There are more than 16 million family members and friends across the U.S. who are currently caring for a person living with Alzheimer’s. Over 430,000 of those Alzheimer’s caregivers live in Arizona and southern Nevada.

Tucson resident Teresa Koslow is one of them, although she says she doesn’t see herself that way. “I am his spouse, a partner. Of course, I am here for my husband as he is for me. I do not consider myself a caregiver.”

It’s a conundrum for spouses who suddenly find themselves in a caregiver role, but don’t necessarily identify as such.

Larry was diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) in 2016 at the age of 74. The neurologist considers this diagnosis pre-Alzheimer’s disease. The main symptom he experiences is short term memory loss, but he also gets confused with time and place and has some concentration issues.

“Dementia is experienced by each person differently. There is no exact time frame on stages - and every individual experience symptoms differently,” says Teresa. “Larry continues to think about issues and wants to contribute to society.”

Larry is a retired political science professor and attorney. He’s authored three books and countless articles. Larry and Teresa have been married for 53 years. The couple has two children (Larisa and Melinda) and two grandchildren (Michael, 19 and Marshall, 14).

“We are a close family,” says Teresa. “Our daughters are knowledgeable about Alzheimer’s and very supportive of our dad.”

Larry is a retired political science professor and attorney. He’s authored three books and countless articles. Larry and Teresa have been married for 53 years. The couple has two children (Larisa and Melinda) and two grandchildren (Michael, 19 and Marshall, 14).

It was the couple’s daughters who first noticed something was wrong. Teresa recalls thinking Larry’s problems were due to recent family trauma. “I was over-compensating for him. Maybe I was in a form of denial,” remembers Teresa. “We had almost lost our youngest daughter. We lost a grandson. This had been devastating.”

But Teresa says the memory issues continued, and that’s when they consulted their doctor and testing began. When Larry was diagnosed, Teresa says she was sad, but not shocked, primarily because she had a strong support system. At that point, Larry and Teresa began researching and located the Alzheimer’s Association. It was the support they needed during an uncertain time.

► CAREGIVER (continued on page 4)
Dear Friends,

This spring heralds the release of the 2018 Annual Alzheimer’s Disease Facts & Figures report. Sadly, as we each are all too aware, the impact of Alzheimer’s – both human and financial – is growing rapidly. By 2025, Arizona and Nevada will see a 42.9% (AZ) and 42.2% (NV) increase in individuals with Alzheimer’s. These are the 2nd and 3rd largest increases in the country!

Nationally, this epidemic continues to grow. Over 5.7 million Americans of all ages will have Alzheimer’s or a related dementia in 2018. Additionally, mortality continues to rise with the number of deaths from Alzheimer’s, from 2000-2015, increasing by 123% while deaths from other major diseases decreased. The facts are staggering. But there is good news. There are signs of progress.

The Association continues to be the largest, private funder of Alzheimer’s research in the world. In January, the Association awarded funding for 28 new projects, totaling $4.5 million of new funding. This funding, cumulative with on-going funding, brings the Association’s active investment in research to nearly $110 million in 19 countries. And this investment is seeing results.

Alzheimer’s biomarkers are making it possible to detect the disease and provide an accurate diagnosis earlier than any other time in history. This early diagnosis of Alzheimer’s provides important benefits to individuals and families, including cost savings and ability to future plan.

While the Alzheimer’s epidemic continues to grow, we continue to make strides in the fight. We all know that there is much more work to be done. But we also know that together – volunteers, donors, advocates – we can realize a world without Alzheimer’s disease.

Many thanks,

Dan Lawler, Executive Director

The Importance of Clinical Trials

Alzheimer’s research can only progress if people volunteer for clinical trials and research studies

When it comes to clinical trials, participation is imperative. Alzheimer’s disease is reaching epidemic proportion - and there is a desperate need for advances in prevention and treatment methods!

Dr. Anna Burke is the Director of Neuropsychiatry at Barrow Neurological Institute. She says there is an unprecedented need for volunteers for clinical trials and other research studies.

Recruiting and retaining trial participants is now the greatest obstacle, other than funding, to developing new and better treatments for Alzheimer’s disease.

“Nearly every family in America has in some way been touched by this devastating illness,” says Dr. Burke. “Researchers are developing new therapies to slow Alzheimer’s and to ultimately stop it. Clinical trials allow clinical researchers to test promising new therapies in a larger population. They also allow for a greater understanding of the illness itself. Every trial, whether successful or not, brings us one step closer to the cure.”

To address the growing need for clinical trial participants, the Alzheimer’s Association has launched TrialMatch - a clinical studies matching service. With TrialMatch, we can fill trials faster, which can help us get answers more quickly and bring us closer to finding better treatments. To date, more than 250,000 individuals have signed up with TrialMatch to search for Alzheimer’s clinical trials.

TriMatch is open to everyone, including people with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias, their caregivers, family members and physicians, and anyone who wants to get involved in the fight against Alzheimer’s.

Currently, TrialMatch lists more than 250 research studies at over 700 local trial sites across the United States and Canada. The tool is cost-free to users.

If you have questions about TrialMatch, email trialmatch@alz.org or call 800-272-3900.
Alzheimer’s: Debunking Myths
When It Comes To Dementia, Misconceptions Are Prevalent

**Myth 1: Memory loss is a natural part of aging.**

One of the most common myths pertains to memory loss. Jackie, a wife and care partner from Las Vegas, confided that she felt family and friends were dismissive of her husband’s Alzheimer’s diagnosis because they believed memory loss comes naturally with age.

**Reality:** We all have memory problems from time to time, like forgetting the name of a person we just met. However, forgetting the name of a friend you’ve known for decades or what route to take to get home is not normal aging. It may be a sign of Alzheimer’s, and evaluation by a doctor is recommended.

**Myth 2: Alzheimer’s is not fatal.**

We recently spoke to a group of journalists about the impact of Alzheimer’s in Arizona and southern Nevada. Most had no idea that the disease is terminal.

**Reality:** To date, there have been no survivors of Alzheimer’s disease. The disease destroys brain cells and causes memory changes, erratic behaviors and loss of bodily functions. The progression of the disease is different for each person, but over time the person will lose the ability to think, eat, talk and walk.

**Myth 3: Only older adults get Alzheimer’s disease.**

Kathy, of Mesa, Arizona, recently told us that she believes the biggest misconception about Alzheimer’s is that it only hits much older people.

**Reality:** Alzheimer’s can strike people in their 50s, 40s and even 30s. This is called younger-onset Alzheimer’s. Age is a major risk factor for the disease, but it is not limited to people over a certain age. It is estimated that there are more than 5 million people living with Alzheimer’s disease in the United States. This includes 5.2 million people age 65 and older and 200,000 people younger than age 65 with younger-onset Alzheimer’s disease.

**Myth 4: Aspartame and aluminum, causes Alzheimer’s.**

At an Alzheimer’s community education in Phoenix recently, a man spoke out, concerned that using artificial sweeteners and drinking diet soda would increase his chance of developing dementia. He says that is the prevailing assumption among his friends and family.

**Reality:** None of these things have been scientifically linked to Alzheimer’s. During the 1960s and 1970s, aluminum emerged as a possible suspect in Alzheimer’s. This suspicion led to concern about exposure to aluminum through everyday sources like pots and pans, soda cans, and antiperspirants. Since then, studies have failed to confirm any role for aluminum in causing Alzheimer’s. Experts today focus on other areas of research, and few believe that everyday sources of aluminum pose any threat.

Aspartame is an artificial sweetener, marketed under such brand names as Nutrasweet and Equal. It was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in all foods and beverages in 1996.

According to the FDA, the agency has not been presented with any scientific evidence that would lead to change its conclusions on the safety of aspartame for most people. The agency says its conclusions are based on more than 100 laboratory and clinical studies.

**Myth 5: There are treatments available to stop the progression of Alzheimer’s disease.**

When it comes to getting a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s or other dementia, all four couples we talked to admitted one of the first things they thought after the diagnosis was: “How can we treat this.”

**Reality:** At this time, there is no treatment to cure, delay or stop the progression of Alzheimer’s disease. FDA-approved drugs temporarily slow worsening of symptoms for about 6 to 12 months, on average, for about half of the individuals who take them.

The progression of the disease is different for each person, but over time the person will lose the ability to think, eat, talk and walk.

When it comes to dementia, how much do people really know? We recently sat down with four couples impacted by Alzheimer’s disease in our area. Each family was very candid, sharing with us that distinguishing fact from fiction can be very confusing.

Q: Tell me a little about your mom?
A: “She was a mother of 10 kids – 6 boys and 4 girls. She was married to a military man, Landoff Fairconeture,”

Q: What is your fondest memory?
A: “My fondest memory about my mother is when we danced together. My mother loved to dance to an artist named Ms. Jody and loved Rick James and Bob Marley! I loved Rick James and Bob Marley!”

Q: What do you think is the biggest misconception about dementia?
A: “The biggest misconception about dementia is that the general population thinks your loved one is crazy and that drives me nuts because of this terrible disease. It took my mother’s identity of being a strong woman and changed people’s perception of her.”

Q: How do you process it?
A: “Emotionally I was broken.”

Q: What do you want people to remember about your mom?
A: “It impressed me how my mother could light up a room when she walked in with her big personality and beautiful presence. Also, just a great person, beautiful mother and friend! She was smart, soulful, an excellent cook, great dancer and beautiful soul.”

Q: Anything you’d like to add?
A: “Mom will be forever missed and always be in my heart and soul.”
On June 21st, people across the Desert Southwest and the world will participate in The Longest Day - demonstrating love for those affected by Alzheimer’s disease.

This is a day of hope, where people will do what they love - swimming, playing bridge, hiking, knitting and more – to honor a caregiver, someone living with Alzheimer’s, or someone they’ve lost to this devastating disease.

Whether it’s choosing a favorite activity, hosting an event or joining a team, participants will raise funds and awareness to advance Alzheimer’s Association care, support and research programs.

Tucson resident Holly Cluff is among those participating, alongside friend Nan Surufka. Holly and Nan also took part last year, revolving their day around their taiko class.

For those who aren’t familiar, taiko is the artistic, powerful, and physically demanding discipline of Japanese ensemble drumming. “It’s not only physically challenging,” admits Holly. “It’s mentally challenging as well.”

Holly and Nan also spent time doing yard work around the dojo where they take their taiko classes.

“Our focus was to bring awareness to the concept of the Longest Day - and for the two of us it was important to participate in an effort bigger than ourselves,” says Holly.

In addition to drumming and community service, Holly and Nan included meditation and dinner at a local Japanese restaurant to complete their day.

“I felt somewhat alone in our community,” remarks Teresa. “I attended the [Alzheimer’s Association] Annual Education Conference last year and it was an eye-opener with so much learning. Larry and I attend support groups. It’s an important socializing outlet.”

While “caregiver” isn’t how she’d categorize herself, Teresa says she knows it’s not easy for those who find themselves in that role.

“It is important as a caregiver to be present. It’s not always easy and caregivers need support too!”

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**Education & Activity Calendar**

*Call your Regional Office or visit www.alz.org/dsw for regular updates to this Calendar*

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**Between 2000-2015, Alzheimer’s deaths increased 123%.

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**5.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s disease.**
Ruby Montenegro became involved with the Alzheimer’s Association 5 years ago. Her grandfather, Edmundo, a WWII veteran, died from the disease.

For her, the disease was a source of grief and was ''depressing, and she is adamant that awareness is crucial.

RivALZ: Tackling Alzheimer’s

Melissa Wastell got involved with the Alzheimer’s Association shortly after her mom passed away in 2015. She was looking for a way to honor her mom, who was diagnosed in her 50s.

Melissa discovered RivALZ Blondes vs. Brunettes, where two teams of professional women compete in a flag football, while raising funds and awareness for Alzheimer’s. “Up to my involvement with BvB, everything associated with Alzheimer’s was sad and horrible,” remembers Melissa. “BvB was the first thing associated with Alzheimer’s that was fun and made me smile.”

Three seasons later, Melissa says RivALZ has provided her with a great support system. “I have gained a lot of great friends and a support group, while doing something fun to spread awareness and raise funds.” The event is fun, but don’t be fooled. These women work extremely hard. “My family was surprised when they came to watch that first time,” recalls Melissa. “They said, ‘You guys really now what you’re doing.’”

Melissa lives in Phoenix with her husband, Andy. She has a BA in Interior Design and Management and works in architecture and design.

Ruby plays either center or offensive line for Team Brunettes. She juggles work, practice and a busy family schedule. When it comes to getting ready for the big game, Ruby has this to say: “I don’t think people understand what we do to prepare for this game. We put in the work.”

Ruby has worked as a court clerk for the city of Avondale for the past 10 years. She lives in Avondale with her husband, Jose. Ruby and Jose have 20-year old twins (Robert and Adelina) and two chihuahuas (Buttercup and Cocoa). Ruby says Adelina may follow in her footsteps and join Team Brunettes in 2019.
### Support Groups

**CENTRAL AZ**
- **AHWATUKEE**
  - Mountain View Lutheran Church
  - 1st Saturday – 10:00 am
- **ANTHEM**
  - Anthem Civic Building
  - 4th Saturday – 10:00 am
- **ARIZONA CITY**
  - Golden Harvest Cowboy Church
  - 1st Tuesday – 1:00 pm
- **CASA GRANDE**
  - Caliche Adult Day Club
  - 4th Wednesday – 1:00 pm
- **CHANDLER**
  - Chandler Reg Hospital, Morrison Bldg
  - 2nd & 4th Thursday – 5:30 pm
- **GOODYEAR**
  - St Therese’s Catholic Church
  - Last Tuesday – 4:00 pm
- **GILBERT**
  - First United Methodist Church of Gilbert
  - 1st & 3rd Monday – 3:00 pm
- **GLENDALE**
  - Didymus Nazar Senior Center
  - 2nd Thursday – 10:00 am
- **GOLD CANYON**
  - Superstition Foothills Baptist Church
  - 1st & 3rd Tuesday – 2:00 pm
- **GOODYEAR**
  - Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
  - 1st & 3rd Monday – 3:00 pm
- **MESA**
  - Red Mountain Active Adult Center
  - 1st & 3rd Friday – 2:00 pm
  - Mesa Active Adult Center
  - 2nd & 4th Tuesday – 10:00 am
  - Sundial Village East
  - 3rd Thursday – 1:00 pm
- **PAYSON**
  - Payson Senior Center
  - 1st & 3rd Wednesday – 1:30 pm
- **PEORIA**
  - Peoria Community Center
  - 2nd & 4th Monday – 10:00 am
- **PHOENIX**
  - Deer Valley Community Center
  - 1st & 3rd Wednesday – 4:00 pm
  - Dust at Church of the Beatitudes
  - 1st & 3rd Tuesday – 12:00 pm
  - 1st & 3rd Thursday – 10:00 am
- **TEMPPE**
  - Tempe Lutheran Church
  - 2nd Saturday – 2:00 pm
- **WICKENBURG**
  - RM Respite Care
  - 1st & 3rd Wednesday – 1:00 pm

**SOUTHERN AZ**
- **BULLHEAD CITY**
  - Western AZ Regional Medical Center
  - 1st Monday – 1:00 am
- **COTTONWOOD**
  - Verde Valley Medical Center
  - 1st & 3rd Wednesday – 10:00 am
- **GREEN VALLEY**
  - Green Valley Community Church
  - 1st Monday – 1:00 pm
- **MARANA**
  - William Taft Abbott Sr Library
  - 4th Wednesday – 10:30 am
- **NOGALES**
  - Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center
  - 1st & 3rd Friday – 2:00 pm
  - Rancho Vaquero Community Center
  - 1st Monday – 10:00 am
- **ORO VALLEY**
  - Rancho Vaquero Community Center
  - Last Tuesday – 4:00 pm
- **PAYSON**
  - Payson Lakes Methodist Church
  - Every Monday – 9:00 am
  - Early Stage & Care Partner
  - March 29 – May 17
- **SEDONA**
  - Sedona United Methodist Church
  - 1st & 3rd Tuesday – 9:30 am
- **SOUTHERN NV**
  - American Legion Post #60
  - 3rd Thursday – 10:30 am
- **SUPERSTITION Foothills Baptist Church**
  - 1st & 3rd Friday – 2:00 pm

**NORTHERN AZ**
- **BULLHEAD CITY**
  - Western AZ Regional Medical Center
  - 1st Monday – 10:00 am
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  - 1st & 3rd Friday – 2:00 pm

### Support Southwest Chapter

**NOMA AZ**
- **BOLIVAR**
  - Mesquite Senior Center
  - 2nd Tuesday – 2:00 pm
- **LAUHLIN**
  - Nevada State Veterans Home
  - 4th Thursday – 10:00 am
  - Nevada State Veterans Home
  - 4th Thursday – 10:00 am
- **SPANISH LANGUAGE GROUP**
  - Arizona Alzheimer’s Association Office
  - 1st Friday – 10:00 am
  - Bilingual Caregiver Support
  - 2nd & 4th Wednesday – 2:30 pm
- **TUCSON**
  - Tucson Senior Center
  - 2nd Thursday – 2:30 pm
- **ALABAMA**
  - Early Stage & Care Partner
  - 4th Friday – 10:00 am
  - Caregivers Support Group
  - 3rd Tuesday – 1:30 pm

### Bereavement Support

- **DENISE**:
  - I felt so alone. I didn’t realize how much I needed affirmation, physically and emotionally.

### Alzheimer’s Disease

Alzheimer’s disease is not a normal part of aging.

Alzheimer’s disease is more than memory loss.

[www.alz.org/dsw](http://www.alz.org/dsw)
# Support Groups

There is no cost for attending and no commitment to come back – just a family of friends who care.

This listing is subject to change. Please call your regional office or visit our website for more information.

## Support Groups (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOODYEAR</strong></td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Wednesday – 1:00 pm</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Wednesday – 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Sun Health Research Institute Every Monday – 1:30 pm Early Stage &amp; Care Partner March 29 – May 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERDE RIVER</strong></td>
<td>Verde Valley Medical Center 1st and 3rd Thursday – 10:00 am</td>
<td>1st and 3rd Thursday – 10:00 am</td>
<td>Valley Presbyterian Church 1st and 3rd Thursday – 10:00 am</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DENVER</strong></td>
<td>Flagstaff Broadscale Living 3rd Wednesday – 6:00 pm</td>
<td>3rd Wednesday – 6:00 pm</td>
<td>TMC Senior Services 1st &amp; 3rd Thursday – 10:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUN CITY AREA</strong></td>
<td>Sun City Christian Church Every Thursday – 9:30 am</td>
<td>Every Thursday – 9:30 am</td>
<td>San Manuel Veterans Home 4th Tuesday – 10:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GILA RIVER</strong></td>
<td>Sun Lakes United Methodist Church Every Monday – 10:00 am</td>
<td>Every Monday – 10:00 am</td>
<td>Nevada State Veterans Home 4th Tuesday – 1:00 pm</td>
</tr>
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## Desert Southwest Chapter

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<tr>
<td><strong>LAS VEGAS</strong></td>
<td>NV Veterans Senior Center 2nd and 4th Wednesday – 1:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HENDERSON</strong></td>
<td>2nd and 4th Wednesday – 1:00 pm</td>
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<td>Henderson Department of Veterans Affairs 2nd and 4th Wednesday – 1:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOUTHERN NV</strong></td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Monday – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Monday – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Henderson Community Center 1st &amp; 3rd Monday – 3:00 pm</td>
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## You’re Not Alone

Denise Henderson, NV

“I was exhausted - both physically and emotionally. I felt so alone. I didn’t realize how much I needed affirmation, understanding... until I attended my first support group.”
Ruby Montenegro became involved with the Alzheimer’s Association 5 years ago. Her grandfather, Edmundo, a WWII veteran, died from the disease. Ruby says her Tata was cared clear, and she is adamant that awareness is crucial. “It might be hard to talk about it, but families should be says Ruby. Melissa Wastell got involved with the Alzheimer’s Association shortly after her mom passed away in 2015. She was looking for a way to honor her mom, who was diagnosed in her 50s. Melissa discovered RivALZ Blondes vs. Brunettes, where two teams of professional women compete in a flag football, while raising funds and awareness for Alzheimer’s. “Up to my involvement with BvB, everything associated with Alzheimer’s was sad and horrible,” remembers Melissa. “BvB was the first thing associated with Alzheimer’s that was fun and made me smile.”

Three seasons later, Melissa says RivALZ has provided her with a great support system. “I have gained a lot of great friendships and a support group, while doing something fun to spread awareness and raise funds.” The event is fun, but don’t be fooled. These women work extremely hard. “My family was surprised when they came to watch that first time,” recalls Melissa. “They said, ‘You guys really now what you’re doing.’” Melissa lives in Phoenix with her husband, Andy. She has a BA in Interior Design and Management and works in architecture and design. Ruby plays either center or offensive line for Team Brunettes. Ruby plays either center or offensive line for Team Brunettes. Ruby says her Tata was cared for by family members and friends. She says signing up for RivALZ was a “great way to keep his memory alive.”

Ruby’s passion for the cause is clear, and she is adamant that awareness is crucial. “It might be hard to talk about it, but families should be prepared and know what resources are out there,” says Ruby.

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On June 21st, people across the Desert Southwest and the world will participate in The Longest Day — demonstrating love for those affected by Alzheimer’s disease.

This is a day of hope, where people will do what they love — swimming, playing bridge, hiking, knitting and more — to honor a caregiver, someone living with Alzheimer’s, or someone they’ve lost to this devastating disease.

Whether it’s choosing a favorite activity, hosting an event or joining a team, participants will raise funds and awareness to advance Alzheimer’s Association care, support and research programs.

Tuscon resident Holly Cluff is among those participating, alongside friend Nan Surufka. Holly and Nan also took part last year, revolving their day around their taiko class.

For those who aren’t familiar, taiko is the artistic, powerful, and physically demanding discipline of Japanese ensemble drumming. “It’s not only physically challenging,” admits Holly, “it’s mentally challenging as well.”

Holly and Nan also spent time doing yard work around the dojo where they take their taiko classes.

“Our focus was to bring awareness to the concept of the Longest Day - and for the two of us it was important to participate in an effort bigger than ourselves,” says Holly.

In addition to drumming and community service, Holly and Nan included meditation and dinner at a local Japanese restaurant to complete their day.

I felt somewhat alone in our community,” remarks Teresa. “I attended the [Alzheimer’s Association] Annual Education Conference last year and it was an eye-opener with so much learning. Larry and I attend support groups. It’s an important socializing outlet.”

While “caregiver” isn’t how she’s categorized herself, Teresa says she knows it’s not easy for those who find themselves in that role.

“It is important as a caregiver to be present. It’s not always easy and caregivers need support too!”

“I am grateful to my family and friends who understand and support,” she adds. "I have a tremendous support system and I am grateful for that."


Between 2000-2015, Alzheimer’s deaths increased 123%.

5.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s disease.

Take Action

Whether you’re a loved one of someone with Alzheimer’s, a professional caring for a patient, or someone just learning about the disease, there are actions you can take now.

The Alzheimer’s Association has created a free online tool that guides you through personalized care and family decision planning.

Take the First Step Today

Alzheimer’s Association Alzheimer’s Association

The Longest Day is an act of love. It’s a day when people come together and demonstrate love for those affected by Alzheimer’s disease.

Please click on your Regional Office to RSVP for individual classes.

Call your Regional Office or visit www.alz.org/dsw for regular updates to this Calendar.

Education & Activity Calendar

Desert Southwest Chapter

Register online at alz.org/thelongestday.

Join Holly and Nan and participate in The Longest Day, Register online at alz.org/thelongestday.

To learn more about The Longest Day, please call 1-800-272-3900 or email longestday@alz.org.
When it comes to dementia, how much do people really know? We recently sat down with four couples impacted by Alzheimer’s disease in our area. Each family was very candid, sharing with us their distinguishing fact from fiction can drive home the person’s perception of her.

Alzheimer’s can strike people in their 50s, 40s and even 30s. This is called younger-onset Alzheimer’s. Age is a major risk factor for the disease, but it is not limited to people over a certain age. In fact, it is estimated that there are more than 5 million people living with Alzheimer’s disease in the United States. This includes 5.2 million people aged 65 and older and 200,000 people younger than age 65 with younger-onset Alzheimer’s disease.

Myth 4: Aspartame and aluminum causes Alzheimer’s.

At an Alzheimer’s community education in Phoenix recently, a man spoke out, concerned that using artificial sweeteners and drinking diet soda would increase his chance of developing dementia. He says that is just a myth. People think your loved one is crazy and that it only hits much older people. Misconception about Alzheimer’s is that it only hits much older people.

Reality: None of these things have been scientifically linked to Alzheimer’s. During the 1960s and 1970s, aluminum emerged as a possible suspect in Alzheimer’s. This suspicion led to concern about exposure to aluminum through everyday sources like pots and pans, soda cans, and antiperspirants. Since then, studies have failed to confirm any role for aluminum in causing Alzheimer’s. Experts today focus on other areas of research, and few believe that everyday sources of aluminum pose any threat.

At this time, there is no treatment cure, delay or stop the progression of Alzheimer’s disease. FDA-approved drugs temporarily slow worsening of symptoms for about 6 to 12 months, on average, for about half of the individuals who take them.

Key Takeaway

“It is important to understand Alzheimer’s and dispel the myths surrounding the disease. By talking about the realities of the disease, we increase concern and awareness and move closer to a new reality: A world without Alzheimer’s disease.”

James Fitzpatrick
Program Director
**Letter From the Executive Director**

Dear Friends,

This spring heralds the release of the 2018 Annual Alzheimer’s Disease Facts & Figures report. Sadly, as we each are all too aware, the impact of Alzheimer’s – both human and financial – is growing rapidly. By 2025, Arizona and Nevada will see a 42.9% (AZ) and 42.2% (NV) increase in individuals with Alzheimer’s. These are the 2nd and 3rd largest increases in the country!

Nationally, this epidemic continues to grow. Over 5.7 million Americans of all ages will have Alzheimer’s or another related dementia in 2018. Additionally, mortality continues to rise with the number of deaths from Alzheimer’s, from 2000-2015, increasing by 123% while deaths from other major diseases decreased. The facts are staggering. But there is good news. There are signs of progress.

The Association continues to be the largest, private funder of Alzheimer’s research in the world. In January, the Association awarded funding for 28 new projects, totaling $4.5 million of new funding. This funding, cumulative with on-going funding, brings the Association’s active investment in research to nearly $110 million in 19 countries. And this investment is seeing results.

Alzheimer’s biomarkers are making it possible to detect the disease and provide an accurate diagnosis earlier than any other time in history. This early diagnosis of Alzheimer’s provides important benefits to individuals and families, including cost savings and ability to future plan.

While the Alzheimer’s epidemic continues to grow, we continue to make strides in the fight. We all know that there is much more work to be done. But we also know that together – volunteers, donors, advocates – we can realize a world without Alzheimer’s disease.

Many thanks,

Dan Lawler
Executive Director

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**The Importance of Clinical Trials**

Alzheimer’s research can only progress if people volunteer for clinical trials and research studies. When it comes to clinical trials, participation is imperative. Alzheimer’s disease is reaching epidemic proportion - and there is a desperate need for advances in prevention and treatment methods.

Dr. Anna Burke is the Director of Neuropsychiatry at Barrow Neurological Institute. She says there is an unprecedented need for volunteers for clinical trials and other research studies.

Recruiting and retaining trial participants is now the greatest obstacle, other than funding, to developing new and better treatments for Alzheimer’s disease.

“Nearly every family in America has in some way been touched by this devastating illness,” says Dr. Burke. “Researchers are developing new therapies to slow Alzheimer’s and to ultimately stop it. Clinical trials allow clinical researchers to test promising new therapies in a larger population. They also allow for a greater understanding of the illness itself. Every trial, whether successful or not, brings us one step closer to the cure.”

To address the growing need for clinical trial participants, the Alzheimer’s Association has launched TrialMatch - a clinical studies matching service. Through TrialMatch, we can fill trials faster, which can help us get answers more quickly and bring us closer to finding better treatments. To date, more than 250,000 individuals have signed up with TrialMatch to search for Alzheimer’s clinical trials.

Biomarkers for Alzheimer’s disease continue to advance.

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**Getting Started**

Visit alz.org/TrialMatch to create and manage your personal profile that includes information about your diagnosis, location and other preferences. Your profile will be matched with a continuously updated database of clinical trials.

As a new user you will receive a customized list of potential study matches. You may then identify the studies you would like to pursue and contact the site coordinator listed for those studies to determine next steps.

You have the option to be notified via email when new studies that match your profile are added to TrialMatch.

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**Arizona Alzheimer’s Association**

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**Our Vision**

A World Without Alzheimer’s Disease

**Our Mission**

To eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; & to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

**Our Purpose**

To empower and support individuals, families, caregivers, and communities affected by dementia in Arizona and southern Nevada.

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**Desert Southwest Regional Offices**

**Please contact the Regional Office in your area for any help**

**Chapter Office & Central Arizona Region**

1028 E. McDowell Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85006
602.528.0545

**Northern Arizona Region**

3111 Cleaver Dr. Suite A
Prescott, AZ 86305
928.771.9257

**Southern Arizona Region**

1159 N. Craycroft Rd
Tucson, AZ 85712
520.322.6601

**Southern Nevada Region**

5150 S. Valley View Blvd, #104
Las Vegas, NV 89118
702.248.2770

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**Desert Southwest Chapter**

The Desert Southwest Chapter strives to provide the latest in research information. To learn more information on Alzheimer’s research, visit us online at www.alz.org/research

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**TrialMatch**

TrialMatch is open to everyone, including people with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias, their caregivers, family members and physicians, and anyone who wants to get involved in the fight against Alzheimer’s.

Currently, TrialMatch lists more than 250 research studies at over 700 local trial sites across the United States and Canada. The tool is cost-free to users.

If you have questions about TrialMatch, email trialmatch@alz.org or call 800-272-3900.
Tucson resident Teresa Koslow is one of them, although she says she doesn’t see herself that way. “I am a spouse, a partner. Of course, I am here for my husband as he is for me. I do not consider myself a caregiver.”

It’s a conundrum for spouses who suddenly find themselves in a caregiver role, but don’t necessarily identify as such.

Teresa’s husband, Larry, was diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) in 2016 at the age of 74. The neurologist considers this diagnosis pre-Alzheimer’s disease. The main symptom he experiences is short term memory loss, but he also gets confused with time and place and has some concentration issues.

“Dementia is experienced by each person differently. There is no exact time frame on stages - and every individual experience symptoms differently,” says Teresa. “Larry continues to think about issues and wants to contribute to society.”

Larry is a retired political science professor and attorney. He’s authored three books and countless articles. Larry and Teresa have been married for 53 years. The couple has two children (Larisa and Melinda) and two grandchildren (Michael, 19 and Marshall, 14).

“We are a close family,” says Teresa. “Our daughters are knowledgeable about Alzheimer’s and very supportive of their dad.”

It was the couple’s daughters who first noticed something was wrong. Teresa recalls thinking Larry’s problems were due to recent family trauma. “I was over-compensating for him. Maybe I was in a form of denial,” remembers Teresa. “We had almost lost our youngest daughter. We lost a grandson. This had been devastating.”

But Teresa says the memory issues continued, and that’s when they consulted their doctor and testing began. When Larry was diagnosed, Teresa says she was sad, but not shocked, primarily because she had a strong support system. At that point, Larry and Teresa began researching and located the Alzheimer’s Association. It was the support they needed during an uncertain time.

► CAREGIVER (continued on page 4)