

## Valley Living

## Alzheimer's documentary to be shown at Lakeview Center for Active Aging

HEATHER BAUER AND CATHY HEBERT

SPECIAL TO BLACK MOUNTAIN NEWS

You probably know someone caring for a family member or friend due to frailty, illness, or chronic conditions. With 22 percent of the Western North Carolina population age 65 and over, many family caregivers are looking for balance between their work and personal lives.

November is National Family Caregivers Month. The theme this year, "Caregiving Around the Clock" ([www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org)) is an important recognition of the nearly 56,000 caregivers and families in our community caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's Disease and other brain disorders.

The Lakeview Center for Active Aging invites the public to a special screening of *Alzheimer's: Every Minute Counts*, at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 9.

This documentary addresses Alzheimer's, the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, and illuminates the social and economic consequences for the country.

The one-hour documentary will be followed by panel discussion that includes Heather Bauer of Home Instead Senior Care, Co-sponsor; Denise Young, Alzheimer's Association; Rebecca Sharp, VAYA Health; James Hyde, Dementia Friendly WNC; and Dr. Tom Kaluzynski of Memory Care. Carol McLimans of Land of Sky, Family Caregiver Resource Specialist, will serve as moderator.

The number of people living with dementia is growing rapidly with our aging population. Al-

though dementia is not part of natural aging, the biggest risk factor for the disease is advancing age. Nearly 20,000 adults are living with dementia in the Western North Carolina region, including 2,800 people with dementia who live alone.

While there is no cure or effective medical treatment for dementia, research has proven that much can be done to improve the quality of lives for people living with the disease and their families through peer support, socialization by staying involved in their community through meaningful activities, physical exercise, and a bit of awareness and understanding.

People affected by dementia will lose their cognitive skills over time (ability to pay attention, process and remember information, logical thinking and reasoning) but there is still a lot they can do to stay connected with the community, often for many years.

Developing dementia can be unsettling. Our community has a tremendous opportunity to alleviate stress and worry for people living with dementia and their families. Through simple actions, such as a welcoming smile, introducing yourself, attending an awareness session or inviting a person living with dementia to join you for a meal, a profound impact can be made by reducing the isolation and stigma that so often accompanies dementia. Individuals with dementia are often excluded, looked down on, dismissed, and discriminated against. We are working to reverse that



"Alzheimer's: Every Minute Counts" will show at the Lakeview Center for Active Aging on Thursday, Nov. 9. FRED MCCORMICK

stigma by creating an inclusive, educated, and supportive community.

Research shows that, with meaningful engagement, people living with dementia and their caregivers experience less physical and emotional stress, better health, and enhanced quality of life.

Dementia Friendly WNC, a local grassroots organization, is committed to increasing awareness around dementia. We aim to ease fears and increase comfort levels for those interacting with people living with dementia, encouraging those who attend our awareness sessions to take concrete action to reach out to those living with dementia.

With this knowledge, WNC can open the doors of our community to people living with dementia to reduce isolation and interact with them in sup-

portive ways. Our work has led to 98 percent of attendees reporting increased comfort levels in interacting with people with dementia, more community members reporting reaching out to help people with dementia, and organizations reporting that they are making changes in their communities.

Last October at the Swannanoa Valley Friends meeting house, Dementia Friendly WNC met with 25 individuals from 10 different faith communities in Black Mountain. We shared ways to support people living with dementia and their families. This will help keep smaller groups, and the larger community connected.

We would be happy to schedule a Dementia Connection awareness program for your organization by contacting us at

[wncdementiafriendlycommunities@gmail.com](mailto:wncdementiafriendlycommunities@gmail.com).

We also create opportunities for engagement for people living with dementia, through programming with the Asheville Art Museum, Odyssey Clay Studios, the YMCA and support groups across the region.

One of our panel members, James Hyde, is a Black Mountain local living with dementia, and champion here who serves on the steering committee of Dementia Friendly WNC. Hyde, 75, a former professor and pastoral counselor at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, has had dementia since 2010.

There are ongoing local support groups in Black Mountain:

» Memory Loss Navigators, Givens Highland Farms, second and fourth Tuesdays, 9:30-11 a.m. Initial interviews with prospective members are required. People with a diagnosis and care partners meet separately. Please

contact Mel Kelley: 828-301-0529 or email [soulspkavl@gmail.com](mailto:soulspkavl@gmail.com)

» Memory Loss Caregivers of East Buncombe, Givens Highland Farms, second Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Brookside Building (J-K Entrance, lower level lounge 3). Please contact Mary Donnelly: 828-230-4143 or email [maryddsnow@charter.net](mailto:maryddsnow@charter.net).

We hope you will attend the screening of "Alzheimer's: Every Minute Counts" on Thursday, Nov. 9, at 5-7:30 p.m. at the Lakeview Center for Active Aging. There will be a complimentary buffet dinner at 5 p.m., followed by the screening and panel discussion. Show your support by wearing purple! RSVP is required. Please call 669-8610 to reserve your spot.

To learn more about Dementia Friendly WNC and living well with dementia, please visit: [www.dementiafriendlywnc.org](http://www.dementiafriendlywnc.org).

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