

## Keeping Your Loved One Safe

Alzheimer caregivers face many challenges but perhaps none as daunting as keeping their loved one safe. Safety issues such as wandering, driving and creating a supportive home environment become paramount as Alzheimer's disease progresses and the abilities of the person with dementia change. It is important for caregivers to be prepared and plan ahead to make informed choices about safety.



Mark Luinberg/Alzheimer's Association

### Wandering

Wandering is one of the most frightening and potentially life threatening behaviors that may accompany Alzheimer's disease. Six in 10 people with Alzheimer's will wander; many cannot remember their name or address. They may become disoriented or lost, even in their own neighborhood. Although common, wandering behavior can be dangerous; if not found within 24 hours, up to half of those who wander risk serious injury or death. This is especially true during the cold winter months.

### Who's at Risk for Wandering?

Anyone who:

- Returns from a regular walk or drive later than usual
- Tries to fulfill former obligations, such as going to work

- Tries or wants to "go home"
- Is restless, paces or makes repetitive movements
- Has difficulty locating familiar places
- Checks the whereabouts of familiar people
- Acts as if doing a hobby or chore, but nothing gets done
- Appears lost in a new or changed environment

Wandering can happen anytime or anyplace during the progression of Alzheimer's disease. Don't be fooled into thinking if it hasn't happened yet, it won't happen at all. Some common misconceptions about wandering are:

*"My mother has never wandered."*

If your family member is memory-impaired and able to walk, wandering can happen at any time.

*"We've explained to my dad why he should not go out by himself."*

It's unlikely he'll remember he has been told not to go out alone. Plus, as the disease progresses, he will increasingly lose his ability to make good judgments and think logically.

*"My father is in a nursing home."*

Your father could easily wander away from a facility – even a locked unit. Wandering can also occur when you've taken your father home for a visit.

While it's impossible to know when someone will wander, there are important steps you can take to plan ahead and be prepared:

- Enroll the person in Alzheimer's Association Safe Return® (see related article pg. 2).

**Michigan Great Lakes Chapter  
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you, call 800 272 3900

[www.alzmgreatlakes.org](http://www.alzmgreatlakes.org)

This newsletter is published three  
times per year by the Alzheimer's  
Association, a non-profit,  
tax-exempt charitable organization.

**Alzheimer's Association CEO to Retire**

After 13 years of service, Mary C. Frenza, president and CEO of the Michigan Great Lakes Chapter, will retire from her position effective March 31, 2006.



*Mary C. Frenza*

“Mary has provided thoughtful leadership and direction for the chapter for more than 13 years and we are grateful for her long-standing service,” said John Seeley, chairman of the chapter’s board of directors. “While we certainly understand and accept her decision, we will be challenged to find a new leader as committed to our mission and as passionate about helping families affected by Alzheimer’s disease.”

“The Alzheimer’s Association is a dynamic organization and it has been my privilege to work with wonderful volunteers and staff for this very urgent cause,” Frenza said.

“The decision to retire was difficult, but I know I will continue to support

the association and its mission in any way that I can.”

Frenza joined the Alzheimer’s Association in 1992 as executive director of the former South Central Michigan Chapter. She served in that position from 1992-1997 and from 1999-

2001. She was appointed president and CEO of the newly-formed Michigan Great Lakes Chapter in 2001, when Michigan’s South Central, Southwest and West Shore chapters merged to form one organization. Under her leadership, the chapter has experienced significant growth, expanding both its array of services and the number of people served.

According to Seeley, the board of directors has formed an executive search committee and will begin the interviewing process by the end of the year. •

**Safe Return® Provides Peace of Mind**

Alzheimer’s Association Safe Return® offers families safety and peace of mind in protecting a loved one from the dangerous consequences of wandering. This nationwide identification, support and registration program assists in the safe and timely return of those with Alzheimer’s or a related dementia who wander and become lost. Safe Return has a near 100 percent success rate. Benefits of enrollment include:

- 24-hour toll-free emergency incident and enrollment line.
- Confidential, national computerized database which stores contact information and a photo of the enrollee.
- Personalized identification products: bracelet, necklace, iron-on clothing labels and products displaying the Safe Return number.
- Collaborative team of law enforcement, citizens and the Alzheimer’s Association work with you to locate your loved one quickly.

Enrollment fee: \$40. For more information or to register for Safe Return, visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) or call 1.888.572.8566. •

## Keeping Your Loved One Safe

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- Inform your neighbors and local emergency responders of the person's condition.
- Install deadbolt or slide-bolt locks on exterior doors and limit access to dangerous areas.
- Be aware: the person may wander by foot, car or other modes of public transportation.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers and addresses.

### Driving

Driving is a complex activity that requires quick thinking and reactions, good perceptual abilities, and split-second decision-making. While not all people with dementia display unsafe driving, the unfortunate reality is that driving inevitably becomes difficult and later impossible for a person with dementia due to progressive deterioration of cognitive and sensory skills. Although it can be difficult for families to find the balance between maintaining independence and ensuring safety, the ultimate priority must be to protect your loved one and countless others on the road.

### Assessing the Person's Ability to Drive

There are several steps caregivers can take to assess the driving skills of the person with dementia. These include:

- Create opportunities to observe the person with mild dementia when driving. Keep a written record of your observations to share with the person with dementia, other family members, and health care professionals.
- Have the person's driving ability tested. Investigate testing services available in your community.

- Learn about Michigan's driving regulations.

When the time comes that the person is no longer able to drive safely, caregivers will need to be firm in their efforts to prevent the person from driving. There are many techniques caregivers can use to discourage driving – here are just a few:

- Involve the person with dementia in the decision to stop driving if possible. Explain your concerns about his unsafe driving, giving specific examples, and ask the person to voluntarily stop driving. Assure the person that a ride will be available if he needs to go somewhere.
- Transition driving responsibilities to others. Tell the person you can drive, arrange for someone else to drive, or arrange for public transportation.
- Find ways to reduce the person's need to drive. Have prescription medicines, groceries or meals delivered to the person's home.
- Solicit the support of others. Ask your physician to write a letter or prescription stating that the person with Alzheimer's must not drive.
- If the person with dementia wanders, he can wander and get lost by car. Be prepared for a wandering incident and register the person in Alzheimer's Association Safe Return®.

There are many resources available to help you deal with important safety issues like wandering and driving. Contact the Alzheimer's Association at 800.272.3900 for more information. •

## Resources

### Brochures/Fact Sheets

*"About Wandering Behavior – Preparing for and Preventing it"*  
Alzheimer's Association, 2005

*"Driving"*  
Alzheimer's Association, 2005

*"Safety at Home: Adapting the Home to Support the Person with Dementia"*  
Alzheimer's Association, 2005

*"At the Crossroads: A Guide to Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia and Driving"*  
The Hartford, 2000

*"Tips for Encouraging Someone To Wear Their Safe Return Identification Products"*  
Alzheimer's Association

*"Wandering: Who's at Risk"*  
Alzheimer's Association, 2005

### Upcoming Programs

*"Making Sense of Memory Loss"*

**Three-part education series for people with early stage dementia and their care partners. Includes session on making decisions about practical issues like driving and financial planning.**

\$15 per session or  
\$40 for all three sessions.  
Call for program dates  
and locations.

**To obtain these and other resources, contact the chapter office nearest you at 800.272.3900.**

## Break a Sweat for Your Brain

Middle-aged individuals who exercise vigorously enough to perspire and breathe hard for 20 to 30 minutes at least twice a week may reduce their risk of Alzheimer's disease by 60 percent, according to a Lancet Neurology study released online Oct. 4. The research was funded in part by the Alzheimer's Association.

"It's looking more and more as if getting off the couch is one of the best things you can do for yourself," says William H. Thies, Ph.D., Alzheimer's Association vice president of medical and scientific affairs. "Exercise has strong benefits for your heart and overall well-being, and this study adds to a growing body of evidence that it also plays a vital role in keeping your brain healthy. This work is in line with other research suggesting a relatively modest amount of effort can have a big impact. You don't have to run marathons."

In this study, Miia Kivipelto, Ph.D., and her colleagues in Sweden and Finland randomly selected and evaluated 1,449 individuals age 65 to 79 who had undergone physical examinations and answered questions about physical activity and other lifestyle factors during the 1970s and 1980s. The average age at the time of the initial examination was about 50. They found that those engaging in vigorous exercise for 20 to 30 minutes at least twice a week had a 60 percent lower likelihood of later developing Alzheimer's than those who were less active. The researchers also found the risk reduction was even stronger for study participants with APOE-e4, a genetic variation associated with an increased risk but not a certainty of developing Alzheimer's. •

## Alzheimer's Association Launches "Maintain Your Brain™" Workshops

### *NuStep, Inc. Provides Funding for Chapter's Campaign*

To help American adults – especially baby boomers – live a brain-healthy lifestyle and potentially reduce their risk for Alzheimer's disease, the



*Karen Valenti, Maintain Your Brain coordinator, presents at NuStep.*

Michigan Great Lakes Chapter is launching locally a public health and education campaign entitled **"Maintain Your Brain™: How to Live a Brain Healthy Lifestyle."** NuStep, Inc., creators of the NuStep TRS 4000 Recumbent Cross Trainer, is sponsor of the chapter's campaign.

"Since the national launch of the Alzheimer's Association's Maintain Your Brain™ campaign, the public has been asking us for clear guidance on what they can do to keep their brains healthy and reduce their risk of getting Alzheimer's disease," said Mary Frenza, president and

CEO of the Alzheimer's Association, Michigan Great Lakes Chapter. "Our research-based workshop encourages people to maintain their brain health and introduces participants – particularly baby boomers – to scientifically rooted advice on brain health based on strong lifestyle choices."

"NuStep, Inc. is proud to team up with the Alzheimer's Association, Michigan Great Lakes Chapter in advancing the knowledge that healthy, active living leads to healthier minds that can last for a lifetime," said Steve Sarns, vice president of sales and marketing for NuStep, Inc. "We hope individuals of all ages will take the Maintain Your Brain message to heart and recognize how this vital health information will truly transform their lives."

The one-hour interactive Maintain Your Brain™ workshops feature nutritional and lifestyle advice, strategies to keep your memory sharp, interactive exercises and activities, and supportive take home materials. The Association began offering workshops for the general public in November in Ann Arbor; in addition to NuStep's support, the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation provided funding to implement the campaign's launch in Washtenaw County.

This winter, the workshop is being offered in Ann Arbor (February 9), Jackson (February 1), Lansing (January 26), Muskegon (March 28), and Portage (March 27). The fee for the community workshop is \$15 per person. For more information or to register, call 800.272.3900 or visit [www.alzbigreatlakes.org](http://www.alzbigreatlakes.org). •

## Public Policy News

### Alzheimer's Disease: Special Considerations When Choosing a Medicare Drug Plan

Under the new Medicare prescription drug benefit, 33 million Medicare beneficiaries will now have access to prescription drug coverage. The deadline to select and enroll in a prescription drug plan is May 15, 2006. There is still time to assess your situation and weigh the potential benefits and savings of enrolling in one of the plans. Below are frequently asked questions relevant for people with dementia that might help you make a decision as to which, if any, of the plans is right for you.

**Q. Will the Medicare drug plans cover Alzheimer drugs?**

**A.** Yes. Through the Alzheimer's Association's advocacy efforts, all Medicare drug plans are required to cover and have at least two cholinesterase inhibitors and Memantine on their formularies (list

of drugs the plan covers). Each plan will decide what the co-payment amount is for each drug. Plans are allowed to charge different amounts for different drugs. Consumers will need to check with each plan to find out the specific amount of the co-payment for specific drugs.

**Q. My father has Alzheimer's disease, takes several medications and is stable. If one or more of his current drugs are not on his drug plan's formulary, is there anything he can do to get the drugs paid for by his plan?**

**A.** Yes. Your father, his authorized representative or his treating physician can ask the plan to cover the non-formulary drug for him. This request is called an "exception" and generally requires a physician's statement in support of the request. You can get specific information about the

exceptions process from the drug plan organization.

**Q. If my mother has Alzheimer's disease and does not have the capacity to sign up for a plan, who can do it for her?**

**A.** Medicare rules allow an individual who has legal authority under state law to act on behalf of the beneficiary (your mother) to enroll or disenroll her from a Medicare drug plan. Depending on the state law where your mother lives, this may include attorneys-in-fact or agents who have authority under a durable power of attorney document and guardians appointed by the court.

For a copy of the fact sheet "*Alzheimer's Disease: Special Considerations When Choosing a Medicare Drug Plan*," call 800.272.3900 or visit [www.alzmidgreatlakes.org](http://www.alzmidgreatlakes.org). •

### Advocates Work to Retain Funding

Alzheimer advocates were successful in encouraging state officials to minimize cuts to Healthy Michigan funds for FY 2006.

The Alzheimer Information and Referral line item, which funds Dementia Network agencies (the Alzheimer's Association, the Michigan Parkinson Foundation, and the Huntington's Disease Society of America – Michigan Chapter), was reduced by 30 percent or \$170,000. Of this, \$110,000 was used in 2005 to further the goals of the Dementia Plan, specifically the public awareness campaign and the physician education initiative. This left the Dementia Network with a \$60,000 cut in funding, which is much better than other organizations fared.

Funding for the Mental Health Initiatives for Older Adults remained intact, as did MIChoice funding for the state's Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver program. All of this is a direct result of the hard work of staff and advocates across the state. Advocates can be proud and motivated to continue this good work as the FY 2007 budget work begins. •

### Association Sponsors Journal

The Alzheimer's Association has sponsored a special issue of *The Gerontologist* journal focusing on dementia care. This is an exciting achievement for the Association, and the research is a significant contribution to the body of knowledge about dementia care.

The recently published journal features 16 articles exploring quality-of-life issues for people with dementia in assisted living and nursing homes. The articles highlight several areas of improvement the Association is working to address with 24 major long-term care groups, chapters and other stakeholders through our Campaign for Quality Residential Care. •

## Memory Walk® Raises Funds to Strengthen Commitment to Care

### Walkers and Sponsors in 10 Cities Offer Outstanding Support

Memory Walk participants and corporate sponsors showed their support for Alzheimer families in a big way this year, raising nearly \$346,000 to support local programs and services of the Alzheimer's Association, Michigan Great Lakes Chapter. In total, more than 2,100 people took part in the chapter's 10 walks. The walks achieved excellent results overall, with the Ann Arbor Walk taking the top spot with more than

500 walkers and \$92,000 raised (see below for other walk results).

Special recognition goes to Memory Walk national sponsors who participated in local walks. Creative Memories teams raised more than \$20,000. The Ann Arbor team posted the highest Creative Memories team total in the country; consultant Elizabeth Caswell raised the most money of 2,500 Creative Memories

walkers. Teams representing Genworth Financial raised more than \$4,700; Sigma Kappa, who has designated the Alzheimer's Association as its national charity, raised more than \$4,300.

Help us make Memory Walk 2006 an even bigger success! If you would like to be involved as a committee member, sponsor, team builder and/or walker, please call the chapter office nearest you at 800.272.3900. •



*Ann Arbor, October 2, 2005*



*Mason/Oceana, September 24, 2005*



*Kalamazoo, September 17, 2005*

### Memory Walk Top Walkers & Teams

#### **ANN ARBOR - \$92,000**

*Corporate:* Creative Memories - \$15,800  
*Family:* Busia's Girls - \$1,770  
*Individual:* Elizabeth Caswell - \$6,857

#### **BATTLE CREEK - \$13,000**

*Corporate:* Walkers from the Woods-Northpointe Woods - \$1,331  
*Family:* Schell Family - \$1,075  
*Individual:* Tom Clark - \$1,703

#### **COLDWATER - \$11,000**

*Corporate:* Drew's Place of Coldwater - \$4,000  
*Family:* Irma's Family and Friends - \$976  
*Individual:* John Worth - \$685

#### **FREMONT - \$14,000**

*Corporate:* Newwaygo Medical Care Facility - \$3,513  
*Family:* Markiewicz Family - \$1,280

#### **JACKSON - \$39,000**

*Corporate:* The Willows-Lloyd Ganton Retirement Centers - \$4,268  
*Family:* Ken Pittelkow Family - \$1,387  
*Individual:* Ellen Keatley - \$2,370

#### **KALAMAZOO - \$47,000**

*Corporate:* Team Fountains-The Fountains at Bronson Place - \$2,489  
*Family:* Jabberwalkers - \$2,792  
*Individual:* Susan Pritchard - \$2,745

#### **LANSING - \$76,000**

*Corporate:* The Mackenzie Companies - \$9,518  
*Family:* McKimmy Team - \$2,432  
*Individual:* Rhonda Franck - \$2,483

#### **MASON/OCEANA - \$13,000**

*Corporate:* Thrivent Financial for Lutherans - Lake, Mason, Osceola Chapter - \$3,559  
*Family:* Margie's Team - \$690  
*Individual:* Linda Ochs - \$790

#### **MUSKEGON - \$30,000**

*Corporate:* DeBoer Nursing Home - \$3,107  
*Family:* The Prayer Warriors - The Thompson Family - \$663  
*Individual:* Bob Gundy - \$4,145

#### **THREE RIVERS - \$11,000**

*Corporate:* Cass County Council on Aging - \$815  
*Family:* Batten Family - \$2,678  
*Individual:* Kathy Brueck - \$1,210

## Memory Walk 2005

### Top Sponsors

#### National Sponsors

Genworth Financial 

 

#### \$5000 Platinum Medal Sponsors

Burcham Hills Retirement Community  
Heartland Health Care Center  
Huron Woods - St. Joe's Senior Services  
The MacKenzie Companies

#### \$3000 Gold Medal Sponsors

DeBoer Nursing Home  
Drew's Place of Coldwater  
Edgewood Retirement Center  
Hackley Hospital  
Heartland Health Care Center  
Jackson County Medical Care Facility  
John Ganton's Countryside Retirement Community  
KNI/Southwest Michigan Imaging  
Lansing Automakers Federal Credit Union  
Lloyd Ganton Retirement Centers  
Newaygo County Medical Care Facility  
Pfizer Corporation  
Tecumseh Place  
Wal-Mart

#### In-Kind Platinum and Gold Medal Sponsors

1600 WAAM TalkRadio - Ann Arbor  
The Ann Arbor News  
Binder Park Zoo  
Comcast  
Jackson Citizen Patriot  
WBCK-AM 930 - Battle Creek  
WKHM Talk Radio - Jackson  
WLNS Channel 6 News - Lansing

## Chapter News

### Save the Date for Schreiber Conference

Don't miss one of the best conferences for health care professionals and caregivers in southwest Michigan. The sixth Dr. Richard Seyfarth Schreiber Conference will be held May 16, 2006 in Kalamazoo. This year's conference, "**Partnering in Care,**" offers an abundance of practical information that you can use when you get back to your office or home. Here's a preview:

- Kathy Laenhue, M.A., a nationally renowned author and lecturer will present the keynote session on creating meaningful experiences for people with dementia while meeting the needs of care partners.
- Alzheimer's Association pre-conference workshop will introduce "Foundations for Dementia Care," a training for Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Residences.
- The latest advances in the treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease will be highlighted, along with pharmaceutical approaches to treating behavioral and psychiatric symptoms of dementia.
- More than 30 exhibitors will participate and distribute useful information.
- Continuing Education Units will be available.
- Register early to receive a discount rate!

Registration brochure and program will be available in January. To register early or for more information, please call Conferences and Seminars at Western Michigan University at 269.387.4174 or visit our conference Web site at [www.alzmgreatlakes.org](http://www.alzmgreatlakes.org).

### Chapter Implements New Campaign for Quality Residential Care

This year, the Alzheimer's Association rolled out a new, multi-year initiative, the **Campaign for Quality Residential Care**. The Campaign is supported by 24 leading organizations concerned with issues of importance to older adults. The objective and expected outcome of the Campaign is to increase the capability of direct care providers to provide high quality care to people with Alzheimer's and dementia, and to provide enhanced support to their families, to improve the quality of life for those struggling with the disease. The Campaign's "Foundations of Dementia Care" training modules have been developed to increase dementia knowledge and competency of direct care staff, and their supervisors, in nursing homes

and assisted living facilities. Trainings will initially be offered in four areas including Basics of Dementia, Nutrition and Feeding, Social Engagement, and Pain Management.

The Michigan Great Lakes Chapter has been awarded \$10,000 from the Chelsea Community Foundation Fund of the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan to launch the program locally. This grant supports initial development of the program and enables us to offer the dementia training program to direct care staff and supervisors from facilities in Chelsea and the surrounding region. Over a three-year period we plan to build our capacity to offer the training program throughout our service area.

## You Can Make a Difference in the Fight Against Alzheimer's

The record growth in the number of people we serve each year is made possible by the generous support of thousands of donors and volunteers. We could not offer our services and expert assistance without your support.

Please consider renewing and increasing your gifts to the Alzheimer's Association to help those fighting the battle against Alzheimer's disease. Your gifts of time and talent as a volunteer helping with chapter operations, Memory Walks, Helpline, or programs are invaluable. Your financial support is also vital, and there are many ways to give.

**Gifts of cash** are quick and easy by check and credit card. **Long-term appreciated stocks** or **bonds** are a simple and frequently used alternative.

**Life insurance policies** with cash surrender value are another gift option. Donors who no longer need death benefits can discover hidden assets in paid-up life insurance policies. When you donate a life insurance policy, you receive an income tax deduction for the surrender value, avoid the need for any subsequent premium payments and remove death benefits from a possibly taxable estate.

Consider one of the simplest and most rewarding gifts you can make to the Alzheimer's Association: a **bequest** in your will or other estate plans. To make a bequest to the Michigan Great Lakes Chapter, consult a professional – your attorney, accountant or trust officer – who will work with you to design a bequest that fits your situation and meets your goals. A professional

will also make sure you receive the tax benefits allowed for your gift. If you already have a will, it may be amended by codicil to include the Alzheimer's Association.

Your attorney may have his or her own style for drafting a will, but the following statement contains the necessary elements for making a bequest to the Alzheimer's Association, Michigan Great Lakes Chapter: "I give and bequeath (describe dollar amount, property to be given, percentage or remainder) to the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association, Michigan Great Lakes Chapter, 107 Aprill Drive, Suite 1, Ann Arbor, MI 48103." For information, contact Julie Seagraves, development director, at 734.677.3081 or [julie.seagraves@alz.org](mailto:julie.seagraves@alz.org). •