

Are You Part of the **MOVE** to End Alzheimer's?

Submitted By Micah Evans, Development Director

As Americans become increasingly aware of the toll Alzheimer's disease is taking, more families than ever are calling for information, assistance, and education. Scarcely a day goes by where the media doesn't have a new story about families affected by Alzheimer's or the latest research, and caregivers are responding with new requests for help and hope.

It is heartening to families whose loved ones are affected by this disease to know some of the good things happening. In the past months, legislation was signed in Nebraska and Iowa, requiring a certain amount of training for any skilled caregiver who works with a person with dementia. Nebraska and Iowa have also enacted Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Acts, making it easier for caregivers to address legal issues surrounding guardianship when crossing state lines.

The work has only just begun, and we need your help to continue programs that directly support our loved ones. I urge you to start a **Memory Walk** team today. By walking to end Alzheimer's, we are raising valuable funds that continue to support not just advocacy, but community education, support groups, library resources, and the many programs we offer to help those whose lives have been effected by dementia.

The Memory Walk is the biggest event of the year. It is our signature event, and each year, it continues to grow as more families get involved. Will you join the **MOVE** to end Alzheimer's by **forming a team and walking this year?** There is a Memory Walk in your community, and your support and your donations are more important than ever. Please join us. **Please walk to end Alzheimer's.**



They are walking to end Alzheimer's. Are you?

To get involved, to form your team, to participate, or to support the Memory Walk through your donations, please call Micah Evans at 402.502.4301, e-mail at mevans@midlandsalz.org, or visit <http://www.alz.org/midlands>.

Can Alzheimer's Disease be Prevented?

By William J. Burke, MD, member of Midlands Chapter Medical Scientific Panel

Alzheimer's disease is often considered a disease of old age. Indeed, the rate of this dementia doubles every five years starting at age 60. However, recent studies using new ways of imaging the brain suggest that the actual onset of the disorder may occur much earlier. One of the key changes in Alzheimer's disease is the accumulation of a protein called beta-amyloid ("amyloid" for short) in the brain. Exciting new technologies are now allowing researchers to visualize amyloid in the brain of living persons. Studies using this new technology have led to the particularly surprising finding that up to a third of cognitively normal, older adults have considerable amyloid in their brains. There is a growing consensus that these individuals have "pre-Alzheimer's disease" and that with sufficient age, they will develop the clinical disease. Amyloid has been found not only in the elderly but also in the children of those at high genetic risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.



The implication that the disease process may begin years, even decades, before the disease declares itself has led to an increased emphasis on early detection, and in particular, on prevention of the illness.

In April 2010, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) sponsored a two and a half day summit held in Washington, DC. The purpose of this conference was to summarize all the available evidence regarding whether Alzheimer's disease and cognitive decline can be prevented. During the conference, experts summarized evidence on a number of key questions and have now published a draft consensus statement (<http://consensus.nih.gov/2010/alz.htm>). All presentations from the conference are freely available at the same site via webcast.

The overarching question was: What factors are associated with a reduction of risk for Alzheimer's disease? Importantly, a wide variety of possible preventive factors were considered, including: nutritional supplements, herbal preparations, dietary factors, prescription or nonprescription drugs, social or economic factors, medical conditions, toxins, and environmental exposures. The bottom line was that "there is currently no evidence considered to be of even moderate scientific quality supporting the association of any modifiable factor with reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease."

Some factors that had weak evidence to support a role in prevention were recognized. These included adequate levels of folic acid, adherence to a diet low in saturated fats and high in fruits and vegetables, use of statins, light to moderate use of alcohol, more years of education, higher levels of cognitive engagement, and participation in physical activities. All of these factors have been reported to be associated with reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease. Certain compounds were singled out for which there is NO consistent evidence to suggest any role in prevention, including: ginkgo biloba, beta-carotene, flavinoids, multivitamins, and vitamins B12, C, and E.

The authors did recognize some limited evidence suggesting that certain factors increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease e.g. ApoE gene variation, diabetes mellitus, current smoking, and depression.

Throughout this review, the authors repeatedly emphasized that there is often very little data on which to draw conclusions and that the quality of the evidence is typically low. The final recommendation of the report was that there is an urgent need for conducting rigorous, state-of-the-art, methodologically sound research to address these deficiencies.

In the meantime, one useful way to characterize this information is to think of it in terms of cardiovascular health. We have learned an enormous amount about how to prevent and reduce the risks of heart disease based on control of blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking cessation and exercise. It seems increasingly clear that all activities contributing to cardiovascular health appear to benefit brain health. While we wait for more definitive studies, we need to focus on these known modifiable risk factors. What is good for the heart is good for the brain!



Activities Enhance the Lives of Persons with Alzheimer's disease and Other Dementias

Submitted By Clayton Freeman, Program Director

We often quote Pat Callone in our presentations to caregivers when we say it is important to "Nurture What Remains" when caring for a person with Alzheimer's. A person in any stage of dementia needs assistance from a caregiver to organize the day based on personal needs, interests and abilities. Activities enhance the person's sense of dignity and self esteem by giving purpose and meaning to his or her life.

A person with dementia does not need to give up past activities and recreational interests because they have Alzheimer's. There are ways to adapt an activity so that it is appropriate to the person's ability, allowing them to still enjoy and be engaged physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Caregivers do not need to invent "special" activities; everyday tasks can become activities that keep the person busy, feel included and safe. It is important to understand when planning activities that over time, attention span and interest may wane and frustration and tolerance will change. The caregiver needs to have timing when to end an activity. For an activity to be successful it must incorporate skills and abilities that remain and "play down" the skills that can no longer be performed. It is the process, not the result that matters; what matters is that you were able to spend together, the person with dementia feels engaged and helpful, and they are doing something they enjoy. Tanya, a caregiver for her mother says, "She's happiest when we spend time together looking at family photo albums. She remembers details from 20 years ago that I've completely forgotten."

The Alzheimer's Association Midlands Chapter has activities resources available to caregivers. Please call our information and referral line at 402.502-4301 and visit with one of our care consultants on ways to incorporate activities into your daily routine.

Our brochure called [Activities for the Individual with Alzheimer's](#) is available on our [website](#).

Some daily activities to consider:

Chores: dusting, sweeping, folding laundry

Mealtimes: buttering bread, setting the table, selecting the beverage

Personal care: bathing, getting dressed

Creative: painting, playing the piano

Physical: taking a walk, playing catch, dancing

Social: having coffee, talking, playing cards, reminiscing

Spiritual: praying, singing a hymn, being in a quiet place

Spontaneous: going out to dinner, visiting friends

Caregiver Support Group Update

Submitted By Betty Chin, Program Department

The Alzheimer's Association Midlands Chapter currently has 31 Caregiver Support Groups to service 15 counties in northeast Nebraska (Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Washington, Burt, Wayne, Cedar, Cuming, Stanton, Knox), and southwest Iowa (Pottawattamie, Shelby, Mills, Harrison, Fremont).

We would like to welcome our newest group, **Edgewood Vista**, located in West Omaha. Their start date is Thursday, July 1, and will meet every 1st Thursday of the month at 2:00 pm.

In addition, we would like to welcome our recent new members. They are **Careage** of Wayne, in Wayne, NE, which meets every 2nd Thursday of the month at 4:00 pm; **The Center**, in Council Bluffs, IA, which meets every 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm; **St. Paul Lutheran Church** in Millard, which meets every 3rd Monday of the month at 1:00 pm, and every 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm; and **Maple Crest Care Center** in Benson, which meets every 3rd Thursday of the month at 5:30 pm.



Check our [Support Group](#) webpage at www.alz.org/midlands for a complete list of our established sites. We are in the process of forming three potential caregiver support groups, two in Douglas County, and one in Mills County, and you can get more information about these new support groups (or any support group) by calling the Midlands Chapter.

If you are interested in becoming a caregiver support group facilitator, or know of friends, neighbors, or family members who are interested, please contact Betty K. Chin at 402.502.4301, ext 205 or bchin@midlandsalz.org for more information.



Midlands Chapter Receives New Grants

The Alzheimer's Association Midlands Chapter is proud to announce to new grants. Chris Stewart, Respite Coordinator from the **Respite Resource Center** recently presented Duane J Gross (left to right, picture above) with a check for \$2,000. This grant will continue to help the Midlands Chapter offer respite grants to caregivers providing around-the-clock care to loved ones affected by Alzheimer's disease. Recent respite grants have supported short term overnight stays so the caregiver could visit family members out of state. Other respite grants provide in-home care so caregivers can get out of the house for shopping and errands.

The Midlands Chapter also received a \$3,000 grant from the **AseraCare Foundation** to support community education for caregivers. These programs include the ten warning signs of dementia, early detection strategies, legal and financial literacy, and understanding dementia. Hosted by the Midlands Chapter and the **Community Education Fund**, these classes allow caregivers and persons with dementia the opportunity to learn about how to find community resources.

Community education programs are a valuable part of the work of the Midlands Chapter. To support the Community Education Fund, please call Micah Evans at 402.502.4301 or e-mail him at mevans@midlandsalz.org

Midlands Chapter Celebrates 7th Annual Ride to Remember

The Alzheimer's Association Midlands Chapter hosted the **7th annual Ride to Remember** on June 5, as an estimated 150 riders helped raise thousands of dollars for programs, support groups, family consultations, and community education for the families affected by Alzheimer's disease in northeast Nebraska and southwest Iowa.

Undaunted by gray skies, over 100 riders departed from **Dillon Brothers Harley Davidson** and 20 members of Desmo Omaha, the Ducati riders club (picture above), departed from **Ducati Omaha**. The riders received a warm welcome at **Mable Rose Estates**, their first stop, where they met the residents, gave them rides, and enjoyed lunch as the guests of Mable Rose and **Hillcrest Health Systems**.



"I'd like to offer a huge thank you to all the riders and supporters of the Ride to Remember, who have come out to show their support for families whose lives have been affected by Alzheimer's. We could certainly hear them as they came through the front gates!" said Clay Freeman, program director.

After enjoying lunch, riders took a scenic ride through the Loess Hills of Iowa, ending the day at the Prestige Restaurant in Omaha, where they enjoyed dinner and silent auction items. Many bikers rode in support of their own parents, loved ones who were affected by Alzheimer's, and the Midlands Chapter programs. The

Midlands Chapter staff and board would like to thank **CLH Architects**, **Dillon Brothers Harley-Davidson**, as well as **Ducati Omaha**, **Mabel Rose Estates**, and the **Prestige Restaurant** for their sponsorship and support for the Ride. For more information about the 2011 Ride to Remember or to join the committee, contact Alisha Palagi at 402.502.4301 or by e-mail at apalagi@midlandsalz.org.



This year, more than ever, we need your participation and support at the **Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk!** Invite your friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, and members of your church or synagogue to get on the **MOVE** to end Alzheimer's disease. Participate in the Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk and join the nationwide fight against the devastating disease. Alzheimer's is an escalating health epidemic. If left unchecked, 16 million Americans will develop Alzheimer's disease by mid-century.

But there is something we can do. We can walk with a purpose to end Alzheimer's. When you walk, you raise essential funds that benefit research, education, support and care. Your support moves us closer to better treatments and a cure.

We can **MOVE** a nation to end Alzheimer's. Sign up for a Memory Walk in your community today! **Go to www.alz.org/midlands and scroll down to Memory Walk to find out more or to create or join a team.** Please call Alisha at 402.502.4301 or apalagi@midlandsalz.org for more information.

- **September 11, 2010**
Council Bluffs, IA
Mid-America Center
[Council Bluffs Walk website](#)
- **September 12, 2010**
Fremont, NE
Clemmons Park
[Fremont Walk website](#)
- **September 18, 2010**
Harlan, IA
Pioneer Walking Park
[Harlan Walk website](#)
- **September 26, 2010**
Omaha, NE
Chalco Hills Recreation Area
[Omaha Walk website](#)

Join Memory Walk on Facebook

Did you know that each Memory Walk can be found online? If you're on Facebook, you can join the Walks, share your stories about why you Walk, post pictures, reach out to team members, and get connected with hundreds of other walkers in your area.

Just click on the following links:

- [Harlan, IA Walk](#)
- [Council Bluffs, IA Walk](#)
- [Fremont, NE Walk](#)
- [Omaha, NE Walk](#)



Respite Care Reimbursement Is Available Through the Midlands Chapter



Respite care reimbursement is available for caregivers of persons with dementia living in Douglas or Sarpy Counties in Nebraska. Make application TODAY by filling out the forms at www.alz.org/midlands or call 402.502.4301 for more information.

Midlands Chapter Wish List

The Alzheimer's Association Midlands Chapter welcomes donations of gifts in kind from our donors. Your generosity helps fulfill our mission and can provide a valuable tax deduction for you. Currently, the Chapter has need of the following items:

- Flat screen television for educational programs and presentations
- Board room chairs
- Brochure rack for the Family Resource Room
- Portable flip chart and stand
- Digital Camera
- Funding for the Respite Care Reimbursement Program
- A vehicle for staff travel



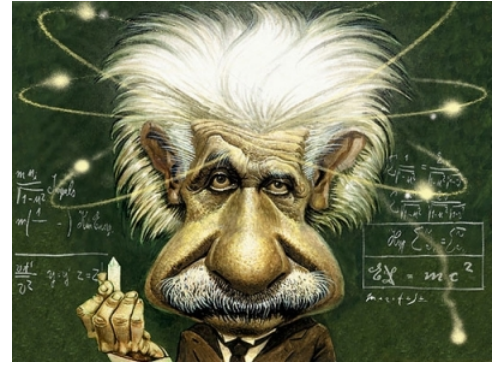
Maintain Your Brain

By Rosalie Shepherd, Program Staff

Two people have exactly the same amount of plaques and tangles caused by Alzheimer's disease, but only one exhibits dementia. Why? The answer is "cognitive reserve."

According to Dr. Yaakov Stern, the Director of Cognitive Neuroscience at Taub Institute, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, some people's brains possess the ability to cope with damage much better than others. Cognitive reserve, according to Dr. Stern, accounts for this resilience.

Dr. Stern found that certain experiences help develop cognitive reserve. His studies looked at "life exposures"--- education, occupation, family environment, exercise and leisure time spent doing stimulating activities---that build up cognitive reserve. Other studies augment Dr. Stern's studies and report that subjects with a greater number of stimulating leisure experiences were half as likely to develop Alzheimer's.



In addition, those with low education were over twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's compared to their more highly educated counterparts. However, we all know highly intelligent and educated people who get the disease, but studies note that highly literate elders experienced onset of the symptoms far later than their less literate counterparts. Even though these subjects may have the propensity to get the disease, they may get it later in life or not at all because of cognitive reserves.

Mental Activity is one of the points in the Maintain Your Brain program. Research has found that keeping the brain active by doing certain activities seems to increase its vitality and may build its reserves of cells and connections. You could even generate new brain cells by committing to lifelong learning.

Dr Stern's advice? In the future we will develop better pharmacological interventions, but for now "Stay in school, and expose yourself to as many stimulating leisure activities as possible."

Join Us On



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Vision

A world without Alzheimer's disease.

Mission

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.