

Candlelight Tribute November 2008

As we remember a loved one who has passed on or one who continues to live with Alzheimer's or a related dementia, we often light a candle as a memorial to a loved one or to symbolize the gift of life. As Alzheimer communities plan for a time of remembering, we offer the following suggestions to help plan the Candlelight Tribute.

The following suggestions are for the candle lighting part of the program (see Timeline for Candle Lighting part of program).

1. Decide what you will to do for this part of the program before gathering supplies.



- How will you set up the display?
- Will you have the program inside or outside?
- What supplies are needed for your arrangement?

2. Inform the families about this tribute well in advance (Newsletter and/or letter of invitation). Involve the families in the effort. For example, let your families know what supplies you will need or if you would like assistance in planning the ceremony. Perhaps families will donate some or all of the items needed or volunteer to do the shopping to gather the supplies or volunteer to help plan the tribute for your community.

3. Supplies—which ones you need will depend upon what you choose to do



- Table for candle display—e.g., table in resident dining area
- White tablecloth—measure the table to determine the size needed (cloth preferred, but plastic or paper will serve the purpose)
- 1 8-10 inch non-scented pillar candle

- Vase for flowers if you choose this instead of a candle at the center of the display
- Flowers—if you choose the vase instead of the candle (fresh flowers such as gladiolas or carnations)
- Votive candle holders—one for each family that will be attending plus some extras
 - The candleholders should be clear so that the lavender candle will be visible.
 - Triangular candleholders fit together nicely to form a circle.
 - Other shapes will serve the purpose.
- Votive candles (lavender)—one per holder
- Lighter—butane fireplace type (1 needed and spare suggested)
- 3x5 cards (lavender or white)—1 package of 100 should be more than enough
- Several markers for writing names on the 3x5 cards
- Purple ribbon—make loops like the ones for breast cancer and other causes
 - Approximately 1/2 to 5/8 inches wide
 - Approximately 6-7 inches of ribbon per loop
 - 1 roll (12 yds) yields approximately 60 loops
- Small glue gun and several sticks of glue (depends on how you make loops)
- Straight pins
- Candlesnuffer
- Bowl/basket for ribbons
- 2-3 6-8 inch candles—use as “lighters” for the votive candles
- 2-3 White paper or plastic cups (bathroom size)—use as candle holders

4. Information about gathering supplies.

- Explain why you are purchasing the items and ask if the store will give some kind of discount. The number you are purchasing may be small, and the store manager may not give you a discount. There is no harm in asking.
- Wal-Mart stocks or will order the triangular holders. They cost approximately \$1 each and are manufactured by Libby. Wal-Mart gave us 30 holders instead of a discount when we purchased 200 for the 2007 event. Other stores may also sell these votive

candleholders. There is no requirement that the holders be triangular.

- Bed Bath & Beyond is one place to locate lavender candles. In 2007 we used votive candles manufactured by the Yankee Candle Co.; the fragrance was Lilac Blossom. We used this candle because it was a good match for the color we wanted and the scent was not overpowering. BB&B gave us a 25% discount because we were purchasing 200 candles. Grocery stores and/or “dollar” stores often have lavender candles for under \$1 each. If you are not purchasing large quantities, this may be a better option.
- After purchasing the supplies, you will need to remove price stickers and wrappers from the candles and candleholders. You may want to wash the candleholders.
- Purple ribbon—look for ribbon at the craft stores such as Hobby Lobby and Michael’s. In 2007 we found the ribbon on sale for 50% off at Hobby Lobby.

5. Have purple looped ribbons available for guests to wear.

- You will need approximately 6-7 inches of ribbon for each loop. Ribbon should be approximately 1/2 to 5/8 inches wide. In 2007 we found a nice shade of purple ribbon at Hobby Lobby. Avoid the blackish purple; go with a lighter shade. Most likely the ribbon will not match the candles.
- Use a glue gun to secure the loop at the place of overlap. Have pins available or put a pin through each ribbon in advance. Double-sided tape doesn’t usually adhere to fabric satisfactorily; some double-sided tape adheres permanently. Read the label.
- You may prefer to cut and loop the ribbon and then secure it with a pin—that is, not to use a glue gun.
- Encourage people to wear these ribbons during the month of November, Alzheimer’s Awareness Month.

6. Set up a candlelight display before guests arrive—about 1-1 ½ hours ahead of time.



- Place a white cloth on the display table.
- Surround a white pillar candle with votive candleholders and candles. You may want to have some kind of base to elevate this candle about the height of the votive candleholders.
 - Use an 8-10 inch non-scented, white (or lavender) pillar candle. Light this candle shortly before guests are scheduled to begin arriving.
 - Make a circle (or several concentric circles) of the

votive candleholders around the base of the pillar candle. Use lavender votive candles.

- Be sure to have one candle for every family that plans to attend plus a few extras. After the ceremony you might want to offer a candleholder with a candle to the family.
- Be sure to have one or two lighters (fireplace type).
- Instead of butane lighter, make lighters by using 2-3 candles (6-8 inches) that have been pushed through the bottoms of 2-3 paper or plastic cups. This will create a candle and holder similar to the ones that are often used in candlelight worship services.
 - Those lighting the votive candles can get the light from the central (pillar) candle and then light the votive.
 - Blow out the candle so that the next person can take the light from the center candle and light the votive.
- Use a candlesnuffer to extinguish the flames at the end of the program.

7. Additional comments regarding the display



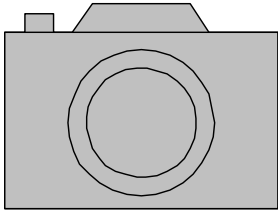
- Instead of having a candle at the center of the display, place an attractive vase with several long-stemmed fresh flowers—e.g., gladiolas or carnations.
 - Arrange the candleholders in a circle(s) around the vase.
 - If you choose to have flowers at the center of the candle display, you will need butane lighter.
- If you decide to have flowers at the center, you might consider having someone place a flower in the vase as each name is read.
 - So that the vase won't look bare for most of the program, place a few flowers in it when you set up the display.
 - If your program is near November 11, place red and white carnations in the vase as the names are read.

8. As guests arrive...



- Greet the guests
- Encourage guests to wear a purple ribbon (have bowl/basket near entrance)
- Ask guests to write the name(s) of their loved one(s) on one of the 3x5 cards— one name per card. Whoever will be reading the names needs to be at the table where people write the names on the cards so that they can verify the pronunciation.
 - If you do not plan to have the candle lighting to be an official part of the program, now is the time to allow the guests to light a candle(s) for their loved one(s).
 - Direct guests to the refreshment area and give them some idea of when the program will begin.

9. At some time during the program...



- Someone will read the names that have been printed on the 3x5 cards. You may also want to include the names of anyone who lived in the community and passed away during the last year even if the family is not present.
- At the end of the program, you may invite each family to take a candleholder, or you may want to keep these items for your 2009 program.
- Take plenty of photos
- If you used a vase with flowers for each name that was read, you could invite each family to take one of the flowers.