatment is in no way a “hard pill to swallow.” A small but growing group of people who share the same “partner” gather every Monday morning. After a half hour of light exercise, we gather into smaller groups for fellowship. There we learn the various effects of our common “partner”.

We have time to share our common experiences, fears, tears, and laughs. Even the most quiet, stoic person may break a laugh.

Without pressure or awkwardness the café aims for an atmosphere where honesty regarding our “partner” brings a camaraderie greater even than mere friendship.

The workers and volunteers at Cafe are there to meet us, warmly greet us by name, introduce newcomers, and patiently direct us to our room to keep each of us welcome and unrattled. Other Cafe activities apart from these gatherings are also arranged regularly for members who desire. I have acquired new friends and have also been convinced that many of these friends share a common faith.

I'm grateful that Memory Café has opened a new life for me. Thank you to you who make it possible. You, friend, are invited to swallow this pill and live.



BREAKING NEWS

Angela Lunde from Mayo Clinic is
returning to speak at Memory Cafe on
Wednesday, January 14th! Open to
the public.

Stay tuned for more details!



FOR OUR HEALTH

THE HEALING POWER OF SHARING YOUR STORY

(Excerpted)

Compassionate Care: Accepting the Dementia Diagnosis
by L.E. Summers



The simple act of sharing your story can be a powerful source of healing, connection, and empowerment. It's about breaking the silence, shedding light on your hidden struggles and triumphs, and finding solace in the shared experiences of others. It's about recognizing that your voice matters, your story has value, and by speaking your truth, you can heal yourself and inspire and uplift others who are walking a similar path.

Sharing your story is not about boasting or seeking pity; it's about connecting with others on a human level, fostering empathy, and building a support community. [Think about your Support Circle at Memory Cafe]. It's about acknowledging the raw emotions, the difficult decisions, and the moments of grace that shape our experiences. It's about giving voice to the unspoken, shedding light on the often-invisible struggles of caregivers [and those living with dementia] and reminding the world that dementia is not just a medical diagnosis but a profoundly personal journey.

The act of sharing your story can be incredibly cathartic. It allows you to process your emotions, make sense of your experiences, and find meaning amid chaos. It can also help you gain perspective, identify patterns, and discover hidden strengths and resilience within yourself.

By sharing your story, you're not just telling your own experience but contributing to a collective narrative of resilience, love, and hope. You're creating a ripple effect of understanding and empathy that can extend far beyond your immediate circle.



"Memory Cafe has been such a blessing for us. With all the education, tips on taking care of our loved one, friendships, caring, sharing with laughter and tears - we are excited to go every week for all the extra support and projects. Thank you, Memory Cafe."

~Lois and Larry Satler

JUST FOR LAUGHS

STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS



Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

How is the moon like dentures?
Both come out at night.

Which underwear brand do seniors love best?
It Depends.

I'm getting older and wider instead of older and wiser.

Where can single men over 65 find younger women who are interested in them?
In the bookstore, under "Fiction."

An old woman is sitting at a bar when an older gentleman sits down beside her. "So," he says, "do I come here often?"

What's the best part of old age?
That it doesn't last very long.

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."

What's worse than middle age?
Knowing you'll grow out of it.

My memory's not as sharp as it used to be.
Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

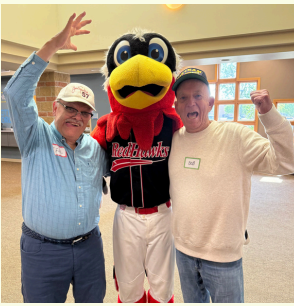
"Do it, even if you do it poorly. It's important to try."

~Dr. Bess Martin, Essential Health





SUMMER JOY!



“MY CIRCLE”

REBRANDING THE “CIRCLE OF SIX”

By Abby Husar, Program Manager



If you’ve been a part of Memory Cafe for a while, you’ve probably heard us talk about the importance of forming a “Circle of 6”. A circle of 6 is a group of identified people that are chosen to help support those living with memory loss and their caregiver throughout their journey. This idea came from the book *Dancing with Elephants* by Jarem Sawatsky. After being diagnosed with Huntington’s Disease, Jarem made it a priority to gather people around him and his family for support and to walk their journey beside them.

Here at Memory Cafe, we believe in the power of this kind of support. And we’re excited to share a small change—we’re rebranding the “Circle of 6” to “My Circle.”

Why the change? We want to keep the heart of the idea while reminding everyone that it’s not about the number. Maybe you only have two or three people right now—that’s okay. What matters is that you start building your circle and build it with intention.

Think outside the box. Invite people who you trust and can share freely with, who challenge you, who will teach you and people you can share moments of joy with. Don’t assume people don’t want to help—you might be surprised by how willing they are, especially when given a clear and meaningful way to show up.

If you have not yet identified a support circle, we encourage you to start. Let’s walk this journey together.



**September 29
-THROUGH-
December 2**

The Caring Catalog is an online giving platform powered by the FM Area Foundation to help connect community members with local nonprofits.

When giving through the Caring Catalog, you can make multiple gifts in one transaction. All gifts are tax-deductible. They accept:

- Online donations
- Checks made out to the FM Area Foundation, with the nonprofit you want to support in the memo line
- Gifts of stock (Please contact FMAF at 701.234.0756 and ask for Patty Mastel or Lexi Oestreich)

You will receive an email confirmation of your gift immediately after your donation, and a second detailed tax receipt will follow. If you do not see it come through, check your junk mail or contact the FMAF office.

FMAF will share your contact information with us so we can send you special recognition and thanks. If you do not wish to have your information shared, you can choose to be anonymous and they will keep your donation private.

PLEASE NOTE: We do not receive your donation information until the end of the campaign, so thank you notes may be delayed.



SEPTEMBER MEETING SCHEDULE

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

MONDAY SCHEDULE

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

Sept 1st - Labor Day. No programs

Sept 8th - 9-11am Morning Programs

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

9:30-11:00 - Coffee and Conversation Support Groups (free respite care for your loved one provided by our well-trained volunteers)

9:30-11 - 'The Gathering' - Support group for individuals experiencing early stages of memory loss for any medical reason.

1-2:30pm, Caregiver Education: Emergency Care Planning with Ashley Cannizzaro, LSS; Wood burning with Jerry and Joyful Moments with Friends

Sept 15th - 9-11 am, Morning programs as noted above.

No afternoon programming

Sept 22nd - 9-11 am, Morning programs as noted above

11:30 - 'Dine and Dance', Mhd American Legion

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

Sept 29th - 9-11 am, Morning programs as noted above

11:30-1pm, - Lunch and Learn for 'The Gathering' (see below for details)

THE GATHERING LUNCH AND LEARN

**Monday, Sept 29th- 11:30-1pm
Lunch will be served!**

NEW

One of the most common needs people living within the memory loss community have is for high-quality education. The earlier this education starts the better! We are thrilled to announce the kick-off for our new strategic educational program for those living with early stage memory loss and their loved ones. If you attend 'The Gathering' please reserve a spot for yourself and one or two of your loved ones!

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

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

Sept 3rd - Fall Kick-Off! Join us for music with the Norsky Brothers, treats and fun! Hope Lutheran Church, 2902 25th St S. Fargo

Sept 10th - 'Blooms and Bingo' with Hope Blooms. PRIZES! Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead

Sept 17th - Education: Medicaid Overview for Long-term Care with Chrystal Labotore, ND Dept of Human Services. Respite provided. Hope Lutheran Church, South Campus

Sept 24th - Support Group Meetings:

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

1-2:30pm - Caregiver Cafe.

Both groups meet at the MC office- 1122 1st Ave N. Fargo

MOVING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

For widows/widowers who have lost their loved one from dementia. Sept 24th-9:30-11am, Memory Cafe office

YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA SUPPORT

Education: Emergency Care Planning with Ashley Cannizzaro, Lutheran Social Services
Sept 22nd, Rustad Center, 6-7:30pm
601 26th Ave E. West Fargo

VOLUNTEER MEETING AND EDUCATION

All volunteers please join us on Tuesday, Sept 9th 1-2:30pm. Linger, Laugh and Learn Center

'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. Mondays, 9-11am, Bethel.

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS

Rehearsals are held every Thursday from 1 - 3pm at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 613 16th St. S. Fargo. Newcomers are warmly welcomed and encouraged to attend. No singing experience is necessary!



Sing From Your Heart Chorus

By Deb McTaggart, Director



"Making music with others is one of the closest things we have to a superpower. It fills us with unique energy. It heals us of pain. It fills us with confidence. It helps us create beauty. It connects us with others who can enhance these things further. Music is special." Vaughan Fleischfresser, Music Educator

Music has an incredible power to bring us together. E. Thayer Gaston, a pioneer in music therapy, taught that this power is strongest and most felt when we share the music experience with others. You don't have to be a musician to feel it—it's for everyone.

For people with memory loss and dementia, this idea is a beautiful reminder of what music can do. It's not about being perfect; it's about being present. The sounds of singing together create a feeling of belonging and connection, making us feel less lonely.

Music is a way we can all find joy together. This is why we sing!

Want to learn more about Sing From Your Heart Chorus or have questions? **Visit our website at singfromyourheartchorus.org or call/text 701-369-0629.**

CAR SHOW JOY! 69 CARS JOINED THE PARTY!



People's Choice Award Winner:
Don and Laurine Kounovsky



Childhood Friends, Deb Ernst and Al Aamodt

Our FIRST Annual Classic Car Show was a HUGE SUCCESS! The weather was perfect, the hotdogs and rootbeer floats donated by **Johnson's Auto Repair** and **Bernie's Liquor** were delicious and so many old and new friends joined us for the afternoon. A SPECIAL thank you to our volunteers from **Scheels** and **Concordia** who made it all look easy! We are already excited for our Car Show next year!

CARE PARTNER CORNER

By Teryl Clausen, LSW (retired)

Care Partner Support Group Facilitator

Connections with other people. How important are they? Studies show that connecting with others is crucial for both mental and physical well-being, fostering a sense of belonging, improving mood, and even increasing longevity. Strong social connections offer emotional support, reduce stress, and provide a buffer against loneliness and isolation, which can have detrimental effects on health. So how does this need for connections relate to care partners?

Imagine this:

You are going merrily along in your life with your spouse or parent and then you start noticing changes in your loved one. Small ones at first, like repeating questions, memory loss, misplacing items. You pass it off as normal aging or no big deal. Then the changes become more obvious and more challenging for you to ignore.

This is a good point for caregivers and their loved one to start attending Memory Cafe. At Memory Cafe you will both receive understanding, high quality education, and sustained support which will be invaluable to both of you throughout your journey. But is this enough?

Outside of the supportive environment of Memory Cafe there is still a life that need to be lived day to day on your own. The sooner connections can be made with an expanded support circle of friends and family the better because these people will help support both of you as your journey continues. Doing casual things together such as playing games, dining out or going to a movie together will nourish these friendships very naturally. You may even consider going to the Sons of Norway on Thursdays for Pie Day, even if you aren't Norwegian!

Sometimes people living within the memory loss community experience the falling away of friends as the disease progresses. But new relationships can be developed through intentional efforts to meet our needs for meaningful sustained connections. And in turn, the relationships we establish will likely be a blessing to the other people involved, too.



THANK YOU
SO MUCH

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THANK YOU
SO MUCH

Your donations to our Amazon WishList are ALWAYS deeply appreciated! Unfortunately we often don't know who you are so we cannot share our appreciation with you! Please let us know if you purchased items from our Wishlist and would like to be notified that we received your gift(s). THANK YOU!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

By Presley Norris

I've been working with individuals with memory loss since I was 17 years old, and it's a cause that has always been close to my heart. Having a loved one with memory loss brings many challenges – not just for the person experiencing it, but for their entire support system.



After attending the 2024 Redefining Memory Loss Conference, I felt inspired to take that passion even further by volunteering. I wanted to help create a space where no one feels alone in this journey, and I saw how Memory Cafe does an exceptional job of offering exactly that – a place of comfort, understanding, and connection. Their events are not only supportive, but also incredibly engaging. There's always something that brings joy and sparks interaction.

Volunteering has also helped me feel more connected to the community around me. Each time I serve, I'm reminded why this work matters: to bring comfort, connection, and a sense of togetherness to those who need it most.

WHOEVER/WHATEVER THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT IS PERFECTLY OK!

At times, it is hard to know how to comfort someone living with advanced dementia who is worried about various situations or troubling recurrent thoughts. In these situations it is important to validate your loved one's reality instead of dismissing their concerns or attempting to correct them. That never works.

Here are some suggestions from Jolene Brackey, author of *Creating Moments of Joy*:

- "Your mom will be right back."
- "Susan is playing at Robin's house."
- "Judy is taking care of your cat."
- "Charles is having a beer with Bud."
- "I'll come get you when your husband gets here." (Her husband is no longer living but in that moment she can rest because you are taking care of it.)
- "Your home is being checked on by your neighbor Bill."
- "You have lots of money." (give them a bank statement with the balance amount that makes them feel secure.)
- "Your son needed to borrow your car."

If something works, write it down in a notebook so other people can comfort your loved one with the same words of reassurance. When someone else finds something that works well they can write it in the notebook, too.

MEMORY STRATEGY

Source: alzheimers.org.uk

Using Words and Rhymes

Words and rhymes can help you to remember people's names.

Try thinking of words that start with the same letter as the person's name:

Pleasant Peter Funny Fiona
Pretty Penny Smiley Sunita

You could also think of words that rhyme with the person's name:

Jolly Molly Carer Sarah
Tall Paul Merry Terry

Some people make up their own rhymes, songs or sayings to help them remember facts and numbers. Here are some techniques people told us they use:

- Betty found it difficult to remember the registration number of her car, which was **YY51 FHT**.

She made up this humorous sentence:

Why, Why (have I got) 51 Funny Happy Toes?
YY51 FHT

"Let me do all the good I can, in all the ways I can, in all the places I can, at all the times I can, to all the people I can, as often as I can, for I shall not pass this way again."
–John Wesley

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Memory Cafe of the Red River
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"It was an honor to be a part of the Redefining Memory Loss Conference in June and see the amazing supportive community Memory Cafe has helped foster for those living with memory loss and their caregivers. Memory Cafe is a fantastic resource for anyone impacted by mild cognitive impairment or dementia."

-Dr. Stuart McCarter,
Mayo Clinic

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