

LIVING with Alzheimer's

-Written by the members of the Alzheimer's Association Utah Chapter Early Stage Support Group

We were a CEO, a Senior Vice President, an Advocate, an Activist, a Corporate Buyer, and an Engineer. We are a mother, a father, a sister, a brother, an aunt, an uncle, a daughter, a wife, a grandmother and a friend. We have conquered the corporate world, effected change, made a difference, traveled the world, left a legacy, and raised a family. We have Alzheimer's disease.

We met one another at an Alzheimer's Association group for people living in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. Though we all have been diagnosed with the same disease, we are each going through it in our own way. It is through this group that we not only learn how to live with this disease, but also learn how to laugh again. On a daily basis, we choose whether or not we cry and scream that we can no longer drive, write, cook, pay bills, and fix things. We often choose to share our challenges with friends and laugh about how many times we misplace something, how often we repeat things, and how quickly we forget ÷ some days we choose to do both.

We find joy in sharing special moments we have with friends and family. We confide in one another without fear of judgment. We lift and support one another as long as needed. We go on trips together. We learn new things. We live.

It is through this group that we learn we are not and will never be alone.

***NOTE: This story has been submitted to Chicken Soup for the Soul as a short story about life with Alzheimer's disease. Not to be rewritten or duplicated without the express permission of the Alzheimer's Association Utah Chapter.**