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) is an important recognition of the nearly 50,000 caregivers and families to 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. The 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; Dennis Young, Alzheimer’s Association; Rebecca Sharp, VAYA Health; Jan Maety, Dementia Friendly WNC, and Dr. Tom Larkin 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. Although dementia is not part of natural aging, the biggest risk factor for the disease is advancing age. Nearly 20,000 people 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 life 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 self-understanding.

People affected by dementia will lose their cognitive skills over time (ability to pay attention, process and remember information, and 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 and the surrounding areas can be a source of support for those dealing 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 small groups, and the larger community connected.

We would be happy to schedule a Dementia Community Action Program for your organization by contacting us at: dementiainfo@gmail.com.

We also create opportunities 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 2011.

There are ongoing local support groups in Black Mountain:

- Memory Loss Navigators, Givens Highland Farms, second Tuesdays, 5:30-11 a.m. Initial interviews with prospective members are required.
- Dr. Tom Larkin’s dementia clinic evaluations and care partner meetings.
- Dementiafriendlywnc.org

Contact Mel Kelley: 828-303-8529 or email soulievskiy@gmail.com

- Memory Loss Caregivers of East Buncombe, Givens Highland Farms, second Tuesdays, 5:30-11 a.m. Brookside Building (J & R Entrance, lower level lounge 3).

Please contact Mary Denney: 828-420-5143 or email marydennysowchartering.net.

We hope you will attend the screening of Alzheimer’s Every Minute Counts on Thursday, Nov. 9, at 5:30 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 866-8610 to reserve your spot.

To learn more about Dementia Friendly WNC and living well with dementia, please visit www.dementiainfowc.org.

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