



La Crosse County Aging Unit
Bridging care from our community to your home.



November/December 2015

Family Caregivers Newsletter

November is National Family Caregiver Month!

Your loved one's care does not always take place in hospitals, or nursing homes, or doctor offices, or medical clinics. Most care actually occurs in the home – and that's a good thing. People are healthier at home and health care costs are reduced. Family caregivers have the best interests of their loved ones at heart. But caregiving at home can take its toll and it certainly takes a lot of planning. The Nation's 90 million family caregivers are front and center in providing care every day – enabling their loved ones to stay at home longer where they are happier and healthier.

Most adults would prefer to age in place. 90% of adults over the age of 65 would prefer to stay in their current home as they age. Family, friends, and neighbors provide 80% of the care for the elderly

Two out of every 5 adults are family caregivers. 39% of all adult Americans are caring for a loved one who is sick, disabled, or living with frailties of old age. That's up from 30% in 2010

Family caregivers are the only people who are present with patients in all care settings. Patients may have more than one doctor; nurses change shifts; prescriptions may be filled at different pharmacies. But family caregivers are there as full partners with their loved ones through it all.

Complex care happens in the home Almost half of family caregivers perform sophisticated medical/nursing tasks for their loved ones – such as providing wound care and operating specialized medical equipment – and up to 70% manage medications for their loved ones.

Caregiving effect the whole family. Men are now almost as likely to say they are family caregivers as women are (37% of men; 40% of women). And even 36% of younger Americans between ages 18 and 29 say they are family caregivers!

Many families make changes at home because of their caregiving responsibilities. Some families have to tighten their belts at home to pay for out-of-pocket caregiving costs (an average of \$5,500 per year). And many more have to make home alterations to ensure safety, security, and cleanliness for their loved ones.

With the ranks of family caregivers growing every year – tens of millions strong – we recognize and celebrate the importance to the Nation of the role that family caregivers play during
National Family Caregivers Month.

Source: <http://caregiveraction.org/national-family-caregivers-month>
Caregiver Action Network!



"An obstacle is often a stepping stone." ~Prescott

National Alzheimer's Awareness Month

7 Facts You Need to Know About National Alzheimer's Awareness Month

By [Dennis Fortier](#), Caring.com Expert

As you may have read elsewhere, November is National Alzheimer's Awareness Month. But surely, the public is already well aware of this horrible disease. After all, Alzheimer's has directly affected approximately 1 in every 2 families and the others must have certainly noted its prominent coverage in the news. We don't really need more awareness, right? Wrong.

Some of the information below may surprise you. That is to say, it is information about which you are not presently aware. However, by merely learning the seven facts below you will be helping to reduce the Alzheimer's problem. That's right...making you aware of this information and encouraging you to share it with your social networks will facilitate a more informed and more effective approach to combating the threat we face from this disease.

First, here are a few facts and figures that you may already know. Alzheimer's currently affects more than 5 million Americans and that number is likely to triple by 2050. It is the sixth leading cause of death in the USA and is climbing steadily in the rankings. Also, Alzheimer's is the leading cause of dementia and accounts for about 65% of all dementia worldwide. These facts may not be news to you, but they are still quite sobering.

7 Facts You Need To Know

Now, here are some points you may not know but should. It is the following information that I hope will stimulate discussion and promote a better understanding of the disease. With more discourse, we can begin to erode the lingering stigma that currently prevents some people with early symptoms from seeking timely medical attention.

1) We generally detect Alzheimer's at the end-stage of the disease.

On average, Alzheimer's follows a 14-year course from the onset of the first symptoms until death. There is some variability across patients but 14 years is pretty typical. The more surprising news is that, on average, we diagnose Alzheimer's in years 8-10 of that disease course. This means that for most patients, symptoms go undiagnosed and untreated for at least seven years, during which time the lesions spread through the brain and cause irreparable damage. **Please be aware that we diagnose Alzheimer's disease far too late to optimize the effects of currently available treatments.**

2) Memory loss is not a part of normal aging.

The point about end-stage detection raises an obvious question about "why" we diagnose this disease so late. There are many contributing factors but most of them can be reduced through awareness and education. Some patients resist medical attention in the early stages because they fear a stigmatizing label or because they are misinformed to believe that Alzheimer's cannot be treated. Many people, including a startling number of physicians, incorrectly believe that memory loss is a normal part of aging. Improving the timeliness of diagnoses for Alzheimer's is, in many ways, a problem that can be addressed through awareness and education. **Please be aware that memory loss is not a part of normal aging and, regardless of the cause of the memory loss, timely medical intervention is best.**

3) Current Alzheimer's drugs are probably more effective than you think.

Our widespread practice of late detection has many negative consequences. For example, one of the reasons that current treatments are often deemed ineffective is because they are routinely prescribed for patients with end-stage pathology who already have massive brain damage. With earlier intervention, treatment can be administered to patients with healthier brains, many of whom will respond more vigorously to the recommended therapy. Yes, we need better treatments, but a great start would be to intervene earlier with the treatments we already have. **Please be aware that currently approved treatments may be more effective than some headlines indicate.**

4) Alzheimer's disease can be treated.

Another treatment related concept about which everyone should be aware is this. Preventing or slowing further brain damage is preferable to letting the damage spread without constraint. Yet, many physicians, patients, and caregivers conclude that any treatment short of a cure is not worthwhile. While today it is true that we have no cure for Alzheimer's, that does not mean there is no treatment. With a good diet, physical exercise, social engagement, and certain drugs, many patients (especially those detected at an early stage) can meaningfully alter the course of Alzheimer's and preserve their quality of life. **Please be aware that "we have no cure" does not mean "there is no treatment"**.

5) The Alzheimer's drug pipeline is full.

Here's another fact of which you should be aware. Through an intense research effort over the past twenty years, scientists have gained a lot of insight about Alzheimer's disease mechanisms and about other factors that increase the risk for the disease. Much has been learned and some very promising drugs, based on sound theoretical approaches, are in FDA clinical trials right now. While much of the disease remains shrouded in mystery and we may still be a long way from better treatments, it is possible that an effective agent is already in the pipeline. **Please be aware that, although we don't know when, better treatments for Alzheimer's are certainly on the way.**

6) Taking good care of your heart will help your brain stay healthy.

Know this; the health of your brain is very closely tied to the health of your body, particularly your heart. Researchers have shown conclusively that high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and obesity all confer greater risk for cognitive decline. The mechanisms that keep oxygen-rich blood flowing through your body play a key role in maintaining a healthy brain. Everyone should be aware about the close association between vascular health and cognitive health. **Please be aware that maintaining good vascular health will help you age with cognitive vitality.**

7) Managing risk factors may delay or prevent cognitive problems later in life.

There are well-identified risk factors for Alzheimer's disease that are within our power to manage. These include diabetes, head injuries, smoking, poor diet, lethargy, and isolation. With greater awareness of these facts, we can imagine a world where diabetics take more care to control their blood sugar, where helmets are more prevalent in recreational activities that are likely to cause head trauma, where people smoke less and eat more fruits and vegetables, and where everyone makes a better effort to exercise and to stay socially engaged on a regular basis. While these facts may not be well known, they are all well proven. Galvanizing an effort to publicize them is one purpose of National Alzheimer's Awareness Month. **Please be aware that many risk factors for Alzheimer's can be actively managed to reduce the likelihood of cognitive decline.**

So why bother with Alzheimer's awareness? Because it is a terrible disease poised to ravage our aging society and the lack of education and awareness has led to a stigma that prevents a more proactive approach to early intervention. The result is that we diagnose it too late, which hampers the efficacy of available treatments. A more educated public could manage risk factors to minimize the likelihood of Alzheimer's, could monitor personal cognitive health with greater vigilance, and could seek medical attention at the earliest sign of decline. Physicians could then diagnose problems earlier and prescribe appropriate treatment including diet, exercise, and drugs to slow disease progression as much as possible. In the end, we could have fewer cases, more effective treatment, slower progression, higher quality of life, and lower healthcare costs. The social, emotional, and fiscal benefits of awareness and education in this area are too large to quantify.

By reading this article, you have increased your understanding of the problem and raised your awareness about what can be done. That is a great step in the right direction but you can do one thing more. You can help to spread this message.

In the spirit of National Alzheimer's Awareness Month, please share this article with your friends to promote more widespread awareness. Post it to your Facebook page, mark it in Delicious, Tweet it, Digg it, or email it. It doesn't matter how you do your part, it only matters that you get it done.

Community Resources & Events



FREE Confidential Memory Screenings

Offered as part of National Memory Screening Day

Tuesday, November 17, 2015

Please call 608-392-9505 by November 10th to Register

Mayo Clinic Health System—800 West Avenue South—La Crosse, WI
Skemp Building—First Floor

Brought to you by the Mayo Clinic Health System Department of Geriatrics
For more information call 608-392-9505 or 1-800-362-5454, ext. 9505



STRENGTH, BALANCE, SUPPORT

Special class for those with Parkinson's

ATTENTION INDIVIDUALS WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE:

Would you like to find ways that you can exercise and fight back against Parkinson's while improving balance and strength?

The La Crosse Area Family YMCA is offering a new class designed specifically for Parkinson's patients. You will sample various types of exercise designed to improve balance, gain strength and stability.

Class Time: Mondays from 12:10-12:50 pm

Class Dates: Starts Monday, Sept. 14th until December 21st, 2015

Fee: FREE for YMCA Members
\$3.00 per class for non YMCA members **

** Attendance of 6 classes or more will entitle participant to waive \$75.00 joining fee to become YMCA member

CARE PARTNERS WELCOME!!!

To register or ask questions, contact:

Barb Schaefer
bschaefer@laxymca.org
608.519.5503

La Crosse Area Family YMCA
North Branch
400 Mason Street, Onalaska, WI 54640
P (608) 782-9622, F (608) 782-9616

"Live each day as if your life had just begun." - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

REACH | National VA Program

In 2004, U.S Department of Veterans Affairs launch a nationwide Alzheimer's disease Neuroimaging Initiative which is funded by the VA, National Institute on Aging, and other resources. To help make it easier for clinicians to diagnose Alzheimer's in its early stages. According to VA researchers, they are working on potential drug therapies for prevention and treatment; exploring the genetic and environmental causes of the disease; and working to better understand a connection between Alzheimer's and other chronic disease, such as diabetes. VA researchers discovered that Vitamin E appears to slow the degeneration part of the brain in Alzheimer's patient and regular exercising with a proper diet can help ward off Alzheimer's. This may even reverse its symptoms in some patients as well.

Recently, the Department of Veterans (VA) expanded support nationally to caregivers of Veterans with Alzheimer's disease. This had shown a great outcome in reducing stress on caregivers while improving care for veterans through the REACH VA program (Resource for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health in VA). According to the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, typical issues caregivers face when caring for veterans with Alzheimer's reported feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, cut off from family and friends, lonely, prone to bouts of crying, and having worse physical health than the previous year.

The REACH VA provided caregivers 12 individual in-home and telephone counseling sessions; five telephone support group sessions; and a caregiver quick guide with 48 behavioral and stress topics. The program also included education on safety and patient behavior management; and training for the caregivers' health and wellbeing. Thus, helping caregivers reduces their burden; drops in depressive symptoms and their related daily impacts. Causing fewer frustrations, including those that have clinical potential for abuse; and decreases in dementia-related behaviors from the Veterans they cared for. Giving caregivers to spend fewer hours per day devoted to caregiving duties. "This program has been proven to provide the right resources, training and a renewed focus on personal health that can make a world of difference to those caregivers and their Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki (Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (2011)).

"Dementia caregiving is such an all-encompassing task," said Dr. Linda Nichols from the VA Medical Center in Memphis, Tenn., and co-author of a recent study on the program. "The intervention provided time for themselves, which caregivers never have enough of. REACH VA improved our caregivers' knowledge to manage care, made them feel more confident and competent as they formed bonds with the VA staff supporting them, and decreased the inevitable feelings of isolation and loneliness that come from a selfless, but very sacrificial duty of care" (Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (2011)).

References: Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. (2011, March 1). Retrieved October 6, 2015, <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2061> and Office of Research & Development. (2015, April 13). Retrieved October 6, 2015, <http://www.research.va.gov/topics/alzheimers.cfm>

Questions? Contact:

Allissa Schwarz, MSW, Patient Care Services at Tomah VA @ 608-372-3971 ext. #61551
Sharon Kjos, RN and Care Giver Support Coordinator at VA in Tomah, WI @ 608-372-7718
Sandy Valentine, Veterans Service Office in La Crosse @ 608-785-9716



Educational Events

HEALTHY AGING CONFERENCE 2015 MEMORY DISORDERS: MEMORY AND AGING

Gundersen Community and Preventive Care Services (CPCS) hosts the 2016 Healthy Aging Conference, "Memory Disorders: Memory and Aging" **Friday, Nov. 6, from 7:45 a.m. to noon** at the **Radisson Center, 300 South Second Street, La Crosse, WI**

For more information, call **608-775-4717**. To register online, visit gundersenhealth.org/wellness.

Conference Purpose

To educate conference attendees and raise awareness on memory disorders and the actions we can take to help others preserve healthy minds and bodies.

Agenda and Conference Objectives

7:30 to 7:45 a.m. – Self-serve breakfast available

7:45 a.m. – Welcome – Sarah Havens, director, Community & Preventive Care Services, Gundersen Health System

7:50 to 8:50 a.m. – Assessment, diagnosis, treatment and care for those living with a memory disorder – Concepcion Santillan, MD, neurologist, Gundersen Health System

What is the difference between normal aging, MCI, dementia and Alzheimer's disease? During this presentation Dr. Santillan will examine modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors in Alzheimer's disease; reversible and non-reversible causes of dementia; and discuss pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic treatments in dementia. At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will have an understanding of basic and advanced types of work-up to diagnose dementia including functional imaging studies.

8:50 to 9:50 a.m. – What the experts are saying about medications and medicine – Eric Johnson, PharmD, BCPS, clinical pharmacist, Gundersen Health System

During his presentation, Eric will describe the guideline recommendations and common instructions that patients may receive from a doctor or a pharmacist when starting medications such as donepezil, rivastigmine, galantamine, and memantine. The audience will be introduced to the concept of a prescribing cascade; when a second medication is prescribed to treat the side effect of the first medication. Eric will identify which non-prescription medications and herbal products have been used for the treatment of Alzheimer disease and dementia. At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to describe the Beers criteria and identify which medications on this list can affect the memory of elderly individuals.

9:50 to 10 a.m. – Break

10 to 11 a.m. – Physical Activity Programs for People with Mild Cognitive Impairment: Exploring the Feasibility of the FitBit Zip™ vs. the Accusplit Eagle Pedometer – Nancy Richeson, PhD, CTRS, FDRT, associate professor, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Mild cognitive impairment and the importance of physical activity for this population will be identified during the presentation. Dr. Richeson will describe the outcomes of the pedometer feasibility study including types of activity that were effective and the outcomes of physical activity on brain health. Participants will be able to define mild cognitive disorders and describe why physical activity is important for the mild cognitive impaired population.

11 a.m. to Noon – Caring for the Caregiver – Amy Brezinka, BSW, program coordinator, Caregiver Coach Program, La Crosse County Aging Unit

The Caregiver Coach Program was developed in 2013 to help family caregivers. Amy will raise awareness and general understanding of the Caregiver Coach Program and share lessons learned as the program has developed and grown over the past 2 ½ years. She will share ideas on how to best support and encourage caregivers, raise awareness of resources and services for caregivers in La Crosse County.

Noon – Wrap-up, closing and evaluations

Who should attend

- RNs, LPNs, certified nursing assistants, resident care assistants, social workers at all levels, recreational therapists, health educators, administrators
- Case managers
- Care coordinators
- Home care providers
- Long-term care facility employees
- Family care network providers
- Service referred agency staff (i.e. Aging Unit, ADRC)
- Family or professional caregivers
- Anyone interested in learning more about healthy aging

Accreditation

Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center Inc. is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Wisconsin Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, Inc, provider No.1089, is approved as a provider for social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) www.aswb.org through the Approved Continuing Education (ACE) Program. Gundersen Lutheran Medical

Educational Events



Alzheimer's Association—Community Education Classes alz.org | 1.800.272.3900

- **Tuesday, November 17th from 1:00pm to 2:30pm**
Know the 10 Signs: Early Detection Matters
Goodwill Store—Community Room
Mormon Coulee Road, La Crosse
- **Tuesday, November 17 from 3:00pm to 4:30pm**
Dementia Conversations
Goodwill Store—Community Room
Mormon Coulee Road, La Crosse
- **Tuesday, December 8th from 3:30pm—5:00pm**
Effective Communication Strategies
Northside Community Policing Center
713 Saint James Street, La Crosse
- **Tuesday, December 8th from 5:30pm—7:00pm**
Understanding and Responding to Dementia Related Behaviors
Northside Community Policing Center
713 Saint James Street, La Crosse

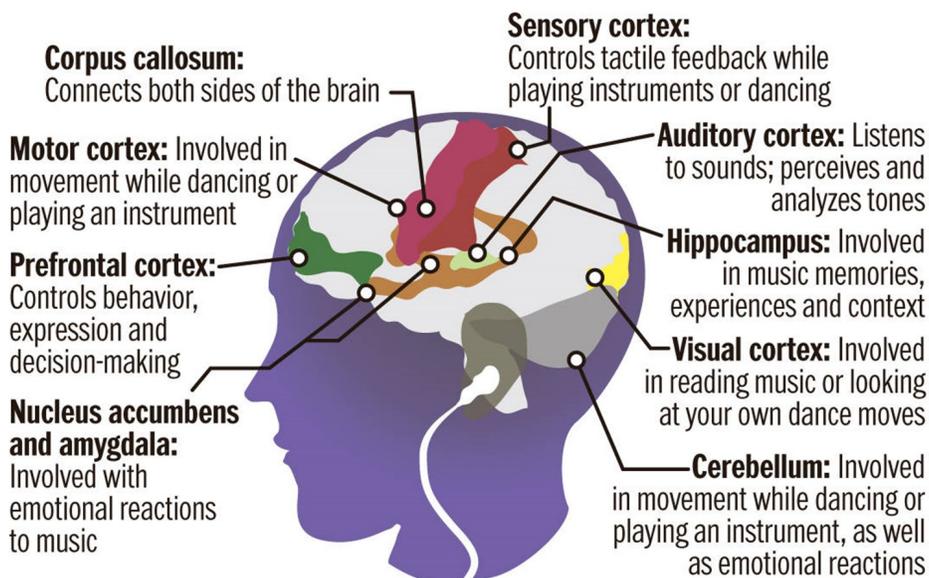
alzheimer's association®



“Music imprints itself on the brain deeper than any other human experience. Music evokes emotion and emotion can bring with it memory. Music brings back the feeling of life when nothing else can.”

~Dr. Oliver Sacks

Music and the brain *Playing and listening to music works several areas of the brain*



Resources for Care Partners

Caregiver Support Groups

Support Group for Persons with Dementia and Care Partners

When: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the Month from 3pm to 4pm
Where: Village on Cass, 225 South 24th Street, La Crosse
Contacts: Chris Brown, Terry Fleming and Art Peek at 608-392-9505



Family Support Group—Alzheimer's/Dementia

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6pm-7pm
Where: Bluffview Memory Care, 2101 Bluffview Court, Holmen
Contact: Bluffview Memory Care Management Team at 608-526-5864

Caregiver Support Group

When: *Last* Wednesday of the month at 1:15pm
Where: Hillview Health Care Center—Sunshine Room
3501 Park Lane Drive, La Crosse
Contact: Nikki Weisenberger at 608-789-4867

Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Thursday of the month at 1pm
Where: Lakeview Health Center, 902 E Garland Street, West Salem
Contact: Luann Rose at 608-786-1400 ext. 40155

Caregiver Support Group— *A group for Women caring for someone with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*

When: Every Monday from 8:30am—Noon
Where: Perkin's in Onalaska—9428 Wisconsin 16, Onalaska, WI
Contact: Mitch Mader at 608-519-0753

Parkinson's Support Group

When: 4th Tuesday of each month from 2pm-4pm
Where: Gundersen Health System
Contact: Julie Halzwarth at 608-775-2789

Great Rivers 2-1-1 ~ For more information about area support groups dial 2-1-1

**NATIONAL
FAMILY CAREGIVERS
MONTH**
November 2015

During National Family Caregivers Month, remember...

"Respite: Care for Caregivers"

R is for **"Rest and Relaxation"**

Everyone needs a little "R and R" – especially family caregivers. Relaxing is the best way to return refreshed to handle your many responsibilities as a caregiver.

E as in **"Energize"**

Caregiving is often round-the-clock 24/7. Respite isn't simply "getting a few hours off." It's necessary to help you reenergize, reduce stress and provide care for your loved one.

S as in **"Sleep"**

Caregivers often have sleep problems. Address sleep problems and insomnia before they take too great a toll on your health.

P is for **"Programs that can help you"**

Respite – which can be in the home or out of the home – can be hard to find but there are programs available to help you.

I as in **"Imagination"**

Let your mind run free; read a book; see a movie. You have been so occupied with the nuts-and-bolts of caregiving that refreshing your mind will actually help you be a better caregiver.

T as in **"Take Five"**

...or better yet, take ten. Do you find yourself saying, "I wish I had just ten minutes to myself"? Don't feel guilty. You need a reprieve – a few minutes to temporarily disengage.

E is for **"Exhale"**

A simple breath in and then a long exhale can help you focus and increase your vitality. A few deep breaths can give you more energy, reduce stress, and lift your mood.

Resources for Care Partners

Lunch Bunch Memory Café | La Crosse

The **Lunch Bunch Memory Café** is a place to meet with others diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), Alzheimer's/ dementia and their care partner in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Once a month, this group offers a chance for everyone to have some fun and share a positive experience in a supportive environment. It's a place to talk with others who may be on a very similar journey and to learn, "*You are not alone*".

When: This group meets the last Tuesday of every month

Time: 11:30am—1:00pm

Location: Black River Beach Neighborhood Center
1433 Rose Street
La Crosse, WI 54603



Lunch & beverage provided at a suggested donation of \$4 per person

Topics: Art, music, health and wellness topics will be featured at each café. Details will be announced on monthly invites.

Upcoming Dates:

November 24th—Pump House Presentation/Alzheimer's Awareness Event

SAVE THE DATE: December 8th (11am to 1pm) Holiday Getaway for Care Partners at the Radisson

RSVP is encouraged. If you would like more information, or to be added to our mailing list, please contact:
Amy Brezinka with the La Crosse County Aging Unit at **608.785.3460**.

Travelled Roads Memory Café | West Salem

When: 2nd Friday of each month

Time: 10am—11:30am

Location: Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library
Community Room
201 Neshonoc Rd|West Salem, WI



Coffee & bakery items provided at a suggested donation of \$1 per person.

The **Travelled Roads Memory Café** is a place to meet with others diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), Alzheimer's/ dementia and their care partner in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Once a month, this group offers a chance for everyone to have some fun and share a positive experience in a supportive environment. It's a place to talk with others who may be on a very similar journey and to learn, "*You are not alone*".

Topics: Art, music, health and wellness topics will be featured at each café.

Resources: Community resource information will be available each month. The Caregiver Coach will be available to answer questions and visit with Care Partners during the café.

RSVP is encouraged. If you would like more information, or to be added to our mailing list, contact
Amy Brezinka at 608.785.3460 or abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

"Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful."

~Joshua J. Marine

Creativity and the Aging Brain

Shelley H Carson Ph.D. | Life as Art | March 30, 2009 | www.psychologytoday.com/blog/life-art
Use the powers of the aging brain to enhance creativity.

The aging brain resembles the creative brain in several ways. For instance, the aging brain is more distractible and somewhat more disinhibited than the younger brain (so is the creative brain). Aging brains score better on tests of crystallized IQ (and creative brains use crystallized knowledge to make novel and original associations). These changes in the aging brain may make it ideally suited to accomplish work in a number of creative domains. So instead of promoting retirement at age 65, perhaps we as a society should be promoting transition at age 65: transition into a creative field where our growing resource of individuals with aging brains can preserve their wisdom in culturally-valued works of art, music, or writing.

In a recent study, psychologist Lynn Hasher and her group at the University of Toronto found that older participants were (as many seniors will attest!) more distractible than their younger counterparts. However, members of this older, distractible group were also better able to use the distracting information to solve problems presented later in the study. This work, along with other studies on aging and cognition, suggest that the aging brain is characterized by a broadening focus of attention. Numerous studies suggest that highly creative individuals also employ a broadened rather than focused state of attention. This state of widened attention allows the individual to have disparate bits of information in mind at the same time. Combining remote bits of information is the hallmark of the creative idea.

Other studies show that certain areas of the prefrontal cortex involved in self-conscious awareness and emotions are thinner in the aging brain. This may correlate with the diminished need to please and impress others, which is a notable characteristic of both aging individuals and creative luminaries. Both older individuals and creative types are more willing to speak their minds and disregard social expectations than are their younger, more conventional counterparts.

Finally, intelligence studies indicate that older individuals have access to an increasing store of knowledge gained over a lifetime of learning and experience. Combining bits of knowledge into novel and original ideas is what the creative brain is all about. Thus, having access to increased internal warehouse of knowledge provides fertile ground for creative activity in the aging brain.

Many seniors are already making a mark for themselves in creative fields. Consider Millard Kaufman, who wrote his first novel, the hit book *Bowl of Cherries*, at age 90. Then there's 93-year-old Lorna Page, who caused waves in Britain with her first novel *A Dangerous Weakness*. Following in the footsteps of Grandma Moses (who did not take up painting until in her 70's), former patent attorney John Root Hopkins turned to art in his 70's and had a showing of his work in the American Visionary Art Museum at age 73. There are numerous examples throughout history of the creative power of the aging brain: Benjamin Franklin invented the bifocal lens at the age of 78, Thomas Hardy published a book of lyric poetry at age 85, Frank Lloyd Wright completed the design of the Guggenheim Museum in New York at and 92, and Giuseppe Verdi wrote *Falstaff*, perhaps his most acclaimed opera, at the age of 85.

I suggest that we change our expectations of the elderly. Instead of referring to "the aging problem," we should expect our seniors to be productive throughout the lifespan. I challenge each citizen, whether you are currently a senior citizen or a senior-to-be: first, consider one life lesson that you would like to pass on to future generations. Second, decide upon a creative medium in which you could embed this lesson - perhaps a novel or a painting or a musical piece. Then make it the work of your post-retirement years to grow proficient in that medium and to produce a work that embeds your message.



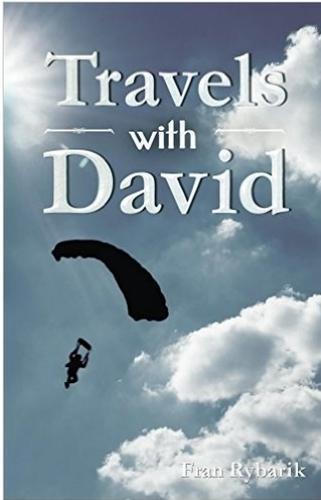
*EVERY CHILD IS AN ARTIST.
THE PROBLEM IS HOW TO REMAIN AN ARTIST ONCE WE GROW UP.*

-Pablo Picasso

Books & Websites

Travels with David

Written by a local Author, **Fran Rybarik** from La Crescent, MN

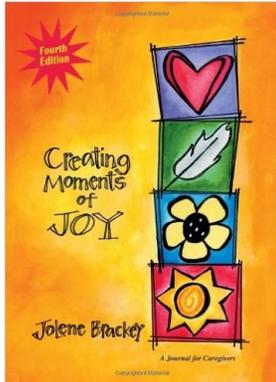


The man she loved for forty years died with no warning.

Reeling from the shock of finding his body, Fran Rybarik never imagined the unusual path her life would take, starting with her sons' belief that their dad's adventures weren't over.

Ten years, 41,000 miles and 27 film canisters of David's ashes later, she chronicles the effects of her husband's post-life travels with an ever-growing community of family and friends. As David's adventures continue, Fran learns to remember him with joy, and eventually she begins to pursue her own pilgrimages.

This is not a "how to grieve in a year" book, but rather an inspirational story of loss without letting go. Using snippets of grief theory from her bereavement background, along with poetry, honesty and humor, Fran weaves her parallel journey of healing within the stories of Travels with David. This book can be ordered for purchase at Barnes & Nobel in La Crosse or online at Amazon.com.



Creating Moments of Joy | A Journal for Caregivers

Jolene Brackey has a vision. A vision that will soon look beyond the challenges of Alzheimer's disease and focus more of our energy on creating moments of joy. When a person has short-term memory loss, his life is made up of moments. But if you think about it, our memory is made up of moments, too. We are not able to create a perfectly wonderful day with someone who has dementia, but it is absolutely attainable to create a perfectly wonderful moment; a moment that puts a smile on their face, a twinkle in their eye, or triggers a memory. Five minutes later, they won't remember what you did or said, but the feeling you left them with will linger. Available for purchase online at Amazon.com or at Barnes & Nobel in La Crosse.



Be Yourself Everyone Else Is Already Taken | Guided Journal

Kick-start your journey of self-discovery! Filled with prompts, checklists, and quotations to help you reflect on and write about the past, the present, and your hopes and dreams, this unique journal is a safe, creative space where introspection is allowed and encouraged--because the best gift you can give yourself is to Be Yourself. Available for purchase online at Amazon.com.

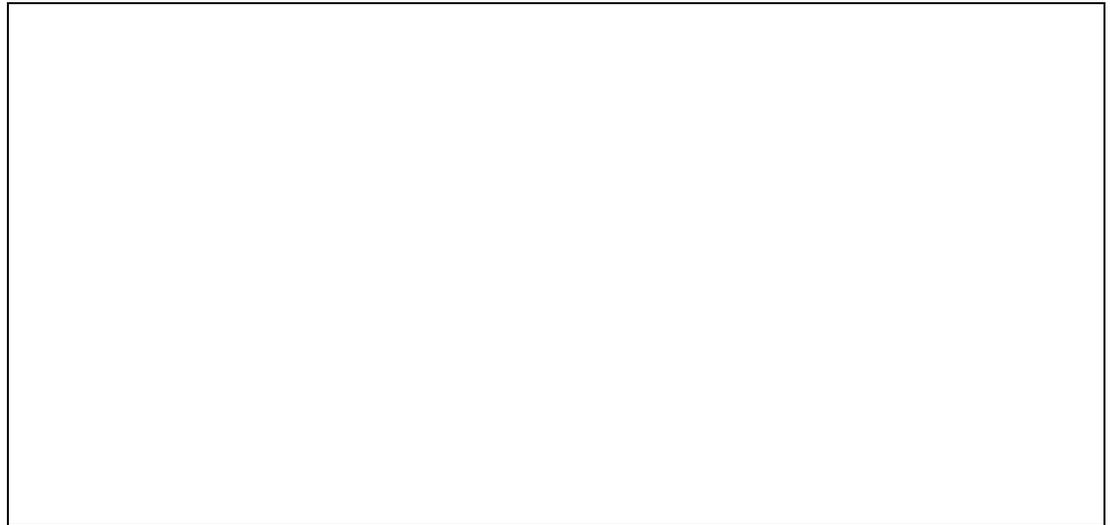
Helpful Websites

- ◆ **Family Caregiver Alliance—FCA** is first and foremost a public voice for caregivers. Founded in the late 1970s, we were the first community-based nonprofit organization in the country to address the needs of families and friends providing long-term care for loved ones at home. Website link: www.caregiver.org
- ◆ **Maria Shriver Blog | Powered by Inspiration— Tales of Alzheimer's and Caregiving**
Website link: <http://mariashriver.com/blog/category/alzheimers-and-caregiving/>



La Crosse County Aging Unit
County of La Crosse, Wisconsin
 Administrative Center • Room 2260
 400 4th Street North • La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601-3200
 (608) 785-9710 • FAX: (608) 785-6135
 web site: www.co.la-crosse.wi.us

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Family Caregivers Newsletter

November/December 2015

La Crosse County Aging Unit
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The **La Crosse County Aging Unit** provides information and services that promote independence, and support the dignity of Seniors by allowing choices for living in and giving to their community.

Programs & Services include:

- Home-delivered Meals
- Meal Sites
- Transportation
- Caregiver Coach Program
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Gifted Hands
- Senior Farmers' Market
- Nutritional Supplements
- Wellness & Prevention
- Senior Life Newsletter

Caregiver Coach Program &
 Lunch Bunch Memory Café Sponsors:

