

Our
Mind Matters

November 2022

The gift of time

Helping to Live Well

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Travel Group**

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Thank you

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COVER PHOTO: Trudi West and Deb Taylor, two of our walking group volunteers at the Botanic Gardens

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Follow us on Facebook or sign up to our regular emails to keep informed about what is happening at Dementia Auckland – visit da.org.nz or our Facebook page

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By your side

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Update from Dementia Auckland's Clinical Lead



This is the last Mind Matters for 2022. It's been three years since COVID came to our shores and rearranged the way we lived, worked, and played. COVID has played havoc with individuals, families, communities, businesses, and the world. It has also taken its toll on charities like Dementia Auckland. We have not been able to hold a big scale fundraising event in the last 2-3 years and as you would probably be aware, we are struggling financially to keep our heads above the waterline. So, in August we made the decision to exit our head office rather than lose more staff.

In September we sorted, culled, packed, and moved an office for 11 people. We have put most of our belongings into storage and we have set up a temporary 'head office' in my downstairs rumpus room. This will allow staff to work from their own homes and hot desks in a shared space with colleagues. We are calling this 'the Waterview office'. We

will hire professional office space for appointments with clients, outside agencies and meetings. As per usual we will continue to hire venues all over Auckland for our groups.

Challenging economic times have also left Dementia Auckland short staffed in a vital service provision area. We have been down two Key Workers for most of 2022. We have pulled together as a team and plugged fingers in the holes in the dyke as best we could. We are hoping that 2023 will allow us to return to near normal transition and we thank you for your patience on this.

COVID shutdowns forced us to provide supports differently. We changed the way we provided our services - by phone, emails, text and Zoom. Once we were able to, we returned to doing (where possible) our 1:1 support and groups to face-to-face again.

However, COVID gave us the glorious capacity to Zoom and for that we are forever grateful. Despite our return to 'normal transmission' we have kept a Zoom Support Group – The Daughters' Evening Support Group and the Living Well Zoom Travel Club, where participants, who live all over Auckland join in and enjoy vicariously visiting places in the world (see page 3).

The biggest and most dramatic changes to the way we provide services comes in our Education Services. Carer Education Programmes (CEPs) delivered by Zoom have proved very popular. Pre COVID in 2019 we delivered 19 CEPs with between 8-15 people attending each programme. This year we have delivered only 4 face-to-face Carer Education Programmes in

West, Central, South, and North Auckland with between 10 - 12 people attending. We have provided 8 Zoom CEPs, both in the morning and evening, with between 15 - 30 attendees. The last zoom CEP for this year has 75 people registered to attend. We are not restricted by the size of the room on Zoom.

We have begun planning CEP for 2023 and certainly we will be offering a suite of Zoom and face to face education for carers and families. We will create a calendar of these programmes so carers and families can select the dates that work best for them in advance.

Masterclasses via Zoom have also been a great success. In the days of face-to-face Masterclasses, we had between 35-74 people attend in person with maybe 9-15 people watching on Zoom. Masterclasses on Zoom are now bringing in audiences of between 79 -120 people. Family members all over the country, and the world, have been joining in. Carers and staff from our smaller affiliates around the motu have also been joining us. People in places like Rotorua and Waikato have become keen Masterclass followers.

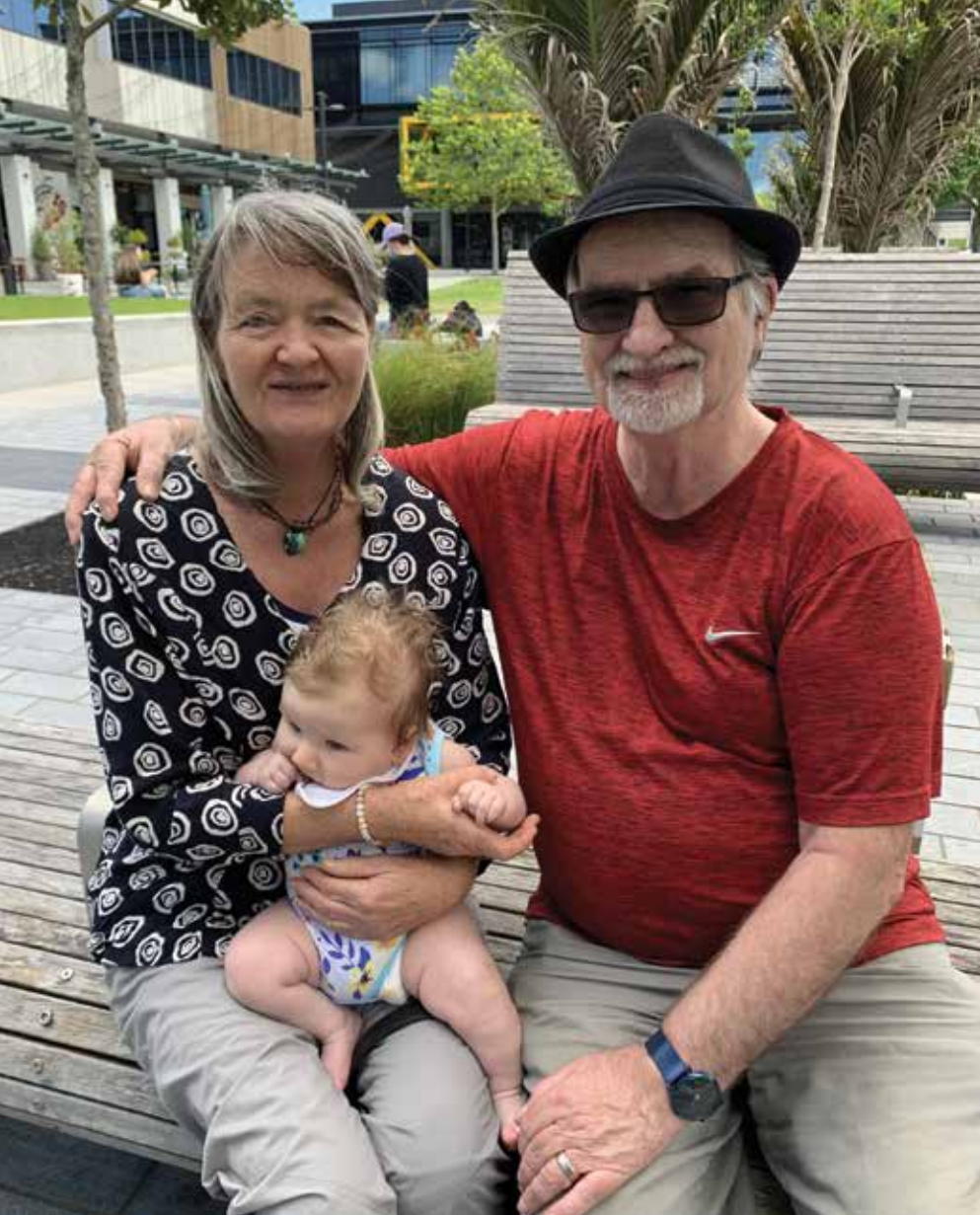
2023 will bring a range of new options with face-to-face /Zoom Masterclasses being provided. As an Educator I feel more animated and energised teaching to a live audience – so watch this space.

Despite all these challenges we have been able to do something exciting in the last few months. Our Educator, Winifred Henderson, has pivoted her roles to take on the huge but rewarding task of Educator to the Residential Facilities. Retirement Villages all over Auckland have been paying Dementia Auckland for Winifred to present educational sessions on Understanding Dementia, How to be a Dementia Friendly Community and Brain Health. So far Winifred has presented to over 2000 people – residents, staff, and Management at over 25 Villages.

The last 2-3 years have been a challenge for us all. At Dementia Auckland we are hoping and planning for a successful 2023.

Rhonda Preston-Jones
Clinical Lead
Dementia Auckland





The Essence of Living Well

A brochure in a hospital waiting room turned out to be a lifeline for David Scott. It was the way he came to know about Dementia Auckland, as prior to that the only advice a specialist offered when diagnosing his 58-year-old wife with Dementia was to get Enduring Power of Attorney. It left him in a boat without a paddle.

A huge weight came off his shoulders when he made contact with Keyworker Nicola Brenton, who he felt instantly supported by, and this began the association he has had with Dementia Auckland for the past few years.

David had not had any exposure to anyone with Dementia before, let alone someone diagnosed with it at an early age, so the Carer Education Programme being "confronting" is perhaps putting it mildly. As was his first experience at a Support group, where he wanted to speak but found himself choked up with word paralysis. When he tried the Young Ones support group after his first experience at general support group, this became the right fit. He could relate better to others who were also experiencing Dementia at a younger age. He went from being a 'deer in the headlights' to being scaffolded by a group of supportive people who became his friends.

Wife Suz also benefited from joining an art group, walking group, Zoom travel group and young women's social group.

Without these groups, David says Suz's world would have been a lot smaller. Previous friendships dropped away, probably a result of people no longer knowing how to relate to her.

David understands, but that doesn't make it easier. When one of his friends was diagnosed with another life-altering condition, he also found himself taking a step back for the same reasons. However, the people who he was sure would remain part of their lives, sadly proved him wrong. Considering social contact is one of the things proven to slow down cognitive decline, the friendships couldn't have been needed more.



Social interaction is akin to exercise for the brain



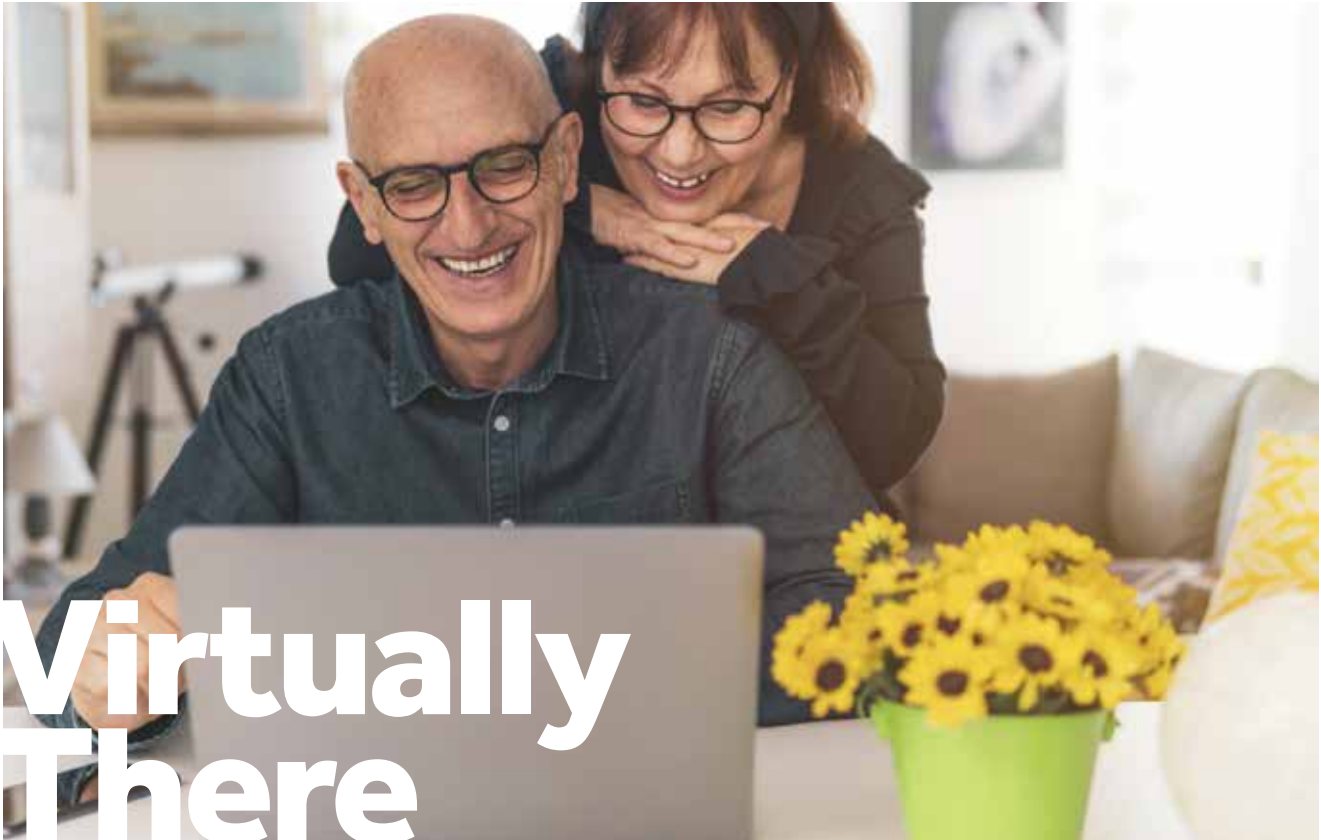
Social interaction is akin to exercise for the brain, it can slow deterioration in cognitive function and boost mood and self-esteem, which in turn fosters better eating habits, more motivation for exercise and facilitates better sleep. Never have we had a time in history where we understand the huge impacts of social isolation more than in this post-Covid lockdown era.

Suz was at times reluctant to go to her art group but always came back with a spring in her step and sense of achievement. She got the physical and social benefits out of the walking group, where she formed some strong bonds. But the group that she really loves the most is the Young Women's group, who meet at the Monte Cecilia Homestead in Hillsborough for lunch and conversation. Suz may not be able to recall what they talked about, but it doesn't matter. Someone with Dementia may not remember what they said or did, but they will remember how it made them feel. Considering it is the highlight of Suz's week, it would be sending positive endorphins flying.

David is looking forward to being able to give Suz the opportunity to attend the new Dementia Auckland Day Programme where she will have further opportunities for activities and social stimulation.

That one initial phone call had a resounding impact for this couple.

By Nicola Fletcher-Williams



Virtually There

A new virtual travel group is transporting people to exotic destinations from the comfort of their home.

Different destinations are chosen each week, where people with dementia explore country and culture over Zoom.

The online Living Well group was initiated in response to Covid restrictions disallowing in-person groups for a period of time, and also serves to meet the needs of those who have mobility issues or other difficulties in getting to an in-person group. Some people attend several other groups but enjoy this one as an additional opportunity for stimulating conversation with others.

Participants may have previously travelled to a country being discussed, allowing them to reminisce. Typically, a person with dementia is more able to recall things from their long-term memory, rather than their short-term memory, so reminiscing draws on this strength.

Discussion points can include local cuisine, population, climate, and history of the country. Videos are shared which show some of the most popular tourist hot spots.

At the end of the session, there is a quiz on the country with no importance placed on their score, designed just as a bit of fun - and they must be achieving this goal because the Carers like to

join in too!

One of the group participants, Red, says he gives the group full marks for assisting him to keep his brain active.

"I take a lot of notes during the session, then go over them later and often pick up something I've missed and can do more research and homework on it."

Ross says his interest is sparked by countries he knew little about,

"It was also interesting to hear from the other participants in the session and I found that usually they came up with some information that I had not thought of. Most elucidating. I'm looking forward to more sessions."

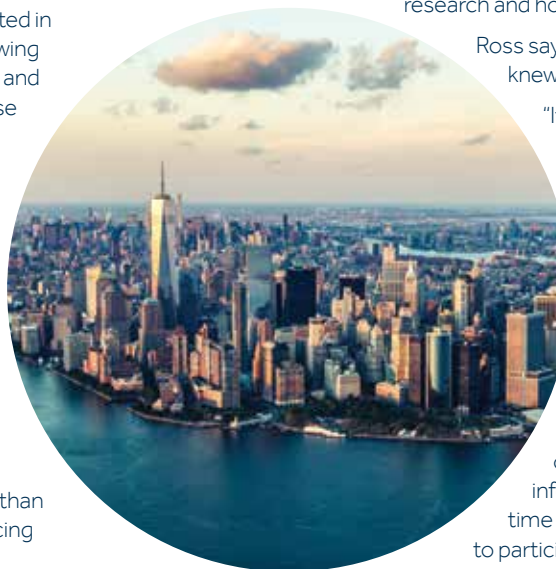
Mark says the group is convenient for him now he is unable to drive

"I love the social interaction with the other group members - everyone is friendly and accepting. The videos of each country that Kelly shares are informative, and I learn new things each time I join the group. "Everyone is encouraged to participate in a non-threatening environment, and I feel comfortable contributing."

And most importantly, Mark loves that there is always humour involved.

"It's great to have a laugh about things."

By Nicola Fletcher-Williams



Living well groups are for people with mild to moderate dementia who are still living at home.



Preparing for Christmas

We had promised you a Masterclass on Preparing for Christmas and the Holidays in early December, but we have unfortunately run out of woman power to run another Masterclass this year. So instead, we thought we would offer you some tips and tricks about Christmas and Holiday on paper.

The three main steps to planning a successful Christmas and holidays are:

- 1** Always consider what the person liked or disliked prior to the onset of dementia
- 2** Take into consideration how they cope now with people, groups, noise, chaos, changes, going to unfamiliar places etc when planning Christmas and holidays
- 3** Be flexible and make adjustments for how your person is now

Consider what Christmas means to the person with dementia

If they used to love Christmas, presents, having the family around or going to church then plan to do modified versions of this. Don't impose something on them you know they dislike.

Keep Christmas events simple

Try not to overwhelm the person living with dementia. Large gatherings, hypes up children rushing around and lots of noise can be overwhelming.

Lower your expectations

Christmas holidays will have to be different now. Let go of perfection.

Think carefully about how to 'do' Christmas or a holiday

Is it better for the family to come to you than for you to go somewhere unfamiliar? Should the visits be in small groups for shorter periods of time?

Involve the person in the rituals of Christmas

Hanging decorations on the tree, looking at Christmas lights, listening to Christmas carols, wrapping presents.

Monitor the alcohol intake

People with dementia are more susceptible to the effects of alcohol than

in the past, so watch the consumption very carefully, especially if other people are topping up glasses. Avoid excessive alcohol consumption which could lead to arguments or falls later on.

Don't overdo the present-wrapping

Make them easy for the person with dementia to unwrap so that they aren't struggling to complete this task in front of others.

Manage the noise

People with dementia often find it difficult to listen to more than one conversation at once. Sit the person at the end of the table or in a quieter room off from the main event so they can escape the noise if they need a break.

Maintain their familiar routines

Try not to change their routine and keep the person orientated regarding the day, the time and what is happening next.

Keep introducing

Remind the person with dementia of the names of family and friends visiting and make sure you introduce everyone clearly (with reference to the relationship) to avoid embarrassment of not remembering names of grandchildren etc.

Reminisce

People with dementia will be able to remember the past in detail and engage in conversation about events in their past so ensure reminiscent topics are built into conversation or old TV programmes are watched.

Enjoy Christmas music

The brain remembers music much better than other things so people living with dementia may enjoy listening to or singing familiar music and family favourites - Christmas carols make the perfect festive accompaniment.

Monitor food intake

Dementia can affect a person's appetite and they may not want to eat a huge Christmas dinner. Give them a smaller portion and offer second helpings later if they are hungry.

Someone needs to stay sober

If the person with dementia is at someone else's home they may become distressed or agitated and may need to be taken home early. Make sure someone in the family can be designated driver if need be and hasn't had anything to drink.

Avoid family arguments

There is enough going on for the person with dementia to cope with on the day.

Enjoy yourself

Of course, one of the most important things is to look after yourself. Taking time out and share the caring with friends or family is important. Have reasonable expectations of what is possible for you and the person living with dementia. Communicate openly with family about how things are, what you think the person will manage, what help you need etc so the family feel included and understand what's going on.

Ask family and friends to spend a little one-to-one time with the person who has dementia. They often value and benefit from gifts of company more than material gifts.

At Christmas time, consideration, compassion, and simplicity is paramount. Empathy is fundamental when considering people living with dementia, but as the primary carer it is equally important to take time out for you, not just at Christmas but all year round.

Rhonda Preston-Jones



Planning a Holiday after Christmas

- Consider if the person with dementia will cope with the travel, leaving their familiar surroundings to go to new environments and meet different people, before agreeing to a holiday. Planning a holiday to somewhere the person is familiar with such as a well-loved holiday house or a frequently visited spot is more likely to be successful.
- Keep it simple, stay local. If you are unsure as to how it will go try practice runs – day trips, overnight trips to nearby places to see how it goes.
- Plan well, be realistic, compromise if need be, be organised, plan for calamities and things going wrong. Always have an exit plan to come home early if things are going pear shaped.
- Plan simple holidays with minimal moving around. Stay at one place and avoid road trips to multiple places with multiple changes.
- Think carefully before agreeing to go on the “final Cruise” or flight to Europe together. It is very difficult to extradite yourselves from a ship or holiday involving a long-haul flight home.
- Regularly inform the person with dementia of the plans, make them an itinerary if need be.
- Make sure the person living with dementia has identification on them. Consider travelling with a bright red hat or jacket.
- Take a night-light. A small night-light plugged in may help the person to find their way to the bathroom in an unfamiliar place without getting lost or bumping into things.
- Inform others around you on the holiday of the situation, as you may need them to keep an extra eye out or give you assistance.

If you keep it simple and plan it well, you can look forward to an enjoyable holiday where you can both relax and enjoy yourselves.





Being a carer

As you will see, this submission to the magazine has no name attached to it. It is written by Anonymous, one of the most prolific writers in any language. I asked that my name not be attached to the article for both my privacy and because my experiences as a carer are not better or worse than anyone else's. These are my observations of what it is like to become a carer of someone with dementia but really, anyone who cares for someone with dementia could have written this.

When you form a relationship with someone, whether it is formal like marriage or something less formal, there is an expectation, perhaps naively, that it will be forever. With that expectation comes an acceptance, whether spoken out loud as part of marriage vows or implicit in the development of the relationship, that one partner will care for the other, 'in sickness and in health'. It is when the 'in sickness' part of that commitment becomes reality that life can become interesting. There is also an expectation that a child will look after its' parents when needed.

Many years ago, I learned one could use the five w's (what, when where, who and why) and an h (how) to help explain a situation and possibly work out a solution or solutions. We can use this method to explore what it is to be a carer.

The 'who and what' is the easy part - the person with dementia (parent, spouse or partner) has been diagnosed with dementia. Finding an answer to the 'when' is less easy as it is very difficult to determine when a person developed dementia as it may be a slow process and ordinary ageing may mask something more significant.

The 'why' and 'how' questions are the most challenging. It is quite normal for the carer to ask why this is happening to them but sadly, finding an answer will be elusive and, in my opinion, not really useful. It is more important, having received the news that your parent, spouse or partner has been diagnosed with dementia, to focus on the 'how' question. How is the carer going to cope?

Becoming a carer often comes at a time when that person is looking forward to retirement – to travel, to exploring hobbies, to a less structured or stressful life. But then, life changes and you have to accept that those words about 'sickness and in health' now require a response.

Being a carer means that you place your own life on hold and focus on assuring that your parent, spouse or partner is well cared for. Whatever their level of dependence or independence, their needs need to be understood and met. You quickly realise that this is an assignment which is unpaid, expects high levels of patience and understanding, tests your mental and physical strength and does not come with a holiday package. You are expected to be on duty 24/7. Perhaps that is one of the most demanding aspects of being a carer. A settled routine is required to ensure the happiness of the person with dementia so no matter the day of the week or time of the year, the routine remains the same.

How a person reacts to being diagnosed affects the role of the carer. If you are fortunate, the person with dementia will continue to interact with people outside the home which can give the carer some 'free time'. If the person with dementia chooses to withdraw from society, it means that your role as a carer becomes more demanding. Having family members or friends to assist can be very useful. However, not everyone understands dementia and that can lead to awkward situations. Serious diplomatic skills are required when you have to explain to someone that the person with dementia no longer wants, for whatever reason, to see them or talk to them on the telephone.

It can be very frustrating when friends or acquaintances hear that you have given up your paid employment to be a carer and ask how you are enjoying your retirement. Once again, diplomatic skills are required to ensure that one's response is acceptable.

However, all is not doom and gloom. My experience has only been here in New Zealand but I am very grateful for the support which is offered by 'the system'. It is very easy to point out what is wrong with our health system but being a carer would be an overwhelming task without the support we are given.

The health system provides a range of products and services which can ease the burden of being a carer. On top of all that, there is an organisation like Dementia Auckland which provides training courses and support groups for carers.

There is still though an aspect of the 'how' question which nobody can answer.

'How long do I have to keep doing this'? We know that dementia is a terminal illness. It is a journey unlike any other we have experienced because we don't know when the journey will end. Life becomes a little like living inside a tunnel. You know that at some stage you will emerge into the sunlight but you have no idea when that is going to be. Thus, it becomes difficult to sustain what I feel is an important pillar of life – hope. When we are enduring a hardship, hope helps us cope as that hardship often has a finite 'life' but dementia does not offer that luxury. What I'm trying to say is that, as a carer, I need to ensure that I keep myself as mentally and physically stable and alert as possible, something that is helped by the care groups facilitated by Dementia Auckland.

In short, being a carer is hard. Dementia is something you would not wish on your worst enemy but if it happens to your parent, spouse or partner, becoming the carer is something that just has to be done.



Remembering Louis

Nadine Rao, a 15-year-old Kingsway School Student, wrote this creative writing piece that was so good we had to share!

We met many years ago under a tree heavy engulfed by rain. It seemed as though the droplets of water would melt him as he dashed under shelter. I fled for cover as well, praying that my church dress wouldn't be drenched by nature's bath.

'Hello there,' he said.

'Hello,' I replied shyly.

Three decades later, as the skin from our youth aged with wear, so did his memory. Though we were both hunched, grey, and as old as the Earth, I could not help but feel grateful for the multitude of memories I had with him. Every day we strolled along the same walkway, worn with our footsteps of thirty years. I feared

changing direction in case I confused him. The cobblestones led along a straight path, with dancers that twirled and bloomed in every corner. Each flower that was special enough to capture his attention was carefully photographed and kept safe in his phone. Though we may have seen a flower once, twice, even three times over, he never disregarded its beauty.

"Look at that flower Ann!" he would exclaim. "It's almost as beautiful as you."

He held photographs of me in every corner of his camera roll. It reminded me of our wedding day. White streams throughout the matchbox church, and wildflowers dancing in the wind. We were too poor to afford a professional photographer, so he brought his camera. He took photos of me the entire day. Although his mind veiled it from him, I knew he remembered glimpses.

After our daily walk, we would make it back to our retreat and have the same conversation we had every day.

"Ann, where's the sugar?" Louis would call.

"Behind the coffee. Lou," I responded. I would hear rummaging, then a silenced, satisfied sigh. Moments later, when I made my way back to the kitchen, I would see a child. A child, with a spoon in hand, digging through the brown sugar, crunching on each crystal that entered his mouth. Louis would look back at me with a playful grin plastered to his face as I pried the jar from his

arthritic claws. "Want some?" he asked. "I haven't had sugar that tasty since England!" Louis exclaimed. But I knew better. He had sugar that tasty just the day before. The last seven years of his life were stored in his phone. Since he could not trust his mind to store memories, he acquired the assistance of his mobile device. Once his sugar break concluded, he would whip his phone out, and search around for his next model. In addition to his digital flower collection, millions of photos would enter his camera roll.

A flower, a table, a fly; it didn't matter to him. I would watch him for a while. Perching on a sofa, with my coffee nestled in my palms, I committed his playfulness to memory. I wanted to remember him like this; happy, playful, and carefree. I make him sound like an advertisement.

Once my daily cook began, and the scents permeated the house; he would watch television.

“ Though we were both hunched, grey, and as old as the Earth, I could not help but feel grateful for the multitude of memories I had with him ”

"Ann, do we know that person? I think we do." The advertisements would pop up, and suddenly, our circle of friends grew to everyone who was involved in television.

"No. Lou. We've never met them."

"I'm sure we have." he would call back, suspicious of my response. But no, Lou, we do not know Nigella Lawson from the Whittaker's Chocolate ad.

I would wake up to the same routine every day. But his memory failed me a little more with every passing minute. He forgot about our walks altogether at the end. Though he never did forget about his daily sugar raid. Instead of watching television, his hallucinations would occupy his fading mind.

They say that when your brain continuously makes connections, the pathways deepen. But for Louis, the pathways could have been drawn in sand. With every gust of wind that came his way, the grains would settle, and the pathways erased. When his dementia attacked him further, I rushed him to the clinic. The doctor confirmed my suspicions. When he told me that Louis would not recall significant things, such as family and friends, I thought hell will freeze over by the time my Louis forgets me.

Well, hell froze over.



Being a Keyworker



Immersed into a plethora of emotions and challenges upon hearing the numbing words of a diagnosis, a Keyworker is a beacon to guide the way through the treacherous, uncharted journey ahead.

Life, as planned and hoped for, is taken in a monumentally different direction, the first stop being the bewilderment of what to do in this new reality.

Keyworkers receive referrals from GPs and other health professionals after a diagnosis of dementia is made, allowing us to contact Carers and let them know they will not be alone in figuring it all out.

These are the more fortunate cases, as some are never referred, leaving families floundering for years without the support system of Dementia Auckland. Sometimes a referral happens many years into the journey, by which time the situation has reached a crisis point when earlier intervention could have prevented this, or we could have helped to provide the stimulating activities to slow the cognitive decline down.

Some family members contact us of their own accord, so we can field phone calls before the diagnostic process has even started. *"I can see Mum has all the signs of dementia, but refuses to go to the doctor, what do I do?"* or *"The GP is brushing off my concerns, but I know something is wrong, help!"* The calls come in about new stages of the journey *My husband is getting*

aggressive, what do I do? "How do I deal with incontinence? How do I handle disagreements in the family over the care of my Mum?" Many of the questions get asked on a daily basis, while others we have never had to answer before, such as *"My Dad has a serious criminal record, rest homes won't want to take him, what do I do?"*

Upon referral, a keyworker meets with the main support person and other family members who want to be involved. They find out all about the situation and challenges with the person with the diagnosis, providing some ideas on how to manage these. We talk about education courses, Living Well groups and support groups, organise Total Mobility Cards, make referrals where appropriate and let families talk to someone who listens and understands. Most importantly, we develop a personal rapport so that families feel they can call us when needed. We constantly hear a sense of relief that Carers have someone to turn to when they don't know what to do.

Keyworkers also run support groups for Carers, which can have a profound impact on the Caregiving journey, providing immense therapeutic value. To be able to talk to people who 'get it', who are not going to judge you for your thoughts and feelings. People who can provide suggestions and advice, or just validate that you are doing a good job, validate your feelings or make you realise that you have to prioritise yourself sometimes. They give each other moral support when making difficult decisions, such as when it is time for residential care. They laugh together and cry together, each as important as the other. They become each other's friends and greatest allies.

One of my support groups has been going for longer than the 4 years I have been in the job. Although many have spouses who are now in care or have passed away, they have continued to support each other well beyond the years of caregiving at home.

I am a Registered Nurse, and this is not a job where you get to see people walk out in a much better state than they came in. We cannot nurse people back to health, which is what I prepared and trained to do. Our sense of reward needs to come from knowing that we have made the journey a little easier, that we provided the emotional support that has been instrumental to Carers in getting through the hard days.



Carers are like Superheroes.



I care deeply about explaining the importance of self-care to prevent Carer fatigue, stress, burnout, and depression, all too prevalent in the job that offers no time off the clock. In doing so, I realised I had to practice what I preach, and have been more mindful of doing things for my own wellbeing, - such as making time to get some exercise in a busy day. As a mother I know all about putting your own wants or needs last.

I have a family member who was diagnosed with Dementia, which has given me perspective from the family's point of view. I discovered first-hand how difficult it can be to implement the things that you know need to happen for that person, even with good knowledge of the system. On top of caring for someone, you often have to tirelessly advocate for them. Already exhausted Caregivers have to find the reserves to keep pushing when they meet hurdles. It's just one of the many reasons Carers are like Superheroes. Many are often already at the limit of what I think they can manage, then it gets exponentially harder and they still keep going. I will always take inspiration from their strength and tenacity.

By Nicola Fletcher-Williams



Memory Matters

“Please take me home”

Those four words echoed through my head and tinged me with guilt. Once again, I was heading out the door and leaving my Mum to this foreign world. To life in the care home. A home that was never home for her.

Mum had been in care for nearly seven years. Don't get me wrong, we did our homework, and this was a well-run facility. One of the best. There were lots of people about to befriend, it was toasty warm inside, bountiful food and lots of

entertainment. What more could Mum want? I don't think she could remember where home was, but instinctively, she knew that was where family was. That was the place where she cooked those important meals and filled the cake tins with delicious, too often, treats. That was the place where she fed her husband and nurtured her babies.

So once again I headed home to my comfortable familiar life. However, a little voice in the back of my head would always be asking “I wonder how Mum is? I wonder what she's doing now? Is she happy or just sitting in her chair looking out the window waiting for my car to pull up in the car park for the next visit?”

At this point I decided to jump online and discover if there was anything out there that would help Mum to be more settled, bring a smile to her face and keep her company in lonely hours. I was quite surprised to find that there was. I

had to search the globe but there were numerous products especially for elderly and those living with dementia. The most highly reviewed product which took my eye was the Joy for All range of companion pets from the USA. Mum loved cats so I immediately ordered one. When it finally arrived, it was an instant hit! Mum fell completely in love with this robotic pet. It became a true companion and never left her side. She appropriately named her new ginger tabby, Joy.

Joy became one of the family to the extent that I became a little jealous of the attention she got over myself! It was a real conversation point. These days I look back on Mum's journey with a great sense of satisfaction. That little pet had given Mum a new purpose for living. It eased her anxiety and home was where Joy was.

Many of the other residents and carers were also fascinated with Joy and asked where she came from. The rest is all history, a business was born. Specialised products from around the globe to bring joy to those living with dementia available right here in New Zealand - Memory Matters NZ.

Stocking a variety of Simple Music Players, Games, Puzzles, Crafts, Amplified Memory Phones, Clocks, Simple TV Remotes, Assistive Listening Devices, Talking Products, Companion Pets and much more.

Brendon Goble
Memory Matters NZ



A couple of products available from Memory Matters NZ



Joy For All Companion Pet Cats

Robotic Companion Cats look, feel, and sound like the real thing. But they're so much more than soft fur, soothing purrs, and pleasing meows. Thanks to built-in sensor technology, Companion Pets respond to petting and motion much like the cats and dogs you know and love. This two-way interaction helps create a personally rich experience that can bring fun, joy, and friendship to you and your loved ones.



Relish Jigsaws

Jigsaw puzzles are soothing and stimulating, which can increase wellbeing and help improve communication and interaction. Relish puzzles are fit for every stage of the dementia journey. From 13 to 63 Pieces.



Young Onset Dementia Day Programme

Twelve per cent of people diagnosed with Dementia are under 65 years of age. When someone is diagnosed with Young Onset Dementia (YOD) in their 50's or early 60's they are usually physically fit, working, driving, managing their finances, and maybe still finishing off raising their adolescent or young adult children. Their spouse or partner is also probably still working. The changes brought on by dementia mean that person will eventually need to stop work and give up driving. They are then often at home all day alone, left to their own diminishing devices. Meanwhile their spouse is at work worrying and feeling guilty that they are not at home supporting and helping them.

For people over 65 years of age the DHB's fund Dementia Day Programmes – some of these DHB contracted Day Programmes deliberately exclude people under 65 years. Others design their programmes to meet the needs of the older people who attend. When people with YOD and their spouses visit these programmes, they tell us "The Day Programmes are for old people!" and they do not offer age-appropriate activities for the fitter, younger cohort.

Therefore, when a wonderful group of energetic and determined carers came to Dementia Auckland and asked if we could do something about this we agreed. Firstly, we approached the DHB's funders.



They acknowledged that services for YOD were very lacking and underfunded, and that many services were not age appropriate for YOD clients. However, they were in no space to negotiate new contracts during this time of upheaval in the health system.

So, in conjunction with Young Onset Dementia Aotearoa Trust (a Wellington based Trust) and the active Carers Group we have created a one day per week, 5-hour YOD Day Programme due to start at the end of October. As this is totally unfunded, we have been fundraising through a Give a Little page. The sessions will be run by experienced group facilitators with help from volunteers. We have been completely oversubscribed with twice as many people as there are spaces. This certainly confirms there is a need out there. The programme will provide stimulating, meaningful adult activities for fit and active people with YOD. Once the programme is up and running, we will ask the participants to give the group a new name. We will keep you up to date with our progress.

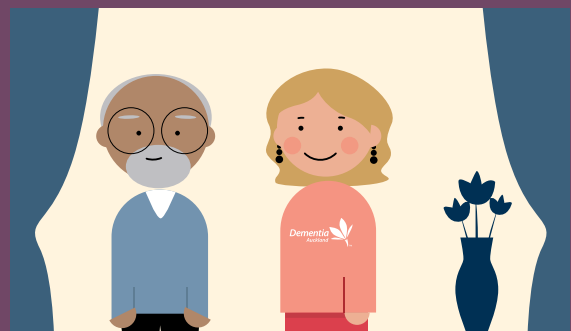
If you are keen to support this great initiative, please donate through the Give a Little website. <https://givealittle.co.nz/org/aact>

If you are keen to be a volunteer please contact Winifred Henderson, Community Education Manager, at: WinifredH@dementiaauckland.org.nz

We're here to help improve the quality of life for those affected by dementia through support for those living with dementia, their caregivers, whānau and support networks for the journey ahead.

We can help with:

- How to recognize signs of dementia
- Information and resources
- 1:1 keyworker support
- Living Well services
- Navigation through the health system
- Education courses and support groups for carers and families
- Phone consultations, advice and support



Learn more at www.da.org.nz or talk to one of our friendly team today on 0800 433 636.