

# Brain Waves

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## Quote of The Month ...

*"The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today."*

~Jackson Brown Jr.

## Leah's Notes ...



**Leah Zehel,**  
Director

Recently when meeting with a newer participant and their family, I asked him "how he liked it?" He responded, "I really did not want to come here, but now I realize it is so much better than what I was doing, sitting home watching television!" This gentleman continued to say, "I like learning new things, all the social interaction and even the exercise." I was so happy to hear that already he was seeing the positive effects of social interaction. After hearing this I thought it would be good to share how we incorporate six key ele-

ments of wellness in our program daily; Socialization, Community, Cognitive, Emotional, Spiritual and Physical. Socializing is what we do best and is our number one priority, we start and end each day with a casual social time, and keep socializing through all our projects. Community, we believe in our participants and focus on what they can do, not what they cannot. We are involved in countless service projects throughout the year, giving our participants fulfillment as they are giving back to the community. Physical, we incorporate an exercise class daily, with fun and effective exercises, focusing on strength and balance. Cognitive, we keep our brains active, getting our brains in gear with trivia, word games, cards, reading, art and much more! Emotional and

Spiritual, we value and respect each one of our participants, listening, validating and always encouraging. We are a safe and supportive environment. Staying active in our program is not only fun, there are real results. Staying socially active influences several biological factors that reduce psychological stress, increase a meaningful social role, self-efficiency and increase a sense of meaning and purpose in life. One comment that I hear far too often from our family members is, "I wish we would have started this program earlier!" I believe that staying active not only enhances social connectedness, it reduces depression, reduces cognitive decline and gives structure and meaning to daily living. ■



## PERSON of The Month

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We learned a few new things about **Myrna** and her family this past month when she was a featured Person of the Month. Myrna spent her early years in South Dakota and moved to a farm in Randolph, WI where she graduated HS and met her husband Ken. She had a wonderful marriage and raised three great sons, Scott, Mark and Jason on the family farm. Her husband passed in 2005, but she was left with a supportive family of sons, daughter in laws and grandchildren that she loves dearly. Myrna has a strong faith and went on mission trips to Africa and even road an elephant there! She loves watching her grandchildren play soccer and she is very proud that her family farm is still producing wonderful "Alsum Sweet Corn" in Randolph (<http://www.alsumsweetcorn.com/>), which she and her husband started in 1976. Myrna loves to have fun and brings a smile and kind word for everyone she meets. We are so thankful that Myrna spends some of her days each week with us! ■





# Memory Minute

By Leah Zehel

## How Can I Improve My Memory? Is there a Daily Exercise I Can do to improve it?

The most important component of memory is attention. By choosing to attend something and focus on it, you create a personal interaction with it, which gives it personal meaning, making it easier to remember.

Elaboration and repetition are the most common ways of creating that personal interaction. Elaboration involves creating a rich context for the experience by adding together visual, auditory, and other information about the fact. By weaving a web of information around the fact, you create multiple access points to that piece of information. On the other hand, repetition drills in the same pathway over and over until it is a well-worn path that you can easily find.

The main reason it gets harder for you to learn and remember new things as you age is that your brain's processing speed slows down as you get older. It becomes harder to do more than one thing at the same time, so it's easier to get confused. Your brain may also become less flexible, so it's harder to change learning strate-

gies in mid-stream. All these things mean it becomes harder to focus. So far, there's nothing you can do to change your brain's processing speed, but there are techniques you can use to increase your learning performance, even if your processing speed has slowed.

Alertness, focus, concentration, motivation, and heightened awareness are largely a matter of attitude. Focus takes effort. In fact, most memory complaints have nothing to do with the actual ability of the brain to remember things. They come from a failure to focus properly on the task at hand.

If you want to learn or remember something, concentrate on just one thing. Tune out everything else. The harder the task, the more important it is to tune out distractions. In other words, it can be harder to do more than one thing at once, and it naturally gets harder as you get older. The solution is to make more of an effort not to let yourself get distracted until you've finished what you have to do. ■



## Memory Matters Calendar

**September 7 ~ Exercise to Change your Brain**

*Guest exercise instructor Margo.*

**September 14 ~ Outing, Weil Center Tour**

**September 21 ~ Habits of Highly Effective Brains**

*Flexing our Mental Muscles.*

**September 28 ~ Outing, JMK Art Center**



## TGP Special Events & Activities

- September 6: *Farmers Market Visit*
- September 11: *Preschool Friends Visit*
- September 14: *Music with Dan Ognevic*
- September 18: *Picnic and Bonfire at Lynn's*
- September 19: *Preschool Friends Visits*
- September 28: *Preschool Friends Visit*

