

## Oregon Chapter News

Published three times a year for our donors, volunteers, advocates and friends in the Alzheimer community.

Fall 2008

[www.alz.org/oregon](http://www.alz.org/oregon)  
1.800.272.3900

## November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month



Advocacy is strong in 2008 with retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich urging Congress to speed research and increase help for families.

Since its founding in 1980, the Alzheimer's Association has been the leader in making the fight against Alzheimer's a national priority, a call that resonates during November, which is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month.

After designating a National Alzheimer's Disease Week in 1982, President Reagan helped to launch a national campaign against Alzheimer's disease in 1983, calling members of the Alzheimer's Association to the White House for the signing of a proclamation declaring National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month.

"The emotional, financial and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease are so devastating that it deserves special attention," Reagan said. Taking lead of the issue, he went on to advocate research as "the only hope for victims and families." Reagan courageously announced his Alzheimer's diagnosis to the public in November 1994 and passed away in 2004.

Alzheimer's Association founder Jerome Stone led a group of family caregivers, Association volunteers and staff in the effort to bring attention to the cause on Capitol Hill. That advocacy effort continues even stronger today with Association public policy staff and volunteers leading the call for increased government funding for critical Alzheimer's research and support programs.

While there is much we don't yet know about Alzheimer's disease, tremendous progress is being made, laying the foundation for future breakthroughs in prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

In 1983 fewer than 2 million Americans had the disease; today, the number of individuals with Alzheimer's has soared to as many as 5.2 million and is expected to grow to 16 million by 2050 unless something is done to slow or stop this devastating disease.

**For additional information and resources, contact the Alzheimer's Association at 1.800.272.3900 or visit [www.alz.org/oregon](http://www.alz.org/oregon)**

## Caregiver Stress Check Adds Support Services for Caregivers

To build on its leading support services, the Alzheimer's Association is launching *Caregiver Stress Check*, a first-of-its-kind, interactive quiz that helps caregivers identify their symptoms of stress and provides them with a tailored list of helpful referrals and resources. The quiz is available at:

[www.alz.org/stresscheck](http://www.alz.org/stresscheck)

Almost 10 million Americans provide unpaid care for a person with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia. Providing this care is often very difficult, and many family caregivers experience high levels of emotional stress and depression as a result.

Symptoms of caregiver stress can include denial, anger, anxiety, exhaustion, irritability and other health problems. The *Caregiver Stress Check* asks specific questions that help to identify these signs, and then directs users to a tailored and comprehensive list of resources referrals.

*Caregiver Stress Check* is the newest in a leading suite of caregiver support services that includes support groups; online message boards; care consultation; information and education; and links to community resources that help caregivers cope.



## Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The fear of getting Alzheimer's runs rampant. I can't count the number of times I'm asked "Am I next?" Someone in this country gets the disease every 71 seconds, many of us have it in

our bloodline – in my case for three generations - it's no wonder the question is being asked!

Researchers don't agree on the answer or our odds. At present we understand some of the risk factors but they don't indicate with 100% accuracy who will be next.

According to our Alzheimer's Association President of Medical and Scientific Relations, Dr. Bill Thies, if you have a parent or sibling with Alzheimer's, you are two to three times more likely to develop the disease, but family history is only part of the story. A combination of genetics, advancing age and environmental triggers are involved.

Although there's no sure method of prevention, many experts believe that we'll be able to lower our chances by socializing, exercising our body, eating a healthy balanced diet, challenging our mind with mentally stimulating activities, and maintaining a positive attitude.

Every thought we have and choice we make contributes to our quality of life, or destroys it, and I choose not to dwell on the "will I or won't I be next" scenario. I'm focused on what I can do to make a positive difference in my life and the lives of others. I enthusiastically invite you to join me. This choice increases our odds of experiencing joy and diminishes our fear of "getting it." I'm hopeful that one of these days we'll find the answers that prevent and cure Alzheimer's. In the meantime, we'll be living life fully and enjoying the journey!

*Judy McKellar*

## Oregon Chapter Offices

### PORTLAND

1650 NW Naito Parkway  
Suite 190  
Portland, OR 97209  
503.416.0201

### EUGENE

1238 Lincoln Street  
Eugene, OR 97401  
541.345.8392

### CENTRAL OREGON

Recil & Violet Watson Ctr.  
1135 SW Highland  
Redmond, OR 97756  
541.548.7074

### SOUTHERN OREGON

2860 State Street  
Medford, OR 97504  
541.774.9348

## Oregon Chapter Board of Directors

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### OUR VISION

*A world without Alzheimer's disease.*

### OUR MISSION

*Eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.*

## Association Wins \$1.5 Million for Early Detection Efforts

*The Alzheimer's Disease: Early Detection Matters* campaign has been voted the top campaign in the American Express Members Project®. American Express Cardmembers voted the project the one they most wanted to fund, and the Alzheimer's Association will receive \$1.5 million to begin an education campaign highlighting the importance of early detection among the general public and physicians.

The prize money will enable the Association to increase public education about early detection, engage people with Alzheimer's to become advocates and empower those who suspect they may have Alzheimer's to find the hope and help they need.

Jay Smith submitted the project in honor of his wife Patty, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at the age of 51 after struggling with the signs and symptoms of the disease.

"It took more than two years for my wife to obtain a correct medical diagnosis, so we decided to do everything we can to increase early detection of Alzheimer's, stop the progression of the disease and help others along the way," Smith said.

Many Americans don't know the 10 warning signs that signal memory loss might be a serious medical problem. The *Early Detection Matters* campaign was designed to educate people about the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's along with the importance of an early diagnosis.

The many benefits of early diagnosis include the ability for the person living with Alzheimer's to be involved in making care decisions and receive treatments that may improve some symptoms.

Progress on *Early Detection Matters* activities will be available at: [www.actionalz.org/membersproject](http://www.actionalz.org/membersproject).

## National News

### Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Stamp

The number of Americans living with Alzheimer's is expected to grow to 16 million by midcentury. With an aging baby boomer population, this degenerative brain disease will continue to touch more lives. More funding for research and more supportive services for those living with Alzheimer's disease begins with greater overall public awareness.

The Alzheimer's Association commends the U.S. Postal Service because this new stamp is a tremendous step in that education effort. By including Alzheimer's disease in its long tradition of highlighting health and social issues through its awareness stamp program, the Postal Service continues to illuminate the challenges of those with the disease and of their caregivers.

Researchers continue to look for new treatments to slow or stop the progression of Alzheimer's disease. These new therapies, when they are developed, will be most effective when taken as early in the course of the disease as possible, making it even more urgent for effective early detection of Alzheimer's disease. Early diagnosis improves care and treatment options for individuals by empowering them to participate more fully in their lives. It offers individuals more time to make choices to maximize the quality of life, build the right medical team, and gain earlier access to existing medications, programs and services.

For more information or to buy the Alzheimer Awareness 42-cent commemorative stamp go to: <http://shop.usps.com> – click on "Stamps", click on "42-Cent First Class"

### E Me, Please

As more and more of our advocates and friends move their communications to the electronic mode, we are striving to meet their requests for information via e-mail.

If you prefer to receive our newsletter, invitations and important announcements via e-mail, please let us know by sending an e-mail to: [tracy.madsen@alz.org](mailto:tracy.madsen@alz.org)



Please put "E Me, Please" on your subject line. THANK YOU!



## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### Thank You!

At this time of year when we reflect on gratitude, we certainly think of the amazing friends who support the mission and work of the Oregon Chapter. There are so many ways that caring individuals contribute to moving the cause forward and to providing critical resources for the programs and services needed by the community. Your donations of time, talent and treasure are both essential and sincerely appreciated.

Special tribute contributions that have been made In Honor or In Memory of loved ones are acknowledged on our Chapter website (website address below) in the “Donate” section.

As we look forward to 2009, we will focus with our many partners on our mutual vision – a world without Alzheimer’s. Best to you for a healthy, happy New Year!

### Memory Mart

Sport your Memory Walk spirit year round with purchases from Memory Mart. Terrific items with Alzheimer’s Association or Memory Walk logos are available at very affordable prices.

Let your fingers do the shopping at:  
**[www.memorymart.org](http://www.memorymart.org)**

### Donate Your Vehicle

New, old, running or idle – the donation of an unwanted vehicle helps in the fight against Alzheimer’s disease. Tell a friend!

On-line at: [www.alz.org/oregon/in\\_my\\_community\\_donate\\_other.asp](http://www.alz.org/oregon/in_my_community_donate_other.asp)

By phone: 503.416.0211 800.272.3900

### Memory Walk ‘08 MOVES Record Walkers!

Over 3,150 walkers in four Oregon cities MOVED to END ALZHEIMER’S at Memory Walk ‘08. All of the walks enjoyed glorious fall weather as people who truly care about the Alzheimer’s cause gathered to show and celebrate their support. The purple MOVE T-shirts worn by many were an impressive sight that drew attention to the walks.

Memory Walk Team Captains rallied their groups and had lots of fun with energetic events to boost their fundraising. They ranged from silent auctions to a wine and chocolate tasting, a softball tournament and a concert called “Rock for Alzheimer’s”. Returning captains stretched their goals and new captains got excited about surpassing theirs.

### The top fund raising teams for each Oregon walk are:

Central Oregon	Compassionate Canines of Central Oregon
Eugene	ElderHealth & Living Forget-Me-Nots
Portland	Kathy’s Clowns
Southern Oregon	PLC Walkers

The terrific captains of each of those teams will win the Grand Prize for that walk. CONGRATULATIONS!

**We sincerely appreciate the participation of everyone who made the 2008 walks a success. Sponsors, volunteers, in-kind donors, participants and donors all teamed up to MOVE with us to END ALZHEIMER’S!**



## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### Board Member MOVES!



Kate Dyer Seeley, a new board member, has a degree in Communication Disorders and Sciences. Kate co-created urbanabox.com, an online creative gift box company. Kate's creative press kits translated into national press from outlets including the Oxygen Network, Vogue International, Jane magazine, Lucky magazine and Entrepreneur magazine. Kate sold the company in 2004 after the birth of her son.

Kate works as a freelance marketing specialist. She writes everything from creative content for websites, to email newsletters and press releases. Kate has appeared on a variety of regional morning programs as a spokesperson for her varied clients. She has appeared on AM Northwest, Good Day Oregon, as well as the local NBC, ABC and CBS affiliates multiple times.

Kate has been a Memory Walk team captain for several years. She said, "I walk because Alzheimer's disease took my mom too early. At 52 she wore smart suits, a short bob, drank coffee by the gallon, and was begging me to hurry up and have a baby already so she could be a grandma. A few years later when I took the plunge into parenthood she couldn't write her name, tie her shoes, or impart her parenting knowledge. This was not supposed to happen in my early thirties. I wasn't supposed to be losing my mom. She was supposed to be teaching me how to become one." Kate's experience has ignited a passion for the Alzheimer's cause and she brings that energy to her board work.



### IRA Charitable Rollover Act Extended

Congress extended a wonderful charitable planning opportunity for 2008 and 2009 permitting IRA owners age 70 ½ or older to make a direct transfer to charities such as the Alzheimer's Association. The transfer can be up to \$100,000 per year.

Since a traditional IRA is funded with non-taxed dollars, a charitable contribution from an IRA does not qualify for an income tax deduction. However, gift amounts from an IRA will not be included in donors' incomes.

The IRA rollover donor can avoid other taxes, too! Each year, IRA owners 70 ½ and older must take a required minimum distribution. This legislation permits the charitable rollover contribution to qualify for the required minimum distribution which can result in a lower taxable income.

Note: It is very important that the IRA custodian must transfer the funds from the IRA directly to the Alzheimer's Association. If an IRA owner withdraws the funds and then contributes them to the Alzheimer's Association, the withdrawal will be included in the donor's gross income. Please contact your IRA plan custodian or trustee before making any withdrawal.

We hope you will consider this method of helping the Alzheimer's Association and at the same time help yourself save taxes.

For further information please contact us:  
**Mary Bohmke 425.967.3120 or**  
**[mary.bohmke@alz.org](mailto:mary.bohmke@alz.org)**

## Ask Our Doc

**I'm really concerned about getting Alzheimer's. What can I do now to delay the disease or, hopefully, to avoid it entirely?**

When people think about staying fit, they generally focus below the neck. But brain health also plays a critical role in thinking, working, playing – and even sleeping.

We now know there's a lot you can do to help keep your brain healthier as you age. These steps might also reduce your risk of Alzheimer's disease or another dementia.

**Adopt a brain-healthy diet.** Research suggests that high cholesterol may contribute to stroke and brain cell damage. A low-fat, low-cholesterol diet is advisable. There is growing evidence that a diet rich in dark vegetables and fruits, which contain antioxidants, may help protect brain cells.

**Stay physically active.** Physical exercise is essential for maintaining good blood flow to the brain as well as to encourage new brain cells.

**Keep mentally active.** Mentally stimulating activities strengthen brain cells and the connections between them, and may even create new nerve cells.

**Remain socially active.** Social activity not only makes physical and mental activity more enjoyable, it can reduce stress levels, which helps maintain healthy connections among brain cells.

If we make brain-healthy lifestyle changes and take action by getting involved, we could potentially experience a future without Alzheimer's disease.

## Education

### Respite Care

Respite care provides a temporary break from your daily caregiving responsibilities. Using respite services can support and strengthen your ability to continue taking care of your loved one with Alzheimer's in the home.

#### Types of respite care services

Respite care services are offered through community organizations, agencies or residential care facilities. The most common respite care services are in-home care and adult day centers.

#### In-home care services offer a range of options including:

- Companion services provide the individual with dementia companionship and supervision of activities.
- Personal care or home health aide services assist with bathing, dressing, toileting and exercising.
- Homemaker services help with laundry, shopping and preparing meals.
- Skilled care services help with medication and other medical services.

**An adult day center** is a place where the person with Alzheimer's can be with others and socialize in a safe environment. Staff lead planned activities, such as music and art programs. Transportation and meals are often provided.

When choosing an adult day center, arrange a meeting with the staff and ask these questions:

- What are the hours, fees and services?
- What types of programs do you offer?
- Are people with dementia separated from other participants or included in general activities?
- Is staff trained in dementia issues?
- What types of healthcare professionals are on staff? How do you screen them?
- How are emergency situations handled?
- How do you ensure the safety of the participants?
- Is transportation available?

**To find the right respite care services for you and the person with dementia, start by contacting your local Alzheimer's Association 1-800-272-3900.** We can help you determine what respite services you need and provide referrals in your area.

## Meet New Southern Oregon Director



Loretta Ascencio is the new Regional Director for Southern Oregon. Loretta's background includes a

career in financial services and as marketing director for two dementia care facilities.

Loretta's respect for the Alzheimer's Association stems from being a caregiver for her mother, Stella. Diagnosis proved difficult as Stella's physician had erroneously identified depression as the cause of her personality change. Loretta eventually took Stella to a neurologist where she was accurately diagnosed. Ill-prepared for the caregiver stress she would experience, Loretta said, "Being a caregiver can be very isolating. I benefited from the Association newsletter and by attending support group meetings. The Association was a lifeline and my link to others caring for someone with dementia."

Loretta advocates for early diagnosis and caregiver support and education. "When speaking to individuals or groups, I stress that the more resources caregivers have, the better they can care for their loved one and for themselves. It is rewarding to draw upon my years of professional and caregiver experience to serve as a resource to others who cope with the demands of dementia.", Loretta said.

## Programs and Services

### When Is It Time to Stop Driving?

In Oregon, having the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or some other form of dementia is no longer reason enough to stop driving. According to Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles, it is the level of impairment that determines whether it is safe to continue to drive or not.

In the early stages of the disease, some people limit their driving to familiar routes, by driving shorter distances, and by driving only during the daytime. This may give a person a sense of security and control, but the risk still remains. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease that affects one's ability to determine when it is no longer safe to drive.

So when is it time to stop driving? Family members are often the first to notice a problem with a loved one's driving. Unfortunately, many family members postpone having the discussion until the situation becomes critical. The Alzheimer's Association encourages family members to seek help by learning as much as they can about the disease, about how the disease impacts driving ability, and why it is important to address this issue early in the disease process.

**Call the Alzheimer's Association at 800.272.3900 for assistance and to learn about classes on this important subject.**

### Some warning signs of driving problems:

- Decrease in confidence while driving
- Riding the brake
- Incorrect signaling
- Uses a "co-pilot"
- Confusion at exits
- Easily distracted while driving
- Other drivers often honk horns
- Getting lost in familiar places
- Driving at inappropriate speeds
- Not anticipating potentially dangerous situations
- Bad judgment or trouble with making turns
- Hitting curbs, near misses or vehicle accident
- Delayed response to unexpected situations
- Difficulty maintaining lane position, moving into wrong lane
- Ticketed moving violations or warnings
- Increased agitation or irritation when driving
- Failure to notice activity on side of road
- Failure to notice traffic signs or stop at red light
- Confusing the gas and brake pedals
- Stopping in traffic for no apparent reason
- Difficulty turning to see when backing up
- Difficulty parking within a defined space
- Scrapes or dents on car, mailbox or garage



# SAVE THE DATE!

## 11th Annual McGinty Conference on Alzheimer's

*The Holzman Foundation –  
Presenting Sponsor*

**April 16, 2009**

Conference details will be posted on the Oregon Chapter website  
as they become available at [www.alz.org/oregon](http://www.alz.org/oregon)

## *Looking Through the Crystal Ball - Dementia Care for the 21st Century*

Make this exceptional one-day conference a priority for you and/or for someone you love. Join professional and family caregivers to:

- Gain valuable insight into Alzheimer's disease
- Learn practical solutions and strategies
- Get current on disease research
- Discover new life-enhancing activities
- Broaden your knowledge of person-centered care