

## Why I Walk to End Alzheimer's

Thousands of Michigan residents will unite to reclaim the future for millions at the Alzheimer's Association's **Walk to End Alzheimer's**. Held in 12 communities throughout the Greater Michigan Chapter, Walk to End Alzheimer's is the nation's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support and research. You can register as an individual walker, a team, or become a team captain and recruit friends, family and co-workers to participate.

In 2009, Sarah Kommer of Grand Rapids registered to participate in the Walk for the first time. 2 years later she is now co-chairing their Walk to End Alzheimer's and wants to engage everyone she can in this cause. Her story is similar to many others:

I remember very clearly the day my mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. I was 26 years old and my life up to that moment had been wrought with the stresses of a typical twenty-something.

*My life was so simple...*

Reality swiftly set in the exact moment we learned about mom's disease. The family had noticed that mom had been forgetting things recently, but my "busy life" kept me from realizing just how much she had changed.

Four years have now passed. Gone is her sharp wit, and ability to whip up dinner from scratch. My mother is still the sweet woman she's always been - but this is not my mother of 4 years ago, or even 4 months ago and this breaks my heart every day.

When the opportunity presented itself to raise money for the Alzheimer's Association, I knew I had to be involved. But, I'm often asked WHY I walk to end Alzheimer's disease.

My answer is simple: I walk for my mother, my father and for all the caretakers who feel helpless and don't know how to deal with this overwhelming stress. I walk for my siblings, my family, and all who struggle to understand the science and research behind the disease, while facing our own feelings of sadness, worry and guilt.

Donate now. Walk now. Be involved. Share this message. I need everyone I can fit in my corner to help me punch back at this heart-wrenching disease!

**Join the fight and help put an end to the Nation's 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death.**

**Ending Alzheimer's begins with you!**



## Inside The Issue:

2

• From the President  
• Grant Support

3

Spotlight on Young-Onset

4

Be Involved

5

Programs & Features

6

Something to Think About

7

Education & Research

8

• Board Listing • 10 warning signs help with early detection of Alzheimer's

## 2011 Walk to End Alzheimer's

### Central Michigan

Saginaw- September 10  
Grand Blanc- September 17  
Isabella County- September 17  
Midland- September 24

### Detroit Metro

Detroit Zoo- August 27

### Northern Michigan

Alpena- September 17  
Traverse City- October 1  
Gaylord- November 12  
*Community Walks:*  
Emmet County- August 27  
Wexford County- September 24

### Upper Peninsula

Marquette- September 24  
*Community Walks*  
Sault Ste. Marie- August 11  
Escanaba- August 27  
Gwinn- September 10  
Houghton- September 10  
Munising- September 10  
Manistique- September 17

### West Michigan

Holland- August 27  
Grand Rapids- September 17  
*Community Walk:*  
Montcalm County- September 10

## SEE WALK BROCHURE INSIDE

## We're Celebrating 30 Years!

In 2011 - the Alzheimer's Association-Greater Michigan Chapter celebrates the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of incorporation as a non-profit voluntary health care organization in the state of Michigan. In 1981, we began as the Detroit Area Chapter, servicing Alzheimer's patients and their families in the Tri-County area. 20+ years later the chapter merged with 5 others throughout the state, becoming the Greater Michigan Chapter, allowing us to provide services to 75% of the counties in Michigan.

We are proud that we have some of the most extensive and expansive programs in the nation for our Michigan residents. With 2 Respite Day Programs, trained social workers, creative support groups, exciting and informative workshops, innovative medical collaborations and an army of volunteers, we are among the top Chapters responding to the needs of those living with Alzheimer's.

**Help us celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary** - become involved in a fundraiser, seek out our programs and services to help you through the maze of Alzheimer's, become an Advocate, give tributes in memory of or in honor of the people in your life... The list goes on, and there's no better time than now!

## From the President

Dear Friends,

The spotlight of this issue is Younger-Onset Alzheimer's. There is no better way to discuss and honor this subject than by sharing a letter I recently received from an 11-year-old-girl. The letter was addressed to: "A doctor trying to find a cure for Alzheimer's."



Dear Alzheimer Association,  
I would like to Donate \$25 to  
find a cure for Alzheimers. See  
My dad has Alzheimers and  
he has early on Alzheimers  
and I want you to find a cure  
for that so my dad can remember  
me. Thank you so much  
for trying.

from  
Hannah

A check for \$25, her babysitting money, was enclosed. Her father is only 48, and was diagnosed at age 45. The letter reminds us once again why we do what we do, and why we **must** find a cure so that Hannah, and other children like her, will never have to write a letter like this again.

Dian Wilkins  
President/CEO  
Greater Michigan Chapter

## Current Grant Support

In addition to the recent grant awards listed, the following funding sources also currently provide support for the programs and services provided by the GMC:

Area Agency on Aging 1-B • Area Agency on Aging of West Michigan • Burton Fraternal Order of Eagles #3814 • City of Detroit/Neighborhood Opportunity Fund • Clarence and Jack Himmel Foundation • County of Alpena • DeRoy Testamentary Foundation • Detroit Area Agency on Aging • Hougen Foundation • Kiwanis of Marquette • Pathways Community Mental Health • Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation • Rotary Charities • United Way • UPCAP (UPAAA) • Valley Area Agency on Aging

## Wish List

If you have any of the following items, please call the Southfield office at 248.351.0280.

- In-view projector, CD/tape player
- Art supplies for Early Stage Club - - paints, disposable cameras, sketch pads
- A breadmaker, board games, large crockpot
- A rolling cart to transport literature and video equipment
- A briefcase that locks

## DONATE YOUR CAR TO



- The only car donation program in Michigan offering Fair Market Value for your car
- 100% tax deductible with free car pick-up
- Program has supported more than 2,000 community organizations
- 70% of your car's selling price goes to your favorite charity

**Call Today (313) 255-1000**  
**or donate online at [charitymotors.org](http://charitymotors.org)**

## Mission Statement

To enhance the quality of living for all persons affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementia related disorders by providing leadership, programs and services, advocacy awareness and research support.

## New Grant Support

**Area Agency on Aging Region 7** - \$10,800 for the Creating Confident Caregiver program • **Area Agency on Aging of West Michigan** - \$4,000 in additional funding to support caregiver education and the CarePartner In Touch program • **Detroit Wayne Community Mental Health Authority** - \$104,951 to support the Comstock Adult Day Program • **Metlife** - \$9,829 to support the pilot Early Stage Social Club • **Metro Health Foundation** - \$10,000 to support the Nancy and James Grosfeld Center, a collaborative program with Henry Ford Health System • **Negaunee Area Community Foundation** - \$500 to support the Wraparound Program • **United Way - Cheboygan** - \$625 to support caregiver services in Cheboygan County • **United Way - Delta** - \$3,000 to support caregiver education and support in Delta County • **United Way - Mecosta Osceola** - \$500 to support caregiver services in Mecosta and Osceola counties • **United Way - Sanilac County** - \$3,000 to support caregiver education and respite care in Sanilac County.



Invest in a world without Alzheimer's.  
And discover the financial benefits  
you'll get in return.

Every significant discovery in the fight against Alzheimer's disease has occurred within the last 20 years. With continued support, one day we will achieve our goal of a world without Alzheimer's. You can make a difference in our mission through planned giving. Planned gifts allow you to make charitable contributions through your estate toward Alzheimer's research, care, and support programs, while benefiting from tax savings and steady income opportunities. To learn how to leave a legacy of support for millions of families living with this disease. **Call Marc Berke at 248.996.1044 or email [marc.berke@alz.org](mailto:marc.berke@alz.org)**



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# SPOTLIGHT ON YOUNGER-ONSET

The greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's disease is increasing age and the majority of people with Alzheimer's are 65 and older. But Alzheimer's is not just a disease of old age. Up to 5% of people with the disease have younger-onset Alzheimer's which appears in individuals in their 30's, 40's, 50's and early 60's.

## Living With Younger-Onset

In 2003, I was diagnosed with younger onset Alzheimer's. At 45, it isn't what most people expect to hear. Several years earlier my mother's sister Lois, only a few years older than me, received the same diagnosis. There was no prior history of the disease that we knew of. Within a year or two, my maternal grandmother was also diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Like many, we believed that this disease only targeted older people. Grandma was in her late 80's. Had she been the only one in the family diagnosed, it would have been upsetting, but not so surprising.

Lois did not have access to early diagnosis, medication or support. The disease progressed quickly and she died in 2005. Grandma followed in 2008. I had the advantage of early diagnosis, early access to medication, and excellent support from the Alzheimer's Association. There has been some progression: I have difficulty with simple arithmetic, rarely know what the date is, and get confused sometimes. But I continue to challenge my mind, trying to learn new things. A few days ago, I celebrated my 53<sup>rd</sup> birthday. I have learned that my attitude has a lot to do with things. A sense of humor, focus on the positives rather than the negatives, and keeping busy are key. Whether it's singing or reading poetry at a coffee house, doing volunteer work, translating, or cooking... everything I do is a challenge to the disease. Acceptance does not mean surrender!

By Bill Carey

## Persons living with Younger-Onset Alzheimer's may be eligible for 2 Government Programs

Effective 2010, persons living with Younger-Onset Alzheimer's disease may be eligible for two programs administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA): Social Security Disability (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

For **SSDI** benefits, the person must have sufficient work credit, be unable to work, and meet the disability criterion for younger-onset Alzheimer's disease. Family members may also be eligible to receive benefits under these programs based on the applicant's work record. For **SSI** benefits, the person must be aged, blind, or disabled, and have limited income and assets. While the programs are different, SSA uses the same criteria for determining whether an applicant is disabled due to younger-onset Alzheimer's disease.

Apply for SSDI benefits as soon as possible by specifying you have younger-onset Alzheimer's disease and are unable to work, as you may lose substantial benefits by waiting to apply. You will need medical documentation to prove that you have been diagnosed with younger-onset Alzheimer's.

There are 2 ways to apply - in person at your local SSA office (call Social Security first 800.772.1213 to know what forms are required) or online at [socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability](http://socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability).

## Planning for the Future with Younger-Onset Alzheimer's

Everyone should plan for the future, but the need is particularly acute for those with young-onset Alzheimer's disease. These individuals are much more likely to be employed, supporting minor children, reliant on employer-sponsored insurance and not have long-term health insurance or financial plans in place.

### Important Steps for Planning for the Future:

- Meet with a certified elder law attorney to discuss creating a durable Power of Attorney for your health care and finances, and set up a will, trust, and proper management of your assets to maximize eligibility for assistance programs.
- Research long-term care insurance options.
- Review employer-provided or personal disability insurance policies.
- Organize and coordinate legal documents and other important information and review them with a family member or friend you trust.
- Discuss your personal preferences for health care and care giving with those you love. One's wishes are more likely to be honored when friends and family are able to discuss them with the individual before they are required to act.
- Research assistance programs and agencies such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Area Agency on Aging, and the Veteran's Aid and Attendance Benefit.

## Younger-Onset Support Group

This group provides a welcoming and secure environment for families and individuals experiencing the early stages of younger-onset memory loss. Participants will focus on issues affecting those younger than 65 who are experiencing memory loss. Please join us at:

### Bloomfield Township Senior Services

4315 Andover Rd., Bloomfield Hills

3rd Wednesday of every month 5:30-7:00 pm

Pre-registration required. Please contact:

The Harry L. Nelson Helpline 800.272.3900



# BE INVOLVED

## Golf Outing supports Alzheimer's

The Financial and Estate Planning Council of Metro Detroit hosted its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing on May 23 at Wabek Country Club in West Bloomfield, with proceeds benefiting the Alzheimer's Association. Over 100 golfers braved stormy weather, while more than 150 people attended dinner and a presentation by the Alzheimer's Association on "Know the 10 Warning Signs – Early Detection Matters."

## Race for Your Memories

Rainy weather didn't stop our dedicated supporters from coming out for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Race for Your Memories. Over 300 runners and walkers came together at Kensington Metropark on Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup> to support the Alzheimer's Association. Through the dedication of our participants and volunteers, Race for Your Memories raised nearly \$35,000.

## Mind Over Matter Bike Ride

Grab your bike and peddle your way to Mind Over Matter, a cycling event tribute to Karl T. David. All ages and riding abilities welcome - you can register for a 5, 25, or 40 mile ride. Ride takes place at Metro Beach in Harrison Township on Saturday, August 6, 2011 at 8:00 am. **Register online at [mindovermatteralz.com](http://mindovermatteralz.com)** or contact Kristine Korpala at [kristine@mindovermatteralz.com](mailto:kristine@mindovermatteralz.com).



## Bankers Life & Casualty

Bankers Life & Casualty held its annual Forget Me Not Days<sup>®</sup> in May. Forget Me Not Days<sup>®</sup> is a nationwide fundraising event benefiting local chapters of the Alzheimer's Association. Participants collect donations in exchange for a packet of Forget-Me-Not flower seeds to raise funds and awareness for Alzheimer's. Throughout Michigan, Bankers Life and Casualty raised over \$28,600 this year, which they have directed to our Walk to End Alzheimer's.

## It's the Thought that Counts!

Show someone you care by making a donation to the Alzheimer's Association in their name - in honor of a marriage, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, anniversary, promotion or any special occasion. It's so easy - and we'll let them know about your thoughtful donation. It's a gift that acknowledges the recipient and also serves to help people in need. Now, that's a good thought!

## Non-Stop Laughs at comedySLAM

June 10, 2011 brought a new level of hilarious fund-raising entertainment to the Southfield Westin. The crowd of 200 took the challenge "Don't Forget to Laugh" to heart as Joe Nipote (a Southfield native), accomplished actor and Las Vegas comedian, organized a fantastic review of professional standup comedians including JJ "Good Times" Jimmie Walker, Jeff Hobson and Mike Green - all well-known on the comedy circuit.

Thanks so much to all of our sponsors and to Joe Nipote for bringing this event to us! We really do believe that laughter is the best medicine!

## VIVE LA DIFFÉRENCE! MOULIN ROUGE *Chocolate Jubilee*

### SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY OCTOBER 29, 2011  
AT THE TRÈS CHIC MGM GRAND BALLROOM  
1777 THIRD STREET, DETROIT

#### PRE-GLOW 6:30PM

An exclusive cabaret featuring cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and a can-can revue  
{For donors of \$2,500 and up}

#### DINNER 7:30PM

Magic, mimes, musique and a feast gastronomique  
{Tickets start at \$200 per person}

CHOCOLATE FÊTE 9PM - MIDNIGHT  
Signature cocktails, DJ, dancing and chocolats galore  
{\$75 per person}

Honorary Chairs: Danialle and Peter Karmanos, Jr.  
Event Chair: Lil Erdeljan  
Event Co-Chairs: Amyre Makupson and Richard Astrein

For more information call 248-351-0280 or go to [www.alz.org/gmc](http://www.alz.org/gmc)

## SAVE THE DATE!

World Alzheimer's Day is September 21st and the global theme for this year is "Faces of Dementia"

The metro-Detroit region is hosting its annual free World Alzheimer's Day caregiver conference at Lawrence Tech University in Southfield in the morning.

Please check our website [www.alz.org/gmc](http://www.alz.org/gmc) or call our toll-free Helpline (800) 272-3900 for more info.

This event is sponsored by Arden Courts.

# PROGRAMS & FEATURES

## Introducing the Early Stage Social Club!

Are you living in the early stages of memory loss and looking for a creative way to connect with others? The Alzheimer's Association Greater Michigan Chapter is proud to announce the launch of the Early Stage Social Club!! The Social Club is a recreational program in which a variety of different activities are planned for individuals with early stage memory loss. Activities include creative writing, photography, Tai Chi, yoga, donation projects for individuals in need, and much more. This club is a great way to get to know others in the community while engaging in opportunities that promote social and cognitive well-being.

The Club will meet weekly for 4 weeks. Pre-registration and assessment are required to determine eligibility for the program. Please call our Harry L Nelson Helpline at 800.272.3900 for more information on the next available 4-week workshop and to schedule an assessment!

Lisa Gardner

[lisa.gardner@alz.org](mailto:lisa.gardner@alz.org)

## Tai Chi Offers Benefits for those with Alzheimer's

By Denise Murray, ACSM CPT Yoga/  
Tai Chi Instructor

The fog of dementia puts individuals living with Alzheimer's disease (AD) at high risk of falling and injury caused by distraction and disorientation. Balance and functional stability are very important for individuals living with AD in preventing injuries and maintaining general health.

When I first began teaching tai chi at the Alzheimer's Association – GMC Adult Day Program, the participants did not find tai chi engaging. However, once I broke down tai chi movements into small easy-to-learn segments using the Step Wise Method for teaching tai chi, I was able to gain their attention. Understanding how practicing a single tai chi movement segment can improve muscle strength and efficiency, I relied on repetition. The response was immediate. Repetition allows the participants to retain movement patterns with minimal prompting. The classes are generally taught seated.

Using the Step Wise Method and practicing with repetition, individuals with AD are able to engage in a challenging tai chi activity that is good for fall and injury prevention. Most importantly, it is an activity that does not remind them of their shortcomings or leave them feeling defeated, and that is the best gift we can give someone living with Alzheimer's disease.



## Care Counselor Corner now available on Facebook

The Alzheimer's Association – GMC has welcomed a new feature to our Facebook page – The Care Counselor Corner!

You can find Care Counselor Corner under the Discussion section on our Facebook page. The column addresses common caregiver issues and allows readers to post feedback, questions and suggestions for future topics. We welcome your comments on grief and loss, challenges around driving and the need for respite.

**Visit us on Facebook at Alzheimer's Association - Greater Michigan Chapter and become part of our following!**

## Creating Confident Caregivers Help is available for families caring for a family member with dementia

*Free Workshops to be offered at various locations throughout Michigan*  
The Alzheimer's Association – Greater Michigan Chapter is partnering with the Area Agencies on Aging to offer an educational training program for families who are caring for a loved one with a dementia related illness, such as Alzheimer's, a closed head injury, or dementia due to stroke. The **Creating Confident Caregivers (CCC) Training Program** has been proven to reduce caregiver stress by empowering care givers with useful tools and information.

"Family caregivers are under a tremendous amount of stress, managing their loved one's care and safety, dealing with their own feelings of sadness, loss and disappointment and juggling increased responsibilities such as managing finances, housekeeping and communicating with family members," said Tina Abbate Marzolf, GMC Board Member and CEO of the Area Agency on Aging 1-B. "The Creating Confident Caregivers Program is an opportunity for caregivers to take a step back from these demands and learn about the progression of dementia, how it impacts their loved one, strategies to manage difficult behaviors and how to manage their own well-being."

This program is supported, in part, by the U.S. Administration on Aging through its Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States, the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, the Area Agencies on Aging, and the Alzheimer's Association – GMC.

Free respite care will be provided for participants. To find a program near you – call 800.272.3900 or go to [alz.org/gmc](http://alz.org/gmc).

## New participants can receive one free 1/2 day at Sakwa Day Program

The Rebecca and Gary Sakwa Adult Day Program in Southfield is currently offering up to 4 hours of free respite care for new enrollees. Pre-screening is required.

The Sakwa Day Program offers a wide variety of activities for those with memory loss including music therapy, the Arthritis Foundation's Tai Chi program, art therapy, dance, bowling, bingo, reminiscence activities, trivia and many other fun individual and group activities. Please call us at 800.272.3900 to enroll today!

# SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

## My Year as an Advocate for Alzheimer's Disease

By Nancy J. Fearon

My tenure with the National Early Stage Advisory Group of the Alzheimer's Association has ended.

It has been a year of informing people about Alzheimer's disease (AD). This disease is quite unique, I believe, from all others. It is misunderstood, sometimes ridiculed, and rarely discussed. It has truly been a pleasure and a privilege to speak to people eager to understand and share this knowledge with others.

My husband, Bob, and I have spoken to both high school students and college educated adults. Everyone has been interested and curious and eager to talk with us following our presentations. Typically, they thank us for our honesty, sincerity and information.

My year as a member on the National Early Stage Advisory Group ended with the annual forum that was held in Washington D.C. On the final day of the forum, the participants fanned out over Capitol Hill to meet with their Senators and Representatives. More than 600 people attended this forum, with every state represented. It was heartwarming to listen to the stories of those with memory loss and their care partners. AD can strike at any age. One participant's husband was diagnosed at the age of 29. Yes, 29!

While Bob and I will continue our journey, we are comforted to know that dedicated individuals at the national, state and local levels are working hard to find a cure for a disease that is the sixth leading cause of death in this country. Left unchecked, this disease will cost almost one trillion dollars by mid-century – a cost that could bankrupt the United States.

But, let's be optimistic. We, with our care partners and families, can lead the charge in educating the world on what Alzheimer's is, and is not. As everyone learns all of the facts, they will support our cause in eradicating this disease as they have done in supporting research for other major diseases like cancer and heart disease. **We can do it!**

## Launching the Alzheimer's Activity Blog

A phrase often heard in regard to brain health is "use it or lose it." While there is ongoing debate as to how true that really may be, staying active is certainly important for people in all stages of Alzheimer's disease to foster positive mood, help people sleep and prevent boredom.

Yet, knowing what to do at each stage of the disease to achieve these goals can be confusing. That's where we can help. Check out our new blog, [alzheimersactivities.wordpress.com](http://alzheimersactivities.wordpress.com) to find great suggestions for things to do with individuals in mild, moderate and late stages of Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. You can search by disease stage or type of activity to find something for everyone! The blog will be updated twice weekly, so check in often for new ideas.

## Down Syndrome and Younger-Onset Alzheimer's Disease

Did you know that the incidence of Alzheimer's disease in adults with Down syndrome is estimated to be 3 to 5 times greater than in the general population? Even more startling is the increased prevalence in those younger than 65. More than 25% of those under age 65 with Down's Syndrome are diagnosed with young-onset Alzheimer's, compared to only 5% in the general population under age 65.

If you, or someone you know is caring for an individual with Down syndrome, and you've noticed cognitive changes, have them evaluated for Alzheimer's disease by a qualified neurologist.

## A Grandson's Perspective

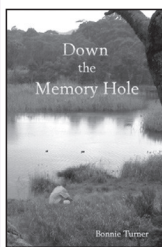
Below is a poem written by James Kathrein. James poetry was inspired by his grandfather, Dave, who had Alzheimer's disease.

*the slow Flow of life's River,  
the web of times Echo,  
a skipped memory –  
equaled in mornings of mine,  
the flow - Erodes - for you to find,  
a feeling of the memory – Lost of mine,  
winding around the continuous circle,  
webbings of Interconnected Time,  
was it a light of bearing?  
or a dark Veil drawn?  
a skipped memory  
echoed in ripples,  
equaled and erosion,  
mourned in loss,  
continually interconnected,  
forever in time,  
find you now this memory of mine –*



From the Alzheimer's

Media Center



## Down the Memory Hole

by Bonnie Turner

His summer vacation is ruined when 12-year-old Buzz Collins shares his room and emotional space with his grandfather, who has Alzheimer's disease, and his parents forbid him to associate with his best friend, Mitch. The thought of giving up his friendship is bad enough. But, how can he relate to someone who can't remember his name, wears adult diapers, thinks dog biscuits are real cookies and could die in the night – scaring Buzz right out of puberty?

Buzz thinks Alzheimer's is caused by a traumatic event, such as the train accident that killed Grandpa's brother Barkley in childhood. The situation turns deadly when Buzz and Mitch—whose friendship Buzz refuses to end—attempt to cure Grandpa of Alzheimer's disease by recreating the train accident on a hot summer day.

# EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

## Education Program helps those living with Alzheimer's disease

The diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease is life-changing and leads to many questions. What will this mean for me and my family? How do I plan for the future? Where can I get the help I need?

**Living with Alzheimer's: For People with Alzheimer's** is an interactive three-part program where you will have a chance to hear from others who have been where you are. We will discuss what you need to know, what you need to plan and what you can do to navigate this chapter of your life.

**This program will cover information for people with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.**

Topics covered will include:

- Understanding Alzheimer's disease and memory loss
- Partnering with your medical team
- Effective communication and telling others about the diagnosis
- Coping with changes and making decisions
- Daily strategies and safety issues
- Opportunities for supporting research
- Resources for people with early-stage Alzheimer's disease

For more information on **Living with Alzheimer's: For People with Alzheimer's** call 800.272.3900 or visit our website [www.alz.org/gmc](http://www.alz.org/gmc)

## Study Finds Memantine Ineffective for Mild Alzheimer's

A drug commonly prescribed for Alzheimer's disease, memantine (Namenda), appears to be ineffective in treating the mild stage of the disease. While some studies suggest the drug is effective in treating moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease, "in mild Alzheimer's disease there is a lack of evidence that it works," said lead researcher Dr. Lon S. Schneider, at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine.

Memantine is approved by the FDA for use in patients with moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease but it is often prescribed off-label for use in patients with mild Alzheimer's disease.

Memantine can help patients with severe Alzheimer's disease think more clearly and perform daily activities more easily, but like other Alzheimer's drugs, it is not a cure and does not stop progression of the disease. Perhaps we should be more careful about using it in milder-stage Alzheimer's patients with respect to efficacy," said Schneider.

## Spring Conference Kudos

Thank you to our generous sponsors for supporting the annual Spring Caregiver Conference at Shriners Conference Center on April 26.

*BrightStar Care • Comfort Keepers • Diversified Home Health Care  
Institute of Gerontology at Wayne State • Odyssey Hospice • Senior Helpers*

Next up: **SAVE THE DATE - NOVEMBER 1, 2011** for the Caregiver Conference in honor of **National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month**, to be held at Shriners Conference Center in Southfield. Contact: [karensarmir@alz.org](mailto:karensarmir@alz.org)

## Study Seeking Participants

Social work student Cyndi Howland-Scafe, is exploring caregivers' experiences with the death of a family member from a dementia-related diagnosis.

- Did you provide care to a family member age 65 or older who died from dementia within the past 6-18 months?

If so, would you be willing to share your experiences with Cyndi? To participate in this study, Cyndi will meet with you at your home or other convenient location for a 60-90 minute interview. It is hoped that the results of this study will help professionals better understand the needs of family members caring for a loved one at the end of life and how to support them.

For more information or to volunteer please contact:

**Cyndi Hovland-Scafe • 608.289.7518 • [chovsca@aol.com](mailto:chovsca@aol.com)**

## Public Policy – The HOPE Act

The *Health Outcomes, Planning, and Education (HOPE) for Alzheimer's Act (S. 738/H.R. 1386)*, was been reintroduced in Congress by Senator Stabenow. Passage of this bipartisan legislation will help doctors detect Alzheimer's disease earlier in their patients, and ensure patients and families are better equipped with knowledge of treatment options and support programs available to them.



Senator Stabenow (D-MI), along with our advocates, reintroduces the **HOPE Act** in April 2011.

## Greater Michigan Chapter Educational Workshops

Call 800.272.3900, visit our website at [alz.org/gmc](http://alz.org/gmc) or contact your local office to learn more about programs in your area.

- ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE – KNOW THE 10 SIGNS: EARLY DETECTION MATTERS
- COMBATING CAREGIVER STRESS
- COMMUNICATION TIPS AND TECHNIQUES
- THE BASICS: MEMORY LOSS, DEMENTIA AND ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE
- LEGAL AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS
- RESEARCH AND MEDICAL UPDATES
- UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIORS
- PARTNERING WITH YOUR DOCTOR

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**10 WARNING SIGNS HELP WITH EARLY DETECTION OF ALZHEIMER'S**

For most of us, it may be difficult to know the difference between age-related changes and the first signs of Alzheimer's.

**Know the 10 Signs: Early Detection Matters**, is the cornerstone of the Alzheimer's Association's national early detection campaign. The recently revised warning signs are a key tool in promoting recognition of common changes that may facilitate early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another dementia. Early detection, diagnosis and intervention are vital because they provide the best opportunities for treatment, support and planning for the future.

**THE 10 WARNING SIGNS ARE:**

- Memory changes that disrupt daily life
- Challenges in planning or solving problems
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Confusion with time or place
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
- New problems with words in speaking or writing
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
- Decreased or poor judgment
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood and personality

For more information about the updated 10 warning signs and early detection and diagnosis or to find a workshop in your area, call 800.272.3900 or visit [www.alz.org/gmc](http://www.alz.org/gmc)