

Grief and Alzheimer’s

“The Longest Loss: Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia,” a webcast from the Hospice Foundation of America, focuses on the ongoing losses associated with Alzheimer’s and other dementia, which might not be present in other illnesses. Ministry Hospice presented the DVD webcast April 22 in Marshfield.

The DVD covered these points:

- The characteristics of Alzheimer's disease and other dementia, including the unique challenges that these diseases present to patients and families.
- The types of grief associated with dementia, including nonfinite loss and anticipatory mourning during early stages and progression of disease.
- To recognize changes in patient and family behaviors that may be indicative of grief and describe therapeutic techniques that can be used effectively, including reminiscence and ritual.
- How to support families as they navigate and grieve changes in the relationship and transitions in care as the disease progresses and understand the potential grief reactions brought about by these changes.
- How to identify the demands and challenges on professional caregivers when caring for individuals with dementia and list strategies for employer support and self-care.
- How to describe innovative ways of supporting family caregivers exhibiting grief reactions throughout the illness as well as after the death of the individual with dementia, noting factors that compound grief, such as guilt, ambivalence, fatigue and relief.



IMAGE COURTESY OF JAMES BARKER AT FREEDIGITALPHOTOS.NET

Patients and families experience grief throughout this disease and mourn what they will lose as well as what they have lost. With other diseases, family members can discuss what is happening with the patient and how it impacts everyone, but with dementia, you lose that ability to share. If a relationship wasn't great to begin with or there were trust issues, that is compounded with dementia. You can't fix the relationship -- the opportunity is lost. People with dementia lose the past and the present.

It's important to recognize that caregivers will feel guilt they didn't do enough, or they might play the "what if" game (what if we had gone to the doctor sooner, what if we had tried something else). They might feel relief after the death of a loved one, or others might tell them they

should be relieved. But you've still lost a loved one, and even though dementia is a fatal disease, it is hard to lose someone. It's important to validate grief throughout the process.

Professional caregivers and residents should be allowed to grieve, too.

Tips when working with people with dementia: Be in the moment with the person. Objectional truth doesn't matter. Respect the person's reality and respond to their feelings, not facts. It's not about logic, but reassurance. (Someone who is worried her purse was stolen can be reassured that it's safe rather than trying to use logic that it couldn't have been stolen.) Give the person time to think and respond to questions. Even non-verbal people can respond sometimes. Touch is important, but ask the person if it's OK to touch her arm or hold her hand.

National celebration

Hilltop welcomed youngsters to our facilities recently for Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day on April 23. This marked the 22nd year of bringing children to work as part of a national program. This was the first time Hilltop participated in the program, which is organized by the Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Foundation.



Becky's daughter Karen helped in the kitchen. She even got to decorate the birthday cakes for the resident parties.

Maria and Candace brought their daughters to a special activities session at Hilltop of Pepper. Mary, Maria's daughter, and Makayla, Candace's daughter, drew pictures, made bookmarks for the residents, tried "Mad-libs" and helped make juice-cicles.



They enjoyed a snack made by Becky before helping with beanbag toss, ring toss and parachute with the residents. Everyone seemed to enjoy their time together. Jamie's



daughter Mercedes visited her at Alpine Terrace for part of her afternoon shift.

While not all of the children know what they want to be when they grow up, Makayla said she would like to be like her mom and work at Hilltop. Sharing a day like this helps children better understand what their parents do and opens them to more career possibilities.

Thank you to all who participated.

Volunteer Recognition Breakfast

Hilltop Affiliates nominated Chuck Huhnke for recognition at the recent Volunteer Recognition Breakfast at Hotel Mead. Chuck the Piano Man plays twice a month at Hilltop of Pepper and Alpine Terrace, to the delight of residents and staff members. Chuck and his wife, Joyce, attended the breakfast April 14 with staff members Augusta Beaumont and Mystique Macomber, and Fran Anderson, a family member of a resident who appreciates Chuck's music. To see a video, go to our Facebook page.



Who's new

Hilltop announces new employees. Say hello when you see them around.

- Maria Glancy, Hilltop of Pepper
- Alicia Greuel, Alpine Terrace

Remember when?

On May 8, 1945, both Great Britain and the United States celebrated Victory in Europe Day. Cities in both nations, as well as formerly occupied cities in western Europe, put out flags and banners, rejoicing in the defeat of the Nazis.

May 8 was the day when German troops throughout Europe finally laid down their arms, although fighting continued in some pockets to May 9, when V-E Day was celebrated in Moscow.

The History Channel features stories every day in its Today in History feature. Check it out at <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history>.

Employee spotlight

Jaime DeBauch answered an ad for a housekeeper and has worked at Hilltop since February 2011. She's been in housekeeping for the past 20 years. Her first position was at a hotel when she was 18. She said she kept at it and kept getting better. In some of her positions, she would train employees and be in charge of what everyone was going to do.



"I've always been really organized," she said. "I've always liked cleaning, and it makes me feel like I'm helping people out."

Jaime said people might be surprised to know she has an associate's degree. She also has two children: one in college and one who will start kindergarten in the fall. While she's done some traveling, she hasn't been out of the country yet and would like to visit the Caribbean.

Her favorite part of the job? "I like interacting with the people, talking with the people. It makes me feel, even though it's just housekeeping, that I'm doing something for them."

Activities

For poetry month, residents wrote haiku, a form of



PLAYING PARACHUTE

poetry with three lines of 5 syllables-7 syllables-5 syllables.

"Perennials"

Flowers growing blooms
After the snow melts away
And restores the roots

"Spring Peeper"

Sounds of the peeper
Whistling through the springtime night
Frogs sing to their mates



MAKING JUICE-CICLES.



GETTING THE GARDEN READY FOR SPRING.

To see which activities are planned, go to <http://hilltopaffiliatesinc.com/calendar.html>.

Memory Cafe

Something new is coming to Wisconsin Rapids for people with early stage dementia, mild memory loss or cognitive impairment. Memory Café will meet the first Friday of the month from 10:30 a.m. to noon at McMillan Memorial Library. It's a time for caregivers and their loved ones to meet for discussion, information sharing, refreshments, camaraderie and creative fun. There is no cost to attend.

The first meeting will be June 5. For more information, call Karen Bradbury, RN, Park Place Adult Day Services, 715-422-2795, and then mark your calendar to attend.



IMAGE COURTESY OF STUART MILES AT
FREEDIGITALPHOTOS.NET

Something to do

If you're looking for something to do, check out <http://visitwisrapids.com> for a list of upcoming events as well as numerous places to visit in the Wisconsin Rapids area.

We celebrate Mother's Day this month. A special concert by TRISIS vintage vocal trio will be at 2 p.m. May 10 at Wisconsin Rapids Community Theatre, 200 Third Ave. S., Wisconsin Rapids. Enjoy a nostalgic Mother's Day concert by Wisconsin's Singing Sweethearts, featuring their new single, "Grandmas's Jewelry Box." For tickets, call 715-421-0435. **Happy Mother's Day!**

WRCT features live performances year-round at the Studio Theatre in the Gilbert & Jaylee Mead Auditorium. Since 1975, WRCT has presented Broadway-type shows while showcasing local talent. We also offer children's productions, workshops and special theatrical productions. Check the website, <http://www.wrctheatre.org>, or call 715-421-0435 for other performances or events.

High compliment

There are many ways to pay compliments: words of thanks, positive remarks, tips for good service at restaurants and hotels. The highest compliment you can pay to Hilltop is a referral. If you are pleased with the care your loved one

received at Hilltop, tell a friend and let us know about it. If you refer a friend or family member to Hilltop, following placement you can receive a \$500 award. Call us at 715-423-7400 to find out more.

Happy Birthday!

May birthdays will be celebrated at resident parties on May 29. We wish a happy birthday to all on their special day.

- May birthdays: Robert

Final notes

>> The Alzheimer's caregiver support group will meet at 9:30 a.m. the second Thursday of the month at the Aging & Disability Resource Center, 220 Third Ave. S., Suite 1, in Centralia Center by Rapids Mall. Future topics include: **May 14**, Dan Smith of WinterSpring Studios, preserving family memories; **June 11**, Funeral planning, trusts and time of need counseling with Ritchay Funeral Home.

Mark your calendar to attend. It is open to family members, caregivers and anyone who has questions about Alzheimer's disease and other dementia. There is no cost to attend and no donations. Meetings include a time for discussion and sharing. Find the full calendar for the rest of 2015 on our website:

<http://hilltopaffiliatesinc.com/news.html>.

>> The Lowell Center monthly newsletter is online at <http://www.seekandfind.com/find/the-city-of-wisconsin-rapids-lowell-center> or pick up a paper copy at Hilltop. We are proud to help sponsor this publication.

>> Want to see what's happening at Hilltop more often than our monthly newsletter?



We often post photos and videos from activities on our Facebook page. Check it out at <http://tinyurl.com/Hilltop-Facebook>. Visit our updated website at www.hilltopaffiliatesinc.com. Follow us on Twitter, too! <https://twitter.com/HilltopWR>.

