



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

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**HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS FOR PEOPLE WITH ALZHEIMER'S
AND THEIR CAREGIVERS**

(CHICAGO) October 19, 2007 – According to the *2007 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures*, one out of eight people age 65 and older have Alzheimer's and nearly one out of every two over age 85 has it. There are currently more than 5 million people in the United States living with Alzheimer's and almost 10 million caring for someone with the disease. Therefore chances are pretty high that this holiday season, you'll be buying a present for parents, grandparents, relatives or friends who have been touched by the disease.

HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR CAREGIVERS

Nearly one in four caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias provide 40 hours a week or more of care. Seventy-one percent sustain this commitment for more than a year, and 32 percent do so for five years or more. One of the best gifts you can give someone caring for Alzheimer's is something that relieves the stress or provides a bit of respite for the caregiver.

The Gift of time: Cost-effective and truly meaningful gifts are self-made coupons for cleaning the house, preparing a meal, mowing lawn/shoveling driveway, respite times that allow the caregiver time off to focus on what he/she needs.

Gift Certificates: Give gift certificates for restaurants and laundry/dry cleaning services, especially those that deliver; lawn care services; computer/technology support; maid services; personal pampering services such as massages, facials, manicures/pedicures.

Books: In addition to fictional and non-fictional books that a caregiver might enjoy, there are a number of books created to assist caregivers such as "The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for Persons with Alzheimer Disease, Related Dementing illnesses, and Memory Loss in Later Life," by N.L.Mace and P.V. Rabins; "A Dignified Life: The Best

Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care: A Guide for Family Caregivers," by V. Bell and D. Troxel; and "Alzheimer's: A Caregiver's Guide and Sourcebook," by H. Gruetzner.

Digital Video Recorder (DVR)/DVDs/CDs: Purchase DVR/TiVo and years worth of services that will enable a caregiver to record favorite shows he/she may not be able watch, purchase his/her favorite movies or music CDs for the caregiver to enjoy on their down time.

HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH ALZHEIMER'S

Early Stage: Approximately 2.5 million people currently living with Alzheimer's are in the Early Stage of the disease, a period when they can live active, healthy lives, but may begin to notice subtle changes. Here are some gift ideas for people living in the early stages of the disease.

Items to help remember things such as magnetic reminder refrigerator pads, Post-It notes, baskets or trays that can be labeled within cabinets or drawers, a small pocket-sized diary or notebook, erasable white boards for key rooms in the house, a memorable calendar featuring family photos – write special family occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries.

Items that may help with daily activities such as a memory phone that can store up to eight pictures with the names and contact information of family and friends, automatic medication dispenser that can help the person living with Alzheimer's remember to take his/her medicine, nightlights that come on automatically when it gets dark, and clock with the date and time in large type.

Entertainment: Plan an outing to a movie, play or concert, sporting event, museum or possibly an organized holiday shopping outing with friends and family, favorite musical CDs or CD with compilation of favorite tunes, VHS/DVD collection of favorite movies. Also activities such as scrapbooking or other craft projects that are social in nature.

You might want to think twice before buying some gifts: Giving electronics may seem like a good idea to make life easier for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia, but that isn't always the case. If you decide to give someone with the disease a new piece of electronic equipment, remember to review the operating instructions with them slowly and more than once. Make a copy of the instructions for the person with the disease and for yourself, so you can talk them through the process on the phone if you need to.

Moderate/Late Stage: People in the later stages of Alzheimer's generally need assistance with day-to-day activities as their memory problems continue to worsen. Here are some gift ideas for people living in the later stages of the disease.

Items that provide sensory stimulation: In the later stages of the disease sensory stimulation may bring back pleasant memories, so gift ideas include scented lotions, a fluffy bathrobe in his/her favorite color, a soft blanket or afghan to keep the person warm.

Clothes: Comfortable, easy to remove, easily washable clothes such as sweat suits, knits, large banded socks, shoes with Velcro ties, wrinkle free nightgowns, nightshirts and robes.

Music: Research shows that music has a positive impact on individuals with Alzheimer's, bringing them back to good times, increasing stimulation and providing an opportunity to interact with family members. So buy favorite CDs or burn a CD full of musical favorites.

Framed Photographs/Photo Collage: Copy photos of family members and friends at photo centers, insert the names of the people in the photo and put in frames or in a photo album created specifically for that person.

Safe Return: Enroll the person in the later stages of Alzheimer's in the Alzheimer's Association's Safe Return, a nationwide identification program that provides assistance when a person with Alzheimer's or a related dementia wanders and becomes lost locally or far from home.

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's. For more information please visit www.alz.org.

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