

Silver Alert Program in Wisconsin

A Silver Alert is a public notification system in the United States to broadcast information about missing persons – especially senior citizens with Alzheimer's disease, dementia or other mental disabilities – in order to aid in their recovery.

In partnership with the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association, the Outdoor Advertising Association of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Silver Alerts may be broadcast through television and radio, digital billboards, and lottery display terminals. Silver Alerts cannot utilize the Emergency Alert System.

Silver Alerts will be issued when the following criteria are met:

- The missing person is 60 years of age or older;
- The missing person is believed to have Alzheimer's, dementia, or another permanent cognitive impairment that poses a threat to the individual's health and safety;
- There is reasonable belief that the missing person's disappearance is due to the individual's impaired cognitive condition;
- The Silver Alert request is made within 72 hours of the individual's disappearance;
There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the missing person.

We hope that no family is ever in the situation to need our help. Unfortunately, we know that many will be. If your family member is at risk of becoming lost, the best thing to do is be prepared.

- Have a clear photo of your loved one stored in a digital file so it can be transmitted to law enforcement quickly if need be.
- If you are concerned about your loved one's ability to safely operate a vehicle, you can submit a *Driver Condition or Behavior Report* (MV3141) to the WI Department of Transportation at www.dot.state.wi.us. This will begin a process by which the DOT will assess your loved one's driving ability. You can also engage the help of your family member's doctor when filling out this form.
- Know your loved one's vehicle details, license plate and any unique descriptors. Keep a photo of the vehicle and any identifying features of it. Even if they no longer have a license and/or keys are kept out of view, it is best to be prepared if your family member becomes lost while in a vehicle.
- Encourage personalized plates, a unique bumper sticker or window cling on your loved one's vehicle. This will make the vehicle more noticeable.
- Utilize local resources such as the local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org, Aging and Disability Resource Center (a bureau of the WI Dept. of Health Services) at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov, or Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin at www.alzwisc.org for information on wandering triggers and prevention tips.
- Contact your local law enforcement agency to determine whether they endorse and are trained in a tracking device program. Some Wisconsin communities also maintain their own registry of elderly residents who are at risk of becoming lost.
- Sign up at wisconsincrimealert.gov to receive alerts from the Wisconsin Crime Network, which include Silver Alerts and Amber Alerts. You may be the person who finds someone else's lost family member.

With the WCAN, law enforcement officers issue alerts at no cost either by fax, e-mail or text message to individuals and business owners. Anyone may subscribe to the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network to receive alerts for free <https://alerts.wisconsincrimealert.gov/register.php>.

"We Have "Two Mothers""



(For a mother with Alzheimer's, from her daughters and son)

We have two mothers - two mothers we claim.
Two different people yet with the same name.
Two separate women diverse by design, but we love them both dearly they both are divine.
The first is the mother who carried us here, gave birth and nurtured and launched our careers.
She's the one whose features we bear, complete with the facial expressions we wear.
She gave us deep faith that follows us yet.
Along with examples in life that she set.
Then as we got older she some younger grew, and we'd laugh as just mothers and their children do.
And then came the year that her mind clouded so, and we sensed that the mother we'd known soon would go.
As quickly she changed and turned into the other.
A stranger who dressed in the clothes of our mother.
Oh, she looked the same at least at arm's length, but she was the child now and we were her strength.
We've come full circle, we children and she.
Our mother, the first the second and we.
And if our own children should come to a day, when a new parent comes and the old goes away.
We'd ask of them nothing that we didn't do, love both of those parents as both have loved you.

Author: Joann Snow Duncanson

Website Link: <http://www.scrapbook.com/poems/doc/4734/221.html>

Letter from Mother to Daughter for Mother's Day.

Letter from a Mother to a Daughter: "My dear girl, the day you see I'm getting old, I ask you to please be patient, but most of all, try to understand what I'm going through. If when we talk, I repeat the same thing a thousand times, don't interrupt to say: "You said the same thing a minute ago"... Just listen, please. Try to remember the times when you were little and I would read the same story night after night until you would fall asleep. When I don't want to take a bath, don't be mad and don't embarrass me. Remember when I had to run after you making excuses and trying to get you to take a shower when you were just a girl? When you see how ignorant I am when it comes to new technology, give me the time to learn and don't look at me that way... remember, honey, I patiently taught you how to do many things like eating appropriately, getting dressed, combing your hair and dealing with life's issues every day... the day you see I'm getting old, I ask you to please be patient, but most of all, try to understand what I'm going through. If I occasionally lose track of what we're talking about, give me the time to remember, and if I can't, don't be nervous, impatient or arrogant. Just know in your heart that the most important thing for me is to be with you. And when my old, tired legs don't let me move as quickly as before, give me your hand the same way that I offered mine to you when you first walked. When those days come, don't feel sad... just be with me, and understand me while I get to the end of my life with love. I'll cherish and thank you for the gift of time and joy we shared. With a big smile and the huge love I've always had for you, I just want to say, I love you... my darling daughter. "Happy Mother's Day!"

By: Spring in the Air

Website Link: <http://www.agingcare.com/Discussions/mother-to-daughter-letter-150678.htm>



- FATHERS DAY -
SUNDAY, 21ST JUNE 2015

Give Your Dad the Best Father's Day Gift Ever: Your Attention

As years go by, most of us gain – or attempt to gain – perspective. By retelling personal stories, elders are often, consciously or subconsciously, trying to reframe their life from the perspective of time. If we give them the gift of attentive listening, we may find their often told stories more interesting, and we may even learn something new about them. Also, since our elders' history is part of our history, we may learn something new about ourselves.

Listen early on if you can

Before my dad had brain surgery, he had other health problems including surgery that required him to have someone attend to his needs while he healed. At that time, my mother was able to provide most of his care, but I'd often sit with Dad to give her a break. Those times with Dad are now some of my most precious memories.

I clearly remember him laying back in his recliner as I sat on the couch asking him questions about his unusual childhood. He told me interesting stories about events that I'd had no idea were a part of his history. His stories were not only interesting – they helped me understand him better. True, these were not often-repeated stories. However, they were revealing stories about his past. If his life had taken a different turn than the devastating cognitive results from a failed brain surgery, they may have become beloved, oft told tales.

Story telling goes mainstream

As our World War II Veterans age, there's been increasing interest in recording their war experiences. This is precious history and I admire the people and organizations that encourage this trend. Some businesses now offer tools to help families record their personal histories, as well.

While this formal approach can be wonderful, the times I had with Dad, and with my other elders in turn, were simply spontaneous moments of sharing. I believe that the mood would have been broken had I tried to convert it to an official story telling time.

Ideally, the younger generations could do both – engage in listening to our elder's stories spontaneously, as well as recording their voices and even images as they speak. More important than the method, however, is letting your elders know you value their stories and hearing about their lives.

I've heard elders say that one thing they like about their assisted living experience or nursing home life is that many of the aides listen to their stories with genuine interest – the same stories their children and grandchildren may have grown tired of. These hands-on caregivers are hearing the stories for the first time, which can make them a good audience.

To have the rapt attention of a younger person who will listen to your life's story is balm for an elder whose current quality of life is progressively deteriorating. Could that "younger person" be you this Father's Day? Could you take time this Father's Day to ask your dad to tell about his childhood, his youth, or his early years as an adult? I can almost guarantee that if your dad can communicate at all, you will come out of the experience with memories that outlast his physical life. You are bound to hold those moments close long after he is gone.

What if your dad can no longer communicate?

If it's too late for your dad to tell you stories, you can turn the process around. Think back on your life as a family and tell him stories about how you remember him as a dad. Remark on the fun things you did. However challenged he is to articulate anything now, I feel sure he'll get something out of the fact that you are interested in him as a person. One's personal history can become increasingly important as we age. After all, as life draws to a close, we will all want to know we made a difference. Stories help us add meaning and make sense of life.

Listen to your dad tell his stories if he is able. If not, help him out by supplying the words. This could be one memorable Father's Day for you both.

Website Link: <http://www.agingcare.com/Articles/fathers-day-gift-attention-listening-151105.htm>

Upcoming Events

Home Sweet Home

2015 Aging In Place Conference

"I want to stay in my own home as long as I can."

Thursday, May 14th

9:30am—3:00pm

Radisson Ballroom A

200 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse

Cost: \$20 for Seniors/Family Caregivers

To pre-register, please call (608)-785-9710

Deadline to register is May 8th by 4:30pm

Sponsored By:

La Crosse County Aging Unit, ADRC, Home Instead Senior Care,
BrightStar & Comfort Keepers

"Many of us follow the commandment 'Love One Another.' When it relates to caregiving, we must love one another with boundaries. We must acknowledge that we are included in the 'Love One Another.'"
— Peggi Speers

alzwi.org | alzheimer's association®

29th Annual Wisconsin Network Conference on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

May 17-19, 2015 | Wisconsin Dells, WI

Kalahari Resort & Conference Center

REGISTRATION IS OPEN THROUGH MAY 10.

Register on-line at: <http://www.alzwi.org>

Direct any questions to Kathy Davies at 715.869.2667 or kdavies@alz.org

This conference is designed for:

Family caregivers | Persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias | Care facility leaders & staff
Home health professionals | Nursing professionals | Activity professionals | Physicians | Researchers
Social workers | Occupational, physical and speech therapists
Personal care workers | Program directors | Recreation, art and music therapists

PARTICIPATE with professional and family care providers from across the Midwest.

LEARN about cutting edge research and best practices in care and support.

ENHANCE skills, resources and connections.

ADVOCATE for persons impacted by Alzheimer's and related dementias.

Upcoming Events

Local Community Events May & June 2015

- ◆ **May 1–15** - Pump House – Art Exhibit by students from Logan, Aquinas and Central High Schools Tuesday – Friday 11:00 to 7:00 Saturday Noon to 4:00 FREE
- ◆ **May 2** – FREE admission to Norskedalen | Website link: <http://www.norskedalen.org/>



- ◆ **May 16** – Riverside Family Fun Fair – Old-fashioned carnival, activities, games, food & exhibits about area attractions and festivals
- ◆ **May 15–17** Westby Syttende Mai Festival – Norwegian Folk Festival. Ethnic food, costumes, dancing and entertainment. Parade, quilt display/sale, rosemaling, woodcarving
- ◆ **May 23-24** – Barre Fest | La Crosse Fairgrounds N4985 Hwy. M in West Salem, WI - Annual festival includes chicken-Q, live music, whiffle-ball tournament, corn-hole tournament, kids games
- ◆ **May 1** – First of the season’s Farmer’s Markets at Cameron Park Community Market. Fridays 4:00-8:00 p.m. through October.
- ◆ **May 9** – First of the Saturday Farmer’s Markets at Cameron Park Community Market. Saturdays 8:00-1:00 through October
- ◆ **June 6-7** – June Dairy Days | Village Park in West Salem. Softball tournaments, fun run, carnival, fireworks, Big Wheel races, parade, music and food

Save the Date!



“Power Up!” Event Empowering Family Caregivers

August 4, 2015

10am—1pm

Black River Beach Neighborhood Center
1433 Rose Street | La Crosse, WI

Topics:

Advocacy | Self Care | Life in Harmony—Music Therapy

More details about this event coming soon!

Early-onset Alzheimer's: When symptoms begin before age 65

When Alzheimer's begins in middle age, misdiagnosis may be more likely.

Early-onset Alzheimer's is an uncommon form of dementia that strikes people younger than age 65. Glenn E. Smith, Ph.D., a neuropsychologist at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn., answers questions about this condition.

How common is early-onset Alzheimer's?

Of all the people who have Alzheimer's disease, about 5 percent develop symptoms before age 65. So if 4 million Americans have Alzheimer's, at least 200,000 people have the early-onset form of the disease. Early-onset Alzheimer's has been known to develop between ages 30 and 40, but that's very uncommon. It's more common to see someone in his or her 50s who has the disease.

How important is it to obtain an accurate diagnosis?

Accurate diagnosis is critical so that you can explain your condition to your employer and perhaps arrange a lighter workload or more convenient schedule. For family reasons it is even more crucial.

The diagnosis is fundamental in helping the family respond with appropriate understanding and compassion. In addition, a complete evaluation will rule out reversible forms of dementia that might improve with treatment.

What types of problems occur more often in early-onset Alzheimer's?

Alzheimer's disease has a tremendous impact at any age. But we don't expect to see dementia at a young age, so problems emerging at work or home may be misunderstood. People with early-onset Alzheimer's may lose relationships or jobs instead of being identified as medically ill or disabled.

What coping suggestions do you have for couples?

The loss of intimacy is something poignant with early-onset Alzheimer's. Many people who develop late-onset Alzheimer's have already been widowed. But couples in their 40s or 50s are often in the middle of their lives together. Spouses or partners face the possibility of spending many years without an active partner. Losing the romantic component and changing to a caregiver status complicates the relationship. Try to:

- Communicate about changes you're experiencing and ways in which your needs also may have changed. Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Find new activities that you can enjoy together.
- Keep a folder of resources you may need as the disease progresses.
- Find a counselor who works with couples facing issues you feel challenged by, such as sexuality and changing roles in the relationship.

How do you suggest involving kids?

A diagnosis of early-onset Alzheimer's also can be difficult for your children, who may not understand what you may go through. Children may blame themselves, become angry or react in any number of ways. Try to:

- Find activities you can enjoy together.
- Stay engaged and talk with your children honestly about what you're experiencing.
- Find a support group for children, and invite your kids to some of your counseling sessions. Make your child's school counselor and social worker aware of your condition.
- Keep a written, video or audio record of your thoughts, feelings and experiences for your children. They'll appreciate your sharing your wisdom and memories.

Are there financial issues to consider?

People with early-onset Alzheimer's often have to quit work, and this loss of income is a serious concern. Finances get even tighter if spouses or partners also quit their jobs to become full-time caregivers.

Some medical benefits and many social-support programs won't provide assistance unless the person with Alzheimer's is older than age 65. Younger people may need special waivers to get into such programs. What you can do:

- Talk with a financial planner and an attorney to help you plan for your future financial needs.
- Ask your employer whether early retirement is an option.
- Explore what benefits may be available to you through Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid.
- Organize your financial documents and make sure your spouse or partner understands and can manage your family's finances.

What's most important to know?

Key elements of Alzheimer's care are education and support. Getting connected to services such as support groups can help you identify resources, gain a deeper understanding of the disability and learn ways to adapt. *Remember, you're not alone.* Many resources are available to assist you, your family and caregivers to cope with this disease. Be sure in the early stages of the disease that you and your spouse or partner do research and establish a plan for managing the progression of your condition. Knowing you have a plan and have identified support and resources will help everyone in the future. By Glenn E. Smith, Ph.D., Mayo Clinic Staff

Tips for Care Partners

Alzheimer's Disease: Your Role as Caregiver

Do You Realize How Much You Do?

Your role as caregiver to a loved one suffering from Alzheimer's disease can be very involved.

- You help maintain the quality of life for your spouse, parent, family member, or friend with Alzheimer's disease.
- You have become educated about symptoms, treatments and the progression of the disease.
- You probably keep track of appointments with the doctor, medication schedules, and exercise.
- You offer the love and support necessary to meet the challenges of Alzheimer's disease.

You are a caregiver. While many patients retain their independence for a period of time after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, some may need more help with performing daily activities. For others, the diagnosis may come after weeks or months of you coping with symptoms that did not have a name. Regardless of how long you've been dealing with Alzheimer's disease or to what degree, in some way Alzheimer's has affected your life and responsibilities -- physically, emotionally, or economically.

The role you have taken on is not an easy one. However, the following tips offer some guidance on how to maintain and improve your caregiving relationship:

- **Take time for yourself.** Make sure you have time to relax. If necessary, enlist the help of other family members or even hire someone to help out.
- **Learn as much as you can about your loved one's disease** so you will know how you can help. You'll also understand what changes to expect in your loved one's behavior or symptoms.
- **Help your loved one participate in as many activities** in the home and outside the home as possible. Maintain the intricate balance between helping your loved one accomplish a task and actually doing the task for him or her. Allow the patient the time needed to complete daily activities on his or her own, such as dressing.
- **Consult your loved one about his or her family affairs.** Although it's not easy to discuss these topics, you should be informed of your loved one's wishes regarding a living will, durable power of attorney, and do-not-resuscitate (DNR) order.
- **Set realistic goals for yourself and your loved one.** Do not attempt to do everything. By setting attainable goals, you are setting everyone up for success, rather than disappointment.
- **Do not put your life on hold.** Continue to meet with friends, participate in hobbies or groups, and maintain a schedule as normally as possible. You will feel more energized and are less likely to feel resentful in the long run.
- **Have someone you can talk to.** You are there for your loved one -- to listen and to offer support -- but you also need a support person. Talk openly and honestly with a friend or family member. If this is not possible, join a support group. Understanding that you are not alone and that someone else is in a similar situation helps you to feel nurtured.

The most effective caregiver is well informed, prepared, and asks for help and support from all resources that are available. **Source:** <http://www.webmd.com/alzheimers/guide/role-caregiver>

Gundersen Health System—Pre-Driver's Screening Program

Why a pre-driver's screening program?

Driving a vehicle makes it easier to function within the community and in life, but when a driver lacks certain skills, serious safety and liability risks may exist. Gundersen's Occupational Therapy Pre-Driver's Screening Program strives to ensure everyone behind the wheel has the necessary skills to keep themselves, and everyone around them, safe.

Who is appropriate for this screening?

Driving becomes dangerous when an individual behind the wheel has problems with skills such as:

- Visual perception
- Thinking processes
- Movement
- Self-control

Impairments in these crucial skills may be a result of:

- Stroke
- Brain injury
- Spinal cord injury
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Arthritis
- Alzheimer's or other age-related condition

What is the assessment process?

The Pre-Driver's Screen is administered by a Registered Occupational Therapist using specialized and standardized tests. The steps of the process include:

- Obtain history
- Administer comprehensive test of visual functioning including acuity, visual fields, depth perception and color vision
- Administer test of reaction time
- Test strength, range of motion, sensation and coordination
- Assess memory, problem solving, road sign knowledge, information processing and judgment
- Review results with patient and physician
- Decision made by physician on return of patient to driving based on assessment.

What results from the Pre-Driver's Screening?

Recommendations are discussed with the client and the client's referring physician. Recommendations may include:

- An additional behind-the-wheel evaluation
- State testing by the Department of Motor Vehicles
- Further visual examination by a vision specialist
- Adaptive driving behaviors such as daytime driving only, driving in a designated mile radius from home and no freeway driving
- Operation of motor vehicle not recommended

How to start the Process...

1. Discuss concern with physician
2. Physician must refer patient to Occupational Therapy before assessment
3. Questions? Call Gundersen Health System: (608) 775-6777 or (800) 362-9567, ext. 56777

Clinic Driving Evaluations offered at Mayo Health System in La Crosse

For more Information and Appointments:

Please call Rehabilitation Services at 608-392-9768

Community Resources

Lunch Bunch Memory Café

The **Lunch Bunch Memory Café** is a place to meet with others diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia and their care partner in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Once a month, this group offers a chance for everyone to have some fun and share a positive experience in a supportive environment. It's a place to talk with others who may be on a very similar journey and to learn, "You are not alone".

When: This group meets the last Tuesday of every month

Time: 11:30am—1:00pm

Location: Black River Beach Neighborhood Center
1433 Rose Street
La Crosse, WI 54603



Lunch & beverage provided at a suggested donation of \$4 per person

Topics: Art, music, health and wellness topics will be featured at each café. Details will be announced on monthly invites.

Upcoming Dates:

May 26, 2015 | June 30, 2015 | July 28, 2015 | August 25, 2015 | September 29, 2015

RSVP is encouraged. If you would like more information, or to be added to our mailing list, please contact: Amy Brezinka with the La Crosse County Aging Unit at **608.785.3460** or email at: abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

Caregiver Support Groups

Support Group for Persons with Dementia and Care Partners

When: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the Month from 3pm to 4pm
Where: Village on Cass, 225 South 24th Street, La Crosse
Contacts: Chris Brown, Terry Fleming and Art Peek at 608-392-9505

Family Support Group—Alzheimer's/Dementia

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6pm-7pm
Where: Bluffview Memory Care, 2101 Bluffview Court, Holmen
Contact: Bluffview Memory Care Management Team at 608-526-5864

Caregiver Support Group

When: 4th Wednesday of the month at 1:15pm
Where: Hillview Health Care Center—Sunshine Room
3501 Park Lane Drive, La Crosse
Contact: Nikki Weisenberger at 608-789-4867

Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Thursday of the month at 1pm
Where: Lakeview Health Center, 902 E Garland Street, West Salem
Contact: Luann Rose at 608-786-1400 ext. 40155

Caregiver Support Group— A group for Women caring for someone with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

When: Every Monday from 8:30am—Noon
Where: Perkin's in Onalaska—9428 Wisconsin 16, Onalaska, WI
Contact: Mitch Mader at 608-519-0753

Parkinson's Support Group

When: 4th Tuesday of each month from 2pm-4pm
Where: Gundersen Health System
Contact: Julie Halzwarth at 608-775-2789

Great Rivers 2-1-1 ~ For more information about area support groups dial 2-1-1





La Crosse County Aging Unit
County of La Crosse, Wisconsin
Administrative Center • Room 2260
400 4th Street North • La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601-3200
(608) 785-9710 • FAX: (608) 785-6135
web site: www.co.la-crosse.wi.us

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Family Caregivers Newsletter

May/June 2015

La Crosse County Aging Unit
400 4th Street North, Room 2260
La Crosse, WI 54601-3200
608-785-9710
www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/aging/

Newsletter Editor:

Amy Brezinka, Program Coordinator
Caregiver Coach Program
608.785.3460
abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

The **La Crosse County Aging Unit** provides information and services that promote independence, and support the dignity of Seniors by allowing choices for living in and giving to their community.

Programs & Services include:

- Home-delivered Meals
- Meal Sites
- Transportation
- Caregiver Coach Program
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Gifted Hands
- Senior Farmers' Market
- Nutritional Supplements
- Wellness & Prevention
- Senior Life Newsletter

