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LORAIN FAMILY FINDS HOPE WITH NEW ALZHEIMER'S PROGRAM *RDAD strengthens individuals with Alzheimer's physically & mentally*

[Cleveland, OH, October 26, 2011] – As dementia progresses, individuals can drift into isolation and sadly, end up spending too much time staring endlessly at a television screen. However, physical activity has numerous benefits for those diagnosed with dementia, Alzheimer's and memory problems in general. The Alzheimer's Association Cleveland Area Chapter is bringing a specialized exercise program directly to the homes of those who need it most – for free – with a new program called RDAD (Reducing Disability in Alzheimer's Disease). The program has been funded to serve as many as 150 people and the chapter is on the look-out for more people to sign up.

This free program provides families with more than a dozen personal visits from a trained professional who teaches individuals with memory problems and their caregivers how to do simple exercises to improve their health. The program also teaches family members about symptoms and how to care for individuals with memory loss.

For Steve Cain, of Lorain, the RDAD program has been instrumental in keeping his wife engaged in stimulating activities rather than just watching TV. "I'm always trying to get her involved in things to keep her active," Cain said "She doesn't mind participating in this program and it's a nice change from her regular activities."

Cain's wife Mary was diagnosed with dementia six years ago. "Participating in the program makes her concentrate and use her thinking powers. I believe the physical exercises actually stimulate her brain," Cain said. "It carries on into her functioning in her everyday life. I have also noticed an improvement in her physical strength and balance." Cain believes his wife is more stable walking and getting in and out of the house.

Benefits of Exercise and Alzheimer's

When Alzheimer's individuals and others with memory problems engage in physical activity, there are both mental and physical health benefits. Even simple exercise has shown to prevent muscle weakness, reduce falls and improve balance and flexibility. Those who exercise show a decrease in mental decline, improved behavior and better communications skills.

"Physical activity can also play a part in reducing the symptoms of anxiety and depression, sometimes experienced by people with dementia," said Lauren Tortorici, Clinical Care Coordinator, Alzheimer's Association. "Caregivers participating in the RDAD program have also shared that their loved ones are more alert and higher functioning after doing the exercises," she said.

The RDAD program provides 14 home visits and two follow up calls with a specially trained professional. Involvement requires participation by both the individual with memory loss and their caregiver. The Cains just started the program in September.

"Mary's doctors were excited about her participating in the program; especially her neurologist," Cain said.

A Joint Effort

The Alzheimer's Association Cleveland Area Chapter joined with the Ohio Department of Aging, The Benjamin Rose Institute, and the other Association Chapters in Ohio to implement RDAD with support through a grant from the Administration on Aging.

The program hopes to improve the ability of the person with memory problems to carry out activities of daily living while also helping family caregivers provide assistance. The program has funding to serve 150 individuals with memory loss during the two years that the program is being implemented. Individuals with memory loss engage in

simple strengthening, balance, flexibility and endurance exercises. Participants must have some ability to stand and walk. The initial exercise and education program was developed by Dr. Linda Teri from the University of Washington, Seattle.

Anyone interested in learning more about the RDAD program can call the Alzheimer's Association Cleveland Area Chapter at 216-721-8457 or 1-800-272-3900 for more information.

ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION CLEVELAND AREA CHAPTER

The Alzheimer's Association Cleveland Area Chapter serves Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake and Lorain counties with offices in Ashtabula, Avon, Beachwood, Chardon and Mentor. The Association's mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. The disease currently affects an estimated 5.4 million American adults (about 40,000 in Northeast Ohio) and is the 6th leading cause of death in the country. [Follow us on Facebook](#) [Follow us on Twitter](#)

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