



WILLOW
VALLEY
COMMUNITIES

THRIVE FORWARD

MEMORY CARE NEWSLETTER

Volume I, Issue 6



WHAT'S INSIDE

MIND, BODY,
SPIRIT

Care for the whole person

COMMUNITY
SUPPORT

Because it takes a village

RAISING THE
STAKES

Movement on the Memory
Care Center

Stimulating the Resident's Mind, Body, and Spirit

Another goal of our proposed Memory Care Center is to stimulate the Resident's mind, body and spirit. But what does this mean? Basically, it means identifying things that have brought the Resident great pleasure in their life and finding a way to rediscover these joyous occasions, events or activities—even amidst the dementia.

It might be something as simple as enjoying a favorite ice cream cone on a warm summer day. It could be listening to a “special song”—that reminds them of their dating years. Or it may be a drive in the countryside on a beautiful fall afternoon to observe the foliage and reminisce about treasured fall memories. It could be rubbing fragrant lotion on their hands—maybe calming lavender or a floral scent to spark memories of their beloved garden. It may be reading a poem penned by their late spouse, or a favorite passage of scripture, like the 23rd Psalm. Maybe enjoying the aroma of fried chicken coming from the stove, or going for a walk on a frosty winter day. In essence, it is discovering the Resident's favorite things and identifying ways to bring them to life once again so that they feel comfort and assurance.

So how do we learn what their favorite things have been? The first step is to figure out in what age they are currently living. As dementia progresses, the person gets younger and younger in their mind. Early in the disease, they may have lost only the last fifteen to twenty years of memory, but as the disease progresses, they may lose forty to sixty more. If you can't figure out the age at which they are living, you might just try asking them, “How old are you?” And don't be surprised by their response. Once you have

figured out their self-identified age, you can begin to determine what may have been significant in their life at that time. Investigate by asking their family and friends. You can then use that information to create things which may stimulate their mind, body and spirit. Our proposed Memory Care Center will be designed to offer a variety of opportunities for Residents to recall special times. For example, walking paths, garden plots, and bird watching locations will be available utilizing the extensive outdoor space. Plus, strolling through the grocery store, with its ice cream parlor and bake shop, is sure to bring back pleasant memories. And the various clubs that will be created are certain to conjure up recollections of good times. The intent is to bring to mind happy experiences—even if they last only for a brief moment, which is often the case for individuals living with dementia. By stimulating the Resident's mind, body, and spirit, our mission is to increase quality of life for each person.

This concept is highly person-centered. Want to help optimize your individualized routine, in the event this information could be useful in the future? Start by documenting a list of your favorite things in life, and share your list with family and friends.



Brain Conference Recap: Current and Best Practices in Dementia Care



Kristen Loose, MS, RN, NHA Vice President of Healthcare Operations

Senior Housing News hosted the inaugural Brain Conference this past July in Chicago, Illinois. Senior Leaders from around the country gathered at this conference which focused on current and best practices in dementia care. Our Vice President of Healthcare Operations attended to “get the scoop” on the latest advancements, which she shares with you in her summary of the event.

James Mastrianni, MD, Professor of Neurology at the University of Chicago was a keynote speaker. He discussed the importance of early identification and diagnosis in dementia, especially Alzheimer’s Disease. This is largely because there are known strategies for slowing progression of the disease in people with an early diagnosis. For example, he discussed a study in which patients are asked to do three things daily – read aloud, practice handwriting, and solve basic math equations. He shared that patients who spend

30 minutes daily doing these three things have shown improved cognition.

Many of the speakers underscored the importance of prevention in the fight against Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementias. Speakers from across the country, both industry veterans and pioneers, touched on the most important aspects of disease prevention, such as physical activity, a brain-healthy diet, and quality of sleep.

Another focus at the conference was the use of technology and the increasing presence of Artificial Intelligence in the care of Residents with dementia. The incorporation of technology can significantly affect how care is safely provided for Residents while maintaining independence in the care setting. Many vendors were onsite at the conference to show examples of products that are available in today’s market—everything from smart-home technology to improve quality of life to computerized engagement for dementia prevention were presented or on display. Adaptive technology to control appropriate lighting throughout a memory care center can assist with maintaining people’s circadian rhythms in order to promote quality sleep, which can also contribute to less “sundowning” and behaviors. Utilizing technology in the form of “brain games” can be very successful in the ongoing effort to slow disease progression, as well as provide engaging activities for Residents and their families.

Overall, I came away from attending this conference with new information to assist in the future programming of the Memory Care Center, as well as making some professional connections.

Creating Moments of Joy: A Reading Suggestion for Carepartners

Creating Moments of Joy, by Jolene Brackey, is an informative book covering a wide range of topics designed to assist us in our interactions with individuals living with Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. Don't be put off by the book's seventy-three chapters as most chapters are only two to four pages in length. The book is divided into four sections. First is a foundation portion where you are assisted to better understand the person who has dementia or Alzheimer's Disease. The second section introduces some tools that promote positive outcomes in your interactions with individuals with dementia. The third section recommends some strategies to facilitate meaningful communication. And, the fourth area suggests some things that are likely to bring joy to your loved one or friend—and bring comfort to YOU as well!

Jolene writes in a practical, honest, and straightforward manner. She is sometimes a bit blunt, but skillfully uses stories, quotes, and humor to broach some sensitive topics. You can read the entire book cover-to-cover or just peruse the table of contents and concentrate on the topics of greatest relevance or highest interest to you.

Creating Moments of Joy addresses so many subjects. For example, how should you respond if the person no longer recognizes you? What if the person says, "I have to go to work?" How might you answer the same question that gets repeated every thirty seconds? If the individual can no longer drive safely, what are some possible approaches to "taking away the keys?"

What causes some people to swear as their dementia progresses (when swearing is totally out of character with their former being)? When is it time to consider a residential transition?

Jolene explores what it feels like to have Alzheimer's Disease. She magically transports you there. She also helps you realize that you can't control this disease; you can only control your reaction to it. Do you regularly face situations with your loved one that frustrate you? Jolene likely has a suggestion to help. What are the three things that you should never say to someone with Alzheimer's? Do these subjects spark your interest? Then pick up a copy of this great book in the Resource Room. It's well worth a read!

Reviewed by David Haverstick, Memory Care Center Project Consultant



Memory Café Coming to Willow Valley Communities

What is a Memory Café?

The Café provides a safe, welcoming place for those with memory loss and their caregivers, friends, and family to gather together. Also, for anyone who has concerns about their memory.

Where is it located and when is it held?

The Café will be held in the Lakes Private Dining Room and meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m.

What is the purpose of a Memory Café?

It can be a place to relax outside of the home environment, while providing emotional support and an opportunity to decrease isolation through social contact.

Can anyone attend?

The focus is on individuals with memory concerns and those supporting them.

Who is it not for?

It is not a drop off or respite or formal care service. It is for the person with memory concerns and their caregivers to attend together.

What happens there?

It will vary, but a structured program is always offered. It could be a guest speaker, entertainment, an art project, memory games, or reminiscing. Conversation is encouraged! Light refreshments are served.

How do I join?

Just show up! No referral, appointment or reservation is necessary.

Who runs the Café?

A member of the Willow Valley Communities Memory Support team and trained volunteers will guide and facilitate the Café.

What if I want more information about memory issues?

Educational information and resource materials will be available at all gatherings.

Who can I contact if I want more information?

You are welcome to contact Mary Schreiber, Memory Support Resource Coordinator, at mschreiber@willowvalley.org



Raising the Stakes - Movement on the Memory Care Center

The promise of the expansive seven-acre campus of the Memory Care Center feels more tangible than ever! As the campaign total inches toward the minimum campaign goal, the development team has constructed a new destination where progress of the Center can be observed. Located on the Lakes Campus, between Meadow Ridge and the construction of the new SouthPointe Midrises, an observation deck has been erected. From the deck, viewers are invited to draw parallels between renderings on the project's vision board and stakes denoting the perimeter of the future Commons building.

Parking is available adjacent the observation deck and Residents are welcome to stop by for a glimpse into the future Center. For information about the Memory Care Center, including information on how to support the Center, please call the Willow Valley Communities Charitable Foundation at 717.517.3901 or email foundation@willowvalley.org.



Questions or Comments:

Please contact Mary Schreiber, *Memory Support Resource Coordinator*

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