Connie Ridgeway sits at the kitchen table of her Mesa, Arizona home, reflecting on her late husband. She's understandably emotional as she recounts how they met, fell in love, and married in May 2006. Connie says Tom swept her off her feet.

“He loved classical music and the Rolling Stones,” Connie reminisces. “Our first date, he invited me to the Phoenix Symphony. “That was the night he swept me off my feet,” says Connie. She also talks about how Tom would come alive and break out into song and dance whenever he heard the Stones.

Tom lived in Arizona his entire life. He loved the outdoors - hunting and golfing among his favorite activities. “We golfed almost every weekend, traveling to different courses all over the state. We loved that time together,” says Connie.

Early 2008, just two years into their marriage, Connie started noticing things weren’t quite right. “He often complained to me that he wasn’t able to keep up with his work anymore,” says Connie. “He was having difficulty drafting letters. Tom was a fraud investigator, a position he held for nearly a decade. “In the back of my mind I’m saying to myself, this man has been in his job for nine years. I don’t understand why he can’t do this,” recalls Connie. “I wanted to help him, so I started helping draft the letters at home after work.”

Meanwhile, Tom would repeatedly trigger the security system. “He would come home from work, walk through the door and not remember the security code,” says Connie. The security company would call Connie on her cell phone, asking if they should contact the police. “I tried everything to help him remember the code. It was his dad’s birthdate. He just couldn’t do it, so we stopped setting the alarm.”

Tom continued to struggle at work. He was written up several times and eventually let go. His boss discovered Tom was taking work home in the evening. It was considered a breach of security and privacy. He was let go.

Early 2008, just two years into their marriage, Connie started noticing things weren’t quite right. “He often complained to me that he wasn’t able to keep up with his work anymore,” says Connie. “He was having difficulty drafting letters. Tom was a fraud investigator, a position he held for nearly a decade. “In the back of my mind I’m saying to myself, this man has been in his job for nine years. I don’t understand why he can’t do this,” recalls Connie. “I wanted to help him, so I started helping draft the letters at home after work.”

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After his termination Tom struggled with putting his resume together. He was unable to update it or create cover letters; and he was now more
Dear Friends,

Alzheimer’s disease is relentless. The number of people affected by this disease continues to grow at an alarming rate. More than 5.7 million Americans are living with this disease, with a new case developing every 65 seconds. Arizona and Nevada are ground zero for this increase, having some of the highest projected growth rates over the next 6 years.

As this need has grown, so have we. The Chapter recently relocated its offices, to accommodate a larger staff and the need to do more in the community. We have more volunteers engaged in communities across our Chapter, delivering programs and support. Yet, there is still so much more work to be done.

Alzheimer’s disease is not about the numbers. Alzheimer’s, as we each know, is about the individuals. It is about the person. It is about their individual story.

Stories such as Jean & Kathy Norris-Wilhelm. Stories like Manuel & Elena Balderrama. Stories like Laura Rogers. These stories, and tens of thousands of others, are Alzheimer’s. We each have a story — a story of love, of laughter, of heartbreak, of loss.

It is important to tell these stories. Not only to keep alive the joy and happiness we shared with our loved ones, but to also recognize the difficulties and challenges we faced because of this disease. In each of these we find strength. The determination to ensure that our loved ones are remembered for the individual they are, not the disease; and the resolve to create a future for our children free from this disease.

Please, share your story. Raise your voice and join the chorus. Only together will we realize a world without Alzheimer’s.

Many thanks,

Dan Lawler
Executive Director

Letter From the Executive Director

Preventing the Onset of Alzheimer’s?

The Alzheimer’s Association is committed to funding global research efforts to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease. It is an epidemic that is ballooning, particularly in Arizona and Nevada where the growth rate for the disease is second and third in the United States respectively.

The U.S. has a National Plan to address Alzheimer’s that was put in place in 2012. There are five goals: 1) Prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer’s by 2025; 2) Optimize care quality and efficiency; 3) Expand supports for people with Alzheimer’s disease and their families; 4) Enhance public awareness and engagement; 5) Track progress and drive improvement.

Arizona and Nevada have a number of premier research facilities dedicated to Alzheimer’s research. Banner Alzheimer’s Institute (BAI) is among the facilities leading the way. BAI is an international leader in preventative studies. They are currently conducting 40 clinical trials, over a dozen of which are actively enrolling participants.

“We have several promising trials underway,” says Dr. William Burke, Director of The Stead Family Memory Center at Banner Alzheimer’s Institute. “We are active in the prevention space. [We] think we’ll be more successful in protecting the brain from these bad proteins that cause dementia, opposed to after the damage is already done.”

One project Dr. Burke is working on is the Generation Program. It is one of two clinical trials: Generation 1 and Generation 2. Each trial will last 5-8 years, exploring treatments that may be able to prevent the onset of Alzheimer’s.

“So many of our participants are motivated,” says Dr. Burke. “It’s not so much for themselves, but because they want to be involved in finding an answer for this terrible disease.”

The Generation Program isn’t looking for people with Alzheimer’s, rather those with a specific gene (APOE4) that increases the risk of developing the disease. “We want to intervene before people actually develop symptoms,” says Dr. Burke. “Prevent the loss of nerve cells in the brain is what we’re really trying to do.”

To participate in the Generation Program, you must be 60-75 years old and have not been diagnosed with any memory impairment. You also have to be willing to find out your genetic status. If you have the APOE4 gene, it doesn’t mean you will develop Alzheimer’s. But it does mean you are at more risk than those without the gene. Participation is voluntary; you can leave at any time.

The study is funded by the NIH, private philanthropists, and pharmaceutical companies Novartis and Amgen. The Generation Program was spearheaded by Banner Alzheimer’s Institute, but Dr. Burke says the research is being done at facilities around the world. The goal is to end Alzheimer’s before we lose another generation.

In the meantime, there are things you can do right now to reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer’s. Exercise is proven to help. “There was a study in Sweden that followed women for 20 years. The women in the top treatments that may be able to prevent the onset of Alzheimer’s.

Alzheimer’s disease. Even people in the middle of the pack had a 50% reduction in risk of developing Alzheimer’s. If you want to learn more about the Generation Program contact Banner Alzheimer’s Institute or visit www.generationprogram.com.

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Volunteer Recognition
Laura Rogers Provides Community Education and Support

Laura Rogers is personally touched by Alzheimer’s. Several family members are living with the disease.

The Alzheimer’s Association Desert Southwest Chapter recognizes the importance in the relationships forged with our community partners. Through these partnerships, we are able to expand our reach to help the many people affected by Alzheimer’s disease across Arizona and southern Nevada. These two states are hit particularly hard by Alzheimer’s and Laura is committed to raising awareness about the disease.

Laura Rogers, the Health in Arizona Policy Initiative (HAPI) Manager at the Graham County Health Department, has been instrumental in coordinating upcoming First Responder training Sessions across multiple departments.

Thank you, Laura, for being a model partner for County Public Health Departments throughout Southern Arizona! We couldn’t serve the community without committed people like you!

Volunteers Needed
Every volunteer contributes to our ability to serve the community. With your help, we are able to advance our mission and increase our reach.

For more information, please call your local regional office:

Southern Nevada: 702.248.2770
Southern Arizona: 520.322.6601
Central Arizona: 602.528.0545
Northern Arizona: 928.771.9257

Laura is also trained as a Dementia Friend Champion and provides information sessions throughout Graham County for people interested in how to become a Dementia Friend.

Like so many of us, Alzheimer’s disease has impacted Laura personally. While this important cause aligns with her work at the Graham County Health Department, she continues to go above and beyond in helping bring awareness to those in Southern Arizona.

Laura has presented at the Graham County Senior Citizens Center and the Church of Latter Day Saints and has been instrumental in coordinating upcoming First Responder training Sessions across multiple departments.

Volunteers Needed
Every volunteer contributes to our ability to serve the community. With your help, we are able to advance our mission and increase our reach.

The doctor was direct, Connie says, telling Tom he believed he may have Alzheimer’s disease. “We couldn’t believe it. We didn’t even know what that was.”

After months of visits and testing, in October of 2011, a neurologist confirmed what their primary care doctor suspected: Tom had Alzheimer’s. He was 55-years-old and already in the moderate stage.

Connie gradually began taking over all the household responsibilities, her anxiety over the situation escalating. “I could no longer trust him to take care of things — like pay the bills — but I was still unsure why,” says Connie.

“Does he not love me? Does he not care? Anger was building inside of me as it seemed I was losing my partner, my marriage. We hardly had a chance to get it off the ground and it seemed like we were in trouble already. I didn’t know what was going on.”

At one point, Connie came home from work to find the gas burner on and nothing on the stove. When Connie told Tom about it, he was completely unaware. “That was one of the last straws,” says Connie. “Life and death were involved.” On April 21, 2011, they went to see the doctor.

Connie describes how the doctor first asked Tom a series of questions. He then gave him a pen and paper and asked Tom to draw a picture. It could be anything, even a stick figure. “Tom looked at the pen and paper, hesitated as he was thinking, then picked up the pen as if he were going to draw, then put it down and slid it back to the doctor and said, ‘I can’t do it.’”

“He could no longer walk or even stand,” says Connie. In February 2015, she was forced to place him in hospice. “I could no longer take care of his needs. He passed away a few weeks later.”

“I choose to remember the time Tom and I had, and not focus on the time we didn’t have or could have had,” says Connie. “I do not regret a thing.”

Connie smiles when she talks about Tom, his love for the outdoors, golfing, how he made her laugh. “One of the things I miss most about Tom is his sense of humor,” says Connie. “The way he made people laugh. He forever changed my life and who I am.”

“He want to memorialize him by getting involved in the Alzheimer’s cause,” says Connie. “I continue to educate myself on the disease by reading, attending events and searching for clinical trials to participate in. If I can help one person by sharing what we went through, I will consider it a gift from Tom.”

Connie says Tom was in his element when he was outdoors.

Many with early onset Alzheimer’s are in their 40s & 50s.

Ambiguous loss is a loss that occurs without understanding.
Ron & Bonny Lepore

“I think that there is sometimes just a lack of understanding of how this all works. They’re not alone because I have it myself,” admits Bonny Lepore. Her husband, Ron, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s earlier this year at 74-years-old.

Ron is a Vietnam War veteran and avid New England Patriots fan who enjoys volunteering his time at the Prescott VA. He also loves hiking and will travel with a Prescott hiking group 2-4 days a week. “It gives [Bonny] a break. I know that she’s got to do so many things that I can’t do,” says Ron.

“I’ve always been very independent. I’ve always done it my way,” admits Ron. “It got really frustrating because [Bonny’s] helping me but I didn’t [always] know that.”

“This is a tough subject but in a committed team, when your original safety net has holes in it, you’ve got to do something,” persists Bonny. “This is a tough subject but in a committed team, when your original safety net has holes in it, you’ve got to do something,” persists Bonny. “This is a tough subject but in a committed team, when your original safety net has holes in it, you’ve got to do something,” persists Bonny. “This is a tough subject but in a committed team, when your original safety net has holes in it, you’ve got to do something,” persists Bonny.

Together, Ron and Bonny are ready to tackle what’s ahead. “It doesn’t happen and I’m going to enjoy what’s left.”

Jean & Kathy Norris-Wilhelm

“Warrior is what I’d call Jean,” says Kathy Norris-Wilhelm. “It embodies so much about her strength and courage. She’s brave no matter what she does.”

Jean taught in the Chandler Unified School District for nearly two decades. She was in the classroom teaching when she realized something wasn’t right. She decided to retire, putting her students best interests first. Later, in 2016, Jean was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

“The first day I found out what happened, a tear came down,” recalls Jean. But she said that was the end of that. “I am not doing that. I’m not going to look at it that way.”

“It is talking about it can help just one family, one person – that’s critical,” says Kathy. “There’s power in knowledge.”

Kathy says dementia is often misunderstood. “The emphasis only on memory is a huge misconception. For Jean, it’s language-based.”

“It’s not going to take our joy. Every single day we find something to be happy about,” says Kathy. “It’s love. It’s always been love,” adds Jean.

In Arizona, Alzheimer’s is expected to grow 42.9% by 2025.
Every 65 seconds someone in the U.S. develops Alzheimer's.

JULY

2 Monday - 9:00 am
Early-Stage Partners in Care
Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church
200 W Campbell Avenue
Tempe, AZ
Please RSVP: 520.322.6601

6 Friday - 1:00 pm
Understanding & Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior
Nevada State Veteran’s Home
100 Veterans Memorial Drive
Boulder City, NV

9 Monday - 11:30 am
Know the 10 Signs
Alzheimer’s Association Office
340 E Palm Lane, Suite 230
Phoenix, AZ

9 Monday - 3:30 pm
Know the 10 Signs
Casa Pedrito Road
6327 W Fillmore Street
Phoenix, AZ
Presented in Spanish

10 Tuesday - 10:30 am
Healthy Living
Graham County Health Department
826 W Main Street
Safford, AZ

10 Tuesday - 12:15 pm
Know the 10 Signs
Gilbert Senior Center
130 N Oak Street
Gilbert, AZ

11 Wednesday - 10:00 am
Know the 10 Signs
Gila Bend Senior Center
5401 W Oro Valley Road
Gila Bend, AZ

11 Wednesday - 1:30 pm
Understanding Alzheimer’s & Dementia
Barrow Neurological Institute
240 W Thomas Road, 3rd Floor
Phoenix, AZ

11 Wednesday - 3:00 pm
Memory Cafe
Casa Pedrito Road
7250 N Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ

12 Thursday - 12:00 pm
Understanding Alzheimer’s & Dementia
Nye County Coalition
300 E Wilson Road
Pahrump, NV

11 Wednesday - 1:15 pm
Dementia Conversations
Granite Gate Senior Living
3850 N US Highway 93
Prescott, AZ

11 Wednesday - 3:00 pm
Memory Cafe
Casa Pedrito Road
7250 N Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ

16 Monday - 9:30 am
Know the 10 Signs
Shepherd of the Hills UMC
13658 W Meridian Boulevard
Sun City West, AZ

17 Tuesday - 1:00 pm
CarePRO (10 Week Series)
Southwest Medical Associates West
8670 W Chyenne, Suite 105
Las Vegas, NV
Registration Reg: 702.248.2770

17 Tuesday - 1:30 pm
CarePRO (10 Week Series)
Graham County Health Department
826 W Main Street, Annex Building
Safford, AZ
Registration Reg: 520.322.6601

18 Wednesday - 1:00 pm
Know the 10 Signs
via Linda Senior Center
13658 W Meeker Boulevard
Sun City West, AZ

18 Wednesday - 10:00 am
Volunteer Orientation
Alzheimer’s Association Office
1159 N Craycroft Road
Tucson, AZ
Please RSVP: 520.322.6601

18 Wednesday - 3:00 pm
Memory Cafe
Casa Pedrito Restaurant
7250 N Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ

19 Thursday - 11:30 am
Living with Alzheimer’s: For Care Partners - Early Stage
American Legion Post 60
1510 Bruce Woodbury Drive
Lakeside, NV

19 Thursday - 12:00 pm
Memory Cafe
Casa Pedrito Restaurant
7250 N Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ

27 Friday - 9:00 am
Understanding Alzheimer’s & Dementia
Amigos Senior Center
443 E Desert Senior Lane
Amigos Valley, NV

27 Friday - 9:00 am
Support Group Facilitator Training
Alzheimer’s Association Office
340 E Palm Lane, Suite 230
Phoenix, AZ
Please RSVP: 602.528.0545

30 Monday - 11:30 am
Understanding Alzheimer’s & Dementia
Alzheimer’s Association Office
340 E Palm Lane, Suite 230
Phoenix, AZ

AUGUST

1 Wednesday - 11:30 am
Early Stage Social Engagement
Via Linda Senior Center
10440 E Via Linda
Scottsdale, AZ

1 Wednesday - 1:00 pm
CarePRO (10 Week Series)
Southwest Medical Associates West
8670 W Chyenne, Suite 105
Las Vegas, NV
Registration Reg: 702.248.2770

1 Wednesday - 3:00 pm
Memory Cafe
Casa Pedrito Restaurant
7250 N Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ

2 Tuesday - 9:30 am
Know the 10 Signs
Tempe Public Library
3500 S Rural Road
Tempe, AZ

2 Thursday - 1:00 pm
Volunteer Orientation
Alzheimer’s Association Office
1159 N Craycroft Road
Tucson, AZ
Please RSVP: 520.322.6602

26 Wednesday - 3:00 pm
Memory Cafe
Casa Pedrito Restaurant
7250 N Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ

27 Friday - 9:00 am
Support Group Facilitator Training
Alzheimer’s Association Office
1159 N Craycroft Road
Tucson, AZ
Please RSVP: 520.322.6602

30 Monday - 11:30 am
Understanding Alzheimer’s & Dementia
Alzheimer’s Association Office
340 E Palm Lane, Suite 230
Phoenix, AZ

Steve Johnson was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2013. “Walking the dogs is part of my routine,” says Steve. “I get out. I’m not sitting in the house all day.”

“I think they picture somebody who just kind of sits there, doesn’t recognize anybody, and doesn’t do anything; those later stages, says Jackie. “Where he’s at – early to moderate – it can last a really long time…which I didn’t realize.”

Steve and Jackie have been married for 42 years. “I’m the anti-social person. He’s the gregarious one,” says Jackie. “He wants to be with people, chatting away all the time. He doesn’t do the chatting anymore like he used to. He’s very quiet. And that’s not him.”

“I don’t have the confidence I used to have,” admits Steve. “I used to be able to carry on a conversation. I can’t.”

“People stay away,” says Steve. “Don’t stop. Keep coming at me.”

In Nevada, Alzheimer’s is expected to grow 42.2% by 2025.
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.

**ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION**

**DESSERT SOUTHWEST CHAPTER**

**Support Groups**

**CENTRAL AZ**

AHWATUKEE
Mountain View Lutheran Church
1st Saturday – 10:00 am

ANTHEM
Anthem Cccw Building
4th Saturday – 10:00 am

ARIZONA CITY
Golden Harvest Cowboy Church
1st Tuesday – 1:00 pm

CAS GRANDE
Caliche Adult Day Club
4th Wednesday – 1:00 pm

CHANDLER
Chandler Reg Hospital Morrison Bldg
2nd Thursday – 5:30 pm

FLORENCE
Dorothy Nolan Senior Center
2nd Thursday – 10:00 am

GILBERT
First United Methodist Church of Gilbert
1st & 3rd Friday – 1:30 pm

GLendale
Sarah’s Place at Glencroft
Every Thursday – 2:30 pm

GOLD CANYON
Superior Post 66 Baptis Church
1st & 3rd Tuesday – 2:00 pm

GOODYEAR
Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
1st & 3rd Monday – 1:00 pm

MARICOPA
Cooper Sky Recreation Complex
2nd Wednesday – 10:00 am

MESA
Mesa Active Adult Center
2nd & 4th Tuesday – 10:00 am
Red Mountain Active Adult Center
1st & 3rd Friday – 2:00 pm
Sunland Village East
3rd Thursday – 1:00 pm

PAYSON
Payson Senior Center
1st & 3rd Wednesday – 1:30 pm

PHOENIX
Barrow Neurological Institute
2nd Wednesday – 10:00 am

PHOENIX
Deer Valley Community Center
1st & 3rd Tuesday – 4:00 pm

PHOENIX
Duet Partners in Health and Aging
1st & 3rd Thursday – 11:00 am

PHOENIX
St Theresa’s Catholic Church
2nd Thursday – 4:00 pm

PHOENIX
Westley Community Center
3rd Tuesday – 9:30 am
Spanish Language Group
1st Thursday – 10:00 am

RIO VERDE
Verde Care
1st Tuesday – 3:00 pm

SCOTTSDALE
Desert Mission Methodist Church
2nd & 4th Wednesday – 10:30 am

SCOTTSDALE
Granite Reef Senior Center
1st Monday – 1:00 pm

SCOTTSDALE
La Casa de Cristo Lutheran Church
2nd Thursday – 7:00 pm
4th Wednesday – 10:00 am

SCOTTSDALE
Via Linda Senior Center
2nd and 4th Wednesday – 11:30 am

SUN CITY
Sun City Christian Church
Every Thursday – 9:30 am

SUN CITY
Sun Health Research Institute
Every Monday – 1:30 pm
Early Stage & Care Partner
June 8 – August 6

SUN LAKES
Sun Lakes Methodist Church
2nd & 4th Thursday – 9:00 am
Early Stage & Care Partner

SURPRISE
Surprise Senior Center
2nd & 4th Tuesday – 10:00 am

SURPRISE
Surprise Senior Center
1st & 3rd Wednesday – 9:00 am

TEMPE
Temple Lutheran Church
2nd Wednesday – 2:00 pm

WICKENBURG
R&R Hospice Care
1st & 3rd Thursday – 1:00 pm

NORTHERN AZ

BULLHEAD CITY
Western Az Regional Medical Center
1st Monday – 10:00 am

COTTONWOOD
Verde Valley Medical Center
1st Monday – 10:00 am

FLAGSTAFF
Broadscale Senior Living
3rd Wednesday – 6:00 pm
San Francisco de Assisi Catholic Church
2nd & 4th Tuesday – 10:00 am

KINGMAN
Lingerfield Center
Every Wednesday – 10:00 am
Kingman WACOG
3rd Thursday – 9:30 am

LAKEWOOD / SHOW LOW
Sahuarita at White Mountains Senior Living
2nd Monday – 1:30 pm

PRESCOTT
Prescott United Methodist Church
Every Monday – 10:00 am
Veterans Administration Hospital
1st & 3rd Wednesday – 10:00 am

PRESCOTT VALLEY
Susan J Rheem Adult Day Center
Every Monday – 10:00 am

SEDONA
Sedona Methodist Church
1st & 3rd Tuesday – 9:30 am

ALZHEIMER’S SYMPTOMS CHANGE OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS.

In the mild stage, most function independently in many areas.

Desert Southwest Chapter

**Support Groups**

**SOUTHERN AZ**

CLIFTON
Clifton Public Library
3rd Friday – 2:30 pm

DUNCAN
Duncan Senior Center
2nd Tuesday – 1:30 pm

GREEN VALLEY
Green Valley Community Church
1st Monday – 1:00 pm
Valley Presbyterian Church
1st & 3rd Thursday – 1:00 pm

MARANA
William Taft Abbyt Sr Library
4th Wednesday – 10:30 am

NOGALES
Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center
2nd Friday – 10:00 am

ORO VALLEY
Rancho Vistoso Community Center
Last Tuesday – 4:00 pm
Oro Valley Public Library
1st & 3rd Thursday – 1:30 pm

PIMA Council on Aging Offices
2nd & 4th Wednesday – 2:30 pm

Por Undas Un Arizona Unido
3rd Tuesday – 10:00 am

TMC Senior Services
1st & 3rd Tuesday – 10:30 am
Veteran’s Administration Hospital
2nd Friday – 3:00 pm

YUMA
American Veterans Post 330
1st & 3rd Friday – 10:30 am

SOUTHERN NV

BOULDER CITY
Nevada State Veterans Home
4th Tuesday – 1:00 pm
Senior Center of Boulder City
2nd & 4th Wednesday – 1:00 pm

HENDERSON
Barbara Greenispian Women’s Care Ctr
4th Tuesday – 4:30 pm

LAS VEGAS
Alzheimer’s Association Office
4th Friday – 10:00 am
Coffee Talk
Alzheimer’s Association Office
1st Friday – 10:00 am
RSVP Early Stage & Care Partner
July 6 – August 31

AFFORD
SEACUS
2nd Thursday – 1:30 pm

SIERRA VISTA
Sierra Vista Library
4th Thursday – 10:30 am

TUCSON
Cvano Business Center
1st & 3rd Tuesday – 2:00 pm
Grace Health & Healing Clinic
1st & 3rd Saturday – 9:00 am
Veterans & Spouses

HUB CITY
1st Monday – 1:00 pm

HOGAN
2nd & 4th Thursday – 10:00 am

LAUGHLIN
American Legion Post #60
3rd Thursday – 10:30 am

MESQUITE
Mesquite Senior Center
2nd Tuesday – 2:00 pm

PAHRUMP
Nye Communities Coalition
2nd & 4th Wednesday – 10:00 am

SOUTHERN NV

SUMMERLIN
Desert Vista Community Center
1st & 3rd Wednesday – 10:00 am

SURPRISE
Sun City Grand Recreation Center
2nd & 4th Thursday – 10:00 am

ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION

ABOUT OUR GROUPS

Alzheimer’s symptoms change over a period of years.

Alzheimer’s Association Desert Southwest Chapter offers a variety of specialized Support Groups. From general community to Veteran’s to Early Stage, our groups are ready to help you along your journey.
All our support groups are facilitated by trained individuals. It’s a place to:
• Exchange practical information
• Discuss problems and solutions
• Talk through challenges
• Share feelings and concerns
• Learn about available resources

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 with questions or visit our website at www.azt.org/dsw.

Support groups and their facilitators are not to be contacted for commercial purposes, solicitation, or visits from anyone who is not currently caring for someone with dementia.
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)**

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

#### Desert Southwest Chapter

- **Pima Council on Aging Offices**
  - 2nd & 4th Wednesday – 2:30 pm
- **Por Undas Un Arizona Unido**
  - 3rd Tuesday – 10:00 am
- **TMC Senior Services**
  - 1st & 3rd Thursday – 10:30 am
- **Veteran’s Administration Hospital**
  - 2nd Friday – 3:00 pm
- **American Veterans Post 330**
  - 1st & 3rd Friday – 10:30 am

- **Mesquite Senior Center**
  - 2nd Tuesday – 2:00 pm
- **Nye Communities Coalition**
  - 2nd & 4th Wednesday – 10:00 am

#### Southern NV

- **Lauglin**
  - 2nd Tuesday – 10:30 am
- **Henderson**
  - Barbara Greenspan Women’s Care Ctr
  - 4th Tuesday – 1:40 pm
- **Las Vegas Alzheimer’s Association Office**
  - 4th Friday – 10:00 am
  - Coffee Talk
  - Alzheimer’s Association Office
  - Fridays – 10:00 am
  - RSVP Early Stage & Care Partner
  - July 6 – August 31
- **Alzheimer’s Association Office**
  - 4th Thursday – 11:00 am
  - Spanish Language Group
- **Alzheimer’s Association Office**
  - 1st Friday – 10:00 am
  - Renosent
- **Henderson Mountain View**
  - 3rd Tuesday – 10:00 am
- **Laughlin**
  - American Legion Post 460
  - 3rd Thursday – 10:30 am

### 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 – 10:00 am
- **CaSa Grande**
  - Carine Adult Day Club
  - 4th Wednesday – 1:00 pm
- **Chandler**
  - Chandler Reg Hospital Morrison Blvd
  - 2nd Thursday – 5:30 pm
- **Florence**
  - Dorothy Nolan Senior Center
  - 2nd Thursday – 10:00 am
- **Gilbert**
  - First United Methodist Church of Gilbert
  - 1st & 3rd Friday – 1:30 pm
- **GlenDale**
  - Sarah’s Place at GlennForest
  - Every Thursday – 2:30 pm
- **Gold Canyon**
  - Superstition Foothills Baptist Church
  - 1st & 3rd Tuesday – 2:00 pm
- **Goodyear**
  - Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
  - 1st & 3rd Monday – 3:00 pm
- **Maricopa**
  - Copper Sky Recreation Complex
  - 2nd Wednesday – 10:00 am
- **Mesa**
  - Mesa Active Adult Center
  - 2nd & 4th Tuesday – 10:00 am
  - Red Mountain Active Adult Center
  - 1st & 3rd Friday – 2:00 pm
- **Phoenix**
  - Sun Village East
  - 3rd Thursday – 1:00 pm

### Northern AZ

- **Bullhead City**
  - Western AZ Regional Medical Center
  - 1st Monday – 10:00 am
  - Cottonwood
  - Verde Valley Medical Center
  - 1st & 3rd Wednesday – 1:00 pm
  - Flagstaff
  - Brookside Senior Living
  - 3rd Wednesday – 6:00 pm
  - San Francisco de Asis Catholic Church
  - 2nd & 4th Thursday – 10:00 am
  - Kingman
  - Lingeritter Center
  - Every Wednesday – 10:00 am
  - Kingman WACDG
  - 3rd Thursday – 9:30 am
  - Lakeside / Snow Low
  - Soterra at White Mountains Senior Living
  - 2nd Wednesday – 1:30 pm
  - Prescott
  - Prescott United Methodist Church
  - Every Monday – 10:00 am
  - Veterans Administration Hospital
  - Every Friday – 1:30 pm
  - Veterans & Spouses
  - Prescott Valley
  - Susan J Rhema Adult Day Center
  - Every Monday – 10:00 am

### Support Groups

#### Alzheimer’s Association Desert Southwest Chapter

- **Payson**
  - Payson Senior Center
  - 1st & 3rd Wednesday – 1:30 pm
- **Peoria**
  - Peoria Community Center
  - 2nd & 4th Monday – 10:00 am
- **Phoenix**
  - Barrow Neurological Institute
  - 2nd Wednesday – 10:00 am
  - Deer Valley Community Center
  - 1st & 3rd Wednesday – 4:00 pm
  - St Theresa’s Catholic Church
  - Last Tuesday – 4:00 pm
  - Golden Gate Community Center
  - 2nd Monday – 10:00 am
  - San Francisco de Asis Catholic Church
  - 1st & 3rd Wednesday – 10:00 am

#### Alzheimer’s Association for Southern Nevada

- **Henderson**
  - Barbara Greenspan Women’s Care Ctr
  - 4th Tuesday – 1:40 pm
- **Las Vegas Alzheimer’s Association Office**
  - 4th Friday – 10:00 am
  - Coffee Talk
  - Alzheimer’s Association Office
  - Fridays – 10:00 am
  - RSVP Early Stage & Care Partner
  - July 6 – August 31
- **Alzheimer’s Association Office**
  - 4th Thursday – 11:00 am
  - Spanish Language Group
  - Alzheimer’s Association Office
  - 1st Friday – 10:00 am
  - Renosent
- **Henderson Mountain View**
  - 3rd Tuesday – 10:00 am
- **Laughlin**
  - American Legion Post 460
  - 3rd Thursday – 10:30 am

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payson</td>
<td>Payson Senior Center</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Wednesday – 1:30 pm</td>
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<td>Support group held in Payson Senior Center.</td>
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<td>Peoria</td>
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<td>Community center for seniors in Peoria.</td>
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<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>Barrow Neurological Institute</td>
<td>2nd Wednesday – 10:00 am</td>
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<td>Neurological institute for brain health.</td>
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<td>1st &amp; 3rd Wednesday – 4:00 pm</td>
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<td>St Theresa’s</td>
<td>St Theresa’s Catholic Church</td>
<td>Last Tuesday – 4:00 pm</td>
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<td>Catholic church for community gatherings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golden Gate</td>
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<td>2nd Monday – 10:00 am</td>
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<td>Community center for seniors in Las Vegas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Francisco de Asis</td>
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<td>Soterra</td>
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<td>2nd Wednesday – 1:30 pm</td>
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<td>Community center for White Mountains.</td>
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<td>Prescott</td>
<td>Prescott United Methodist Church</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Methodist church for community gatherings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterans Administration Hospital</td>
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<td>Every Friday – 1:30 pm</td>
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<td>Hospital for veterans.</td>
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<td>Veterans &amp; Spouses</td>
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<td>Community center for veterans and their spouses.</td>
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<td>Susan J Rhema Adult Day Center</td>
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<td>Adult day center for seniors.</td>
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<td>Methodist church for Sedona.</td>
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<td>Flagstaff</td>
<td>Brookside Senior Living</td>
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<td>Community center for Flagstaff.</td>
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<td>Cottonwood</td>
<td>Verde Valley Medical Center</td>
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**July**

- **2 Monday - 9:00 am** Early-Stage Partners in Care
  Our Seasons Lutheran Church 1300 W Campbell Avenue Tucson, AZ
  Registration Req: 520.322.6601

- **6 Friday - 1:00 pm** Understanding & Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior
  Desert Southwest Chapter, 1159 N Craycroft Road Tucson, AZ
  Please RSVP: 520.322.6601

- **9 Monday - 11:30 am** Know the 10 Signs Alzheimer’s Association Office 340 E Palm Lane Tucson, AZ
  Registration Req: 520.322.6601

- **9 Monday - 3:30 pm** Know the 10 Signs
  Coc’s Bakery Restaurant 7250 N Oracle Road Tucson, AZ
  Please RSVP: 602.528.0545

- **11 Wednesday - 12:00 pm** Understanding Alzheimer’s & Dementia
  Nye County Coalition Center 300 E Wilcox Road Pahrump, NV

- **11 Wednesday - 1:15 pm** Dementia Conversations
  Granite Gate Senior Living 3858 N Las Highway B9 Prescott, AZ

- **11 Wednesday - 3:00 pm** Memory Cafe
  Coc’s Bakery Restaurant 7250 N Oracle Road Tucson, AZ

- **16 Monday - 9:30 am** Know the 10 Signs
  Nuecedo’s Food Mart
  1510 Bruce Woodbury Drive Laughlin, NV

- **17 Tuesday - 1:00 pm** CarePRO (10 Week Series)
  Southwest Mental Health Center 8870 W Cheyenne, Suite 105 Las Vegas, NV
  Registration Req: 702.248.2770

- **17 Tuesday - 1:30 pm** CarePRO (10 Week Series)
  Graham County Health Department 826 W Main Street Safford AZ
  Registration Req: 520.322.6601

- **18 Thursday - 12:00 pm** Understanding Alzheimer’s & Dementia
  American Legion Post 60 340 E Palm Lane Tucson, AZ
  Please RSVP: 702.248.2770

- **19 Thursday - 11:30 am** Living with Alzheimer’s: For Care Partners – Early Stage
  American Legion Post 60 1510 Bruce Woodbury Drive Laughlin, NV

- **23 Monday - 9:30 am** Memory Cafe
  Tempe Public Library 3500 S Rural Road Tempe, AZ

- **23 Monday - 9:30 am** Memory Cafe
  Tempe Public Library 3500 S Rural Road Tempe, AZ

- **27 Friday - 9:00 am** Support Group Facilitator Training
  Alzheimer’s Association Office 1159 N Craycroft Road Tucson, AZ
  Please RSVP: 520.322.6601

- **27 Friday - 9:00 am** Understanding Alzheimer’s & Dementia
  Amargosa Senior Center 443 E Desert Senior Lane Amargosa Valley, NV

**August**

- **1 Wednesday - 11:30 am** Early Stage Social Engagement
  Via Linda Senior Center 10440 E Via Linda Scottsdale, AZ

- **1 Wednesday - 1:00 pm** Early Stage Social Engagement
  CarePRO Southwest Mental Health Center West 8870 W Cheyenne, Suite 105 Las Vegas, NV
  Registration Req: 702.248.2770

- **1 Wednesday - 3:00 pm** Memory Cafe
  Coc’s Bakery Restaurant 340 E Palm Lane Tucson, AZ

- **2 Tuesday - 4:00 pm** Volunteer Orientation
  Alzheimer’s Association Office 1159 N Craycroft Road Tucson, AZ
  Please RSVP: 520.322.6601

- **26 Wednesday - 3:00 pm** Memory Cafe
  Coc’s Bakery Restaurant 7250 N Oracle Road Tucson, AZ

**Manuel & Elena Balderrama**

Manuel and Elena met in Mexico when they were young. “At first, we were neighbors,” says Manuel Balderrama. “I liked her, and she liked me. There was chemistry and we became sweethearts.”

Manuel and Elena have been married 54 years. They have five children (one of whom passed away) and six grandchildren.

In 2006, Manuel says Elena began having symptoms. An Alzheimer’s diagnosis came years later, in 2012. “The process was very slow,” says Manuel. “She was losing and losing consciousness.”

Manuel admits he didn’t know a lot about Alzheimer’s and mistakenly thought she would recover. He soon realized there was no cure. “I felt sad but I never expressed it,” recalls Manuel. “I did not show her that I felt down so she did not worry.”

Elena is now in the later stages of the disease. Manuel says he is preparing for what’s next and is determined to keep Elena home with him as long as possible. “At my children and my grandchildren support me in that way,” says Manuel. “Mexican people want to keep the family close to each other. There is a lot of family unity. I think it is part of the culture.”

**Steve & Jackie Johnson**

Steve Johnson was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2013. “Walking the dogs is part of my routine,” says Steve. “I get out. I’m not sitting in the house all day.”

“I think they picture somebody who just kind of sits there, doesn’t recognize anybody, and doesn’t do anything; those later stages, says Jackie. “Where he’s at - early to moderate - it can last a really long time…which I didn’t realize.”

Steve and Jackie have been married for 42 years. “I’m the anti-social person. He’s the gregarious one,” says Jackie. “He wants to be with people, chatting away all the time. He doesn’t do the chatting anymore like he used to. He’s very quiet. And that’s not him.”

“I don’t have the confidence I used to have,” admits Steve. “I used to be able to carry on a conversation. I can’t.”

“He’s still a person,” says Jackie. “He still likes to have social interactions. He would really like to be with people more.”

“People stay away,” says Steve. “Don’t stop. Keep coming at me.”

In Nevada, Alzheimer’s is expected to grow 42.2% by 2025.
Ron is a Vietnam War veteran and avid New England Patriots fan who enjoys volunteering his time at the Prescott VA. He also loves hiking and will travel with a Prescott hiking group 2-4 days a week. "It gives [Bonny] a break. I know that she's got to do so many things that I can't do," says Ron.

"I've always been very independent. I've always done it my way," admits Ron. "It got really frustrating because [Bonny's] helping me but I didn't [always] know that."

"This is a tough subject but in a committed team, when your original safety net has holes in it, you've got to do something," persists Bonny. "The other guy's got to come in there and patch it up."

Together, Ron and Bonny are ready to tackle what's ahead. "It doesn't bother me. I'm not afraid of it," says Ron. "I know what's going to happen and I'm going to enjoy what's left."

Jean & Kathy Norris-Wilhelm

"Warrior is what I’d call Jean," says Kathy Norris-Wilhelm. "It embodies so much about her strength and courage. She’s brave no matter what she does."

Jean taught in the Chandler Unified School District for nearly two decades. She was in the classroom teaching when she realized something wasn’t right. She decided to retire, putting her students best interests first. Later, in 2016, Jean was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

"The first day I found out what happened, a tear came down," recalls Jean. But she said that was the end of that. "I am not doing that. I’m not going to look at it that way."

"It us talking about it can help just one family, one person – that’s critical," says Kathy. "There's power in knowledge."

Kathy says dementia is often misunderstood. "The emphasis only on memory is a huge misconception. For Jean, it’s language-based."

"It’s not going to take our joy. Every single day we find something to be happy about," says Kathy. "It’s love. It’s always been love," adds Jean.

Ron & Bonny Lepore

"I think that there is sometimes just a lack of understanding of how this all works. They're not alone because I have it myself," admits Bonny Lepore. Her husband, Ron, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s earlier this year at 74-years-old.

"The other guy's got to come in there and patch it up."

"This is a tough subject but in a committed team, when your original safety net has holes in it, you've got to do something," persists Bonny. "The other guy's got to come in there and patch it up."

Together, Ron and Bonny are ready to tackle what’s ahead. "It doesn't bother me. I'm not afraid of it," says Ron. "I know what's going to happen and I'm going to enjoy what's left."

In Arizona, Alzheimer’s is expected to grow 42.9% by 2025.
Volunteer Recognition
Laura Rogers Provides Community Education and Support

Laura Rogers is personally touched by Alzheimer’s. Several family members are living with the disease.

The Alzheimer’s Association Desert Southwest Chapter recognizes the importance in the relationships forged with our community partners. Through these partnerships, we are able to expand our reach to help the many people affected by Alzheimer’s disease across Arizona and southern Nevada. These two states are hit particularly hard by Alzheimer’s and Laura is committed to raising awareness about the disease.

Laura Rogers, the Health in Arizona Policy Initiative (HAPI) Manager at the Graham County Health Department, has been instrumental in coordinating upcoming First Responder training Sessions across multiple departments.

Thank you, Laura, for being a model partner for County Public Health Departments throughout Southern Arizona! We couldn’t serve the community without committed people like you!

Volunteers Needed

Every volunteer contributes to our ability to serve the community. With your help, we are able to advance our mission and increase our reach.

For more information, please call your local regional office:

- Southern Arizona: 520.322.6601
- Western Arizona: 928.771.9257
- Central Arizona: 602.528.0545
- Nevada: 702.248.2770
- Northern California: 916.447.2670

Many with early onset Alzheimer’s are in their 40s & 50s.

Ambiguous loss is a loss that occurs without understanding.

The doctor was direct, Connie says, telling Tom he believed he may have Alzheimer’s disease. “We couldn’t believe it. We didn’t even know what that was.”

After months of visits and testing, in October of 2011, a neurologist confirmed what their primary care doctor suspected: Tom had Alzheimer’s. He was 55-years-old and already in the moderate stage.

Connie did her best to care for Tom while coping with ambiguous loss. In her struggle to manage care responsibilities and work, Connie lost her job. She eventually found work again, and received much needed respite. Her mother-in-law was a great help. “She stayed with Tom until she got home from work until we needed to begin utilizing adult day care.”

Connie vowed to take care of Tom as long as she could. It was now the end of 2014 and Tom was declining fast.

“He could no longer walk or even stand,” says Connie. In February 2015, she was forced to place him in hospice. “I could no longer take care of his needs. He passed away a few weeks later.”

“I choose to remember the time Tom and I had, and not focus on the time we didn’t have or could have had,” says Connie. “I do not regret a thing.”

Connie smiles when she talks about Tom, his love for the outdoors, golfing, how he made her laugh. “One of the things I miss most about Tom is laughing together. He forever changed my life and who I am.”

“I want to memorialize him by getting involved in the Alzheimer’s cause,” says Connie. “I continue to educate myself on the disease by reading, attending events and searching for clinical trials to participate in. If I can help one person by sharing what we went through, I will consider it a gift from Tom.”

Tom is father to two daughters and has four grandchildren.
Dear Friends,

Alzheimer’s disease is relentless. The number of people affected by this disease continues to grow at an alarming rate. More than 5.7 million Americans are living with this disease, with a new case developing every 65 seconds. Arizona and Nevada are ground zero for this increase, having some of the highest projected growth rates over the next 6 years.

As this need has grown, so have we. The Chapter recently relocated its offices, to accommodate a larger staff and the need to do more in the community. We have more volunteers engaged in communities across our Chapter, delivering programs and support. Yet, there is still so much more work to be done.

Alzheimer’s disease is not about the numbers. Alzheimer’s, as we each know, is about the individuals. It is about the person. It is about their individual story.

Stories such as Jean & Kathy Norris-Wilhelm. Stories like Manuel & Elena Balderrama. Stories like Laura Rogers. These stories, and tens of thousands of others, are Alzheimer’s. We each have a story — a story of love, of laughter, of heartbreak, of loss.

It is important to tell these stories. Not only to keep alive the joy and happiness we shared with our loved ones, but to also recognize the difficulties and challenges we faced because of this disease. In each of these we find strength. The determination to ensure that our loved ones are remembered for the individual they are, not the disease; and the resolve to create a future for our children free from this disease.

Please, share your story. Raise your voice and join the chorus. Only together will we realize a world without Alzheimer’s.

Many thanks,

Dan Lawler
Executive Director
I was 52 years old in 2005 when Tom and I met. He was 50. We enjoyed doing everything together.”

Connie Ridgeway sits at the kitchen table of her Mesa, Arizona home, reflecting on her late husband. She's understandably emotional as she recounts how they met, fell in love, and married in May 2006. Connie says Tom swept her off her feet.

“He loved classical music and the Rolling Stones,” Connie reminisces. “Our first date, he invited me to the Phoenix Symphony. “That was the night he swept me off my feet,” says Connie. She also talks about how Tom would come alive and break out into song and dance whenever he heard the Stones.

Tom lived in Arizona his entire life. He loved the outdoors - hunting and golfing among his favorite activities. “We golfed almost every weekend, traveling to different courses all over the state. We loved that time together,” says Connie.

Early 2008, just two years into their marriage, Connie started noticing things weren’t quite right. “He often complained to me that he wasn’t able to keep up with his work anymore,” says Connie. “He was having difficulty drafting letters.”

Meanwhile, Tom would repeatedly trigger the security system. “He would come home from work, walk through the door and not remember the security code,” says Connie. The security company would call Connie on her cell phone, asking if they should contact the police. “I tried everything to help him remember the code. It was his dad’s birthdate. He just couldn’t do it, so we stopped setting the alarm.”

Tom continued to struggle at work. He was written up several times and eventually let go. His boss discovered Tom was taking work home in the evening. It was considered a breach of security and privacy. He was let go.

Early 2008, just two years into their marriage, Connie started noticing things weren’t quite right. “He often complained to me that he wasn’t able to keep up with his work anymore,” says Connie. “He was having difficulty drafting letters.”

Tom was a fraud investigator, a position he held for nearly a decade. “In the back of my mind I’m saying to myself, this man has been in his job for nine years. I don’t understand why he can’t do this,” recalls Connie. “I wanted to help him, so I started helping draft the letters at home after work.”

Tom continued to struggle at work. He was written up several times and eventually let go. His boss discovered Tom was taking work home in the evening. It was considered a breach of security and privacy. He was let go.

After his termination Tom struggled with putting his resume together. He was unable to update it or create cover letters; and he was now more

**SAVE THE DATE**

**SEPTEMBER 15, 2018**
PRESCOTT

**SEPTEMBER 29, 2018**
SIERRA VISTA

**OCTOBER 13, 2018**
WEST VALLEY
GREEN VALLEY

**OCTOBER 27, 2018**
LAS VEGAS
YUMA

**NOVEMBER 3, 2018**
PHOENIX
VERDE VALLEY

**NOVEMBER 10, 2018**
TUCSON

**WALK TO END ALZHEIMER’S**

**Ambiguous Loss**

Mesa woman recounts husband’s Alzheimer’s diagnosis

“i was 52 years old in 2005 when tom and i met. he was 50. we enjoyed doing everything together.”

connie ridgeway sits at the kitchen table of her mesa, arizona home, reflecting on her late husband. she's understandably emotional as she recounts how they met, fell in love, and married in may 2006. connie says tom swept her off her feet.

“he loved classical music and the rolling stones,” connie reminisces. “our first date, he invited me to the phoenix symphony. “that was the night he swept me off my feet,” says connie. she also talks about how tom would come alive and break out into song and dance whenever he heard the stones.

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