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## Oscar Night raised \$50,000 this year

by Jen Czuba, Jacinda Drakulich and Sarah Smith

The Midlands Chapter Oscar Night America was the most successful in its seven year history, raising nearly \$50,000 in revenue, more than twice the amount raised last year.

Approximately 200 people attended the event. The chapter sold all of its silent auction items, as well as each live auction item, raising nearly \$9,000.

More than 106,000 Nebraskans and Iowans affected by Alzheimer's disease, as well as their caregivers and loved ones, benefited from the event. This year's event was sponsored by The University of Nebraska Department of Psychiatry, Harrah's Casino and the Bozell advertising agency.

The event was emceed by the chapter CEO Dr. Duane Gross and featured a silent and live auction, entertainment and gourmet dinner. A live telecast of the Academy Awards followed. Mayor Jim Suttle attended. Each guest received an Oscar show program, which was the same one celebrities received at the Academy Awards in L.A.

"In all respects, this was our best Oscar Night," Micah Evans, midlands chapter development director, said. "I am very excited to see it grow."

Last year, 52 charities nationwide hosted viewing parties for the 81st Academy Awards, raising more than \$3 million, all of it remaining in local communities. Oscar Night 2009 supported the Alzheimer's Association.

"Especially in these difficult financial times, supporting local charities is essen-



(Left to Right) Deborah Conley, Mick McKinley, Jan McKinley and Wood Hall at Oscar Night 2010. More photos on page 6.

tial. We're very happy that Oscar Night America serves as a successful, and fun, way for people around the country to help make a difference," Bruce Davis, academy executive director, said.

Since its inception in 1994, the program has generated nearly \$27 million in funding for a wide spectrum of charitable organizations and keeps donations within the local community.

The Midlands Chapter has a committee that works all year to organize and promote this event. Committee members find sponsors, design marketing materials and help organize the event.

If you would like to get involved in the 2011 Oscar Night planning committee, contact Alisha Palagi at [apalagi@midland-salz.org](mailto:apalagi@midland-salz.org) or call 402-502-4301.

### upcoming events

- ✓ May 22- Informal meeting at Panera Bread on 76th and Dodge at 2 p.m. with Patrick Bartmess.
- ✓ June 2 - Annual picnic event
- ✓ June 5- Motorcycle "Ride to Remember" -for more information visit [ride2010.kintera.org](http://ride2010.kintera.org)

# Caregivers need to pay attention to their health

by Ainslee Kardisco, Kirby Kaufman and Jessica Leisure

When caring for someone else, caregivers often neglect their own health. It's especially important, though, that caregivers pay attention to their physical and mental well-being.

Implementing personal time for caregivers is just as important as the structure provided for the person living with Alzheimer's.

It's common for caregivers to experience emotions such as shock, disbelief, fear of the unknown, regret, guilt or anger while caring for anyone with a long term disease. These emotions are all real and everyone reacts differently to them.

Caregivers should be surrounded with a lot of support, including fam-

ily, church members, colleagues and a formal support group, social worker Diane K. Hendricks said.

It is important for caregivers to keep socializing, eating right and exercising, she added. Educating caregivers about the disease as soon as possible is also important. In fact, once the diagnosis has been made, caregivers should begin their quest for knowledge.

"This is the time to focus on finding out as much as you can about the disease. The earlier on in the disease that they can establish a routine that reflects caring for themselves, the better," Hendricks said.

Hendricks said caregivers need to monitor their own health and emotions for any of the following red flags: difficulty sleeping, poor nutrition, harming yourself or others, becoming isolated or experiencing personality changes. The burden on caregivers is fairly high, and depression, anxiety and decline in physical health are common among caregivers.

The book, "The 36-Hour Day," shows how common sense and imagination become the best

tools for caregivers. The tools are important because that's what helps the caregiver adapt and accept change.

For example, if a person with Alzheimer's can eat food successfully with his or her fin-

gers, but can't use silverware, the caregiver should feed the person as many finger foods as possible, the book suggested.

Caregiver Terry Johnson can relate.

Johnson, a teacher at Grace University, is the primary caregiver for his wife, Liz. However, Johnson does not like to leave Liz home alone for more than an hour or two.

**"This is time to focus on finding out as much as possible as you can about the disease."**

*-Diane K. Hendricks*

"I find surprises in the fridge once or twice each week, like a container of Orville Redenbacher popcorn or cooking oil or melted ice cream that went into the fridge instead of the freezer," Johnson said. "Life is not dull!"

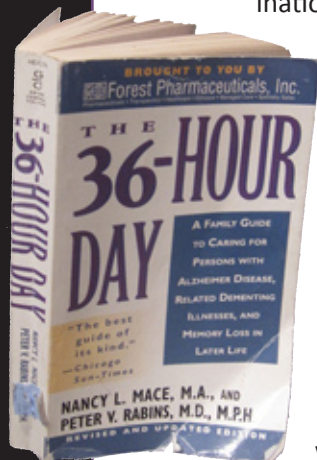
Johnson has also been working with Cathy Wyatt, a certified senior advisor (CSA), to find options for Liz, such as a senior companion to spend time with her during the day when he can't be there.

"Each individual is different and each person has his own way of responding to problems," the book "The 36-Hour Day" indicated. "A healthy response for one person may be unhealthy for another."

● A stress test is available at <http://www.alz.org/stresscheck> for caregivers to determine if they need additional help.

## tips from "The 36-Hour Day"

- ✓ Take time for yourself
- ✓ Seek help when needed
- ✓ Communicate constructively
- ✓ Understand that you are not alone
- ✓ It is only normal to feel angry when faced with this difficult situation
- ✓ Rest and the companionship of friends will do much to keep you going strong
- ✓ Laughter can be a great medicine



# Son cares for mother with young-onset dementia

by Nichole Baugh, Scott Bougger and Chase Spencer

Patrick Bartmess was living in Everett, Wash., and working at a children's hospital in the medical records department when he decided he wanted to become an elementary school teacher. With the coaxing of his family members, he moved back to Omaha to live with his mother and stepfather and attend the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

While attending classes at UNO, Bartmess began noticing changes in his 65-year-old mother's behavior. Janet French was increasingly forgetful, often losing her car keys and misplacing her glasses.

After noticing more unusual behavior, Bartmess and his family decided to get to the bottom of his mother's forgetfulness.

**"I want to show respect because she's my mother, and I don't want her to feel incompetent."**

*-Patrick Bartmess*

"We thought that maybe my mother's condition was grief," Bartmess said because his step father had just died following complications in surgery.

In 2007, doctors determined that his mother's condition was not grief, but Alzheimer's disease.

After graduation, Bartmess became a substitute teacher rather than a full-time educator to spend more time caring for his mother.

"It was difficult because my brother lives in Maine and my stepfather

died right before she was diagnosed." But overall, the decision to take care of his mother was very natural and he has no regrets, he said.

Bartmess decided to stop teaching and become a full-time caregiver soon after his mother was diagnosed. Without the consistency of a normal schedule, his mother often became confused.

"I just earned my elementary teaching degree and I'm not applying it to children, but rather my mother," Bartmess said.

Being a caregiver can often mean changing your entire life. Bartmess said talking with family, friends and people who can relate to his situation both at support groups and during one-on-one conversations has been crucial. Bartmess has found many ways to reduce the stress that comes with being a caregiver.

Bartmess attends the Alzheimer's support group at the Midlands Chapter. He most recently formed a social group for caregivers to get together outside of regular monthly meetings.

"If it wasn't for the Alzheimer's Association, I'm not sure what I would have done," Bartmess said. "Getting to talk to real people has been a major help. In one way, they have great little tricks as to how to handle the behaviors. The second and more important way was that there was somewhere I could go to vent. The



Janet French, Patrick Bartmess and their dog Maggie.

peer group makes me feel not so alone."

Bartmess said the hardest part of caring for his mother is the balance between giving care and letting her figure things out on her own.

"I want to show respect because she's my mother, and I don't want her to feel incompetent," he said.

Being there to monitor and report behavior is also on a caregiver's list of responsibilities.

"It's not like a tumor where everyone can see it. It's a brain disorder where the only way you can track its progress is through behavior," he said.

Bartmess informs his extended family about his mother's condition through his blog.

"Instead of calling everybody every day, I've started a blog that's password protected. I gave my family the password so that when they get curious they can look," Bartmess said.

● Join Bartmess Saturdays at Panera Bread for a social gathering at 7825 Dodge Street.

# 'Brain food' important for maintaining health

by Dani Grant, Rayna Fleming and Shannon Stawniak

**P**ull up "brain health" on your Internet browser, and your computer will give you endless options. A patient with Alzheimer's needs to have the best resources available, and brain health is on the front line. One of the most important tools to maintain in brain health is brain food.

But is there really such thing? According to the "Archives of Neurology," an online medical journal, people who follow a brain-healthy diet are less likely to develop mild cognitive impairment, the precursor to Alzheimer's disease. These diets have gained the interest of caretakers, Alzheimer's patients and researchers looking for answers.

A brain-healthy diet reduces the risk of heart disease and diabetes, encourages good blood flow to the brain and

minimizes fat and cholesterol.

"The overall concept is that energy intake from the protein, fat and carbohydrate sources need to be adequate in order for our brains to function properly," Kelli Price, a nutritionist with a master's degree in Nutrition Science from Texas Woman's University, said. "Without sufficient energy intake, neurotransmitters found in the brain are not able to send signals properly to the rest of the body."

Specific foods need to be consumed to keep the brain healthy. "A diet for positive brain health needs to be rich in Omega-3's," Neilson said. Omega-3's are also known as polyunsaturated fatty acid, which is found in fish, flaxseeds, walnuts, salmon, shrimp, tofu, scallops and squash.

"People living in Nebraska don't get enough fatty acids in their diet because they are constantly consuming meat products. It's the Cornhusker state — beef is what people are all about," Carrie Nielsen, a registered dietitian in the Omaha area, said.

To be healthier and increase Omega-3 intake, Nielsen said people should try to incorporate a couple of servings of fish per week and add flaxseed to their current meals.

The Mediterranean Diet, which emphasizes increasing fruits, vegetables and olive oil and decreasing red meat, has also been associated with an increase in cognitive functions. A Mediterranean diet includes legumes and cereal, moderate alcohol intake, exercise, herbs and spices, nuts and whole grain foods.

Many meal options are readily available for caregivers to serve themselves or offer a person with dementia.

## Mango Salsa Salmon



### Ingredients

- 4 (6-ounce) salmon steaks
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large red onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 1 sprig fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 mangos - peeled, seeded and diced

### Directions

Preheat the oven broiler. Line a broiler pan with foil. Broil salmon steaks on the prepared pan 12 minutes, or until easily flaked with a fork.

Heat olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat and sauté onion until tender. Stir in garlic, tomatoes and cilantro. Cook until heated through, 1 to 2 minutes and remove from heat. Mix in the mangos. Serve over the salmon steaks.

<http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Mango-Salsa-Salmon/Detail.aspx>

### easy grab-&-go options

- ✓ PediaSure, which is rich with vitamins & minerals
- ✓ Pre-sliced bagged fruit from the grocery store
- ✓ Whole grain breakfast bars
- ✓ Oatmeal cereal with fruit; use low-fat milk instead of water
- ✓ Cooked shrimp rings
- ✓ Walnuts, almonds & cashews
- ✓ Dark chocolate in a candy bowl
- ✓ Sushi rolls with fresh fish

# Educating youth: a crucial tool for the future

by Molly Moran, Tiffany Price and Brittany York

Opening a dictionary and finding a word seems like a simple task, but what if the pages of the dictionary were ripped apart and randomly taped back together? How easy would it be to find a word then?

This is just one of the examples Rosalie Shepherd, program staff member of the Alzheimer's Midlands Chapter, uses to teach high school students about the complications of Alzheimer's disease.

Shepherd participates in a national program called Maintain Your Brain. She said it's "based on research that states that our lifestyle has a great impact on our health and longevity." Shepherd goes to high schools to educate students about Alzheimer's and the importance of brain health us-

ing the research from Maintain Your Brain.

Young people need to be educated about the importance of brain health and physical health because they will be the ones who can help "trump" the disease.

"They need to know they don't want this disease," Shepherd said. They could also be burdened with the costs of Alzheimer's disease (in their

loved ones) in the future, Shepherd said.

"The Alzheimer's tsunami is coming when the baby boomers get to their senior years," she said. "Seventy-seven million are nearing social security, and 10 million will have the disease."

Alzheimer's has the potential of wiping out the nation's healthcare and Medicare system, Shepherd said, which is why she became interested in the program.

"I guess the bottom line of the take away is that we can make a difference by our choices. Mounting evidence shows that our lifestyles can trump genetics in 90 percent of the cases. It shows that changes we make now can help us live a healthier life into old age," Shepherd said.

**"The Alzheimer's tsunami is coming when the baby boomers get to their senior years."**

*-Rosalie Shepherd*

# Explaining Alzheimer's to children becomes necessary task

by Molly Moran, Tiffany Price and Brittany York

Children or young adults who have a grandparent with Alzheimer's may notice warning signs, which include things like repeatedly misplacing familiar items, feeling disoriented in familiar surroundings, displaying rapid mood swings as well as suspicious or paranoid behavior.

It is important to explain to children and young adults what might be happening to the older generation, including their grandparents.

"Sometimes people

with Alzheimer's will act out of character and do things they wouldn't normally do, which can be scary for young kids," Barbara Bayer, research coordinator for geriatric psychiatry at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, said.

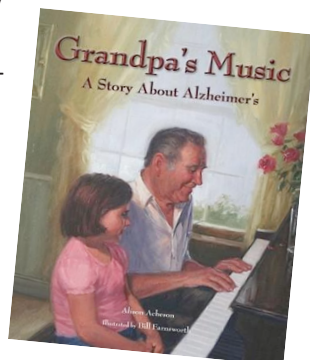
Knowing what to say and how to say it can be a challenge for some adults, who might be struggling to understand the disease themselves.

Bayer suggested explaining to children and young adults that their grandparent has a "brain disease"

that won't allow his or her mind to work properly.

"With children, we typically try to answer their questions instead of giving them too much information," Bayer said.

Books can be a great source of information to help explain the disease, especially to children. Popular titles include: "Always My Grandpa: A Story for Children About Alzheimer's Disease", "Alzheimer's Disease And Other Dementias", "Striped Shirts and Flowered Pants" and "Grandpa's Music: A Story About Alzheimer's." These books are available online or local libraries.



# Guenther continues leadership on chapter board

by Kristen Cloyed and Alyssa Roth

Larry Guenther began his journey with the Alzheimer's Association more than a decade ago in Illinois. Today he is chairman of the Midlands Chapter Board of Directors.

"(It's) one of the best non-profits I've ever worked with," Guenther said.

Guenther's interest in the Alzheimer's Association sparked when two of his grandparents were sent to the hospital around the same time and one did not make it out.

Although neither grandparent was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, one displayed some symptoms. This incident made him think about diseases that affect older people and what he could do to help.

Guenther became involved with the Alzheimer's Association in Illinois through the bank where he worked. The owner's wife suggested he be a member of the board. During his time in Illinois, he served as board president.

When he moved to Omaha about six years ago, he was put in contact with the local chapter.

As chairman, Guenther works with the entire board to ensure that its actions are consistent with the mission and vision of the Alzheimer's Association. He said one of the most rewarding parts of his position is working with the board members.

"They are all great leadership examples and very talented," Guenther said.

Clayton Freeman, program director for the Midlands Chapter, said Guenther's "outstanding leadership"



*(Left to right) Board President Larry Guenther, Tracy Guenther, Michelle Clark and Ryan Clark, board member, at Oscar Night 2010.*

makes him a good chairman.

"He has been a strong supporter and advocate for Alzheimer's," Freeman said. "He brings that passion to the board."

An important aspect of the Midlands Chapter is that it is one of the few in the nation to work with young-onset Alzheimer's.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, between 200,000 and 500,000 Americans have young-onset Alzheimer's. The association works with people in that demographic, which includes people younger than 65 and represent what's called the new face of Alzheimer's.

Freeman said focusing on young-onset is important because younger patients sometimes have trouble accessing the social services they need. He added that younger patients and their caregivers can speak out and be strong advocates for Alzheimer's.

"These folks can be a real voice for change," Freeman said.

Guenther said the most important thing the association does to help support caregivers is provide training, education and a support network.

"They're not the only ones in that situation," Guenther said.

Guenther said that he has been fortunate not to have Alzheimer's diagnosed in his immediate family. He has had many friends and coworkers who have dealt with a loved one with Alzheimer's, though.

"It's one of the toughest diseases on the family," Guenther said.

He explained that not only must the family deal with the memory issues, but eventually cope with the death.

Guenther hopes that through his work with the association, its goal of "a world without Alzheimer's" may be achieved.

He also wants to see increased awareness of the disease and the association while maintaining a fiscally strong chapter.

# New intern wants to fill 'in between' times helping

by Nichole Baugh

Each day begins with the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. What happens in between is what matters the most. But what can I do "in between" to make a difference? I go to work, school, clean the house, take the dogs for a walk, cook dinner, talk with my husband and go to bed. The following day, I find myself in a state of *déjà vu*.

At the beginning of my 2010 school semester, my professor, Kathy Tewhill, announced an internship with the Alzheimer's Association as the editor of the Midlands Chapter "News and Views" newsletter. The newsletter was established only six months earlier and has had two successful issues.

Tewhill shared her personal story of being a wife whose husband suffers from young-onset Alzheimer's. Her passion and dedication convinced me to get involved.

So far, I have met many wonderful people and committed families. I have heard stories of heartbreak, love and perseverance. I have seen people around me caring for their loved ones in a way that I could never image.

This internship is quickly becoming something more for me than a requirement to graduate. I find myself grateful that I can wake up each morn-



Baugh

ing, and that I am able to recognize the world around me. Being able to cook, clean, walk and communicate with others is something I don't take for granted anymore.

I feel this opportunity has done more for me so far than I have done for it.

To give back, I want to create a newsletter that will truly help people deal with this devastating illness. I want our articles to not only be informative, but also reach people on a personal level. I want to fill my "in between" helping people with Alzheimer's. I can only thank you all for giving me and my fellow students the opportunity to do so.

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  - ✓ Professional educational programs & conferences
  - ✓ Safe Return program®
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  - ✓ Advocacy for quality dementia care & services & funding for public programs
  - ✓ Funding to accelerate the pace of promising research

## Oscar Night America 2010

