



# Purple Angels Newsletter

*A monthly publication from Marshfield Area Purple Angels, Inc.*

MAY 2017

## Calendar

May 4

There is no  
memory café  
this month

May 14



May 29



### Purple Angels Memory Café Takes A Break

After hosting 19 awesome memory cafés in a row, Marshfield Area Purple Angels is taking a break during the month of May! Well, we're not actually taking a complete break, as Doug will be in sunny California presenting on "dementia friendly health care" at the annual conference of the Institute for Healthcare Advancement. And because other volunteers are also busy the first week in May, we decided to cancel the memory café this month. But we'll start back up in June with our annual meeting on Thursday June 1, and we'll have a "picnic in the park" on Thursday July 6. We also have some interesting speakers and fun activities planned for the rest of the year. Watch for the details coming in future issues of the newsletter.

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### Volunteers Needed for Board of Directors

Memory cafés are big events, and many volunteers work hard to make them happen each month. Several people have expressed interest in volunteering but usually say, "I'm not sure I can help much with setting up tables or serving a meal." Well we have other volunteer opportunities that are just as important, but they can be done while sitting in a chair! That's right, we need volunteers to serve on the Marshfield Area Purple Angels Board of Directors. Meetings are few: we have an annual meeting each year and one or two other short meetings as needed. All meetings are conveniently held on the same days as our memory cafés, so travel and time commitments are kept at a minimum. If you are willing to volunteer as a board member, please contact Doug at 715-383-0897.



## Caregiver Tips about Eating and Successful Mealtimes

People with dementia can develop problems with eating. As with many of the symptoms of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, it is up to the in-home caregiver to determine the root cause of the problem to find the best solution.

The person with dementia may lose the ability to tell when they are hungry or full, complicating mealtime and adding stress when the caregiver is hungry and needs to eat. Smells and tastes may also be different to someone with dementia, so they might refuse favorite foods or drinks.

Someone with dementia may forget to eat or forget how to use their utensils and make bite-size portions for themselves. Even dentures that do not fit properly can be a cause of dietary changes or loss of appetite. Certain medications may also alter their appetite.

These problems can lead to dehydration and malnutrition. Poor nutrition can even make dementia symptoms worse. Watch for weight loss and always contact a physician if you are concerned about any changes in weight and diet.

To encourage eating, use these tips to create a pleasant dining experience:

- Offer several small meals throughout the day, rather than three large meals. Also offer plenty clear fluids throughout the day, and limit drinks with caffeine in them.
- Try to serve meals at the dining room or kitchen table whenever possible. To encourage eating, sit down and eat together.
- Eliminate distractions such as the TV or radio, and keep the table setting simple.
- Use a plate that contrasts with the color of the table so it can be easily seen.

- Don't overcrowd the plate. Offering too much food at a meal can cause the person with dementia to refuse to eat.
- Some people with dementia may prefer to eat one type of food at a time. Use a divided plate or serve foods individually in small bowls.
- Offer finger foods that don't require utensils such as sandwiches, tater tots or fries, chicken drumsticks, and sliced fruit and vegetables.
- Many people with dementia experience difficulties chewing and swallowing. Avoid foods that are tough and hard to chew. Cut food into small pieces or consider grinding foods to make them easier to eat.
- If the person you are caring for has dementia with compulsive behaviors, he or she may overeat or eat very quickly. You may need to limit the amount of food you serve. You may need to keep foods out of sight and out of reach.
- If the person you care for is not eating or is losing weight, supplement meals with high-protein/high-calorie drinks. For example, make milkshakes with ice cream, fresh fruit and protein powder to add calories.
- Select foods that smell good while they are cooking, and whenever possible, engage the person your care for in preparing the meal or setting the table. These are signals that it will soon be time to eat and helps the person with dementia get ready.
- Understand that people with dementia can have a different sense of time. You may need to adjust the time of meals instead of making them stick to a standard schedule.
- Make mealtime joyful. Don't rush through the meal. Take time to talk and laugh and enjoy each other's company. This is not a time to argue, scold, or worry about spills and messes.

*Watch for more caregiver tips in future newsletters!*