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Summer/Fall 2022

CONNECTIONS

Special Edition

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Alzheimer's & Dementia



STEP FORWARD. GIVE HOPE



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Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Everything we have learned about memory, memory treatments, and memory disorders is known because someone volunteered for a research study. Thanks to study participants, researchers are making great strides in the early diagnosis of memory disorders and identifying potential new interventions to help treat, delay the onset of, and possibly prevent Alzheimer's disease.

The Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center is actively recruiting study participants from all walks of life.

Please visit the Open Studies page at adrc.wisc.edu to learn about studies currently recruiting research participants.

2022 Tributes and Memorials

A collective place to honor and remember our friends, family members, and community members touched by dementia or who have passed.

To find a full list of tributes and memorials made this year visit:
alz.wisc.org/memorials



Another Perspective on Caregiving

By Jeff Hamm, ADAW Executive Director

Stress. Burden. Depression. Health problems. Burnout. The messages we get are consistent: Dementia caregiving is bad for caregivers.

Research in the late 1990s suggested that spouses who reported caregiving strain were more likely to die than non-caregivers. One study followed participants over four years and determined that caregivers were 63% more likely to die than same-age non-caregivers.

Thus, caregiving is not just bad for caregivers—it is deadly. I have heard educated caregivers report this information to their peers in support groups.

It is less known that, since 2000, most studies have come to the opposite conclusion. Caregiving—including dementia caregiving—is associated with lower rates of caregiver death. Research indicates

that even caregivers in poor health survive longer than non-caregivers in better health. As recently as 2020 a research study found a “mortality benefit” for dementia caregivers, despite the well-documented stresses and strains of dementia caregiving.

How do we make sense of this apparent paradox? How can caregiving be so incredibly hard and, at the same time, be a potentially protective factor against death?

No one doubts the strain, depression, grief, and burnout that dementia caregivers experience. Hundreds of research studies support their reports. But some scholars argue that the positive aspects of caregiving—which even appear in research on caregiver burden—go unnoticed, under-studied, and under-reported.

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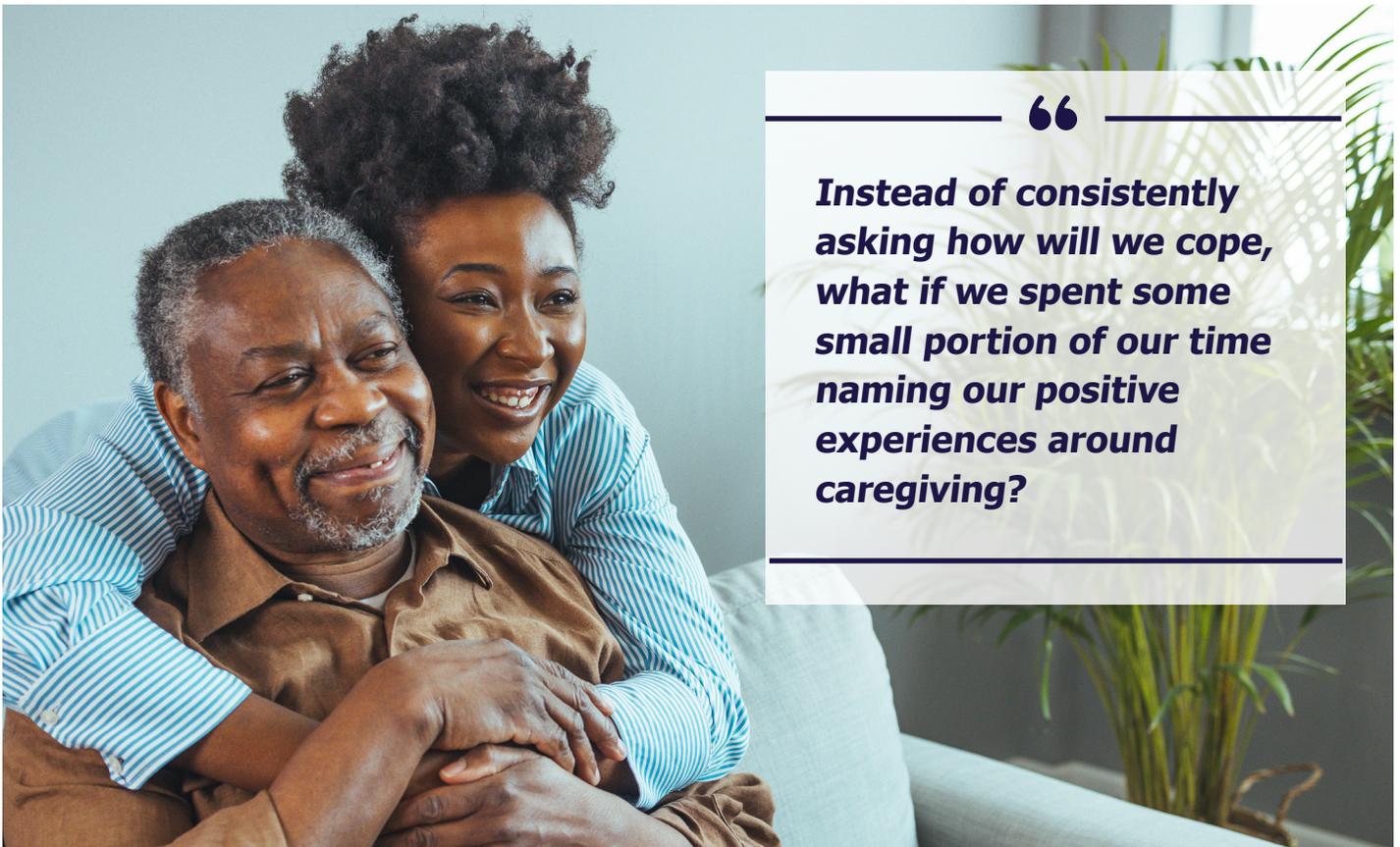
Some scholars think that we humans are fundamentally wired to care for and assist others. That may explain why research finds that helping, in general, improves our well-being and decreases illness and death. Some care providers experience caregiving as a personal religious calling that promotes their spiritual life. Dementia caregiving offers caregivers the chance for increased closeness in a meaningful intimate relationship, positive experiences that improve mood, feelings of accomplishment, and a greater sense of life purpose. In a recently published poem in these pages, caregiver and poet Bill Rettig described his spouse as having provided “a sacred space where I can serve.”

All these positive feelings and experiences may protect against the challenges and strains that can also come with dementia caregiving. In fact, caregivers who report the positive aspects or benefits of caregiving also report lower levels of psychological distress. Recent studies have shown that helping caregivers recognize and appreciate the psychological benefits of caregiving is more effective for reducing caregiver depression symptoms than other interventions.

Those of us attending dementia caregiver support groups hear reports of positive experiences of caregiving at nearly every meeting. Sometimes caregivers say “We’ve had a good week,” or they describe a particularly powerful interaction or shared experience. As a group facilitator, I admit paying less attention to these statements than to those of caregivers who are struggling and suffering.

What if we flipped the script? Instead of consistently asking how will we cope, what if we spent some small portion of our time naming our positive experiences around caregiving? What has caregiving taught us—about our loved ones, ourselves, our family and community, the world? When has caregiving brought us joy or peace? What benefits have we received that only caregiving could have offered?

It will be difficult to tell a different story about caregiving. The national narrative for decades has been almost exclusively about caregiver stress and strain. We can and will continue to support caregivers in their isolation, fear, and pain. But, for the health of caregivers themselves, it may also be time to recognize and celebrate the positive aspects of caregiving.



“
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”

Be Social!

Online Programs

Meeting of Minds

Meets online weekly, Tuesdays 10:00 am - 11:30 am

A memory enhancement and support program to help maximize cognitive function and sustain quality of life for those with memory loss, Alzheimer's, or other dementias.

For more information contact: RKearney@alzisc.org

Virtual Memory Café

Meets online the 3rd Friday of each month

10:00 am - 11:30 am

For more information contact: RKearney@alzisc.org

FIREWORKS

Boom, Crash, Sizzle

Ooh and aah

Togetherness

Hotdogs and a cool drink

Good food and s'mores

Bright and pretty colors painting the sky

Large groups of people coming together

A very festive time party in the sky

Loud noises

Snap crackle

Watch out and wear your shoes

Ooh and aah

Poem by Meeting of Minds participants

In-Person Programs

Lodi Memory Café

Meets the 4th Friday of each month

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Reach Out Lodi: 601 Clark St,
Lodi, WI

For more information contact: RKearney@alzisc.org

Prairie du Chien Memory Café

Meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month

10:00 am - 11:30 am

At Hoffman Hall: 1600 S. Wacouta Ave.
Prairie du Chien, WI

For more information contact: Heather.Moore@alzisc.org

Portage Memory Café

Meets the 4th Thursday of each month

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

At Portage Public Library: 253 E. Edgewater St.
Portage WI

For more information contact: Janet.Wiegel@alzisc.org

Sauk City Memory Café

Meets the 3rd Thursday of each month

9:30 am - 11:00 am

At Sauk Prairie Community Center: 730 Monroe St.
Sauk City, WI

For more information contact: Janet.Wiegel@alzisc.org

Reedsburg Memory Café

Meets the 2nd Friday of each month

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

At Fusch Community Center: 2090 Ridgeview Dr.
Reedsburg, WI

For more information contact: Janet.Wiegel@alzisc.org

Richland Center Memory Café

Meets the 4th Thursday of each month

10:00- 11:30 am

At Woodman Senior Center: 1050 N. Orange St.
Richland Center, WI

For more information contact: Heather.Moore@alzisc.org

Westfield Memory Café

Meets the 1st Wednesday of each month

10:00 am - 11:30 am

At Village Hall: 124 East 3rd Street,
Westfield, WI

For more information contact: Janet.Wiegel@alzisc.org



Johnny's Walkers

By Mychela Burkhart

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Alzheimer's and Dementia Walk in Lancaster, WI. We have been honored and grateful for how this community has come together over the years, paying tribute to those touched by dementia and raising funds for family caregivers.

But one Grant County family stands out in our minds.

John Errthum, a US Army veteran of WWII, married the love of his life, Rosie, in 1949. They lived and farmed in rural Lancaster until 1973, when they moved into town. Together, they raised six sons and four daughters. It wasn't always a quiet life, but it was a full one.

The family was startled to suspect that something was off with this active father and grandfather. Tasked with cleaning fish after a day at the lake, it was clear that John had forgotten how. Something he had mastered earlier in life was suddenly difficult. When John could only name six of his ten children, he acknowledged something was wrong. With the support of his family, he sought help.



John was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2007. Throughout his journey with Alzheimer's, the family worked closely with ADAW. "ADAW gave us knowledge about what to expect and how to be prepared for the changes ahead," said Linda Groeschl, one of John and Rosie's daughters.

"Education was a key part of learning to live with someone with dementia. We learned to use laughter, patience, and compassion. We also learned what to look for and how to keep dad safe. The importance of paying attention to the changes Dad was going through and how to help with the next phase of the disease. The ADAW was a great source if we had any questions," said Linda.

Alzheimer's disease showed up in other family members. "Mom always said, 'John and I have ten children--sooner or later someone in the family will be diagnosed with the disease,'" said Linda. John's mother is believed to have had dementia and his sister had Alzheimer's; now two of his nieces are living with a diagnosis. "Alzheimer's is a struggle for families. They lose their loved ones even though they are alive," said Peggy Koehler, John and Rosie's eldest daughter.

The Errthum family joined the Alzheimer's and Dementia Walk in 2007. After John's diagnosis, they wanted to help raise awareness and emphasize the importance of early detection.

"We participate in the walk to help others with their struggle with Alzheimer's. Showing support by raising funds to help others know that they are not alone. I walk for my brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews who one day may get an Alzheimer's diagnosis," said Linda.

John passed away in 2011, but his family continues to walk in his memory. Johnny's Walkers is currently the largest walk team in Grant County and has been actively participating in this event for 15 years.

"Being named Honorary Family this year is quite an honor," says Linda. "We know everything we are doing now will help our family and others in the future."



Grant County

Saturday, August 13th

**Memorial Park: 298 S Grant St.
Lancaster, WI**

8:00 AM Registration

9:00 AM Walk Starts

We couldn't be more grateful to this community for their 20 years of continued support. Bringing dementia resources and education to this community is made possible by you!

Register online at:
bit.ly/Grant_AlzWalk_2022



Why we walk

The Alzheimer's and Dementia Walk is a multi-county ADAW fundraiser and celebration. While remembering those we have lost, we take action and provide hope to those living with dementia and their care partners in Wisconsin. All events are family-friendly, powered by volunteers, donors, and friends.

Participating in one of the six walks held throughout south-central and southwest Wisconsin can help bring the life-changing impact of free education, support, and a listening ear to those who need it most in our communities.

Register your team today and fundraise to provide comfort, assistance, resources, and education, ensuring families don't walk through this journey alone.

If you would like to further assist us in reaching our fundraising goal this year, consider being a corporate or family sponsor. Every dollar raised stays right here in Wisconsin. Learn more at alzwissc.org/walk-with-us, or contact Becky Mulhern at becky.mulhern@alzwisc.org.

Nothing unites us like doing good together.



Green County

Saturday, September 10th

**Twining Park: 425 14th Ave,
Monroe, WI**

8:00 AM Registration

9:00 AM Walk Starts

For over 20 years, Monroe has welcomed and supported the walk, and ADAW. We are grateful for the community's support over the years!

Register online at:

bit.ly/Green_AlzWalk_2022

Columbia/Marquette County

Sunday, September 11th

**Riverside Park: 300 E Wisconsin St
Portage, WI**

**12:00 PM Registration
1:00 PM Walk Starts**

This community has repeatedly proven its commitment to providing education and resources for those affected by dementia. We are grateful for over 16 years of support!

**Register online at:
bit.ly/ColMar_AlzWalk_2022**



Dane County

Sunday, September 18th

**Elver Park: 1250 McKenna Blvd,
Madison, WI**

**8:00 AM Registration
9:00 AM Walk Starts**

For 24 years, we have watched this walk grow into one of our biggest. Dane County may be large, but the tight-knit community we have built together ensures no one will face dementia alone.

**Register online at:
bit.ly/Dane_AlzWalk_2022**

Sauk County

Saturday, September 24th

**Mary Evans Rountree Park:
2nd Ave & Park, Baraboo, WI**

**8:00 AM Registration
9:00 AM Walk Starts**

The energy this community brings to each walk is immeasurable. From a trumpet start to the famous chant, this has become one of our most unique walks of the season. We can't wait to see what this year brings!

**Register online at:
bit.ly/Sauk_AlzWalk_2022**



Crawford County

Saturday, October 1st

**St. Feriole Island Park:
101 N 4th St, Prairie du Chien, WI**

**8:00 AM Registration
9:00 AM Walk Starts**

We have been overwhelmed with the amount of support shown by this community. With this only being the 4th annual walk, we look forward to reaching more people who want to make a difference or seek assistance while on their dementia journey.

**Register online at:
bit.ly/Crawford_AlzWalk_2022**

Mark your calendars



18th Annual Dump Run

Columbia County's largest charity biker event.

Poker Run, Pig Roast, Street Dance and much more!

Saturday, August 27th

The Dump
Cambria, WI

9th Annual Tractor Ride/Drive



Charity Tractor Ride & Drive

Join us for a fun day of tractor and wagon rides for all age groups.

**Sunday, September 25th
Starting at 10 AM**

Kelch Aviation Center
Brodhead, WI

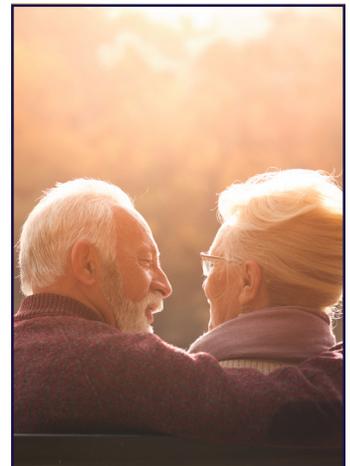


Green County Caregiver Conference

Thursday, November 3rd

Kelch Aviation Center
Brodhead, WI

Stay tuned for
registration information



A Day with Lewy

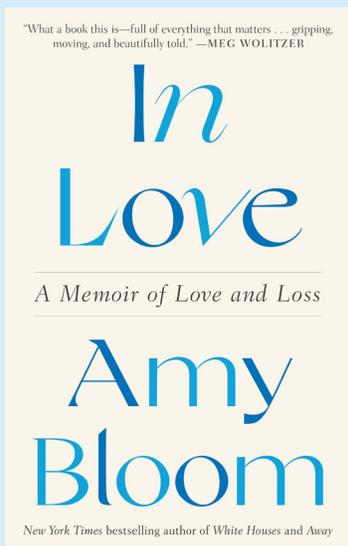
Lewy Body Dementia and the caregiving journey.

Thursday, November 10th

Kestrel Ridge Golf Course
Columbus, WI

Stay tuned for
registration information

What we are reading



In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss by Amy Bloom

In her new book, *In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss*, novelist and psychotherapist Amy Bloom writes about her efforts to support her husband Brian's choice to end his life after an Alzheimer's disease diagnosis at 65. Brian Ameche, son of famed Wisconsin football star Alan Ameche, was a respected architect. The memoir traces their love affair and marriage, the early signs of cognitive problems, Brian's diagnosis, and Amy's herculean struggles to fulfill Brian's wishes. A powerful, sobering, and, by turns, very funny and painful perspective on dementia, grief, and end-of-life choices.



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www.alzswisc.org/newsletters

PURCHASE YOUR 2022 WALK SHIRT!

Proceeds from shirt sales come right back to the
Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin!

Shirts come in a variety of styles and
sizes, and ship right to your address!

Order yours today at:

bit.ly/AlzWalk-Tshirts



Customize the back of your shirt with a logo or team name!

Learn how by contacting us!