

## Caregiver Tip for Holidays

Give yourself permission to do only what you can reasonably manage. No one can expect you to maintain every holiday tradition or event. Also, consider asking others to bring dishes for a pot-luck meal or to host the meal at their home.

## Awards

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is something that can fall to the wayside with Alzheimer's disease.

The Organization Award recognizes an organization, agency, or institution that has chosen the development of exceptional programs and/or services that benefit the Alzheimer's community and its mission. The recipient of this year's award was Mercy Medical for their work evacuating Alzheimer's patients during the flood.

The Family Caregiver Award recognizes an individual or family who embodies the courage to face the challenges of caregiving, the compassion to ensure dignity for their loved one, and the wisdom to reach out for support. This year's recipient was Greg Vogt, a 23 year old who lives with and takes care of his grandmother with Alzheimer's.

The Special Service Award recognizes an individual or a group that has made a unique contribution. The recipients of this year's award were Jim Affeldt, Carol Daniels, Leland Freie, Allen and Sandy Harms, Pat Healy, Dave Marner Jr., John Riccolo, Steven Shelby, Tammy Van Bogart, Ron Wendt and Norma Wenzel, also known as "The Committee". This group of individuals has consistently supported David Good since he was diagnosed with Visual Variant of Alzheimer's disease in 2003. They have allowed him to remain an active part of the community by

## DIALZ program for Fall 2008

DIALZ is a unique educational opportunity for you and your family offered over the telephone once a month for one hour. DIALZ programs are offered in sequence every 2nd Tuesday of each month. Experts from a variety of disciplines present a series of 12 programs that occur each month. These programs are designed to help you live with an Alzheimer's diagnosis. During each program you will have the opportunity to listen, learn and ask questions.

How to register for DIALZ:

Step 1: You must register for each DIALZ program. Call the Alzheimer's Association at 319.294.9699 or call our 24/7 Helpline at 1.800.272.3900. You may register for the entire program series all at the same time, or month by month.

Step 2: Once registered, you will receive a confirmation letter that includes a toll-free program call-in number along with other instructions.

Step 3: On the evening of the call, just before 7:00 p.m., dial the toll-free num-

ber provided and an operator will put you through to the presentation.

The DIALZ program is FREE, however if you register to participate, but do not call-in, you will be billed \$15.00 for the unused line. Cancellation must be received within 12 hours of the program.

October 14th Program: Legal and Financial Planning

While it's important for everyone to plan for the future, putting legal and financial plans in place is especially vital for the person with dementia. This program will help you understand how to make plans for finances and property, how to make plans for health care and long-term coverage, and naming another person to make decisions on behalf of the person with dementia.

November 11th Program: Dealing with Challenging Behaviors and Communication Tips

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias

can cause a person to act in different and unpredictable ways. This program will help identify common behaviors and possible causes to help you to understand why the behaviors occur and how to respond appropriately, as well as providing tips on ways to improve communication with a person with dementia.

December 9th Program: Caregiver Stress & Nursing Home Placement Considerations

This program will look at situations that place caregivers at risk for high stress and will offer suggestions on what they can do to manage it, including when to consider nursing home placement.

You must register in advance for each program to receive the toll-free number allowing you to call-in and participate. All programs take place from 7-8 p.m. The program will be presented from 7-7:30 p.m. and from 7:30-8 p.m. callers will have the opportunity to ask questions.



Norma Wenzel, Allan Harms, Sally Harms, Steven Shelby, Dave Good, Pat Healy, Leland Freie, Ron Wendt, Dave Marner Jr., Jim Affeldt, Tammy Van Bogart and John Riccolo, also known as "The Committee", collect their Special Service Award at the Excellence in Caregiving Award Luncheon.



Toni Lang

continuing to provide him support and assistance.

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease can be one of the most challenging and overbearing commitments a person can take on. These recipients have truly given of



Greg Vogt

themselves to provide and care for individuals with Alzheimer's.

Congratulations to our other outstanding nominees: Meth-Wick Community, Sara Sanders, City Hospice volunteer, Brooke Miller, Linda Linderbaum, Joe O'Brien



Tim Charles

## Activities at home—planning the day for a person with dementia

Activities are the "things that we do," like getting dressed, doing chores, playing cards—even paying bills. They can be active or passive, done alone or with others. Activities represent who we are and what we're about.

A person with dementia needs assistance from a caregiver to organize the day. These planned activities can enhance the person's sense of dignity and self-esteem by giving more purpose and meaning to his or her life.

Activities structure time. They can make the best of a person's abilities. Activities can also reduce behavior like wandering or agitation.

Both the person with dementia and the caregiver can enjoy the sense of security and togetherness that activities can provide.

Types of activities you can structure include:

### Daily routines

Cleaning: Dusting, sweeping, doing laundry  
Mealtime: Preparing food, cooking, eating

Personal Care: Bathing, shaving, getting dressed

### Other Activities

Creative: Painting, playing the piano  
Intellectual: Reading a book, doing crossword puzzles  
Physical: Taking a walk, playing catch  
Social: Having coffee, talking, playing cards  
Spiritual: Praying, singing a hymn  
Spontaneous: Going out to dinner, visiting friends  
Work-related: Making notes, typing, fixing something

Planning activities for the person with dementia is best when you continually explore, experiment and adjust. Consider the person's likes and dislikes; strengths and abilities; and interests. As the disease progresses, keep activities flexible, and be ready to make adjustments. Also, don't be concerned about filling every minute of the day with an activity. The person with Alzheimer's needs a balance of activity and rest, and may need more frequent breaks and varied tasks.

## Tips for giving medication

Administering medication to someone with Alzheimer's can be a daunting responsibility. Preventing missed pills or giving the wrong dosage are valid concerns.

Here are some suggestions:

- Learn about each medication before administering. Make sure you know exactly what each pill is for and the possible side effects.
- Clearly explain exactly what each pill is for. Tell the person with Alzheimer's why and how they need to take it.
- Keep good records of each medication.

Make note of dosage and frequency.

- Organize medications. Store them safely out of reach in a locked cabinet or drawer.

- Develop a routine. Giving medications in a specific way at specific times can help reduce conflicts. But if the person doesn't want to take it at a particular moment, try again later.

- Make the task as easy as possible. Ask your pharmacist for liquid, which may be easier to give than a pill, or ask if you can crush the pill and put it in food. (No pill or tablet should be crushed without first consulting your physician or pharmacist).

## Tips for making mealtime easier

Mealtime can be a challenge for an individual with Alzheimer's as well as their caregiver. Here are suggestions to help make mealtime easier.

Set aside at least an hour for each meal. Don't rush the person through it.

Make sure the person is seated comfortably, but up right. Keep the person sitting in that position for at least 30 minutes after eating.

Prepare soft foods that are easy to chew and swallow. Eating may become difficult, so food may need to be mashed or pureed.

Thicken drinks with gelatin or cornstarch to reduce the risk of choking.

Get training on using the Heimlich maneuver. A person may be more prone to choking as Alzheimer's progresses.

Contact a doctor to have weight loss evaluated. Significant weight loss could be a sign of malnutrition.

Make mealtimes calm and comfortable. Serve meals in quiet surroundings, away from the television and other distractions. Keep the table setting simple, using only the utensils needed for the meal. Avoid placing items on the table that might distract or confuse the person.

Be flexible to food preferences. It is possible the person may suddenly develop certain food preferences or reject foods he or she may have liked in the past.

Encourage independence. Make the most of the person's abilities. Allow the person to eat from a bowl instead of a plate, with a spoon instead of a fork or even with his or her hands, if it's easier.

## Music can help caregivers hit the right note

Caregivers sometimes struggle to relate to a loved one with Alzheimer's. Music is one way to connect.

"People with Alzheimer's often respond to music when they respond to nothing else," Suzanne Hanser, chair of music therapy at Berklee College of Music in Boston, told Time magazine.

Music can help with memory recall and reminiscing and positive changes in mood and emotions. It can also help the caregiver and person with Alzheimer's reduce anxiety and stress.

When you use music to interact with Alzheimer's, be sure to:

- Identify music that's familiar and enjoyable to the listener.
- Use live music, tapes or CDs rather than radio programs with commercials.
- Use music to create the mood you want.
- Use photographs along with music to help stir memories.
- Encourage clapping or dancing with the music.
- Eliminate competing noises by shutting windows and doors and turning off the television.

For more information on music therapy, visit the American Music Therapy Association's Web Site: [www.musictherapy.org](http://www.musictherapy.org)

## Caregiver Tips for Holidays

Warn people about difficult or unsafe gifts. Advise people not to bring dangerous tools or instruments, utensils, challenging board games, complicated electronic equipment or pets.

Ask for help and support. Develop a bulletin board for listing tasks & responsibilities. If someone asks "What can I do to help?" you can respond with a specific idea.