Help Support MemoryCare Families!

Gifts from now until June 30 will go twice as far!

Now through June 30th, any new or increased donation to MemoryCare will be matched dollar for dollar, up to $50,000! Help us serve families by donating today.

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This matching gift is made possible in part by Dolly and Rakesh Agarwal, Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community, and Triune Donors for which we are deeply grateful.

Click here to double your dollars!
My wife, age 66, has young-onset Alzheimer's. She is mostly cheerful and pleasant, and has always seemed content to be home, either by herself or with the care companions who come in now and then. I've never had to worry about her - until about a week ago when she just walked out the door and headed down the street. Thankfully one of our neighbors recognized her and brought her home. She's done it twice more - and then last night went out in the middle of the night in her nightgown! When I ask her where she's going, she says she's looking for our kids (all of whom are adults). Now I'm afraid to leave her alone at all. Is this what they mean by "wandering?" How can I make her understand she shouldn't do this?

Caring for a person with brain change can take some unexpected turns. Just when you think you have a handle on it and everything is going well - it changes. This story isn't unique. The news is full of reports of people with dementia who have wandered off...and unfortunately, some of them don't have happy endings: Charlotte Man with Alzheimer's Disappears

The Mayo clinic says, "Wandering is common among people with dementia. This behavior can happen at any stage of the disease. If your loved one has Alzheimer's, he or she is at risk of getting lost - even if he or she has never wandered in the past."

Or, to put it another way - it never happens...until it happens.

Of all the common symptoms of dementia, wandering is one of the most worrisome because it poses safety issues. A person with cognitive impairment is unaware of the danger in which she has put herself. She doesn't realize that she no longer has the ability to safely navigate in what may have once been familiar surroundings. She is simply focused on whatever her reason was for leaving in the first place.

And there is always a reason. Perhaps "wandering" isn't the most accurate term for this behavior. 'Wandering' is defined as: "walking in a casual, leisurely, and aimless fashion." That
typically doesn’t apply to a person living with dementia. There is nothing aimless or leisurely about what she’s doing, because she is on a mission.

- She may be agitated or upset at something going on around her and is **trying to get away from it**.
- She may be thinking of a job from her earlier life and is **trying to get the job done** (i.e., going to work, fixing dinner).
- She may be **searching for something familiar**...because dementia makes even the familiar feel strange.
- She may be bored and **trying to find something to do**.
- She may be needing something - a bathroom, or something to eat, or a person or place - and is looking for it.

Whatever the reason, and however little sense it may make to us, it makes all the sense in the world to her. Remember that she has dementia, and her brain isn't working like it used to.

### So what can you do?

* Get to know your neighbors. Clue them in that your loved one has dementia and that despite your best efforts to prevent it, it’s possible that she might take off on her own sometime.

* Be sure she has ID on herself at all times. Not something she can remove or leave behind (like a wallet or a jacket) but something that is on her all the time. Medical or ID bracelets generally work well ([roadid](http://www.roadid.com) or [medicalert](http://www.medicalert.com) are good choices). Also register with Project Lifesaver and/or the Alzheimer’s Association Safe Return program so you can enlist their help if needed. These won't keep her from leaving, but it increases the chance that someone will be able to get in touch with you.

* Consider installing locks and alarms on doors to let you know when she’s on the move...or for a more pleasant option, try a doorchime. Even something as simple as hanging a bell on the doorknob will help. The goal is to give you a heads-up when she’s heading outside, or possibly to slow her down a bit.

* In the later stages of the disease, hanging a **STOP! or NO EXIT** sign on the door can often deter a person from leaving. Or try camouflaging doors with curtains or hanging a picture or mirror.

* Be sure you have a recent photograph, both closeup and full-body, to show searchers in case she becomes lost.

* If wandering does start, try to find the trigger. Does it happen at a certain time of day? If so, try to schedule something that might distract her (an outing, a visit, an activity). If she’s trying to do a job from her past, think of how you can help her do that job at home (help in the kitchen at dinner time, or fixing a snack for the “children”). If she appears restless and bored, this might be a good time to enroll her in an adult day program or schedule a companion to keep her occupied.

* The one thing you **CANNOT** do is convince her not to do this any more. You can explain it to her, you can describe all the reasons why it isn't safe, you can show her the newspaper articles, you can get angry - but none of this will convince her because one of the things her brain has lost is the ability to have good judgment and make reasonable decisions.
rational decisions. She simply doesn't get what it is you want her to do because she doesn't know she's doing it. Stop looking for logical solutions. This is an illogical disease.

Of course, no one can watch another person every second of every day. We're only human, and even the best and most dedicated caregiver can't fully prevent wandering if it begins. But by putting some of these suggestions in place, and changing your understanding of why she's doing it, you can reduce the incidents as well as the risks.

CAREGIVER WISDOM

WHAT I'VE LEARNED at my SUPPORT GROUP:

My husband goes for a walk every afternoon. So far he hasn't needed any help, but I know that could change at some point. Even though he carries a cell phone and says he'd call if he needed me, I couldn't remember the last time I'd seen him use it. So I asked him to help me "test" my phone by calling me. He was able to do it but I noticed that he had a little trouble figuring it out. I will do this "test" every so often so that when he is unable to make the call, I'll know that it's no longer safe for him to go out alone.
UPCOMING MEMORYCARE EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE

Hear the latest research on brain health and cognitive protection at the
Conference to Launch NC’s Registry for Brain Health

Join MemoryCare in welcoming researchers from Duke University, UNC-Chapel Hill, Wake Forest University, NC A&T, and ECU who will share the latest research on brain health, cognitive protection, and opportunities to participate in research. This day will launch NC’s new Registry for Brain Health and be filled with invaluable information about our brains! You can be a part of the future—learn how to join the registry!

WHEN: Saturday, June 1st, 2019- from 9am-2pm (registration begins at 8:30am)
WHERE: University of North Carolina Asheville, Highsmith Union 203
WHO: Anyone 18 years or older who lives in North Carolina

This event will be free but registration is required. See www.memorycare.org for more information
Program is funded by the State of North Carolina and co-sponsored by MemoryCare, ABIPA and the NC Registry for Brain Health team.

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!
# Upcoming MemoryCare Educational Events

Join us Thursday afternoons **2:00 - 3:30pm in the Bernhardt Education room at the SECU Center for MemoryCare** to learn more about caring for your loved one and yourself!  
**Courses are free and open to the public. Donations are deeply appreciated.**

Registration is required due to limited space. To register, call (828) 771-2931 or email office@memorycare.org with your full name, phone number, physical address, and which course(s) you would like to attend.

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<td>Cameron Kempson, M.Ed - Director of Education, SimplyHome</td>
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<td>David Johnson, MD and Lindsey Kremer, BSW - MemoryCare Staff Physician and CareManager</td>
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"You can clutch the past so tightly to your chest ... ...that it leaves your arms too full to embrace the present."

-Jan Glidewell

ONGOING PROGRAMS
Open to the Public

MEMORYCAREGIVERS NETWORK
PEER SUPPORT & EDUCATION GROUPS

FLETCHER GROUP
First Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Fletcher 7th Day Adventist Church
Howard Gap Road and Naples Road, Fletcher, N.C.
(just past Park Ridge Hospital)

NEW HOPE GROUP
Third Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
New Hope Presbyterian Church
NORTH ASHEVILLE GROUP

Fourth Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00pm

NEW LOCATION!
Newbridge Baptist Church
199 Elkwood Avenue and Merrimon Avenue, Asheville NC, 28804
(enter at glass doors adjacent to the gym)

Network meetings are open to the public.

The Network relies on charitable support to keep its program going.
To make a donation, CLICK HERE

For more information about the MemoryCaregivers Network, contact:

Mary Donnelly
828.230.4143
network@memorycare.org

Pat Hilgendorf
828.301.0740
patricia.hilgendorf@gmail.com

"CAREGIVER COLLEGE"

MemoryCare's ongoing educational series for caregivers

A series of six lectures will be provided for anyone caring for a person with a memory disorder. The program is taught by one of the MemoryCare physicians, and is designed to improve caregiver understanding of different aspects of dementia care. Related presentation materials will be provided.

There is no cost for families who are enrolled in MemoryCare. For those not enrolled, the cost is $180 for the 6-part series. Scholarship funds are available, contact MemoryCare for more information on fee waivers.

Course Content:
What Is Dementia?
Transitioning from Independence to Interdependence
Functional and Behavioral Changes of Dementia
Dementia Treatment Options & Risk Reduction
Caring for the Caregiver
Dementia and Legal Planning Issues

The next ASHEVILLE session of Caregiver College begins Thursday, July 11, and continues on consecutive Thursdays through August 15 2:00-5:00pm
SECU Center for MemoryCare
100 Far Horizons Lane, Asheville
The next WAYNESVILLE session has not yet been scheduled. Watch this space for details!

Do you need a program for a group event?

The MemoryCaregivers Network staff presents on a variety of subjects, including Recognizing Early Warning Signs of Memory Loss, Facts and Fiction about Dementia, Better Communication Techniques, and more.

We are happy to speak at your event to raise awareness and knowledge about Dementia.

Contact Mary Donnelly at network@memorycare.org

To see a list of OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES for those living with dementia and their care partners, CLICK HERE

Caregiver Network News and The MemoryCaregivers Network are auxiliary programs of

We rely on charitable donations to continue these programs!

Please consider donating… perhaps in honor of a loved one’s birthday… or a memorial… or a sustaining gift to support families like yours who depend on the services that MemoryCare provides!

Make a difference. Make a donation. Click here to donate.

For more information about MemoryCare, click this link to visit our website: www.MemoryCare.org

Thank you for your interest and support!

MemoryCare is a charitable non-profit organization whose mission is three-fold:
To provide specialized medical care to older adults with cognitive impairment; to support caregivers with education, counseling, and improved access to services; and to provide community education.

Caregiver Network News is written and edited by Mary Donnelly. Contact network@memorycare.org for more information.

Click Here to subscribe to Caregiver Network News.

Click Here to access our archives and read previous issues.