



Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN



November 2025

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

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GIVING THANKS FOR MEMORY CAFE

By Kent and Jo Satrang

Have you ever felt like you are in a circumstance that is beyond your ability to fix? What can you do when a family member, friend, neighbor or acquaintance tells you they are exhausted from care giving and don't know where to turn? How can you bring hope to someone who is feeling like their life is slipping away?

When someone shares a life altering challenge, I want help carry their burden and find a way to give hope, even if it is beyond my ability to fix. God has blessed us with the incredible resource of Memory Café that speaks hope into the reality of memory loss. I have learned that even though I cannot fix the circumstance, I can learn how to love and give hope in ways that are not always intuitive. (Con't p. 7)



Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

Our program manager, Abby Husar, recently met with a social worker from a local long-term care community. After attending the Redefining Memory Loss Conference, the social worker wanted to learn more about Memory Cafe.

During their meeting, the social worker shared that when she welcomes new residents and their families, she includes dementia education as part of the admission process. She told Abby that she often hears families say, *"Oh yes, I already learned this at Memory Café."*

I was thrilled when I heard that! This is such a powerful moment. It means that because of Memory Café of the Red River Valley, our community is becoming more informed, compassionate, and confident in navigating the dementia journey. Knowledge truly is power, especially when it helps people feel more prepared and supported.

I'm so proud of our community for embracing and supporting our mission. We're filling a unique need that healthcare systems, social services, and faith-based programs alone cannot meet. Without MCRRV, many of our community members wouldn't have a safe, welcoming space to learn, connect, and discover how to live well... whether they're living with dementia themselves or caring for someone who is.

Thank you, friends and supporters, for helping make our work possible.

With gratitude,

Maggie Ness, Executive Director



We are honored to be a part of the FM Area Foundation's Caring Catalog. We ask that you consider supporting Memory Cafe for this year's Caring Catalog. 100% of your donation goes directly to support our free programs and resources at Memory Cafe. Thank you for your support!

Ways to Donate:

- Online donations (www.areafoundation.org)
- Checks made out to the FM Area Foundation, with Memory Cafe in the memo line. (Mail to 409 7th St S., Fargo, ND or Memory Cafe)
- Gifts of stock (Please contact FMAF at 701.234.0756)

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.

WITH ALL MY LOVE

Written by Lisa Swenson

First published in Northern Narratives 2024 —

Fargo Public Library

If you were a poem
Line by Line,
I'd memorize you
And make it rhyme.

If you were a melody
A love song sweet
Forever I'd play you
On repeat.

If you were a garment
Comfortable and all-weather
I'd clothe myself,
You're my favorite sweater.

If you were a lantern
The darkness to light
You'd show us the way
Dispelling the night.

If you were a photo
In a gold frame
You'd be timeless, unfaded
Ever the same.

But you are a being
And heaven decreed
That we must be mortal
With all my love...Godspeed.

*In all things,
give Thanks*

By Rev. Paul Idstrom, Retired

Happy Thanksgiving! An artist painted the Mayflower ship bobbing up and down as it was anchored in the little harbor at Plymouth. The Mayflower was ready to start back to England.



It had been a bitter, bitter winter. Death was devastating. Only half of the original one hundred two Pilgrims who landed on Plymouth Rock on Dec. 20, 1620 had survived.

The crew of the Mayflower once again invited the remaining pilgrims to return to the security and comfort of the Old World in England, but not one pilgrim accepted. These pilgrims had made America their home!

Equipped only with bare hands, faith in God, Bible in hand, raw courage and hope for the future (Con't p. 7)

STILL HERE, STILL ME

Voices of Those Living With Memory Loss

By Chuck Roos

About ten years ago, I started noticing changes with my cognitive function when I began struggling to keep up with the demands of my job. I worked there for over forty years but suddenly, I wasn't able to remember details or keep track of things like I once did. I had to write everything down. And then, just days before I retired in 2020, my son, Kyle, a pharmacist, died from Covid. These two major changes seemed to accelerate my memory and cognitive decline. My neuropsychological testing indicates I am living with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) as well as long- term major depression and grief. My memory and thought processing are most impacted by my MCI. Information enters my brain but isn't processed efficiently.



Some of the ways I have learned to cope with this situation are making lists, staying physically active, and attending Memory Cafe. I stay physically active with daily gym visits, swimming, stretching and jogging. I enjoy socializing with other members and the staff. Exercise and socialization are very important to maintaining the health of my brain and fighting off my depression.

Attending Memory Cafe with my "Forgetful Friends" has given my life a new purpose. I know I am not alone and I don't have to pretend or hide there. I am warmly welcomed and accepted because people who attend Memory Cafe truly understand what I am going through. They don't have to TRY to understand, they truly DO understand because they are living with various cognitive changes, too. These are "my people." It feels so good to sit down next to each other in the rich companionship of shared experiences and the shared education we receive at Memory Cafe. The humor and laughter we experience together is also very comforting. Laughter always helps.

"Attending Memory Cafe has helped Chuck find a new path towards renewed purpose in life. He is helping others and also receiving help at the same time," says Chuck's wife, Deb. "If we happen to have anything else scheduled for a time that Memory Cafe is meeting, we now need to change those appointments because Chuck doesn't want to miss Memory Cafe. That's how important Memory Cafe is to him."

Caregiver Celebration!

(All previous and current care partners welcome)

Keynote Speaker - Jack Michaels, Local Radio

Personality

Giveaways & Take Home Gifts.

Wednesday, Nov. 5th, 1 - 2:30pm

Hope Lutheran Church, South Campus

RSVP to hello@memorycaferrv.org or 701.404.6712



FOR OUR HEALTH

The Arrival Fallacy (excerpted)

www.calm.com



The arrival fallacy describes the belief that true happiness will come from accomplishing the next big thing. Yet, more often than not, when the goal is finally reached, the expected joy is either short lived or absent entirely.

The reasons behind the arrival fallacy are multifaceted. Society often puts a strong emphasis on our achievements as a source of happiness. This can create unrealistic expectations about the effects of success on our emotional wellbeing. Social media also plays a significant role, as people often showcase the highlights of their lives, without mentioning the struggles. This skewed perception can reinforce our beliefs that true happiness is just one achievement away.

In addition, our brains are wired to anticipate rewards, and achieving goals often triggers a release of feel-good brain chemicals. However, this boost in mood is usually temporary, leading to a "high" followed by a return to the baseline mood, or even dissatisfaction, as the long-awaited permanent state of happiness does not materialize as expected. This can prompt us to set new goals in the hope that these will finally bring the happiness we're seeking, continuing the cycle of the arrival fallacy. Understanding the arrival fallacy allows us to manage our expectations and build healthier relationships with our goals and the paths we take to achieve them. By recognizing this mental trap, we can start to shift our focus from the destination to the journey itself, finding joy and satisfaction in the present rather than constantly deferring happiness to future achievements.

DENIAL

By Deb Roos, Care Partner

Denial: A refusal to believe or accept something as a truth.



Memory loss, dementia, Alzheimers, diagnoses no one wants to hear, but as a caregiver of a spouse and loved one, Memory Cafe has helped me better understand and accept this disease.

Although medical testing showed scientific results for my husband, Chuck, I felt "Mild Cognitive Impairment" was only temporary, unlike Alzheimers, which was my mom's diagnosis.

Eventually, I agreed to attend the caregivers support group at Memory Cafe. My good friend encouraged me to come with her. "Just give it a try" she said. Reluctantly, I agreed but I was doubtful this was for me.

Within a few short weeks, I realized this was for me! (Con't p. 5)

JUST FOR LAUGHS

STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS



Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

You know you are old when you and your teeth no longer sleep together.

A biker went to a hairdresser who stared at his greasy hair in disbelief and asked, "So, did you come to cut your hair or just for an oil change?"

Why is it always hotter in the stadiums after a game? All the fans have left.

A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France resulting in Linoleum Blownapart.

A boiled egg is hard to beat.

Bob Hope Witticisms



- On turning 70: "I still chase women but only downhill."
- On turning 100: "I don't feel old. In fact, I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap."
- On giving up his early career boxing: "I ruined my hands in the ring. The referee kept stepping on them."
- On never winning an Oscar: "Welcome to the Academy Awards, or, as it is called in my home, 'Passover'."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

~E.M. Forster

FREEDOM



NOVEMBER 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)

NOV. 3rd:

- **Morning Programming:**
 - 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.
- **Afternoon Programming: 1-2:30pm**
 - Music Therapy w/ Deb McTaggart (Music Therapist)

Nov. 10th:

- **Morning Programs as noted above**
- **Afternoon Programming: 1-2:30pm**
 - Caregiver Education: North Dakota Assistive doing a presentation on assistive technology; wood burning with Jerry, and Joyful Moments with Friends

Nov. 17th:

- **Morning programs as noted above**
- **No afternoon programming**

Nov. 24th:

- **Morning programs as noted above**
- **Afternoon Programming: 11:30Am - 'Dine and Dance' @ Moorhead American Legion**

SPECIAL EDUCATION SESSION ON MEDICAID

Crystal Labatore with the ND Long-Term Care Medicaid Division will be joining us again to offer information on Medicaid.

Thursday, November 20th from 9:00 - 10:30 AM

@ Memory Cafe Downtown Office

- Please RSVP as space is limited (Email hello@memorcaferrv.org or call 701.404.6712)

'THE GATHERING' AT THE MOVIES!

Featured Movie: Grumpy Old Men

Tuesday, Nov. 18th @ the Fargo Theater

Doors open at 10:30, movie starts at 11 AM

Cost: \$6 per person which includes admission, popcorn and a soda.

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

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

Nov. 5th - Care Partner Celebration with guest speaker Jack Michaels. All current and previous care partners are welcome to attend. Respite room provided on site.
@ Hope Lutheran Church, 2902 25th St S. Fargo

Nov. 12th - Education: Preparing for the Holidays, Alzheimer's Association. Respite room available on site.
@ Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead

Nov. 19th - Gratitude and Music with Apollo Strings.
@ Hope Lutheran Church, South Campus

Nov. 26th- Support Group Meetings:

9:30 -11 am - Moving Ahead: Life After Loss Support Group
1-2:30 pm - Caregiver Cafe

Both groups meet @ Memory Cafe office - 1122 1st Ave N. Fargo

'MOVING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER LOSS' SUPPORT GROUP

For widows/widowers who have lost their loved one from dementia.
Nov. 26th -9:30-11am, @ Memory Cafe downtown office

YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP

Nov. 24th - Rustad Center, 6-7:30pm 26th Ave E. West Fargo
Education: TBA

'THE GATHERING' SUPPORT GROUP

Support and education for individuals experiencing early stage memory loss or cognitive changes due to aging or any disease process. Mondays, 9:30 - 11 AM, Bethel church

Sack lunch - Wednesday, Nov 19th at 12 pm at Hope church, South campus (prior to 1pm program)

'CLUB SANDWICH' SUPPORT GROUP

Support for caregivers who are caring for a loved one with memory loss while managing their own families, careers and responsibilities. See p. 6 for additional details.

Thursday, Nov. 20th 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Memory Cafe office located at 1122 1st Ave N., Fargo.

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS CONCERT

Let Your Light Shine concert! Saturday, Nov. 22nd, 1 pm
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 613 16th St. S. Fgo. Free!



MEMORY CAFE REFRESH...

Stay tuned...
Big things are coming!

Our mission remains the same, to bring connection, joy, and support to those impacted by memory loss, but our look is getting a thoughtful refresh.

Stay tuned... something beautiful is unfolding.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT ALISON SCHMIDT

One of my goals after retiring was to find a volunteer organization that I could participate in and give back to our beautiful Fargo community. Little did I know how stepping out of my box and saying "yes" to Memory Café would impact me the way it has.



What has stuck out to me the most is how caring, loving, supportive, encouraging and respectful everyone is to one another. When I say everyone, I mean the staff, volunteers, board of directors and most importantly our Memory Café participants. It doesn't matter what stage of memory loss or level of cognitive changes people are experiencing, they are loved, cared for and deeply respected by everyone.

I am learning so much and enjoying my time at Memory Café every week and look forward to what the future will bring for this important community organization. Thank you for letting me come along on this wonderful journey with everyone.

THANK YOU FOR VISITING MEMORY CAFE BISON BASKETBALL TEAM!



DENIAL (con't from p. 3)

I quickly learned I was not alone. My thoughts and feelings were being shared by others in this group. Chuck's cognitive challenges are now something we both choose to accept and deal with each day.

Through Memory Café I have found friendship, laughter, compassion and understanding. I've become more realistic in my expectations. Chuck and I have discovered a new appreciation for each other's struggles as we transition into this new phase of life.

Our most important tool we've discovered is making a daily list. It might include groceries to pick up, the time of an appointment, even when we will be home to walk the dog. When we don't take the time, our day can get messy. We aren't perfect, but each day it is becoming more of our morning routine.

There is so much more that Memory Café offers. Fun events like attending Redhawks games, luncheons, educational speakers and even dancing.

A diagnosis is not a requirement to attend Memory Café. If memory loss or other cognitive changes are concerns you or a loved one might be questioning, give us a try.



Sing From Your Heart Chorus

Presents

Let the Light Shine!

A Free Public Concert

Saturday, November 22nd - 1:00 pm

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
613 16th Street South Fargo



'Club Sandwich' Caregiving Network Launches



On Thursday, October 9th, we hosted our very first "Club Sandwich" Dementia Caregiving Network gathering at our Memory Cafe office. This new group brings together adult children who are balancing work, family, and personal responsibilities while also caring for a parent living with memory loss.

Our first meeting was filled with meaningful conversation as participants shared stories, resources, and lived experiences to support one another through the challenges and joys of caregiving.

We're excited to see this group grow and continue building connections in the months ahead!

Our next "Club Sandwich" meeting will be held on **Thursday, November 20th, from 11:30 AM-1:00 PM** at our Linger, Laugh, and Learn Center (1122 1st Ave. N)

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about joining, please call Abby at 701-404-6712 or email abby@memorycaferrv.org.

CARE PARTNER CORNER

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

When my husband Mark began his journey with dementia, I started a journal to record it. Recently, I read through it to find any experiences or things I learned that could help other caregivers.



Some of the entries I recorded were not so pleasant to read. Thankfully, many people on the memory loss journey do not develop the psychotic and behavioral issues that Mark did. I will share my experiences for those who may relate.

What I learned along the way:

- Not to question the "why" of what Mark did, as it didn't really matter. What I needed to remember is that he was doing as his brain told him to do.
- I expected too much of Mark, like understanding the words I said, and expecting him to remember them. So many times I would say "I already told you that".
- Not attending to his feelings rather than what he said. His delusions and hallucinations were scary to him much of the time and instead of comforting him, I told them they weren't real. To Mark, they were very real.
- He spoke many things to me that were hurtful and upsetting. I often neglected to remember not to take them personally and remember that his perceptions did not match reality. Also, to remember that later the same day or maybe the next day, that he would be on to something else.
- I resented being the recipient of his complaints and the supplier of his needs. I sometimes shared my own complaints with him and let him know that he stressed me out!
- The sadness could be overwhelming when I observed the downward progression of his abilities and how he was sad about them, too. I didn't always know how to help him in his sadness.
- It took me a while to see that what he wanted most was my presence with him, and I was not expected to carry on conversations or provide activities for him.
- I also learned that without other people in our lives, we would become isolated from the world. He lived in his reality and I lived in mine.

"WHY I APPRECIATE MY SPOUSE ..."

Words of gratitude from members of 'The Gathering'

- "The way she protected us from getting scammed recently."
- "Her/his patience with me."
- "He helps me stay organized."
- "He is so good to me."
- "Her willingness to help me when I need it."





GIVING THANKS FOR MEMORY CAFE (con't from p. 1)

Every time I have lovingly asked the question to someone in the journey of memory loss, "Have you considered visiting Memory Café?" my feelings of not knowing what to say or do evaporate and I know I am giving a valuable resource that brings hope. I feel confident that my caring question is going to be an answer to someone's pain.

When people have experienced Memory Café, the excitement in their voice as they tell me about the welcome, genuine love and practical help is overwhelming. Even though their circumstance is beyond my ability to fix, I can point them to a place that gives them hope and practical help.

Memory Café is a place of warm welcome and an extremely valuable resource to extend to anyone who is in need of hope in the life altering challenge of memory loss.

These are a few of the reasons we are honored to support Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley.

ASK FOR HELP

When we experience a major loss, such as a new diagnosis of dementia or cognitive impairment, we need love and support from others. Don't feel ashamed of your heightened sense of dependence on others right now, whether you are a person living with the disease or a care partner or family member. Ask your friends and loved ones for their support and patience. Many of them want to help but you will need to ask them and tell them specifically how they can help you. This makes it much easier for them to help you. Don't be shy, ask for help! And then keep asking!



IN ALL THINGS, GIVE THANKS (con't from p. 2)

these early immigrants were ready to settle in and make the best of it. Eventually these pilgrims invited family and friends to join them in this new venture; we are part of this great immigration.

Harvest in 1621 was recorded as being barely adequate but the governor ordained a feast of thanksgiving. The native Americans and those early settlers thanked their God for their provisions and took courage to live another year.

How awesome these moments of sharing took place. May it be our continued privilege and honor to share with all God's people His abundance and His blessings even in the midst of the 'Mayflower' events in our own lives.

May God's extravagant grace continue to abound in our own Thanksgiving.

MEMORY STRATEGY: MAKING LISTS

Psychology Today May 7, 2021



- Externalizing what we need to remember.** Lists are useful because they document what we ordinarily forget. Unlike stories—in which events are connected by cause and effect—items on a list have no internal structure, except verticality. The first item on a list does not cause the second.
- Remembering across contexts.** When we retrieve a memory, it is often retrieved in context. Without the right context, we have difficulty remembering. That's why people can forget why they came into a room—the initial encoding context was in a different room.
- Resonating with our serial processing.** We naturally take things one at a time. What feels like parallel processing is often sequential, with several tasks performed one at a time quickly. The linear layout of a list is friendly to our serial processing.
- Adding without restructuring.** We can amend a list by simply adding to it.
- Generating new items.** While creating a list, a new item can act as a retrieval cue for another item.
- Concision.** Lists are concise and orderly distillations—small and digestible, like tapas.
- Lending a sense of accomplishment.** Completing items on to-do lists provides satisfaction, allowing us to see what we've done.
- Decision-making.** Lists can help with decision-making. Listing the reasons for and the reasons against a particular option allows us to perceive the decision all at once, without having to keep in mind the entire jumble of the most effective aid for complex decisions is still two lists: pros and cons.
- Breaking habits.** If we have a habit we want to reduce or eliminate, then a "Not-to-Do" list is helpful. For example: do not eat crackers at the computer.
- Saving time.** Lists are easy to write and efficient to read. There's no need for complex sentences or paragraphs. Important points can be written and identified quickly, especially compared to blocks of text.

CONTACT US: MEMORY CAFE RRV

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www.MemoryCafeRRV.org

hello@memorycaferrv.org

Memory Cafe of the Red River

Valley

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Celebrating our Caregivers during
National Caregiver Month!
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