



Purple Angels Newsletter

A monthly publication from Marshfield Area Purple Angels, Inc.

MARCH 2018

Calendar

March 1

Memory Café
11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Good Shepherd Lutheran
Church, Marshfield

March 3

I Want You to be Happy Day

March 8

Popcorn Lover's Day

March 14

Learn About Butterflies Day

March 17

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

March 20

First Day of Spring



See the back page for more information about these events.

Preventing Falls: A Priority for Caregivers

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths for older adults. Those who live with dementia are especially at risk. Impaired judgment, decline in sensory perception over time, and an inability to tell others about their needs can contribute to an increased fall risk for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia.



Marshfield Purple Angels is focusing on safety this year, with a series of presentations at our monthly memory cafes, beginning in March with a presentation on falls prevention. Liz Kracht, BSN RN, Injury Prevention Coordinator at Marshfield Medical Center, will provide tips and suggestions to help caregivers maintain a safe home environment and lower the risk for falls in and out of the home. An article with suggestions for preventing falls at home is also included in this newsletter.

Topics of discussion at upcoming Purple Angel Memory Cafes include driving and car safety, including when and how to keep a loved one with dementia from driving a car when it is no longer safe. There will also be a presentation in May by Midstate Independent Living Consultants, with information about assistive equipment, home assessments, and programs to help make your home safer and more accessible. This is important information every caregiver needs to know.

Caregiver Tip: 10 Suggestions for Preventing Dementia-Related Falls at Home

Preventing falls needs to be a priority for all caregivers. Here are some suggestions to help you prevent falls at home.

1. Arrange for adequate lighting. Dementia can damage vision and cause illusions and misperceptions. Make sure the home has enough lighting in each room to reduce visual difficulties. People with dementia might misinterpret what they see, so reducing dark areas and shadows is very helpful.

2. Provide visual cues. People with dementia can have difficulty separating similar colors, such as the same carpet on the stairs and on the floor. It is helpful to define the top and bottom of a staircase through the use of contrasting colors. You can also place bright colored tape at the edge of each stair to further help define them.

3. Clear walking paths inside the home. Those living with dementia can have a hard time recognizing the danger of a loose rug, unsteady footstool or electrical cords stretched across the floor. Removing tripping hazards and keeping pathways clear can help prevent falls.

4. Decrease clutter outside. Areas outside of the home should be clear of objects (leaves, rocks, etc.) and there should not be dips or rises in walkways or uneven ground wherever someone with dementia typically walks.

5. Information and reminders in a common place. Create a single place for any notes or reminders that can easily be accessed and read by a person with dementia. This can be a cork bulletin board or a dry erase board. This can help prevent the need for a person with dementia to walk around looking for information.

6. Keep important things by the bed. A major issue for people living with dementia is confusion at night. Restless nights can leave them tired and unsteady. To help prevent wandering at night, keep important items on a bedside table, including water, a light source, eyeglasses, tissues and the telephone.

7. Consider unmet needs. A person living with dementia may start to wander as their condition progresses. This may lead them into unsafe areas. Wandering often signifies an unmet need a person with dementia is trying to satisfy. For example, they may be looking for a telephone because they usually called their wife at 5 p.m. Instead of trying to physically stop the wandering, try distracting or redirecting their activity to avoid raising a person's anxiety or frustration level.

8. Lower noise levels. As a person living with dementia may have more sensitivity to noise, you should try and decrease the level of white noise and loud sounds around them. If the noise level becomes too much, it can cause anxiety and nervousness – which can make a person with dementia unsteady on their feet.

9. Keep help at hand. For an older person who is at risk of falling, being able to quickly and easily call for help is vital. Consider a fall alert bracelet, bed alarm, or use a baby monitor to help you hear when they get up.

10. Supply safe footwear. What a person wears on their feet can represent a major fall risk. If a shoe can easily slip off, it can cause them to trip. However, a person living with dementia may struggle with complicated articles of clothing that involve buttons or laces. Shoes with Velcro fastenings are a good solution, making footwear easy to take on and off, but also safely securing it to their feet.



Purple Angels Memory Café

A community program provided by Marshfield Area Purple Angels, Inc.



THE LUCK OF THE IRISH

A celebration of St. Patrick's Day, lucky charms, rainbows, and pots of gold!

You've heard about the Luck of the Irish, but it takes more than just luck to stay safe at home and prevent falls. Liz Kracht, BSN RN, Injury Prevention Coordinator at Marshfield Medical Center, will provide tips and information more valuable than a pot of gold!

- Enjoy coffee, cookies and social time with family and friends
- Join in a sing-a-long
- Learn about preventing falls
- Share lunch together
- Create a fun craft project

For more information, contact Doug at **715-383-0897** or visit our website: **www.marshfieldpurpleangels.org**

DATE:

Thursday, March 1, 2018

WHERE:

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
502 W McMillan Street, Marshfield

TIME:

11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

You don't need to stay for the entire time.
(Come when you can, leave when you need to)

LUNCH:

Free lunch served at 12:30 p.m.
Menu: Irish beef stew, fresh bread, beverage and dessert.

The Purple Angels Memory Café is always free and open to anyone with Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia, as well as their caregivers, family, and friends.



In the Spotlight



Howie Sturtz

Howie Sturtz, a well-known and beloved musician and band leader, passed away on February 16, 2018.

Howie was the guest of honor at the very first Purple Angels Memory Café in October 2015. He had just gone into retirement and had his final show at the Central Wisconsin State Fair a few weeks before that, but he agreed to come to our event, play some music, and talk about his life and career. It was the perfect kickoff for the Purple Angels! Because the Marshfield Area Purple Angels was formed in memory of our mother who had Alzheimer's disease, we wanted to feature a guest of honor who was connected to her, and Howie was one of Mom's favorite entertainers. His music and legacy will live on and he will be remembered not only as an entertainer, but as someone who truly cared about people.

March Holidays and Events

February has more going for it than just Valentine's Day. Make room for these fun observances as well!

March 3 is *I Want You to be Happy Day*. "I Want You to be Happy Day" is an unselfish day: It's a thought that we wish upon others that we care for or love. Celebrate today by doing more than wishing someone is happy. Do something to make others happy. It can be as simple as sending a card that will put a smile on someone's face. Other ideas include a phone call, making positive compliments, or cooking a special meal. Be creative. There are endless ways to make others happy.



March 8 is *Popcorn Lover's Day*. Many of us love popcorn, so it only makes sense that there should be a special day just for popcorn lovers! This day is intended to enjoy popcorn and share it with others. You can have it in a traditional way, with salt and butter, or you can add any number of flavors to it. Some popular flavors are cheddar cheese, parmesan and garlic, and even hot pepper! There is no requirement as what seasoning to use today, as long as you eat plenty of popcorn. Now that's not hard to do, is it?



March 14 is *Learn about Butterflies Day*. In keeping with the spirit of this very special day, celebrate by learning a little more about the wide range of butterflies. Buy a Butterfly identification book, so you will know what butterflies inhabit your yard. And learn how to attract them. You can do this by planting flowers that they like. Celebrating "Learn About Butterflies Day" in March gives you time to plan your garden to include some plants and flowers that will attract more butterflies that you can enjoy all summer long!



Looking for more information? Check us out!

Marshfield Area Purple Angels is an all-volunteer, tax-exempt (501c3) charitable organization serving the greater Marshfield area. Please visit our website www.marshfieldpurpleangels.org and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/marshfieldpurpleangels for more information.

If you have any questions, call Doug Seubert, dementia specialist, at **715-383-0897** or email doug@marshfieldpurpleangels.org.

