

Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

January 2026



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FAMILY SUPPORT

BY JASON AND KRISTI EIDE

Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley has been in our life for the past four years, but dementia has been in our life longer. Our moms were both diagnosed with dementia, Alzheimer's and Frontal Lobe Dementia. Watching them decline from being talkative and active to quiet and expressionless was tough, sad, and often frustrating for all of us. Jason's dad was also diagnosed with dementia. Our loved ones have now passed but these experiences remain close to our hearts.



Because of the influence of our parents we have always prioritized giving to others, whether it be our time or money. Our children are now young adults so to help

(Cont p. 2)

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.

Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

A new year always brings a sense of possibility and at Memory Cafe, we're stepping into this season with full hearts and renewed excitement. The start of a new year invites reflection on how far we've come and hope for what's ahead. We know that 2026 is truly going to be a transformative year for Memory Cafe and for the individuals, families and friends we serve.

We are deeply grateful for the generous individuals who have boldly stepped forward to support Phase 1 of our building renovation project. Their belief in our mission and their willingness to invest in what's possible have laid a strong foundation for what's ahead. Once this phase of the project is complete, our team will move into the building, begin hosting some of our programs, and work through what is needed to implement additional respite opportunities for our care partners. We will not be able to host our Monday morning and Wednesday programming in the building until Phase 2 is complete, as that phase includes an expansion of the space.

For those who have not yet set foot into the building, it is a beautiful and spacious space. However, based on the number of friends we are currently serving, and the growth we anticipate, we would not be able to adequately accommodate our community without the completion of the expansion project. We look forward to sharing a public capital campaign with the community in the spring of 2026.

For now, we're looking forward to creating more moments of connection, learning, and joy together as we continue walking alongside individuals and families impacted by memory loss. None of this would be possible without the incredible community that surrounds us. Thank you for your continued support and for helping us build a place of belonging.

With gratitude,
Maggie Ness



THANK YOU!

Generous donor support, an amazing team of volunteers, and managing conservative budgets has generated net income and positive cashflow annually for Memory Cafe. Having built up a strong cash balance, we are well-positioned to move into our new home and meet increased operating costs. Thank you for your continued financial support in 2026!

From Grumpy to Grateful



Here is a photo of an “attitude adjustment tree” taken by my friend Ramona Danielson.

Also known as a U-turn tree, I’m calling upon it this gratitude season to remind me that for every grump and gripe I have, there’s always a chance moment to smile and celebrate, too.

To you and yours,

Jean
Memory Cafe board member

“MEMORY CAFE IS MY GO-TO REFERRAL.”

DR. LINDSEY DAHL, GERIATRICIAN.
Sanford Health



Memory Cafe fills a critical gap in care by providing education, guidance and meaningful support for individuals living with dementia and their families. The program offers a welcoming, inclusive environment where participants can access support groups, engage in activities designed to enhance cognitive ability, and connect with others who share similar experiences. These opportunities significantly reduce isolation, promote dignity, and improve quality of life for both patients and caregivers.

Families frequently report that Memory Cafe helps them better understand the disease process, navigate challenges with greater confidence and feel supported during what can be an overwhelming journey. The educational resources and community connections provided through the program complement medical care in a way that truly reflects a whole-person approach to health.

STILL HERE, STILL ME

Voices of Those Living with Memory Loss

By Abigail Byman, with assistance from Ben Cushing, her son



Getting From There to Here

I grew up on the south side of Chicago in the 50’s to a Jewish family. Education was an important value to us. My father was a chemical engineer, my mother was a librarian, both of my older brothers got PhDs, and I got a law degree. I went into higher education law, not criminal law; I didn’t do court cases, but I worked to find a satisfactory conclusion for all involved parties, be they faculty, staff, and/or students. I was the general counsel for multiple universities over the course of my forty-year career.

My mother died of Alzheimer’s decades ago. One of my older brothers is currently suffering from the same disease and couldn’t remember how we were related the last time I saw him. Now I’m noticing more and more blank spots in my own brain as my mental sharpness gets noticeably dulled. I moved to North Dakota for a job I’ve since retired from and have no family in the area except for my son. If it weren’t for Memory Café, we’d feel completely stranded.

Memory Café has been immensely helpful for discussing my cognitive decline, for finding strategies to cope with the loss of my faculties, and even just kvetching and commiserating over shared experiences. Being able to talk things over with a large group of caring, supportive people does wonders for reminding me that I’m not in this alone, as isolating as it can sometimes feel. The staff of the Memory Café have only ever had kind words for me, and I have only kind words for them.

FAMILY SUPPORT (CONT)

them start financially giving we asked each of them what organization they would like to support. Our son, Thomas, chose to donate to help those with dementia and their family. We already donated to the Memory Cafe so we gave an extra donation for Thomas. We now do this together annually.

We give to the Memory Cafe because our family understands the challenges and emotions those with dementia and their loved ones face. We know having a place for socialization, support and education is so vital for the dementia community. The Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley provides these and so much more.

FOR OUR HEALTH

Skills2Care® Occupational Therapy and Program Support Caregivers

By: Abby Husar, OTR/L, Program Manager

Caring for someone living with memory loss can be very meaningful but pose some challenges at times.

Occupational therapy (OT) offers practical support to help caregivers feel more confident, capable, and supported — and one helpful way is the Skills2Care® program. According to Jefferson University, the Skills2Care® program “is a research-tested program that improves skills and well-being of caregivers, reduces challenging behaviors that often occur with dementia and slows decline in daily function of people with dementia.”

This home based program, led by an occupational therapist, partners with the caregiver to create an individualized plan to help ease the daily challenges of family caregiving. This program helps caregivers build skills to support independence, safety, and quality of life at home.

Occupational therapists certified in Skills2Care® teach caregivers how to manage the day-to-day challenges of dementia. Program content includes:

- Understanding dementia
- Reducing challenging behaviors
- Promoting function
- Communicating effectively
- Making the home safer
- Ways to care for themselves while providing the best care possible.

The Skills2Care® program focuses on a personalized approach. Strategies are tailored to the individual and their caregiver, focusing on what matters most in daily life — from bathing and dressing to meaningful routines and activities. Interested in learning more?

Questions about cost or insurance coverage? Contact Innovative Therapy Solutions and Consulting (trained in Skills2Care® program) at **701-638-8106** to get your questions answered and to connect you with a Skills2Care® trained occupational therapist in Fargo/Moorhead.



WITH LOVE & SYMPATHY

Our gentle pediatrician and Scrabble master, Linda, passed away early last month. Our sincere condolences to her husband, Ted, and their family.

JUST FOR LAUGHS

STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS

Knock, Knock.

Who's there?

Noah.

Noah who?

Noah better way to start the year than with you.



Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

I was going to quit all my bad habits for the new year, but then I remembered that nobody likes a quitter.

My local gym costs \$120/year. That's \$60 per visit, not a great deal.

Why did the fish stop lifting weights?

He pulled a mussel.

This New Year's, I've resolved to lead a better life. Now all I have to do is find someone who will trade lives with me.

Why was the math book so excited for January 1st?

It wanted a fresh set of problems!

This New Year's, I'm going to make a resolution I can keep: no dieting all year long.

Knock knock. Who's there? Radio. Radio who? Radio not, it's a new year.

Being on a diet isn't so bad if you don't follow it.

My diet is taking all afternoon to work.

Quote of the Day

“I can accept failure, everyone fails at something. But I can't accept not trying.”

~Michael Jordan



JANUARY MEETING SCHEDULE

MONDAY SCHEDULE

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

Jan. 5th:

- **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)

Jan. 12th:

- **Morning Programs** as noted above

- **Afternoon Programming:** 1-2:30pm

- Caregiver Education: "Beyond Behaviors" w/ Abby Husar; Wood Burning with Jerry, and Joyful Moments with Val

Jan. 19th:

- **Morning programs** as noted above

- **No afternoon programming**

Jan. 26th:

- **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

Flourishing Forward: Dementia Workshop

A special educational event hosted by Memory Cafe for those living with early-stage memory loss and their care partners, families and friends. We are thrilled to welcome back **Angela Lunde, MA Program Director with Mayo Clinic.**

Event Details:

Date: January 14, 2026

Session 1: 9:30 - 11:30 AM

Lunch: 11:30 - 12:30 PM

Session 2: 12:30 - 2:30 PM

Location: Dakota Medical Foundation - 4321 20th Ave. S., Fargo

This is an RSVP only event, we ask that you **RSVP** by January 8th to what session(s) you will be attending and if you will be joining us for lunch.

There is no cost to attend this event however, we have included a suggested donation of \$25 to support our Giving Hearts Day campaign.

Thank you Sam and Laneil Skaff for sponsoring this important community event!

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

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

Jan. 7th - "Hope for 2026" Music: Moorhead Jazz Band
Hope Lutheran Church, 2902 25th St S. Fargo

Jan. 14th - Flourishing Forward: A Dementia Workshop
Dakota Medical Foundation (4321 20th Ave S. Fargo)
*See details, must RSVP

Jan. 21st - Vinyl Listening Party; "Bring and Brag" (**Bring a favorite item, poem or joke to share**)
Hope Lutheran Church, South Campus

Jan. 28th - Support Group Meetings:
9:30 -11 am - Moving Ahead: Life After Loss Support Group
1-2:30 pm - Caregiver Cafe
Memory Cafe office - 1122 1st Ave N. Fargo

'MOVING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER LOSS' SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesday, January 28th: 9:30-11:00 AM

This group is specifically for spouses who have lost a partner to a diagnosis of dementia or another type of memory loss.

YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP

Monday, January 26th: 6:00-7:30 PM

For couples and singles 30-65 years of age who are living with Young-Onset dementia.

'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

'CLUB SANDWICH' SUPPORT GROUP

Thursday, Jan. 15th 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

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

Support for adult children who are caring for a parent or in-law with memory loss while managing their own families, careers and responsibilities.

GRATEFUL FOR MEMORY CAFE



"I am so thankful for Memory Cafe. I have so many fond memories of Judy participating in the many activities. You guys are amazing."

-Curtis Rehder



"We enjoy the community, the diversity and wealth of information that is shared at Memory Cafe. Everyone is positive and upbeat. Building connections between staff and participants is always encouraging."

-David and Nancy Monson

BUILDING UPDATE: DEMOLITION IS IN FULL SWING!



It is TRILLING to watch the progress being made on the construction of our new "Home Away From Home"! The goal is to be in our new building within the next 8-10 weeks. Stay tuned for continued progress reports in our monthly newsletter!

Thank you to the benevolent donors who **gave us this incredible building** and the surrounding **SIX ACRES of land** to us and those who have already stepped forward to support this project so generously!



Leeora and Abby's future office



Our multi-purpose room, with a wall removed!



Our kitchen serving window, soon to be tripled in size!

GIVING BACK: 90 BLANKETS IN 90 MINUTES!

Memory Cafe's long-standing tradition of community service lives on! Once again, our 5th grade friends from **Oak Grove Elementary**, Memory Cafe participants and volunteers, and our community partners tied 90 blankets in 90 minutes to benefit four area non-profit organizations. This year the recipients included: Churches United, Matthew's Voice, Down Home and the Ronald McDonald House. Thank you to everyone who participated. A very special note of appreciation for **Kim Vannett** who purchased all the fabric, coordinated our efforts and successfully led the charge! Thanks so much Kim and Remi Vannett, Oak Grove 5th graders and their devoted teachers, our community volunteers and non-profit partners and friends!



\$250,000 Match Fund!

With the legendary momentum we have experienced over the past several years, we are eagerly looking forward to pursuing another GHD season with **GUSTO!** Due to the generosity of our faithful donors, we already have a \$250,000 match in place!

Funds raised will be used to support our operating budget and various programs which include:

- Caregiver support groups (offered 6x/month)
- Support groups for those living with memory loss (offered 4-5x/month)
- CrossFit exercise sessions (offered 4x/month)
- Music Therapy
- Community-based intergenerational creative therapy programs
- Monthly Lunch and Learn educational sessions
- Grief support group
- Sing From Your Heart dementia friendly chorus
- Dine and Dance
- High quality dementia educational materials
- Monthly newsletter
- Volunteer education and support
- Annual Redefining Memory Loss conference

How to support Memory Cafe on GHD:

1. Visit www.givingheartsday.org on or before February 12th to make a donation. **Early giving opens January 12th!**
2. Write a check - Checks may be written out to Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley, dated Feb. 12th with 'GHD' written on the memo line.
3. Mail your check to Memory Cafe (PO Box 883, Fargo, ND 58107). Checks need to be RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 12TH.
4. Drop off your check at Dakota Medical Foundation on or before Feb. 12th. Address: 4321 20th Ave S. Fargo

EVERY DONATION makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our participants and for the greater memory loss community.

Thank you for supporting Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley on Giving Hearts Day!

TESTIMONY

BY KARALEE PICARD, DAUGHTER
OF TIM AND JOY



Karalee, Joy and Tim

"Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is such a great organization! My parents truly love the Memory Cafe and remain in Fargo because of the community it has provided for them. What a relief to those of us who live far away that our loved ones find a gracious, loving community to support those living with dementia and the caregivers who tirelessly support their loved ones with dementia."

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS

By Deb McTaggart, Chorus Director



Get ready to experience the magic of making music! **Sing From Your Heart** is celebrating the start of our **6th season** on Thursday, February 5th and we'd love for **YOU** to consider joining us!

We've seen how "singing from the heart" brings joy and purpose, and the positive audience response confirms the impact we're making. Scientific research highlights the benefits of choral singing on **physical, mental, and brain health**—especially for those with memory loss/dementia and their care partners.

No prior music or singing experience is necessary! We believe everyone can sing from their hearts! There are **no auditions** and **no costs** to participate.

Join us this season and discover the amazing power and joy of singing in a chorus. For more information, please visit our website at singfromyourheartchorus.org.

2025 HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES!



CARE PARTNER CORNER

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

When I was a caregiver for my husband, I did not have a daily routine set up nor was I aware of the need for one. I just took every day as it came and did my best with it, which is maybe what most caregivers do.



I have since learned that a daily routine is important for people with dementia because it can provide a sense of security when they know what's expected of them each day, and it may reduce stress for both the care receiver and caregiver when there is a plan to follow.

If I had developed a daily routine for my husband and me, it may have looked something like this:

- Wake up in the morning at a consistent time
- Complete morning tasks in the same order each day: toileting, shower, dressing,
- brushing teeth, etc.
- Incorporate daily activities that are enjoyed by the care receiver, and adapted as needed, to abilities.

Examples:

- Exercise
- Time outside
- Shopping/Errands
- Television
- Household tasks
- Memory Cafe
- Rest time
- Meal time
- Listening to music
- Regular bedtime

I think white boards are a good idea, as they allow for quick changes if the day's activities change. There are magnetic boards that attach to the refrigerator. If the care receiver can read, they can be referred to the white board to see what's happening that day.

Consistency is important but we all know that days can be unpredictable and flexibility is needed.



"Thank you for your love and support. There are no words to express how much you all mean to me. You have provided deep friendships that give me strength to start every day."

~Marlys, care partner

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

BY SCOTT FISCHER

I was introduced to Deb Kaul in January 2025 by chance. She shared that she'd been following my late wife's cancer journey through CaringBridge, praying for her/us along the way. Shortly after we met, a mutual acquaintance contacted me saying Deb was wondering if I'd be open to volunteering at Memory Café and if it was okay for her to reach out. What started as that compassionate exchange quickly turned into a meaningful commitment. A short time later, I began volunteering on Monday mornings at Memory Café. Little did I know that this simple act of showing up would weave itself so deeply into the fabric of my life, offering not just a way to give back, but a profound source of growth and connection.



Helping others is part of my DNA, so I was drawn to Memory Café's mission from the start. But nothing could have prepared me for the warmth and authenticity I encountered. Each Monday, I spend time greeting folks at the door and simply being present for the participants and their loved ones. I've witnessed the joy in a shared story or song, the lively competition during bingo or any game we play, and the unspoken bonds that form when people come together without judgment. It's a reminder that even in the face of memory loss, humanity shines through in laughter, listening, and those small, tender moments.

Volunteering here has reshaped my own perspective. I've learned to embrace uncertainty with grace, to celebrate the "now" over what might have been, and to recognize the ripple effects of kindness. The staff and fellow volunteers are a constant inspiration—their dedication feels like a gentle anchor in the storm. And the participants? They teach me resilience every single week, turning what could be heavy into something light and hopeful.

If there's one thing I've taken away, it's this: Sometimes, the greatest adventures begin with a chance meeting, an open door, and an open heart. Memory Café has become my Monday morning ritual, a space where I recharge and reflect. I'm endlessly grateful for the journey so far and excited for all the Mondays yet to come.

WINTER WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Please watch your emails for weather cancellations. If you would like to be added to our call list - please contact us.



BRAIN HEALTH STRATEGIES: ACCEPT CHANGES IN YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

WWW.ALZ.ORG

ACCEPTANCE.

Things you once did easily will become increasingly difficult, such as maintaining a schedule or managing money. Some people may try to cover up their difficulties to protect themselves and their family from embarrassment. Or, they may be reluctant to ask for help. Trying to do what others in the early stage have called "faking it" and covering up errors can be a great source of stress. Accepting changes in your abilities and adapting new coping skills can help you restore balance to your life and give you a sense of accomplishment in your abilities as you continue to live with the disease.

Developing effective coping strategies can help you:

- Remain engaged and active
- Respond to challenges that will help maximize your independence and well-being
- Gain a sense of control over your life

Keep in mind that what works well for one person may not work for another. And, strategies that work for you one day may not work the next. When developing your coping strategies, try different ones to find those that work best for you. The more flexible you can be, the better you can fine-tune your strategies to help with each situation.

Creating a coping strategy:

Focus on these three steps:

1. Identify: Make a list of tasks that have become more challenging. Focus on developing coping strategies for your more challenging tasks. For example, if you are forgetting to take your medications, but have no problem doing the laundry, focus on creating medication reminder strategies first.
2. Prioritize: Determine if the task is necessary. Ask yourself if the task you are trying to accomplish will help you get to your goal. For example, if paying bills has become more difficult for you, can someone help you write out each check? If the answer is yes, consider asking someone to help. You can remain in charge of signing each check.
3. Strategize: Find the solution that works best for you. For example, if you are having difficulty cooking dinner, try simplifying the process by using a crockpot. You can make a full meal without spending a lot of time figuring out the cooking process.

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**SCAN HERE →
FOR MORE INFORMATION**



“As a Geriatrician serving individuals and families affected by dementia in our community, Memory Cafe is consistently my go-to referral for patients and their care partners.”

~Dr. Lindsey Dahl, Sanford Health

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