Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

February 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

WHY WE APPRECIATE MEMORY CAFE

FORMER GOVENOR ED AND NANCY SCHAFER

We have been supporters of Memory Café from the first organizational session. We were initially attracted because of family members who had memory loss and saw how the Café could support not only those affected but also the loved ones who navigate daily life alongside them.

As we have observed the program, the two of us have seen firsthand the wonderful benefits of gathering people together with a common cause and the healing and comfort of music, exercise and friendship in a safe, supportive environment.

Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

At Memory Café of the Red River Valley, we see every day how powerful a community can be. For individuals and families navigating memory loss, connection, understanding, and moments of joy are not just meaningful... they are life-giving! No one should have to walk this journey alone, and because of our community, they don't have to.

Our programs are intentionally offered at no cost to participants and caregivers. This is possible because of the generosity of donors, sponsors, and supporters who believe in creating welcoming spaces where people feel seen, supported, and understood. This past year, 85% of our funding came from our community's support. Simply remarkable! From weekly gatherings and educational opportunities to special events that spark laughter and connection, community support is what makes it all happen. THANK YOU to those of you who support our mission.

This Giving Hearts Day, we have received a $250,000 match and are working towards raising a total of $500,000 to help sustain and grow the programs and resources individuals and families rely on each week. Together, we are 'Transforming the Memory Loss Journey' by creating moments that reduce isolation, uplift caregivers, and remind individuals living with memory loss that they are valued and not alone.

When you give, you're not just funding programs. You're helping create moments of connection, easing the weight caregivers carry, and strengthening a community that shows up with compassion and hope. Together, we can continue transforming lives, one moment, one family, and one connection at a time.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

With gratitude,

Maggie Ness

FEBRUARY 12 Giving Hearts Day

"I have witnessed many caregivers forge a hopeful path; a path that is not so much about getting 'through' it as it is abour 'being in' the caregiving role in a way that preserves their own well-being." Angela Lunde, M.A. Mayo Clinic

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.

Robin's Song

Written by: Robin Albright
in honor of his wife, Brenda

You give me time and your affection,
You brought love like I've never known.
You're always there when I need you
And to me a reason to go on.

Chorus:
You're my Bread when I'm hungry,
You're my Shelter from troubled winds.
You're my anchor in life's ocean,
But most of all you're my best friend.

When I need hope and inspiration,
You're always strong when I'm tired and weak.
I could search this whole world over,
You'd still be everything that I need.

Chorus: (sing twice)
You're my Bread when I'm hungry,
You're my Shelter from troubled winds.
You're my anchor in life's ocean,
But most of all you're my best friend.

"Robin and I have a long time history and love for each other. We've known each other since we were 6 years old and started dating at age 15. Our daughter tells us that's true love." ❤
~Brenda

In Loving Memory

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of Theresa (Terri) D. Terri passed away in the presence of her dear family on January 19th. Our thoughts and prayers are with Bruce and their wonderful family.

STILL HERE, STILL ME

Voices of Those Living with Memory Loss

By Robin and Brenda Albright

I was raised by a single mom with my two brothers and sister in Fargo. I didn't meet my father until I was 18 but we became fast friends; the similarities between us were uncanny.

I was 46 when my dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. At the time I was manufacturing corrugated boxes for WestRock Co where I eventually became a superintendent and helped train other plants around the US and Canada on how to be more efficient. I retired from that career after working there for 46 years. During that time, I was also the lead singer and lead guitarist in a 3-man band called Brandy Wine. I self-taught myself the guitar when I was eight years old.

My wife, Brenda and I met when we were six years old. I remember chasing her around like any little boy does who has a crush on a girl. We started dating when we were fifteen and we had our first child, Melissa when we were eighteen. A year later we were married and within the next year we had our second child, Christopher.

I'm good with building projects and working with my hands. In fact, in 1999 my family and I built our lake home in five months after just reading a book on how to build homes. The work was done so well that the inspectors offered me a job on the spot.

Brenda heard about Memory Cafe through my sister's friend. Initially, I was very concerned about attending the group. Now I really enjoy going because I have made good friends there who can relate to the memory changes I am experiencing. It helps knowing you are not alone. I am also very grateful because Memory Cafe has encouraged me to pick up my guitar and start playing again!

"Robin's Song" (***see left column***) is a song I recently composed in honor of Brenda and performed at Memory Cafe. Brenda and my family are so pleased that I am once again enjoying the things I have loved throughout my life.

Throughout everything, Brenda has been by my side; I am so grateful for her. In September of this year we will celebrate our 50th anniversary. We are so grateful for the support Memory Cafe gives to both of us. The knowledge and support we receive is extraordinary and every day we cherish the lifelong friendships we have made at Memory Cafe.

FOR OUR HEALTH: The MIND Diet: A Brain Boosting Way to Eat (excerpted)

www.dementiasociety.org

Have you ever wondered if what you eat can help keep your brain sharp? Scientists say that it can! A specific eating plan called the MIND diet was created to help improve memory, focus, and brain health as people age. It may even lower the risk of diseases like Alzheimer's.

The **MIND Diet** stands for Mediterranean-DASH Diet Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay. It combines two healthy diets:

The **Mediterranean Diet** focuses on fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats like olive oil.
The **DASH Diet** helps lower blood pressure by reducing salt and processed foods while adding more nutrient-rich foods.

How Does the MIND Diet Help the Brain?

The MIND diet includes foods high in antioxidants, vitamins, and healthy fats which reduce brain inflammation and improve blood flow. It also lowers harmful proteins by helping to remove beta-amyloid plaques, which are linked to Alzheimer's disease. Additionally, it provides brain fuel from omega-3 fatty acids and B vitamins that support memory and learning.

Best Foods for the MIND Diet:

- Leafy Green Vegetables – Spinach, kale, and lettuce help slow memory decline.
- Berries – Blueberries and strawberries are rich in antioxidants that protect brain cells.
- Nuts – Walnuts, almonds, and cashews provide healthy fats that support brain function.
- Whole Grains – Oatmeal, brown rice, and whole wheat bread give the brain steady energy.

(cont p. 7)

We've been blessed over the years by the presence of John V. and his dedicated wife, Marlys. Our thoughts and prayers are with Marlys and their lovely family upon his recent passing.

JUST FOR LAUGHS

STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS

Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

A job applicant asked, "Before I accept this offer, I have one question: Are the hours long?" "Well," the boss replied, "we do our best to keep them to 60 minutes."

Knute and Lars decided to go ice fishing. By the time they cut the hole in the ice big enough for their boat, it was too late and they had to go home.

I'm not procrastinating. I'm just prioritizing my relaxation.

I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.

Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: "You stay here, I'll go on a head."

Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, "I've lost my electron." The other says, "Are you sure?" The first replies, "Yes, I'm positive."

Usually I wake up feeling like a million bucks. This morning, however, I woke up feeling like insufficient funds.

I heard that memory foam pillows were on sale but I can't remember where.

Red Skelton on love and marriage:

- Two times a week we go to a nice restaurant, have a little beverage, good food and companionship. She goes on Tuesdays, I go on Fridays.
- We also sleep in separate beds. Hers is in California and mine is in Texas.
- We always hold hands. If I let go, she shops.
- I married Miss Right. I just didn't know her first name was 'Always'.

Quote of the Day

"I don't believe you have to be better than everybody else. I believe you have to be better that you ever thought you could be."

~Ken Venturi

FEBRUARY MEETING SCHEDULE

MONDAY SCHEDULE

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

Feb. 2nd:

- **Morning Programming:**
  - 9-11am Morning Programs
  - 9:00-9:30 - 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, Memories and Musing w/ Deb McTaggart

Feb. 9th:

- **Morning Programs** as noted above
- **Afternoon Programing:** 1-2:30pm
  - Education: "Hidden Impacts of Untreated Hearing Loss" with Dawn Sauvageau, Outreach Hearing Specialist; Wood Burning with Jerry, and Joyful Moments with Val

Feb. 16th:

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

Feb. 23rd:

- **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

February Education

Monday, February 9th: 1:00-2:30 PM (Bethel Church)
Dawn Sauvageau is an Adult Hearing Outreach Specialist with the ND School for the Deaf Resource Center. She will be presenting on the importance of treating hearing loss, the hidden impacts of not treating hearing loss, and how to identify individuals who may be experiencing hearing loss. She will also bring some assistive hearing devices to show.

Wednesday, Feb. 18th: 1:00-2:30 PM (Hope Church- South)
Nicole Holzworth, occupational therapist- will explain how sleep works and why it is so important for a healthy brain. She will teach us about the different stages of sleep, how deep sleep helps "clean" the brain, and how light and screens can affect when we feel sleepy. She will provide simple tips how to improve sleep and keep your brain healthy.

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

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

Feb. 4th - Making of Giving Hearts Day cards with Capstone students, led by Emily Brooks
Hope Lutheran Church, South (3636 25th St. South)

Feb. 11th - Valentine's Party with Ransom Notes and Sweetheart Bingo (Hjemkomst Center-202 1st Ave N, Mhd)

Feb 18th- "Sleep and Brain Health" by Nicole Holzworth, OTR/L (break out speaker from RML Conference '25)
Hope Lutheran Church, South (3636 25th St. South)

Feb. 25th - 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, February 25th: 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, February 23rd 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

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

'CLUB SANDWICH' SUPPORT GROUP

Thursday, Feb. 19th 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.

CARE PARTNER TESTIMONY

"All forms of dementia require much of the care partner. Although it is hard to quantify them, the benefits from taking part in Memory Cafe are numerous and they have become essential in our everyday lives. Every gathering of the group is a real shot in the arm for us. Being with so many others who share the memory loss life lightens the load for us in ways that are hard to explain but that are real and important. We are so glad that this organization functions so well. We are proud to be part of this exclusive 'club'." **~John and Joyce Stende**

BUILDING UPDATE: INCREDIBLE PROGRESS!

It is EXHILARATING to walk through our new "home away from home" as it is being renovated to meet the needs of our memory loss community! The goal is to be moving into the building by mid-March.

Thanks again to those who have generously donated the building, six acres of land and funding for the renovations and upcoming expansion. We are profoundly grateful!

Donuts and coffee anyone?
Our new kitchen serving window will be open for 'business' soon!

THE EMPOWERED CAREGIVER

Angela Lunde, M.A. Mayo Clinic

"Dementia caregivers are often the 'invisible second patients' with high rates of burden and pshchological distress, physical ill-health as well as social isolation."

HOPE IS SOMETHING YOU GIVE YOURSELF:

- A Cognitive-Behavioral process
- Cognitive - **Our thinking**
- Behavioral - **Our actions**
- Hope is activated by our thoughts and actions
- Hope gives rise to empowerment
- We have the power to activate hope

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Transition to a place of acceptance
2. Learn new ways of communicating
3. Find a person or community (like Memory Cafe)

ACCEPTANCE IS:

- Being honest about what you can and cannot control
- Believing that good enough is good enough
- Letting go of the need to be "right"
- Allowing yourself to fee what you feel
- Making peace with 'what is'
- Adopting a new way to think about dementia that calls on empathy

ACCEPTANCE IS NOT:

- Apathy
- Passivity
- Giving up
- Giving in
- Relinquishing agency
- Liking the way things are
- Condoning
- Agreeing with

FEBRUARY 12 Giving Hearts Day

We are already feeling the **contagious** energy that GHD offers, not only to Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley but our entire region! The GHD 'season' is our largest fundraiser of the year.

This Giving Hearts Day we received a $250,000 match and we are working hard to raise that match! This is DOUBLE what we raised on GHD last year.

We are also aspiring to meet or exceed our goal of raising those funds with the support of at least 500 donors!

Would you help us spread the word and support our mission by donating generously to Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley? THANK YOU!

Funds raised on GHD this year will be used to support our general operating budget which includes: well-attended caregiver support groups; weekly exercise sessions; music therapy; Sing From Your Heart chorus; top-notch dementia education for our participants, volunteers and community; monthly newsletter; grief support group; various creative therapies: our annual Redefining Memory Loss conference and more!

How to Support Memory Cafe on GHD:

1. **Early giving is OPEN!** Visit www.givingheartsday.org on or before February 12th to make a donation.
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 those living in the memory loss community.
Thank you for supporting Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley!

TESTIMONY

"Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is truly a treasure." ANGELA LUNDE, M.A. MAYO CLINIC

THANK YOU: HORACE LIONS CLUB

Memory Cafe recently received a very generous grant from the Horace Lions Club to support our monthly newsletter and Sing From Your Heart dementia-friendly chorus! THANK YOU SO MUCH Horace Lions!! We appreciate your support of our mission a great deal.

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS

By Deb McTaggart, Chorus Director

Find Your Voice with "Sing From Your Heart"

"A sound of hope, a sound of peace, a sound that celebrates what we believe. A sound of love, a sound so strong. It's amazing what is given when we share a song." — **Greg Gilpin**

Sing From Your Heart has officially kicked off its sixth season, and we would love for you to join our music community! We are a **dementia-friendly chorus** designed for individuals living with dementia/memory loss who are still residing in their homes.

Because we believe in the power of sharing music together, we encourage participants to attend with a care partner—whether that is a spouse, family member, neighbor, or friend. Together, with volunteers, we create a supportive space where the focus is on connection, joy, and the music in our hearts.

Rehearsals begin on <u>Thursday, February 5th!</u>

- **When:** Thursdays from 1:00 – 2:30 PM (Rehearsal)
  2:30-3:00 PM ("Cookies and Conversation")
- **Where:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church (613 16th Street South, Fargo)

Curious about the choir? It is not too late to join! We invite you to come and experience a rehearsal as our guest. No pressure, no fees and no background in singing is necessary—just a desire to share your heart and voice in the "sound of hope." **Call 701-369-0629 for more information.**

MEMORY AIDS

- Pay attention - one task at a time
- Avoid distractions
- Take your time - don't rush
- Stay organized - ask for help if you need to
- Establish a daily routine for everyday tasks
- Wear hearing aids if you need them!
- Take advantage of assistive products:
  - pill boxes
  - calendars/planners
  - memory boards
  - reminder alarms
  - signs and labels
  - routine!
- Stay organized
  - Designate a place at home for your glasses, purse, keys, hearing aides, phone etc.

CARE PARTNER CORNER

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

I wrote the following article at some point during my journey with my husband, Mark. I share it today with other caregivers who may be able to relate to it.

Confusing...this word seems to represent the world that I live in as the wife of a man with dementia. Slowly but surely, he is leaving the world he has experienced all his life, and entering into a reality created by his altered brain. He cannot return to my world but will move deeper into his.

Some days he appears to be back to the "real" world in his mind and I enjoy these times and am thankful for them. But other days, I am asked questions like "are we still married?" "what kind of car do we have?" "who owns our home?" And as hallucinations have become part of his life, more bizarre revelations come out and stranger behaviors. I am asked why are there people going in and out of our house? The garage door is opened to let a "non-existent dog" out. The real cat is seen running away outside the window or chasing a non-existent mouse.

My reactions to the questions and behaviors are inconsistent and sometimes shameful to me. I ask my own questions: Why did I argue with him about that? Why didn't I anticipate what his reaction would be and deal with the situation better? Why don't I remember what I've learned about how dementia works and apply this knowledge? Why do I get so frustrated and anxious when I know it's a disease that my husband has no control over?

Our confusing world keeps changing and I need to keep "upping my game" to keep up with it. It is stressful, tiring, and at times, very sad. Many times, I question my own ability and strength to continue to do what this disease requires of me. Some days I think I don't even want to do it anymore.

There will come a day when I simply can't continue, and I trust that I will know when that is. Until then, I continue to trust God to provide sufficient grace for each day, his wisdom and guidance on this path, to use me as He will to help others on this journey, and that He be glorified in it.

WINTER WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Please watch your emails for weather cancellations. If you would like to be added to our call list - please contact us at 701-404-6712. Thank you!

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

My Journey With Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley
By Steve Miller

I was first introduced to the Memory Café of the Red River Valley back in 2023. After meeting with Deb Kaul, I knew this was an organization I needed to become involved with. The meeting with Deb was inspiring, and soon after, I was fortunate to join the board and later, take on the role of treasurer. That was just the beginning of my journey with the Memory Café.

Nearly three years later, I have seen remarkable growth within the organization. We have expanded our programs, increased the number of attendees, brought on additional staff, and have had a significant impact on the community where we live. The progress we have made is a testament to the dedication of everyone involved and the important role the Memory Café plays in supporting those affected by dementia.

My interest in the Memory Café and supporting those with dementia stems from personal experience. Both of my parents have been affected by dementia—my mother with Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD) and my father, who recently passed away, with Alzheimer's. Although their journeys with dementia were very different, one thing remained the same: my family's need for support. The Memory Café has proven to be a wonderful community and organization that provides vital support not only to those living with dementia but also to their caregivers.

As I have learned more about the various types of dementia, a persistent thought remains: Will I get dementia? This is a common concern for many family members if a parent, grandparent, sibling, or other relative is diagnosed. Despite these worries, it is not something we often talk about openly; instead, we quietly carry this concern. What we can do is focus on living as healthily as possible—staying physically active, continuing to learn new skills, and maintaining social connections. All of these are excellent ways to keep our brains healthy.

However, if we do receive a dementia diagnosis, it is comforting to know that there is a community like the Memory Café in our area. Here, we can simply be ourselves and connect with others who are experiencing similar life changes. The potential for future services, such as respite care, is what continues to drive my passion for this organization and its mission.

Thank you for your ongoing support for the Memory Cafe.

BRAIN HEALTH STRATEGIES: THE GOOD LIFE ROADMAP

ANGELA LUNDE, M.A. MAYO CLINIC

1. Choose a good attitude
2. Focus on your strengths, not your areas of weakness
3. Incorporate routine into your daily life
4. Use memory aids
5. Consider the arts
6. Spend time in nature
7. Exercise most days
8. Eat for heart health - the MIND diet
9. Cultivate supportive relationships and sense of community
10. Be kind to yourself

MIND Diet (cont)

- Fish – Salmon, trout, and sardines contain omega-3 fatty acids that support memory.
- Olive Oil is a heart-healthy fat that reduces brain inflammation.
- Beans are a great source of protein and fiber that keeps brain function steady.

Foods to Limit on the MIND Diet:

- Red Meat – Limit burgers, steaks, and pork.
- Butter & Margarine – Too much saturated fat can harm brain function.
- Fried & Fast Foods – These increase inflammation and may speed up memory loss.
- Cheese – Eat in moderation, as too much can contribute to poor brain health.
- Sweets & Pastries – High sugar intake has been linked to brain aging.

How to Start the MIND Diet:
Starting the MIND diet is easy! You don't have to follow it perfectly.

- Eat more brain-friendly foods daily.
- Make small swaps, like using olive oil instead of butter.
- Snack on nuts or berries instead of chips.
- Eat fish at least once a week.

HOPE IS...

"Hope is not something you either have or don't. Hope is something you give yourself. Hope is activated by our thoughts and our actions. If you experience hope in the face of adversity, your brain performs better, and you are more likely to make positive decisions regarding your health like adopting a healthier lifestyle."
~Angela Lunde, M.A. Mayo Clinic

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FEBRUARY 12

GIVING HEARTS DAY

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