

Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

December 2025



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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Hi, I'm Annie Campbell. I first heard about Memory Café from Steve Miller, a former coworker of mine. At the time, I didn't fully understand its impact, but then I heard Deb and Ellen speak at the Fargo Lions Club. I thought both of them were so eloquent and passionate in the way they presented themselves.



After hearing them speak, I found myself talking about Memory Café and its mission while connecting with individuals in the community. That's when I realized how many people I admire are either affected by memory loss or are actively supporting those who care. (con't p.6)

Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

At Memory Cafe, we do everything as a team, including writing this month's intro! I'm Deb, co-founder, and I'm delighted to step in and share an exciting update with you. You may have opened this newsletter and wondered... *what is this!?* Welcome to our fresh new look. We hope you love it as much as we do!

Admittedly, when I first learned of a potential logo/brand change, I was skeptical. "What's wrong with keeping our cozy red coffee cup with the warm, welcoming steam rising into the air?", I thought. I reflected back to when Beth and I first decided to take the plunge and pay Kim Solberg to develop that logo, it was by far the largest expense we'd incurred up to that point. But it was worth every penny. That logo has served us well over the past eight years - a cozy cup of coffee offering a warm Memory Cafe welcome to everyone who enters our door.

But our little grassroots Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley has now reached far beyond anything we could have imagined back in those early days. Our attendance is growing, our programming is expanding, we are reaching deeper into our surrounding communities, and we now have our own building and six acres of land to call our own. Unbelievable!

Having a new centralized location and our own 'home away from home' for the memory loss community represents a momentous shift and exciting opportunities for us. Our new brand will help signal these new changes and all that comes along with them - our new location (not six!), expanded offerings, a crystallized message, a revitalized commitment to our mission and vision, new funding sources, and incalculable growth potential.

I love the elegance of our new logo with its soothing colors and the delicate flower. It symbolizes the individual living with memory loss, their loved ones, and the circle of support that defines Memory Cafe. I'm excited to see how well it carries forward our well-established warm Memory Cafe welcome to everyone who walks through the doors of our new beautiful home.

Warmly and very gratefully,
Deb



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.

Hard Talk

by Mark Bratlie

Love you
and love to talk freely
(while shadows lurk inside)

Trust you
and feel so ateasy
(being vulnerable terrifies)

Sharing with you
dark parts of me
(afraid you will love me less)

Wanting you
to know the real me
(putting it to the test)

Risking with you
and laying it bare
(hoping you come to my aid)

Holding you
and feeling quite safe
(as shadows start to fade)

STILL HERE, STILL ME

*Voices of Those Living
with Memory Loss*

By: Jeanne Narum, JD, CPA

Remember when your children's activities were the highlight of your day and you adjusted your work day to make sure you didn't miss anything.



This was my life until 3yrs ago when my career as an attorney for BCBS came to a halt as my co-workers recognized I wasn't performing to my full potential. We thought if I took a little time off and regrouped, I would return in short order, not so. With my husband Chris' support, we visited counselors, various Doctors, and eventually Sanford Neurology where they suspected I may have Primary Progressive Aphasia. I had been mixing up words for several months and was struggling with short term memory. I have always been a list maker so as long as I kept a list I could manage our busy lives.

After several months of Dr. appointments, I had the joy of going through cognitive testing. I think I would have rather sat for both the ND & MN CPA & BAR exams again. How could it be Alzheimers when there is no known family history and I'm 50 yrs young with our son in his senior H.S. year, our daughter is at U. Mary, and I'm in the peak of my career? It has not been easy accepting this diagnosis and letting go of all of the things I worked so hard for.

When we heard of Memory Café, we were skeptical of what we would learn. If it wasn't for having pizza and snacks at the Young Onset group I don't know if I could have convinced my husband to go. We have attended most of the Young Onset meetings where they share ideas and learn from organizations and services that are available to support us through this journey. I also look forward to exercising and doing projects with my new Monday morning friends at the Gathering. This is a great way to start the week as Coach Jake motivates us to keep moving. The staff and volunteers treat everyone with dignity and respect and will go out of their way to help us find solutions to life's new challenges.

I have found enjoyment from volunteering at church, food bank, and Hope Blooms with my new friend Sue at Home Instead. We have walked all of the parks and trails in the FM area, ventured through Buffalo State Park, and found the trolls in the Detroit Lakes area. My husband and I enjoy having family and friends visit us at Cotton Lake in the summers. We also enjoyed touring Alaska and a cruise along the Inner Passage, visiting friends in Mexico, and recently we explored Switzerland and Austria.

THANK YOU CARING CATALOG DONORS!



The names and contributions from our faithful Caring Catalog donors have not been released yet but we are VERY grateful to each and every one of you! Thank you so very much for your support of the mission of Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley! Special thanks to our friends at FM Area Foundation for their amazing support over the years. Your dedication to us and so many other impactful organizations in our community is deeply empowering!

UPDATE ON MEMORY CAFE'S NEW HOME!

By Mike Slette, Board President

Many of our Memory Café family were able to join us for an inside look at our soon-to-be new home at the corner of 40th Ave. S and 25th St. It's a natural challenge to blend heartfelt excitement with patient anticipation, but that is our reality in turning this incredible gift into our "forever home".



Those of you who have walked through the building know it has all the makings of a fabulous home for Memory Café. While some dreaming and planning had quietly gone on for several months before the generous donation became official, formal planning kicked into high gear shortly thereafter with Mike Wild and the team at WCRG Architects.

The first phase quickly becoming a well-defined set of outcomes involves the remodeling of the existing space. At a high level the remodeling will include things like:

- adding office space for Memory Café staff
- adding new rooms for small group meeting spaces
- changing flooring in certain areas to better fit our program offerings
- updating lighting for consistency and long-term efficiency
- adding electronic door openers at the main entrance
- updating restrooms to meet the needs of all our attendees

We are blessed the building is in wonderful condition; the work to be done simply begins to transform it into our Memory Café home with the special features needed to serve the community well. It is anticipated that the remodeling will take several months to complete with an anticipated start date of early December. (con't p. 5)

WITH LOVE & SYMPATHY

We offer our sincere sympathies to the families of Bill Gorman and Larry Sattler who passed away recently. These fine gentlemen offered so much wisdom, joy and delight to each of our gatherings at Memory Cafe. Our thoughts and prayers are with Judy and Lois and their families as they grieve the passing of these devoted family patriarchs.



JUST FOR LAUGHS STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS

Me in November: I will make a beautiful hand crafted gift for everyone I love this Christmas!

Me in December: I love two people.



Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

I hate it when people ask me if I'm ready for Christmas.

No, Susan. I'm not even ready for today.

Don't blame the holidays. You were fat in August.

What do you call a snowman who works out? An abdominal snowman.

I may eat all my Advent calendar chocolates in one sitting, but at least I eat them in order.

What did the snowman say to the aggressive carrot? "Get out of my face."

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh? Nothing, it was on the house.

At a party several young couples were discussing the difficulties of family budgets. "I really don't want a lot of money," said one yuppie. "I just wish we could afford to live the way we are living."

WINTER WEATHER CANCELLATIONS: PLEASE NOTE!

IF FARGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED MEMORY CAFE WILL BE CLOSED, TOO!



Quote of the Day

"For it is in giving that we receive."

— St. Francis of Assisi



DECEMBER MEETING SCHEDULE

MONDAY SCHEDULE

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

Dec. 1st:

• 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)

Dec. 8th:

• Morning Programs as noted above

• Afternoon Programming: 1-2:30pm

- Caregiver Education: "Supporting Independence" - Julie Praska-Moser (Alzheimer's Association): Wood Burning with Jerry, and Joyful Moments with Val

Dec. 15th:

• Morning programs as noted above

• No afternoon programming

Dec. 22nd:

• Morning programs as noted above

• No Dine and Dance in December

Dec. 29th: Holiday break - No programming

'THE GATHERING' LUNCH AND LEARN

Featured Education: Amber McCauley, OT-R.

Monday, Dec. 1st 11:30-12:30, Bethel church

RSVP 701-404-6712

Amber is an Occupational Therapist and works at ND Assistive; she also does OT in the home. Additionally, she is certified in Skills 2 Care, an evidence-based program for people living with dementia and their families.

MEMORY CAFE HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE!

TUESDAY, DEC. 9TH

3:00 - 5:30PM

LINGER LAUGH AND LEARN CENTER
1122 1ST AVE N. FARGO



EVERYONE WELCOME!

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

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

Dec. 3rd - Annual Intergenerational Community Service

Project: Tying Fleece Blankets

Hope Lutheran Church, 2902 25th St S. Fargo

Dec. 10th - Education: Why Neuro Testing is Important &

What are the Benefits? Dr. Bess Martin

Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead

Dec. 17th - Christmas concert with Sarah Morrau &

Rebekka DeVries

Hope Lutheran Church, South Campus

Dec. 24th & 31st - Holiday Break - No Programming

'MOVING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER LOSS' SUPPORT GROUP

No meeting in December. Will resume, January 28th, 2026.

YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP

No meeting in December. We will resume January 26th, 2026.

'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

Lunch and Learn - Monday, Dec. 1st, 11:30-12:30 pm

Bethel church. Amber McCauley, OTR/L

'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.

Thursday, Dec. 18th 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

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

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS

CAROLS AND COOKIES!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1:00-2:30

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

613 16TH ST. S. FARGO



FAMILY AND FRIENDS WELCOME!



FOR OUR HEALTH

The Science Behind Spirituality of Healing

By: Nicky Holzworth, OTR/L

The People Who Walked in Darkness Have Seen a Great Light

We are coming upon the darkest time of year—cold, still, and shadowed. It's a season when light feels especially precious.

Years ago, I worked with two men who had both sustained traumatic brain injuries. Their recoveries followed very different paths. One radiated quiet hope. So much so that I felt better after each of our sessions than before he came. He shared the source of this light; each morning, he read the Bible and found strength. His favorite verse was: "For I know the plans I have for you... plans to give you hope and a future." Despite his struggles, he saw the good before him and lived with gratitude. The other man had no faith. He saw himself only as his thoughts. Without hope, he disengaged from life—and over time, his health declined in ways not typical for his injury. Witnessing these two lives taught me how profoundly hope and meaning shape healing.

Today, research confirms what experience revealed. Tyler J. VanderWeele, Director of the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, studies how faith and spirituality influence well-being. His research shows that weekly attendance at religious services is associated with lower rates of depression, suicide, and premature death, as well as better cardiovascular health, greater marital stability, purpose in life, and happiness. Faith, he notes, offers meaning, belonging, and resilience—powerful antidotes to isolation and despair.

In fact, VanderWeele's analysis of national health data suggests that declines in religious participation may explain a significant portion of the rising rates of suicide and depression in recent decades. He argues that faith and community are not just private beliefs but vital public health resources.

Arthur C. Brooks, another Harvard scholar, reminds us that hope is not a feeling but a verb—something we do. As we enter this dark, still season, may we seek out light through connection, compassion, and faith in something larger than ourselves.

UPDATE ON NEW HOME (CONT)

Planning for a second phase is also underway for additional space needed to fully offer Memory Café programming at our new site. Top of the list is the need for a large room to accommodate the growing attendance of Monday morning's Exercise with Coach Jake. Picture over 100 walking through the doors, people joining Jake every week for an amazing workout and breaking into small groups. Consider other events like educational sessions, musical entertainment, caregiver and volunteer celebrations, and programs that welcome area students to work alongside us, large gathering space is a much-needed part of our facility plan.

A small number of quiet and generous donors have come alongside Memory Café in astounding ways to fund the phase one work soon to be underway. A broader capital campaign will be launched sometime in the first quarter of 2026 as phase two details become well-defined. A special thank you goes out to all donors who support Memory Café through regular gifts, the Caring Catalogue, year-end giving and Giving Hearts Day—you make possible all that we do to live out our mission!

MEMORY STRATEGIES: PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Sleep is crucial for mental health as it allows the brain to process emotions and consolidate memories, regulate the stress response, and maintain cognitive functions like concentration and decision-making. Inadequate sleep can lead to irritability, mood swings, increased stress, and a higher risk of developing mental health disorders like depression and anxiety. The relationship is bidirectional, meaning poor mental health can also cause sleep problems, creating a cyclical effect.

Benefits of sufficient sleep:

- Emotional regulation:
- Sleep is a time for the brain to process emotions, which helps maintain emotional balance and reduces irritability.
- Stress management:
- Sufficient sleep allows the body to recover from stress and prevents the dysregulation of the "fight-or-flight" response.
- Cognitive function:
- Good sleep is essential for memory consolidation, attention, concentration, and the speed of information processing.
- Resilience:
- A good night's sleep fosters resilience, a positive mood, and an optimistic outlook.

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS

Carols and Cookies!



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

Thursday, December 18, 1:00-2:30
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
613 16th St. S. Fargo
Friends and family are invited!

FIRST IMPRESSIONS (CON'T)

I recently attended The Gathering, and I was deeply touched by the group's attitude and openness. Memory Café reminded me of the importance of patience, compassion, and connection. Life with memory loss is incredibly challenging, and it takes immense strength to keep going.

The Gathering group reminded me that those affected are still deeply valuable—not just to their loved ones, but to the world.

A recurring theme in our conversations was the significance of support systems. Many members shared how meaningful it was to have a spouse by their side, but just as often, they spoke about the importance of close friendships. It was a powerful reminder that lifelong relationships and showing up for others during times of struggle matter deeply, no matter what stage of life we're in. None of the individuals at Memory Café expected to face memory loss, but that's true of many challenges in life. It's in those unexpected moments that we need our people the most.

The Gathering is more than a support group. It's a community built on shared experience, but also on openness, vulnerability, appreciation, and reflection. It's a space where everyone is seen and heard. Perhaps the biggest takeaway for me is this: don't stop showing up for those affected by memory loss. They still want to talk, laugh, and connect—just like they always have.

Thank you so much, Memory Café, I look forward to our memories together.

CARE PARTNER CORNER

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

Dementia is a progressive disease. Both the caregiver and the person with memory issues experience the process of letting go as the journey progresses.



For the person with memory loss, they may experience the loss of self-esteem, confidence, and relationships. They may lose interest in activities once enjoyed, lose the ability to communicate with others, and the ability to complete daily tasks. Many people with memory loss must let go of the privilege of driving which can be very difficult.

As caregivers of a person with memory loss continue along the journey, there is a process of letting go of the life they were accustomed to and comfortable with. They may grieve the loss of the person they are caring for, as their loved one's personality, abilities and behavior changes. The priorities of the caregiver change as the disease progresses. A good night's sleep, time alone, or time with friends and family can be impacted.

But there are also gifts to be received as the caregiver lets go of their before-dementia life, including:

- Finding joy in little things—smiles, laughter, holding hands, just being together
- Caring about others on the same journey and making a difference in their lives
- Celebrating small victories
- Embracing the “now”
- Discovering a sense of purpose or call on their life
- Learning to give grace to their loved one and themselves
- Experiencing a greater need for God's help and strength
- Realizing they can do what they never thought they could
- Thankfulness for friends and family that support, encourage, and pray
- Appreciation for helpers—doctors, memory café volunteers, facility staff that meet their loved one's needs with compassion and understanding
- Discovering the freedom to let go of things that don't really matter anymore and embracing what does.

SIX TIPS FOR A BETTER HOLIDAY SEASON (Excerpted)

POSITIVE APPROACH TO CARE BY TEEPA SNOW

1. Smaller, simpler, shorter: By simplifying or cutting things that require a lot of work, maybe even some long-held traditions, you actively reduce your stress level. What can you let go of, or minimize in a way so it still sparks joy without the added stress? Can you identify the essentials, and eliminate the rest?

2. Use retained abilities: During the holidays, you can create moments of joy by using photos or other images to talk about stories, memories, or the season itself. Or play a few songs the person likes or create a music playlist.

3. Be ready to hear the same story multiple times: If your loved one asks if they've already told you a certain story, you're typically left with the choices of yes or no. The first answer may discourage the person from telling you the story again, and the latter may be a lie. Instead of answering with either of these options, try responding with "tell me more about that."

4. Avoid direct corrections: The brain of a person living with dementia is chemically and structurally changing. The brain may no longer be able to correctly recall a memory, and will instead fill its gaps with information that may not be accurate. If your loved one says something incorrect, try to let it go and go with the flow instead of correcting them. Generally, the details don't matter.

5. Accept general comments: Communication will become vaguer as the dementia disease progresses. Try to avoid asking open-ended questions like, "Which lights would you like on the Christmas tree this year, Mom?" Instead, try using 'this or that' or 'this or something else' choices. In this example, "Mom, would you prefer I use the white or the multi-colored lights this year?", or "Hey Mom - would you like the Menorah on the mantle, or somewhere else?" To help your loved one even more, consider giving them a visual cue by pointing at the lights while you mention them.

6. Give room to get away if needed: When a person is living with dementia, the hustle and bustle of holiday celebrations can get particularly overwhelming.

If you have other family members or friends visit, consider letting your person living with dementia sit on the edge of the table, instead of the center. This way, the person may only have one person talk to them at a time for less sensory input, and give them space to get away if it becomes too much or they get tired.

In addition, consider where in your home you can offer a quiet space for the person to get away to or spend a little time to quietly relax and recharge.

AVOIDING SCAMS

By: Jeff Carney, Dark Horse IT
darkhorseit.com (701.660.0909)



General Reminders:

- No legitimate company monitors your computer's health (Microsoft, Best Buy, Norton, etc.).
- Never call the numbers listed in warnings or emails.
- Never allow unknown people to access your computer remotely.
- Never give out personal or banking information over the phone or email.

If You See a Fake Virus Warning:

- Don't panic! You can safely close it without calling anyone. Try these options:
 - Press Ctrl + Shift + Esc to open Task Manager
 - Or press Ctrl + Alt + Delete and select Task Manager
 - Find your web browser (Chrome, Safari, Firefox, etc.), right click, and select END TASK.
- If you can't do that, hold your power button down to restart your computer
- When your computer restarts, reopen your browser - but don't restore the old tabs.

Verify, Don't Trust!

- Scammers can fake caller IDs, emails, and even voices of your loved ones.
- If your 'bank' or 'credit card company' calls you, hang up
- Call them back using the number on the back of the card or their official website.
- Never use numbers or links sent to you in emails or texts.
- Always take a moment to think before acting - scammers rely on panic.

Safer Browsing:

- Use the Brave Browser on your phone and computer to block scam popups and ads automatically.
- Keep your software and antivirus up to date.
- Be cautious when downloading attachments or clicking links.
- Bookmark your bank's website and use that to log in - never login through emails.

Password Safety:

- Never use the same password for more than one website.
- New recommendations are for passwords to be 18 digits long, or more.
- Download a Password manager such as Bit Warden (free) to keep track of your passwords.

Family Password:

- Every family should establish a family password that can be used to verify someone's identity in a potential telephone scam, e.g., "cherry cheesecake". If someone calls and claims to be a family member, you can ask them for your family password to verify their identity.

CONTACT US:**MEMORY CAFE RRV**

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