



Our poet, Mark Bratlie was a man of many talents! Not only was he a fabulous poet, he also was a talented stain glass artist. This nativity scene is a small sampling of his stained glass artistry.

December/January Wednesday Schedule All meetings held from 1 - 2:30 pm

Dec. 7th - Dementia Variants & and Their Presentations, Dr. Bess Martin, Essentia. At Bethel

Dec. 14th - Intergenerational Christmas Art Project, Tia Permenter, artist. At Hjemkomst Center

Dec. 21st - Christmas Concert with Sarah Morrau and Rebecca DeVries. At Bethel

Dec. 28th - Caregiver Cafe Support Group. 1-2:30 pm. Call 701-404-6712 for details.

Jan. 4th - SPECIAL EVENT: ERIN BONITTO training and GHD fund raiser! SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS!

Jan. 11th - 11- "Refresh, Renew, and Reconnect in 2023" Melissa Marshall, Co-owner Dale Carnegie of ND and MN

Jan. 18 - Fall Prevention and Safety for Seniors, Nicky Holzworth, OTR Essentia Health & Coach Jake, Fargo Crossfit

Jan. 23rd - Caregiver Cafe Support Group. 1-2:30 pm. Call 701-404-6712 for details.

In This Issue

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- *Still Here, Still Me* - Various authors
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- Opportunities to support Memory Cafe.
- Gratitude for those who support Memory Cafe in so many ways!
- A Message from Erin Bonitto
- Recent and Upcoming Special Events
- Celebrating the Holidays - Teepa Snow and others

Season Greetings Memory Cafe!

As outlined on page six of this newsletter, 2022 has been an active year of growth, energy, and excitement at Memory Cafe! Together we've accomplished so much.

To me, one of our most significant accomplishments of the year was revising our Mission Statement. It now states, *The mission of Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is to recognize the intrinsic beauty and value of those living with mild to moderate memory loss while inspiring in them and their care partners hope, joy, and a sense of empowerment.*"

As I've considered the beauty and power of our new mission statement, I've been reminded of the writings of one of my favorite authors, Jean Vanier. Vanier is a fierce international advocate for people living with disabilities and those who care for them. He is also the author of *Being Human*, one of my favorite books. Look for the similarities between the following quotes from his book and our new mission statement:

To love someone is to show to them their beauty, their worth and their importance.

Love doesn't mean doing extraordinary or heroic things. It means knowing how to do ordinary things with tenderness.

When we love and respect people, revealing to them their value, they can begin to come out from behind the walls that protect them.

The commonalities are striking. Memory Cafe exists to remind people of their intrinsic beauty and value as human beings. We aren't doing anything extraordinary; we're simply treating individuals living with memory loss and their loved ones with tenderness and love. We are encouraging our participants to leave the walls of their homes that protect them from the devastating stigma of dementia in order to actively engage with others who will love, support, and respect them. Not because of the health of their memory, cognitive strength or executive functioning skills, but simply because they are beautiful human beings. They are our dear friends.

Our mission is deeply satisfying and tremendously important to the health and wellness of the memory loss community, but also to our entire FM community. No one else does what we do. A gaping hole would exist in our community without Memory Cafe. As readers of our newsletter, we trust you agree. And, we humbly ask for your generous financial support as you consider your end of year donations.

Thank you for your partnership and Merry Christmas!

~ Deb

Mission Statement

The mission of Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is to recognize the intrinsic beauty and value of those living with mild to moderate memory loss while inspiring in them and their care partners hope, joy, and a sense of empowerment.



This Day
by
Mark Bratlie

Sun shines on nature's face
Wind whispers bough to bough
Air fills with nectar's fragrance
Present day finds harmony

*This is a sacred place
This is a holy time*

Strangers meet upon a walk
Kind words exchanged as gifts
Smiles take the place of sun
Earth's brightness shows increase

Children laughing with abandon
Fleeting moments throb with life
Human spirits fill with lightness
Weary tension dissipates

Arms reach out to touch another
Touch extends to warm embrace
Love says it all in silence
A pair transforms itself to one

Past and future are released
Present gently fills with joy
Nothing further is desired
Each moment is itself complete

*Welcome to a sacred place
Welcome to a holy time*

REFLECTION

DID I OFFER PEACE TODAY? DID I BRING A SMILE TO SOMEONE'S FACE? DID I SAY WORDS OF HEALING? DID I LET GO OF MY ANGER AND RESENTMENT? DID I FORGIVE? DID I LOVE? THESE ARE THE REAL QUESTIONS. I MUST TRUST THAT THE LITTLE BIT OF LOVE THAT I SOW NOW WILL BEAR MANY FRUITS, HERE IN THIS WORLD AND THE LIFE TO COME.

~ HENRI NOUWEN

**"Still Here, Still Me"
Voices of Persons Living With Dementia**

**Dementia Action Alliance
www.daa.org**

"Knowing that changes in my life were going to be inevitable, I decided to spend time where I could be accepted, challenged, and grow. Thankfully, I have several different support groups, groups of friends, and people with special interests. Being part of a caring network means I am able to make a positive impact by listening and speaking with others."

~ **John Wood, living with dementia**

"Dementia does not define who I am. It is a small part of the many facets that comprise my life. I am Laurie Scherrer and I am a wife, a writer, a scuba diver, an educator, and an advocate. I'm a traveler and a mentor. Oh, and I am also living with dementia."

~ **Laurie Scherrer, living with dementia**

"We desperately need the healthcare sector and the community to support us to live beyond the diagnosis of dementia....If you offer us proactive, rehabilitative and enabling post-diagnostic strategies for the disabilities that result from the symptoms of dementia, we can live better lives and the pathway of loss, despair, and a focus on our deficits will be reduced. We need to be enabled, not further disabled."

**Kate Swaffer and John Sandblom
Board members of Dementia Alliance International living
with dementia.**

**"I'm Sorry, There is Nothing I Can Do To Help You"
~Dementia Action Alliance**

People receiving a diagnosis of dementia are often told by the physician to, "Get your affairs in order and return in six months for monitoring". Many physicians believe there is little that can be done since there currently are no medical cures for dementia. There are, in fact, many things that can and should be done. Research shows that eating nutritiously, getting a good night's sleep, reducing stress, maintaining strong social connections, getting daily exercise and movement, having a proactive, problem-solving mindset, and being engaged in stimulating and interesting activities are very beneficial.

People with early symptoms of dementia are becoming valuable educators and helping to increase understanding about the lived experience. Their first-person perspectives and experiences provide informed and beneficial information. Their missing voices on advisory panels, conference presentations and other avenues that inform policies, practices and research continue to fuel misperceptions about living with dementia.

**The disability movement's - "Nothing About Us Without Us"
- is also applicable to dementia.**

**For Our Health:
Gentle Yoga
by Carolyn Espel**



Yoga can be very helpful as a path to improved quality of life and well-being. Tools offered through movement, breath work and meditation can help to reduce stress, improve focus, and increase self awareness, as well as build strength, flexibility, and better balance. The results of this ancient practice support you to become more relaxed and centered in body, mind and spirit.

Many people wonder if yoga is for them and how to get started. It is my belief that there is a yoga for everyone and each person's practice is unique to them. The journey through yoga helps to reveal our strengths and our needs with a foundation of kindness and is a continuum of learning. This adventure of discovery helps to find ways to feel your best and live with as much ease as possible. The foundation of kindness enables you to know and be your best self and reflect that in your relationships and the world.

Yoga is accessible to all and learning involves exploration of resources available and trying them out. With that in mind, please join me on January 9 from 1 - 2 pm when I will be honored to share some yoga practices with you that help you on your journey towards improved health and well-being. Please call Memory Cafe and let them know if you are planning to attend. We hope to see you there!

Carolyn Espel
Yoga Wellness Educator



"If you allow the amount of snow to interfere with your happiness you will have a lot less joy in your life but the same amount of snow."

~Submitted by Karen Beutler

Just for Laughs!
Content
Provided by
Steve Frosile
and Friends!



It's important to rest between sets of exercises. I personally stick to breaks of three or four years.

When you are too tired to do all the things on your 'to-do' list, try a 'to-don't' list. Simply write all the things you're **not** going to do and then...don't do them. Huge sense of accomplishment with none of the effort.

At the marriage retreat, the leader talked about the importance of knowing what matters to each other. "For example," he began, pointing to Ole, "do you know your wife's favorite flower?" "Oh sure," Ole replied, "Pillsbury All Purpose."

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Church communication:
Potluck supper
Sunday at 5:00 pm -
prayer and medication
to follow.

Diner to his restaurant server: "What's this fly doing on my lutefisk?"
Server - "Gagging"

Scenes from our Caregiver Celebration

Memory Cafe was delighted to honor devoted dementia care partners with a special party on November 14th. Almost 100 people were there including our dedicated volunteers and those care partners who joined Memory Cafe when we started 5 1/2 years ago! Army Chaplain Aaron Christensen encouraged the caregivers to make intentional plans to take care of themselves and pursue "micro-steps" in order to achieve their goals. It was deeply satisfying to see the joy on people's faces as they gathered together, received take home gift bags, and won beautiful gift baskets that were given as door prizes!

Everyone received a gift bag made possible by the generous donations of our friends at **Marsh McLennan Agency** who donated funds for fudge from Sweet Dreams Confection, and **Kilbourne Group** who sponsored our ceramic coaster pottery project. Our dear friend, **Mary Nelson, created and donated SEVENTEEN STUNNING GIFT BASKETS that were given away as door prizes! Thank you everyone who helped make this event such a beautiful afternoon of encouragement for our caregivers!**



Nancy and her sister Marjorie

"Wow! Such a great Caregiver Celebration! I love my sleep gift basket! I just opened my gift bag. Fudge was my mom's favorite that we all enjoyed together. Thank you for the special afternoon. The speaker was excellent! Thank you to you and your amazing team!"

~Nancy Perkins



Our incredible care partners with their door prizes!



'It Takes a Village'
Caring Catalog Online
Fundraising Campaign
Nov. 28th - Dec. 9th

Our Campaign Hero Couple:

Mark and Teryl Clausen

Memory Cafe is deeply honored to be one of only 25 non-profit organizations to be selected to participate in this important fundraising campaign this year. We are reaching for the sky and anticipate completing our \$200,000 fundraising goal for 2022 during this campaign! Will you please join us?

It's easy to donate:

- Go to **areafoundation.org** between Nov. 28th - Dec. 9th, find Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley and click on the donate link.
- Visit our facebook page or website, **MemoryCafeRRV.org** and click on the donate button.
- **Mail a check made out to FM Area Foundation with Memory Cafe written in the memo line.** Be sure it gets to us between Nov. 28th and Dec. 9th.

THANK YOU For Your Support!

RECENT MAJOR MONETARY GIFTS



Offutt Family Foundation - \$50,000 (\$25K this year and \$25K in 2023)

Ken and LuAnn Regan - \$25,000

Wow! These gifts are such an encouragement as we build long-term financial sustainability for Memory Cafe! Thank you Offutt Family Foundation and Ken and LuAnn!!

RECENT HOSPITALITY GIFT - OUR POPCORN MAKER!



What a delight to have our new popcorn maker filling the air with warm, freshly popped popcorn!! Thank you **Rob and Nancy Oster** for purchasing it for us! And thank you **Michelle and Paul Breen and our friends from Senior Helpers** for purchasing the supplies for us!

HELP WANTED!

Memory Cafe is looking for a reliable new or used vacuum cleaner that is willing to work hard lifting ice salt and popcorn from the carpet at LLL! Unpredictable hours. No experience necessary - will train. Volunteer pay grade but candidate will enjoy a friendly work environment and very pleasant vacuum cleaner operators. Call MC at 701-404-6712 if you know of a vacuum cleaner that might be interested and available to serve us! Thank you!



'A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT MIKE SLETTE

The amazing work of the Memory Café is carried out by a loving and caring team of staff and volunteers determined to change what has been a common and accepted paradigm for those experiencing memory loss. The old paradigm has included being judged, marginalized, embarrassed, and isolated. The new paradigm is grounded in Memory Café's commitment to inspiring hope, joy, and a sense of empowerment for those with memory loss and their care partners too. How does Memory Café do it?

By fostering a welcoming setting, they create a sense of belonging; through offering education and resources, they increase knowledge and understanding; through a variety of experiences with the arts, they keep music and creativity an active part of their friends' lives. All that the Memory Café offers is provided free of charge to participants making their regular attendance a reality for so many.

As you plan your year-end giving, please consider the Memory Café as one of those important organizations to benefit from your generosity. Cash donations, gifts of appreciated stock, even gifts via Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from retirement plans are all able to be given to support the mission of the Memory Café. Please contact Deb Kaul for questions or instructions regarding your giving plans. Thank you for helping the Memory Café change the way we all think about memory loss!

PRICELESS TIME AND TALENT GIFTS: OUR VOLUNTEERS AND BOARD MEMBERS!



Memory Cafe simply wouldn't exist if it weren't for our incredibly dedicated **volunteers** and board members! Our volunteer pool has grown from about twelve to thirty six this year! They deliver our printed materials around the community, purchase and serve refreshments, welcome and serve our guests, stuff gift bags, provide beautiful outdoor floral arrangements, facilitate our men's and women's groups, write thank you notes, lead special events, create beautiful art and wood projects, bake goodies, make phone calls, design and update our website, run errands, donate incredible gift baskets, deliver memorial flowers, donate funds, and generally allow Memory Cafe to flourish!

And our **Board members** are AMAZING!! I'm so grateful for Katie Ambuehl, Jean Anderson, Karen Beutler, Amy Bro, Paul Finstad, Dr. Taylor Mertz, Rock Messerschmidt, Sam Olson, Mike Slette, and Lonna Whiting who serve so proficiently on our board!

Thank you for your support volunteers and board members! 4.



Building Skills and Community



YOU ARE INVITED!! FRIENDS OF MEMORY CAFE OPEN HOUSE!



Monday, December 5th
2:00 - 5:00 pm
1122 1st Ave N.
Fargo, ND
Please use the West Entrance
on 12th St.

**THIS PARTY IS FOR ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS
AND MEMORY CAFE PARTICIPANTS!
SEE YOU THERE!**

JOYFUL MONDAYS
Linger Laugh and Learn
Center!
1122 1st Ave N. Fargo.
Park and use the WEST
entrance on 12th St. N.

Coffee & Conversation
MONDAYS
9:00 - 11:00 AM

Questions? Call 701-404-6712

Join us on Monday mornings from 9:00 - 11:00 for coffee, hot chocolate and refreshments. Come and go as you wish!



MONDAY AFTERNOON PROGRAMMING

- Dec 5th - 2:00-5:00 pm - Friends of Memory Cafe Holiday Open House! Please join us!**
- Dec 12th - 1:30 - Music, Memories & Musings with Music Therapist, Deb McTaggart**
- Dec 19th - 1:30 - Christmas Vinyl Listening Party with Dan Cushing**
- Dec 26 - Linger Laugh and Learn Center is CLOSED. Merry Christmas!**



Thank you **HOPE BLOOMS** for another lovely gift of flowers! Surprising our participants with their bouquet of flowers was a perfect way to kick off our National Caregiver Month of celebrations! Especially after a beautiful concert by the Moorhead High School Apollo Strings! 5.



Greetings from Erin Bonitto

"I Just Told You...Don't You Remember?"

PLUS "Strategies for Keeping Your Loved One Engaged During the Winter (and beyond!) FREE!!

Families, Community Members and Professionals WELCOME!

Wednesday, Jan. 4th, 1-3pm
Bethel Church
RSVPs Recommended



Erin Bonitto

Greetings Memory Café of the Red River Valley! This past June, I had the sincere pleasure of meeting many of you at the Annual Caregiver Conference, where I was honored to be the keynote speaker. Though I came to you as a dementia educator, I felt much more a member of your community. Like so many of you, my own family was experiencing the deep heartache - and the moments of genuine connection and joys - that can be part of the dementia journey. I shared stories of my dad and the unexpected lessons I had learned as one of his care partners. In September, my dad passed away. I've had time to reflect, with gratitude, on those many lessons. An important take-away for me: Surviving the dementia journey requires a community. A community in which it's okay to cry and laugh and be mad and be glad. A community where resources and knowledge are available - and grace is abundant.

Our family 'patched together' some community supports during our journey. But we did not have anything approaching the extraordinary community and resources you've created at the Memory Café of the Red River Valley. Since meeting you all, I've often wondered how much smoother the road might have been, especially for my mom, if we'd had a thriving Memory Café in our area. To me, it seems the Memory Café of the Red River Valley is a true model for community support during the dementia journey. In January 2023, your Memory Café will be raising funds for Giving Hearts Day, an opportunity to earn a \$50,000 matching grant to support the grow the services available. I hope you will spread the word of this wonderful opportunity - and as you are able - consider making a contribution. I will be helping kick-off this fundraising opportunity with a Refresher Course on January 4th. I hope to see many of you again that day!

2022 Facts and Figures

Here is a brief snapshot of some of the ways Memory Cafe deepened our reach into the community during 2022:

Attendance: Wednesday (Hjemkomst Center and Bethel church programs) - members - 1194, guests - 424; Linger Laugh and Learn Center - 950 members, volunteers, guests

Phone call inquiries - 29/month (average)

Social Media: Facebook followers - 881; people reached by our FB page - 37,300; Increased Instagram followers - 100

Newsletter - Distributed to over 1000 individuals, families and organizations

Board of Directors: Grew by four new members - Paul Finstad, Rock Messerschmidt, Mike Slette (President), and Lonna Whiting. Karen Beutler replaced Dan Cushing in March.

Volunteers - Grew from 12 active volunteers to approximately 36 new volunteers

Donors - 194 new donors in 2022; received our first \$50,000 matching fund challenge and our largest private donation of \$25,000.

Giving Hearts Day - 531 donors; 2nd place award for new donor engagement

FM Area Foundation Caring Catalog - chosen as one of only 25 nonprofit organizations to participate in this year.

Grants received - Otto Bremer - \$10,000; FM Area Foundation - \$7,000; Offutt Family Foundation - \$50,000

This growth wouldn't have been possible without YOUR support! THANK YOU!

JEANS DAY SURPRISE FROM HEARTLAND TRUST!

THANK YOU



HEARTLAND TRUST COMPANY

THANK YOU

It is with excitement and gratitude that we provide a donation to Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley. Each month we pick a new community organization to support. Heartland team members provide a donation of \$3.00 per Friday for Jeans Day. 100% of those funds are donated to a community organization which is picked by the team members. In October, Memory Cafe was chosen! Thank you for all of the amazing work you are doing within our community. We are grateful for your organization!

Who are the Empowered Explorers from Ed

Clapp Elementary school?

Empowered Explorers is a group of leaders at Ed Clapp Elementary School that have demonstrated their leadership and have successfully completed an application that was signed by the student and multiple staff members. This application shows that these students have put forth their best effort to be safe, respectful and responsible in all areas of the school. We are very excited to be a part of Memory Café! Thank you for including us!

WEATHER CLOSURES

We will post our weather related closures on facebook and local TV and radio stations.



Community Service at it's FINEST!! 100 Blankets in 90 Minutes!!



Living out our mission to uphold the beauty and value of individuals living with memory loss and their care partners is brought into focus every Christmas at Memory Cafe. We held our annual intergenerational fleece blanket project on Nov. 16th with students from the **Ed Clapp Empowered Explorers team and Oak Grove Elementary school; together we tied 100 blankets in 90 minutes!** Wow, that's teamwork! The blankets were donated to five area nonprofit organizations who will distribute them to children in need during the holidays. This year we chose **Jeremiah Project, Churches United, Ronald McDonald House, Women's Care Clinic, and Down Home** to receive and distribute the blankets. It was a delightful and very gratifying afternoon of shared community service. Thank you students for your awesome partnership and hard work!



Some of the *Empowered Explorers* from Ed Clapp

"I'm starting to really like helping old people. But, I don't think they want to be called 'old', do they?"
~Ed Clapp student



Joy and her young friends in ACTION!



Coach Jake from CrossFit Fargo even participated!



Our dedicated Oak Grove partners!

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If at first you don't succeed then skydiving isn't for you."
-Steven Wright





Celebrating the Holidays



"Keep it Shorter, Keep it Smaller, and Keep it Simpler"
Teepa Snow's Tips for Celebrating the Holidays



- Ask, "What's the goal? Is the celebration going to be **agenda** driven or **relationship** driven?"
- Who will be there? How many? Would it be better to divide the group into smaller gatherings that gather at different times? In most cases, yes.
- Consider your stamina level and that of your loved one. Be willing to shift from how you've always celebrated the holidays in the past and do it more simply now. Let go of expectations for yourself and your loved one.
- Would it help to switch the location of your celebration to a different place so you and your loved one don't feel responsible for the preparations and hosting responsibilities?
- **Know your person as they were. And now, see them as they are today.**
- **Let go of what you can't have and celebrate what's possible.**

Gift Ideas

Assisting your loved one feel helpful and involved during the holidays is a wonderful gift to give to him/her. Sorting different colored napkins, wrapping gifts, stuffing gift bags, sprinkling festive sugar on cutout cookies, straightening the silverware drawer, wiping off cabinets, dusting furniture, and sweeping or vacuuming the floor are some possible ideas. As her husband Charlie moved deeper into dementia, Elizabeth bought a cookbook from his teenage years. They read through the recipes and highlighted the ones he remembered his mom making during the holidays. Then, with Charlie as her sous-chef, Elizabeth made dishes that were most meaningful to him. The goal is to empower your loved one to feel helpful during this busy time of year. **Remember, it's the process, not the result that matters most! Let go of perfectionism.**

**For Individuals with Advanced Dementia
Doll and Stuffed Animal Therapy (Excerpted)
www.dailycaring.com & alzheimersstore.org**

Using a robotic pet or a baby doll can be a very effective and non-pharmalogical way for a person with advanced dementia to feel comforted and needed. A baby doll and animated pet can...

- Calm someone who is upset
- Provide endless hours of hugs and smiles
- Lull a person to sleep
- Create a distraction from a dangerous, harmful or upsetting event
- Serve as an attention-getter
- Provide a tool for social interaction
- Regenerate warm, nurturing feelings of once again caring for a child or pet
- Make it possible for someone, totally dependent upon others, to care for 'someone or something' else

Some people are concerned that giving their older adult a doll or childlike toy would be demeaning or patronizing. But when someone has dementia, helping them feel safe and happy in their current reality is the top priority. So if trying unconventional ideas like baby dolls, fidget blankets, and other simple activities and toys might help them feel better and enjoy life more, why not give them a try? If they do get upset or offended by the gift, you'll know to cross that off the list. Perhaps you can try it again later.



EVERYONE HAS A STORY WORTH SHARING.

Here is how it works:

Step 1:

Once a week, choose a question to inspire your loved one to write their memories or thoughts.

Step 2:

They will simply reply with an email which is shared with you. Some individuals may need assistance dictating their thoughts and/or using email.

Step 3:

At the end of a year, their stories are bound into a beautiful keepsake book for everyone to enjoy for years to come!

Editors note: I was given this beautiful gift from my son and his wife for my birthday and deeply appreciate it!



Favorite Places
Daily Comforts for Loved Ones



My loved one and I have some favorite places we have lived or visited. Some we can never visit again together because of his condition. I have photos, I have memories, but I miss these places, especially our times together there.

I'm glad we've had those experiences. I wish we could go to those places again but we can't. I do hold them in my heart and keep their memorabilia at hand. Sometimes I close my eyes and recall how I felt being there and bask in that feeling again. I'd like to find ways to keep this feeling alive in our life together now. We can't go back, but I can look for places that we can go or activities we can do that might remind us of those wonderful places we treasure.

My imagination can at least explore that possibility.

Memory, memorabilia, and imagination can help to keep alive the places we have loved together.

MEMORY CAFE

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Sponsors



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The Marv Bossart Parkinsons Foundation