

Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

May 2026



IN THIS ISSUE

- Message from Maggie
- A Message from Dr. Vijay, Conference Keynote Speaker
- Redefining Memory Loss Conference
- *Still Here, Still Me* - by Janet Solheim
- For Our Health - Enhancing Memory and Attention Through Gardening
- Let Go of Guilt
- Just for Laughs - Steve Froslic and Friends
- May Meeting Schedule
- Building Update - We're In! Photo Gallery
- Public Open House and Art Show - May 13th
- My First Visit to Memory Cafe - Stephanie Severson
- Sing From Your Heart Chorus - Deb McTaggart
- Validation Therapy
- Care Partner Corner - Teryl Clausen
- Brain Health Strategies - Benefits of Fresh Air
- Memories - Lyrics from Elvis Presley
- Ten Warning Signs of Dementia

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM DR. VIJAY, KEYNOTE SPEAKER

As Cognitive Neurologists, colleagues and I focus on diagnosis and management of the many causes of memory and thinking changes. Alzheimer's and related neurodegenerative diseases are very common amongst these causes, and understandably can be scary to think about.



While we don't yet have cures for AD and related disorders, fortunately there are lifestyle and medication options to manage the symptoms from these diseases, and in some cases there may even be options to intervene on disease "nuts and bolts" with the aim of slowing progression in the future. There are also some largely treatable or even reversible causes for memory loss. All of this means there are good reasons to have an accurate diagnosis when one is present and to optimize management with the best available tools that fit each individual. I hope to share more about these and related topics at our upcoming conference.

Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

We're thrilled to invite you to be part of this year's **Redefining Memory Loss Conference on June 9 at the Delta Fargo**. Whether you've joined us in the past or will be attending for the first time, this year's event promises meaningful connection, inspiring speakers, and valuable new insights.

This conference is for healthcare professionals, care partners, individuals living with mild-cognitive impairment or early-stage dementia, and those inspired to improve the quality of life for the memory loss community.

Together, we'll experience empowering education, connect with local resources, enjoy music from the Sing From Your Heart Chorus, get moving with Coach Jake, and embrace the beauty of being in community.

We look forward to seeing you June 9th!

With gratitude,
Maggie Ness

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

By: Kolin Sisson,
Fargo Force

The first time I went to memory cafe, something in my heart drew me there, so I asked if I could visit again. My Grandfather had dementia in the later years of his life, and it was hard to see someone go through the loss of one of the only things that stays with you through your whole life. I mean think about it, people leave, careers change, dreams shift. Your memory is the only thing that stays through it all. So I feel deeply for anyone struggling with memory loss and I wanted to help. How my attraction to Memory Cafe started is I wanted to bring a little bit of light to people that were struggling with the same issues as my grandfather before he passed. So I started attending on Mondays for the Social Club - it was amazing! I had a ton of laughs with the guys and realized that I looked up to each and every one of them so much. While living in a generation that is usually on their phones quite a bit and missing out on many treasures of this life, I had met these incredible human beings. (Cont. Pg. 7)



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.

REDEFINING MEMORY LOSS CONFERENCE

Tuesday June 9, 2026 | 8:00-4:30
Delta Hotel | Fargo ND

We are DELIGHTED to offer you another outstanding dementia conference this year! This conference is intended for healthcare professionals, care partners, individuals living with mild cognitive impairment or early-stage dementia, and those interested in improving the quality of life for the memory loss community.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Dr. Vijay Ramanan
Cognitive/Behavioral Neurologist
Mayo Clinic

EMCEE



Becky Gulsvig
Moorhead Native,
Broadway Performer

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Jayne Clairmont
Nationally Recognized
Dementia Expert

Keynote sessions include:

- Updates on Alzheimer's Disease and other Neurodegenerative Diseases - Dr Ramanan
- Forty-four Years of Dementia Knowledge: Mistakes Made and Lessons Learned - Jayne Clairmont

Breakout Sessions Include:

- Panel Discussion: More than a Diagnosis, Living Well With Dementia
- Every Moment Matters: Lessons, Insights & Honest Conversation That Change Professional Care
- Advancing Dementia Care: A Provider - Focused Discussion
- The Empowered Caregiver: Supporting Independence in Professional Care
- Living Well, One Day at a Time: Practical Tips for Dementia Well-Being

Cost:

Before May 13th:

\$70 Community members
\$100 Professionals seeking credit

After May 13th:

\$90 Community members
\$120 Professionals seeking credit

Group Discounts: Table of 6

Community group rate - \$300
Professional group rate - \$510

Scan and register online
today!



Note: If you register online there will be an Eventbrite processing fee. Paper registration forms are available.

Testimonial from 2025:

"Excellent conference! It's so exciting to see how Memory Cafe has grown, your support of the memory loss community is invaluable! Thank you!"

STILL HERE, STILL ME

Voices of Those Living with Memory Loss

My New Life: Giving Up My Driver's License

By Janet Solheim



I started driving when I was a 14 year old farm girl helping my dad get his crop off the field. I would stop to unload the grain after the third round but he kept going so I had to unload it on the run. I drove alone into town to unload my grain and I also drove a beet truck. Dad told me to take my time going but to "put my foot to the metal" on the way back! So, my point is...I've been driving for a very long time!

I am now living with various changes with my memory and how my brain works and was recently diagnosed with the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. As you might expect, this has been a difficult adjustment for me in many ways. One of the most difficult adjustments I have needed to make was facing the fact that I shouldn't be driving any more. Not if I want to avoid an accident and possibly hurting myself or someone else.

The turning point happened one day recently when I went out for a drive. On the way back home I passed out. Another car hit the back of my car because I was in the wrong lane and heading straight for a large tree. It happened during the time of day when school buses were dropping off children which made it even scarier.

I told my daughter about what had happened. I then went to the clinic to take a driver's test. Even though I did not pass, I am glad I took the test for the safety of myself and other innocent people.

Now I have other things to do to pass the time that don't require a car trip - reading, getting back into sewing and going for long walks. It's also been nice to have time with friends and family who are willing to take me shopping and to events I enjoy, like Memory Cafe!

The people I have met at Memory Cafe have quickly become very good friends. I felt comfortable at my very first meeting which is unusual for me. I usually never talk in group settings but I feel very comfortable speaking up at Memory Cafe! I look forward to every Memory Cafe gathering and spending time with my new friends. I am so grateful for Memory Cafe!



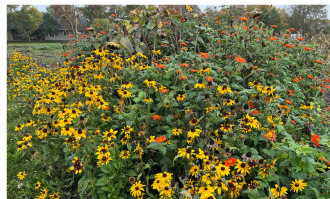
Memory Cafe's Gift Registry

Registry & Wish List



FOR OUR HEALTH: ENHANCING MEMORY THROUGH GARDENING

ALZHEIMER'S TODAY - ALZHEIMER'S FOUNDATION OF AMERICA - www.alzfdn.org



Flowers and produce from our *Growing Together* Community Garden on our new site!

Therapeutic horticulturist Sallie Stutz has no trouble offering an anecdote to illustrate the power of her work. She has countless examples but chose one that involved two nonverbal women who built a friendship in the gardening class she taught as part of AFA's weekly Teal Room in-person programs.

Stutz, who received a certificate in therapeutic horticulture from the New York Botanical Garden, uses plants and nature-inspired activities to work toward the improvement of the physical, cognitive, psychological and social goals of participants.

"Often the repetitive-focused activities can calm the mind and give relaxation. Caring for plants enhances memory and attention, which can benefit people with cognitive impairment. Nurturing plants gives a sense of responsibility and purpose and success. It builds self-esteem. I often try to use familiar and seasonal plants that might trigger good memories such as Christmas cactus and roses."

She also recommends:

- Grow windowsill herbs or microgreens.
- Touch, smell and identify herbs like rosemary, mint and lavender.
- Water your indoor/outdoor plants together.
- Make potpourri sachets with rose or lavender.
- Grow wheat grass or catnip for your cat.
- Make fresh salsa from your tomatoes, peppers and onions.

LET GO OF GUILT

-National Alliance on Mental Illness

You may resent having to remind your partner to take medication, then feel guilty. It's natural to think things like "a better person wouldn't be annoyed with their spouse," but that kind of guilt is both untrue and unproductive. When you allow yourself to notice your feelings without judging them as good or bad, you dial down the stress and feel more in control. When you feel less stressed, you're better able to thoughtfully choose how to act.



JUST FOR LAUGHS

STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS



Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

God: "Hi Noah, been out in the Ark lately?"

Noah: "Yes, went out for a bit of fishing yesterday"

God: "Any good?"

Noah: "No, I couldn't stay out long, I only had two worms..."

"You can live to be one hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to live to one hundred."

-Woody Allen

I've reached the age where my back goes out more than I do.

How do you know your doctor is a vampire? She draws your blood with a straw.

"Facebook just sounds like a drag. In my day, seeing pictures of people's vacations was considered a punishment." - Betty White

A pastor who was giving a children's sermon on vestments asked, "Why do you think I wear this collar?" A boy called out, "Because it kills ticks and fleas for up to 30 days?"

I am looking for someone to brush their teeth with me. Nine out of ten dentists say brushing alone won't reduce cavities.

"He's so old that when he orders a three minute egg, they ask for the money up front." -George Burns

"So far this is the oldest I've been."

-George Carlin

Quote of the Day

"Do the one thing you think you cannot do. Fail at it. Try again. Do better the second time. The only people who never tumble are those who never mount the high wire. This is your moment. Own it."

-Oprah Winfrey



MAY MEETING SCHEDULE

MONDAY SCHEDULE

(PLEASE NOTE: LOCATIONS VARY, SEE DETAILS BELOW)

May 4th:

- **Morning Programming: 9-11:00am**
Bethel Church (2702 30th Ave S. Fargo)
 - 9:00-9:30 - Exercise with Coach Jake
 - 9:30-11:00
 - Men's Caregiver Support Group
 - Women's Caregiver Support Group
 - 'Social Club' (free respite group for your loved one)
 - 'The Gathering - Support group for individuals experiencing early stages of memory loss for any medical reason.
- **Afternoon Programming: 1-2:30 PM**
NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)
 - Games, puzzles, creative arts. **No Music Memories and Musing this month.**

May 11th:

- **Morning Programming: 9-11:00am** *(noted above)*
Bethel Church (2702 30th Ave S. Fargo)
- **Afternoon Programming: 1-2:30pm**
NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)
 - Caregiver Education: "The Life Story": w/ Deb Kaul; Wood Burning with Jerry, and Joyful Moments w/ Friends

May 18th:

- **Morning Programming: 9-11:00am** *(noted above)*
Bethel Church (2702 30th Ave S. Fargo)
- **Afternoon Programming: 1-2:30pm**
NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)
 - **"Memory Cafe Open"**: This is an open time to meet your Memory Cafe friends to have coffee and socialize. Puzzles, games, creative art available as well. There is no structured programming during this time; there are no respite services offered.

May 25th:

- **Memory Cafe is Closed. Happy Memorial Day!**

May (Monday) Education

Monday, May 11th: 1:00-2:30 PM (New Memory Cafe)
Deb Kaul, co-founder of Memory Cafe, will discuss how understanding and sharing our life story can help shape the way care is delivered. She will tell her personal story of caring for her parents and how important it was to honor their identity, values, and needs. This session will focus on practical ways to use the life story as a tool for communication, connection, and finding meaning in everyday life. We encourage all caregivers to attend! (Respite available during this session)

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

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

May 6th - Education: Driving Safety for Seniors: A Panel Discussion.
Hope Lutheran Church, South (3636 25th St. South)

May 13th- 2nd Annual Memory Cafe Art/Hobby Show and Community Open House. All are welcome!
NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)

May 20th- Sing From Your Heart Performance AND Music Memories with Deb McTaggart
Hope Lutheran Church, South (3636 25th St. South)

May 27th - Support Group Meetings:
9:30 -11 am - Moving Ahead: Life After Loss Support Group
1-2:30 pm - Caregiver Cafe
NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. S Fargo)

'MOVING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER LOSS' SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesday, May 27th 9:30-11:00 AM

NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. South, Fargo)

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

Tuesday, May 26th - 5:00- 6:30 PM

NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. South, Fargo)

'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

Wednesday, May 27th 3:30 - 5:00 PM

NEW Memory Cafe (3910 25th St. South, 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.

May (Wednesday) Education

Wednesday, May 6th: 1:00-2:30 PM (Hope Lutheran South)

Memory Cafe annual driving panel brings together experts to provide guidance, resources, and different perspectives to help navigate driving decisions, and learn about alternative forms of transportation. Hear from professionals in insurance, legal, a behind the wheel driving specialist and senior services as they share helpful information and answer your questions. Please join us for this valuable education!



BUILDING UPDATE: WE'RE IN!! PHOTOS FROM OUR FIRST WEEK: VOLUNTEER AND PARTICIPANT OPEN HOUSES



The BIOGirls were our FIRST guests as a group in our new building! They created beautiful 'Welcome to Memory Cafe' cards for us and received dementia education from us.
THANK YOU BIOGirls!



PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE AND ART SHOW Wednesday, May 13th 1 - 2:30pm

We had so much fun during our recent open houses for our loyal volunteers and Memory Cafe participants last month! Everyone was just thrilled with how spacious, homey and welcoming our new Memory Cafe home is!

Now we are ready to welcome YOU, the **GENERAL PUBLIC** to an open house during our **2nd Annual Art Show!** Please mark your calendars, bring your friends, and join us!



MY FIRST VISIT TO MEMORY CAFE

By Stephanie Severson

You truly have something special at the Memory Cafe! I am not much of an emotional person (my husband will tell you I have a black soul) and I had to fight back tears more than once this morning when I visited Memory Cafe. The sense of community and support made the atmosphere hard to put into words.



I would love to volunteer my time in any way you think would be beneficial. I also think my mother-in-law, sister and sister-in-law might be interested in volunteering with Memory Cafe. Sharing my experience at Memory Cafe this morning inspired them to want to be part of the community, as well! You and your team are doing wonderful work, thank you.

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS

By Deb McTaggart, Chorus Director

Connection and community were front and center recently at the Giving Voice Initiative Conference, "We're All in This Together." Over 100 advocates from across the country gathered to celebrate the power of music to defy dementia and memory loss through singing together. Sing From Your Heart is proud to be part of this 70-chorus network!

As the chorus ends its spring season, we invite you to our Memory Cafe concert, "An American Music Sampler," on May 20th at Hope South Lutheran Church. We'll journey through a variety of American classics, from Revolutionary roots to 70s pop. Here is the twist: we don't just want you to listen—we want you to join in! This will be a shared musical experience where every voice is welcome.

Above all, Sing From Your Heart hopes you'll leave feeling uplifted and inspired to join us for our next season as a singer, volunteer, or friend!

singfromyourheartchorus.org

VALIDATION THERAPY

Seniorliving.org Jan. 30th



Validation therapy is an approach to communicating with someone who has dementia that focuses on empathy, listening, and trying to find the hidden need that's influencing the person's statement and behaviors.

This form of therapy is all about acknowledging the individual even if what they're saying isn't factual. This can help the person with dementia feel respected and heard.

You may be experiencing caregiver burnout without even realizing it. Thankfully, Validation therapy is helpful for managing caregiver stress, too.

As humans, we have a need for validation. We need to feel loved and accepted. This need doesn't go away just because dementia has profoundly affected someone's perception of the world around them. In fact, their need for acceptance may be increased because their world has been shaken to the core. Validation therapy has proved successful in being able to improve the quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia by reducing anxiety and enhancing their sense of well-being.

CARE PARTNER CORNER

By Teryl Clausen, LSW (retired)

Care Partner Support Group Facilitator



Managing incontinence may be an issue for caregivers as dementia progresses. Incontinence can impact the quality of life for both the person and the caregiver. I did some research and will share what I have learned:

Some causes of incontinence:

- Person does not recognize the need to go. Messages from the brain to the bladder or bowel may be impaired.
- Difficulty finding the bathroom or managing clothing and toileting tasks.
- Person may not recognize their need for help from others. He or she may be embarrassed after an accident and may hide their clothes or incontinent products.
- The person with dementia may have lost the sense of smell so is not aware of an accident.

What may help:

- Discuss the issue with person's physician to determine if there is a medical reason for incontinence such as constipation, enlarged prostate, medication side effects, UTI, or other reasons. A physician may also recommend a sealant or moisture barrier to protect the skin.
- Establish a regular toileting schedule, like every 2-3 hours. Take the person to the toilet.
- Use easy to remove clothing (elastic waist, pull up pants, Velcro closures, slip-on footwear)
- Use of incontinent products such as briefs, pads, leak-proof underwear and waterproof mattress and furniture protectors.
- There may be a need for an elevated toilet seat or grab bars. A commode may be helpful if there is a problem with mobility or urgency.
- Adequate hydration is important throughout the day as dehydration can lead to other issues, but limiting fluids 2-3 hours before bedtime may minimize nighttime trips to the bathroom.
- Be prepared by keeping incontinent products in the bathroom and in the car plus a change of clothing and plastic bag for soiled items.
- Have cleaning products in the bathroom including gloves and wipes and a scented ChapStick on upper lip may help with odor.
- Skin needs to be cleaned and dried well after an accident to prevent skin issues.
- The focus, as always, should be the dignity and comfort of the person being cared for.

BRAIN HEALTH STRATEGIES: Key Health Benefits of Fresh Air

Source: AI



Fresh air improves physical and mental health by increasing oxygen intake, reducing stress, and lowering blood pressure. It boosts immunity, aids digestion, improves concentration, and enhances mood by increasing serotonin. Regularly breathing fresh air aids in better sleep and can help maintain a healthy weight. Benefits include:

Mental Well-being: Exposure to nature and fresh air can lower cortisol levels (stress hormones), reduce anxiety, and improve mood, as shown in studies mentioned by :UC Davis Health and :Harvard Health.

Improved Physical Health: It helps regulate heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and improves digestion.

Increased Energy and Focus: Fresh air raises oxygen levels, which helps increase energy levels and improve concentration and cognitive function.

Stronger Immune System: Fresh air can strengthen the immune system and increase cellular resistance to infection.

Better Sleep: Spending time outdoors, especially in the morning, helps balance sleep/wake cycles, according to various research studies.

MEMORIES

*Memories, pressed between the pages of my mind
Memories, sweetened through the ages just like wine*

*Quiet thoughts come floating down
And settle softly to the ground
Like golden autumn leaves around my feet
I touched them and they burst apart with sweet memories
Sweet memories*

*Of holding hands and red bouquets
And twilights trimmed in purple haze
And laughing eyes and simple ways
And quiet nights and gentle days, with you*

*Memories, pressed between the pages of my mind
Memories, sweetened through the ages just like wine
Memories, memories*

Written by Mac Davis and Billy Strange for Elvis Presley who performed it at his 1968 comeback concert.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT (CONT.)

By: Kolin Sisson,
Fargo Force



They had so many stories to tell it seemed like a script for a movie. So many different talents, careers, love stories (Bob and Momma). Everyone in this group just had a light to them, that could flush out all of the darkness that, at times, can consume one's life. Not only did they have stories to tell, but also so much knowledge. They know our country so well, music, and most importantly how to connect to other humans, by being so caring and interested in what others have to say. After a few times going I started to realize that the reason I was going now, wasn't to "volunteer" for them...I was hooked. I was talking to enthusiastic, wise, caring human beings who had purity that brought light to my heart and to my life. I've learned so much from hanging with the crew, and continue to be blessed to have gotten to know them and the stories that they've lived. Everyone has a story to tell, but it's only fun when there is someone listening.

10 WARNING SIGNS OF DEMENTIA

www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-is-dementia

Behavior changes

- a. Poor judgment
- b. Moments of confusion

Language difficulties

- a. Trouble finding words, understanding, expressing thoughts

Money challenges

- a. Forgetting to pay bills
- b. Unusual spending

Reading struggles

- a. Reading takes longer and is less enjoyable

Delusions and hallucinations

- a. Speaking to someone who isn't there
- b. Paranoia

Difficulty completing normal tasks

- a. Taking excessive time or is excessively challenged

Memory loss

- a. Forgetting events, names, and memories

Social difficulties

- a. Making insensitive or inappropriate comments

Withdrawing from interests

- a. Shying away from once beloved activities

Way finding challenges

- a. Becoming lost while driving or walking in familiar surroundings

CONTACT US:

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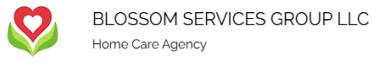
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