

AUGUST 2025



# CARING TOGETHER

A PUBLICATION BY THE  
ALZHEIMER'S ALLIANCE  
TRI-STATE AREA

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## THE MISSION OF THE ALZHEIMER'S ALLIANCE:

To empower those affected by Alzheimer's disease with resources for enhancing their quality of life through education and support.

# MEMORIALS

**Rick Buchanan**

Jim, Sophia and Beatrice Cummings

**Peggy Dukelow**

Cathy and Mark Van Herpen

**Eric Hagelberg**

Wilf & Henderson

**Austine Harris**

Becky & Matt Duncan

**Debra Johnson**

Carington Bright

**David Parsons**

Vicki Orr

**Bill Pearcy**

Lorraine Emmons  
Liza McCubbin

**Bob Pearcy**

Lorraine Emmons  
Rita & William Morriss  
Joan Carter

**Jo Ann Pope**

Bonnie Judd

**John Price**

Cathy and Mark Van Herpen  
Reliance Mechanical

**Loretta Rose**

Sandra and Dusty Penecost  
Kathy & Reavis Cornett  
Brenda & Ryan Cornett  
Janet Gummerman  
Daphne and Mike Cox

**Margie Ruzicka**

Don Dolezalek, Sr.

**Bob Scott**

Becky & Mack Duncan

**Alta Taylor**

Annell and Gary Langdon

**Wesley Self**

Liza McCubbin

**Wanda Robinson**

Karen and Stephen Johnson

**Ann Renfro**

Patricia Stephens

**Nathan E. "Tricky" Jones Jr.**

Ethel P. Jones

## HONORARIUMS

**The Takacs Family**

John Ross

**Al Renfro**

Patricia Stephens



## PROJECT LIFESAVER

Bringing Loved Ones Home

Project Lifesaver is the premier search and rescue program operated internationally by public safety agencies, and is strategically designed for "at risk" individuals who are prone to the life-threatening behavior of wandering. The primary mission of Project Lifesaver is to provide timely response to save lives and reduce potential injury for adults and children with the propensity to wander due to a cognitive condition.

### HOW IT WORKS: CALL **911**

If an enrolled client goes missing, the caregiver should contact their local Project Lifesaver agency by calling 911. A trained emergency response team will then be dispatched to the area. Using the client's individualized radio frequency, first responders can triangulate the individual's location in an effort to find them and return them home safely.

#### Does your loved one qualify for Project Lifesaver?

- ☐ Not allowed to drive a vehicle
- ☐ Cannot live alone
- ☐ Must be supervised at all times

If your loved one meets the qualifications,  
contact the Alzheimer's Alliance to enroll:

 **903-223-8021**

## 4,484

RESCUED TO DATE INTERNATIONALLY

LOCATES  
**DAY OR NIGHT**

AVERAGE RECOVERY TIME:  
**30 MINUTES**



This program was partially funded by the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA)

## NOW FOR BOWIE, CASS AND MILLER COUNTIES

## SUPPORT GROUPS:

- AUGUST 6TH
- SEPTEMBER 3TH
- OCTOBER 1ST

🕒 2:00 PM

## *mark your* **CALENDAR**

**ALL MEETINGS AT THE  
ALZHEIMER'S ALLIANCE**

📍 100 MEMORY LN.

## MEMORY CAFE:

- AUGUST 16TH
- SEPTEMBER 20ST
- OCTOBER 18TH

🕒 10:00 AM

## Mild Cognitive Impairment VS. Dementia

Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is a condition characterized by memory and thinking problems that go beyond typical age-related changes, but are not severe enough to be classified as dementia. The symptoms are noticeable and often resemble those seen in dementia-related conditions.

### What's the difference between mild cognitive impairment and dementia?

Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) differs from dementia in that it doesn't significantly disrupt a person's daily life. Individuals with MCI can usually manage most everyday tasks independently.

Unlike progressive brain disorders such as Alzheimer's, where symptoms gradually worsen over time, the symptoms of MCI may stay the same or even improve. In some cases, issues linked to MCI may result from medications, cerebrovascular conditions (which affect the brain's blood supply), or other treatable factors. Understanding these differences is important for accurate diagnosis and care.

### Does MCI always lead to dementia?

While people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) have a higher risk of developing dementia, it does not mean they definitely will. Many individuals with MCI do not progress to a dementia-related condition. Healthy lifestyle choices, such as eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, staying active, and maintaining social connections, can help reduce the risk of developing MCI or slow its progression. MCI is not a typical part of aging and does affect cognitive abilities. If you or a loved one notices changes in memory or thinking, it's important to speak with a healthcare provider to develop a care plan.



## We're looking for VOLUNTEERS!

If you or someone you know is looking for a volunteer opportunity in the **Our Place Day Respite Center**, please contact us!



# Tips for unpredictable behavior

The brain changes linked to Alzheimer's disease can sometimes result in unusual thoughts, unpredictable behavior, and personality shifts—such as becoming emotionally distant, acting insensitively toward loved ones, or withdrawing from social interactions.

- **Stay calm and redirect.** Use music, photos, walks, or familiar stories to ease agitation. Don't argue—gently change the topic or activity.
- **Be reassuring.** Speak in a soft, calm voice. Offer comfort, even if they don't respond.
- **Simplify.** Use short, clear sentences and avoid open-ended questions or complex choices.
- **Be patient.** Give them time to express themselves and help if needed.
- **Adapt to their communication.** Watch for nonverbal cues that may signal needs like hunger, pain, or confusion.
- **Remove distractions.** Turn off noise and make eye contact when talking.
- **Watch for triggers.** Keep track of what causes distress and try to avoid it.
- **Review medications.** Talk to a doctor about any new behaviors or side effects.
- **Adjust as needed.** What works today might not work tomorrow—be flexible and observe what's truly harmful or just frustrating.



## Repetitive Behaviors and Actions:



People with dementia will often repeat a word, statement, question, or activity over and over. While this type of behavior is usually harmless for the person with dementia, it can be annoying and stressful to caregivers.

Sometimes the behavior is triggered by anxiety, boredom, fear, or environmental factors.

- Provide plenty of reassurance and comfort, both in words and in touch.
- Try distracting with a snack or activity.
- Avoid reminding them that they just asked the same question. Try ignoring the behavior or question, and instead try refocusing the person into an activity such as singing or “helping” you with a chore.
- Don't discuss plans with a confused person until immediately prior to an event.
- You may want to try placing a sign on the kitchen table, such as, “Dinner is at 6:30” or “John comes home at 5:00” to remove anxiety and uncertainty about anticipated events.
- Learn to recognize certain behaviors. An agitated state or pulling at clothing, for example, could indicate a need to use the bathroom.



**WHAT'S UP AT:**

# OUR PLACE



**Our place has been celebrating all month long!**

July has been a joyful month at Our Place Day Respite Center! We had the pleasure of celebrating birthdays for both our friends and dedicated volunteers, filling the center with laughter and love. We have loved getting to listen to soothing piano playing and rocking classics from talented volunteers. The "Our Place Kentucky Derby," was magical with festive hats and friendly competition!

**Have a talent you want to share?**

Contact us at (903) 223-8021 for more information!





# Dental Hygiene

Dental hygiene is important for overall health. Poor dental hygiene may lead to heart disease, gingivitis, stroke, osteoporosis, and respiratory disease. In addition to causing bad breath, inadequate dental hygiene can also affect one's ability to eat, chew, and talk. Here are some tips to help your loved one:

## **Look at the medication:**

Certain medications can cause "dry mouth." Dry mouth makes it more difficult to eat and swallow, produce saliva, and causes tongue irritation.

## **Keep it simple!**

Brushing teeth is a complicated process with many steps. Although most of us do it automatically, if someone is having memory problems, some of the steps might be forgotten. Supervision or assistance is often necessary. Talking someone through the steps or modeling the steps yourself at the same time might help the affected person be more successful. Give the person the toothbrush with toothpaste already on it and put your hand over theirs to start the up-and-down brushing movement to help get started. It may be easier to stand behind the person while doing this.

## **Make it easy for you AND your loved one:**

The bathroom is not the only choice for brushing teeth. A basin on a table or the kitchen sink might work better. It also doesn't have to be the last thing at night before bed or the first thing in the morning. Find a time when both you and the person for whom you are caring are calm and have time to devote to the task. A toothbrush with a large handle can be easier to hold onto and maneuver. Put the handle through a tennis ball to give the person something larger to grasp. Another option is an electric toothbrush, which may prove easier to use. Although fluoride toothpaste is the best, if the person is likely to swallow the fluoride toothpaste, rather than spit it out, try brushing just with water or baking soda toothpaste.

## **Dental Health is Important!**

- Dentures need to be taken out daily, brushed, and rinsed. While they are out, try to brush the person's gums and the roof of their mouth with a soft bristled toothbrush. Gum shrinkage can cause dentures to fit improperly, leading to pain, trouble eating, and infection. Have them checked regularly by your dentist.
- Possible signs of dental problems include someone rubbing or touching their cheek or jaw, moaning or shouting out, head rolling or nodding, and flinching, especially when washing their face or being shaved. Restlessness, poor sleep, increased irritation or aggression, and refusal or reluctance to put in dentures when previously there was not a problem are other signs of dental issues.
- Find a dentist who understands dementia who will work with you and your loved one.

# Sandi Martin

## Interim Executive Director



Sandi currently lives in Texarkana, Texas, which she has proudly called home for over three years. She enjoys fishing, singing, spending time outdoors, and being with family and friends—but her greatest joy comes from the time she shares with her three grandsons, who lovingly call her NaNoo.

With a lifelong passion for serving others, Sandi has dedicated many years to the healthcare field, focusing on Senior Care. Her journey began as a CNA, and over the years she worked across various departments to gain a deep understanding of the needs of seniors and their families. Sandi has been the Executive Director for communities in Oklahoma and Texas. This hands-on experience has shaped her commitment to compassionate, quality care for older adults.

Sandi is proud to be a part of the Alzheimer's Alliance, and is passionate about everything it offers to the community. Her involvement reflects her continued dedication to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those affected by Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

