

# BRAIN Waves

OCTOBER 2017



## Inside This Issue ...

Events/ Activities

Leah's Notes

Memory Minute

MM Calendar

Person of  
the Month

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## Quote of The Month ...

*"Be Where Your  
Feet Are."*

~Anonymous

## Leah's Notes ...



**Leah  
Zehel,**  
*Director*

We all know memory loss affects everyone; the individual, their family and friends. It is sometimes painful to see someone you knew at an earlier part of life fail to remember things. This is especially hard when you know who the person was before the disease and they become depressed and this starts to affect their daily living.

Something that I hear often from our families here at The Gathering Place is that friends start to shy away and start to not include the person with dementia in their outings or gatherings anymore. If the person with the memory loss is

married this means the spouse also starts to feel rejected which can add to depression and social isolation for the couple.

You can, and should, continue to be a friend to someone with dementia. The first thing you can do is learn something about the process your friend is experiencing. This means attending classes in the community that explain the process, to give families and friends tools to use in communicating with someone who is challenged with impaired memory or other cognitive issues.

As memory becomes more impaired the "moment" becomes so very important to those with dementia. This means that your invitation to take a walk, visit a public garden or art gallery might be well received because the only expectation is to view and enjoy. The individual will not be challenged in

passive experiences that rely on memory to participate. It is important to protect self-esteem and not leave your friend feeling that they have failed. The more you pre-plan your event the more likely everyone feels good about the time spent together.

Learning how to communicate with someone with dementia is an art and often very challenging. Never make your time together a quiz to see what they remember, keep information simple, reducing stress and choices will allow you both to enjoy the moment. When we are in the moment we are the most present for ourselves and others. This is a wonderful lesson that contributes to life satisfaction and can be taught to us by those experiencing this challenging journey. So, don't be afraid to be a friend and don't take any "moments" for granted! ■



## PERSON of The Month

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What a great presentation **Martha B** gave us; we knew she had a lot of talents, but there were so many we didn't know! Martha still lives in the farm homestead where she was born in out near Lakeland College. She had one brother who later became a minister. They attended Pinehurst school down the road and later Plymouth HS. Martha attended Sheboygan Business College, got married and had two children, David and Sarah. Martha and Sarah still walk with two dogs to where the school house used to be on "good days". She played the violin for one year with the Sheboygan Symphony before being called to play the piano for the church choir and eventually the pipe organ for 60 years at Immanuel Church. She loved to work in business offices and worked at Lakeland College Registrar's Office, Immanuel UCC Church and Neumann Plumbing & Heating in Howards Grove. She never applied for a job, but was always asked to take the job. One of her

favorite jobs after she retired was "Grandma's babysitting service" for her 5 grandchildren. If that wasn't enough to keep her busy, Martha also is an accomplished knitter, making blankets, pads for chairs and plants and prayer shawls for church. She also is fluent in high and low German and has transcribed documents, hosted a German family and traveled to Germany to visit their family homestead several times. Martha's time with us, reflects her strong work ethic and love of people when she is with us. Very social, can do bulletins faster than anyone else and a desire to lend a hand wherever needed. I've never known Martha to have a bad day, always positive. We are so blessed to have Martha in our TGP family! ■





# Memory Minute

By Leah Zehel

## Keep Dancing...it turns out it is good for the brain!

A couple times a year we welcome Sue Alby, dance instructor to come over and teach our Memory Matters group dance! Sometime when I tell the group we are going to dance I get some eye rolls, but we always end up having a really good time! Not only do we get a good work out, and do a lot of laughing, we are exercising our brain also!

Picking up choreography can seem like a brain teaser. Interpreting which arm, which leg, which direction even, can lead to legs and arms everywhere except for the very position they should be in. This can be frustrating, but keep dancing, as research suggests that learning new steps is good brain maintenance.

Dance is seen as viable therapy because it simultaneously combines physical and cognitive stimulation, which could maximize its impact on neuroplasticity and cognition. So far, studies have examined the effects of dance in elderly individuals with dementia, including subjects with Alzheimer's disease and those with confusion, disorientation, and memory loss.

Dancing is mainly associated with physical health benefits, but scientists have recently discovered its neurological benefits. The complex mental coordination that dance requires activates several brain regions: the cerebellum, the somatosensory cortex and the basal ganglia, triggering kinesthetic, rational, musical, and emotional responses. This strengthens neural connections and can improve our memory.

Neurologist Dr. Robert Katzman said, "Freestyle social dancing, such as foxtrot, waltz and swing, requires split-second, rapid-fire decision making, which is the key to maintain intelligence because it forces your brain to regularly rewire its neural pathways, giving you greater cognitive reserve and increased complexity of neural synapses.

Building your brain's neural complex works in much the

same was as exercise, to get fitter you have to train regularly. So, the more dancing you do, the greater you're cognitive reserve. Your improvisational skills on the dance floor should fire up the rapid decision-making that's needed to forge new neural pathways. A study in 2012 showed that a 10 week dance intervention helped dementia patients over 70. It was a small pilot study of 18 subjects, where ten of the dance participants showed an improvement in cognitive function and mood compared to the eight who did not dance.

Dance and ageing research has shown its positive impact on the neurology in healthy and dementia groups. Dance therapy could be prescribed by physicians to improve visual perception and spatial memory, an area commonly affected by dementia.

If dancing can keep my mind healthy, then I'll see you in the studio! ■

## Memory Matters Calendar

**October 5 ~ – How to Integrate all your senses to Improve Memory**

- *Your Heightened Senses*

**October 12 ~ The Sense of Smell and Taste**

- *Music with Dan Ognevic*

**October 19 ~ Outing, JMK Art Center**

**October 26 ~ Game Day**

- *Exercise with Margo*

## TGP Special Events & Activities

*Reminder Friends and Family are always invited to our Entertainment Programs! (Even if it is not your scheduled day to come).*

### October 5:

- Music Entertainment by The Saddle Tramps, Western Theme Day
- Art with Joann

### October 10: Preschool Visit

### October 12: Outing to Mauthe Lake, Color Drive

### October 16: Guitar Sing-a-Long with Dennis Reha

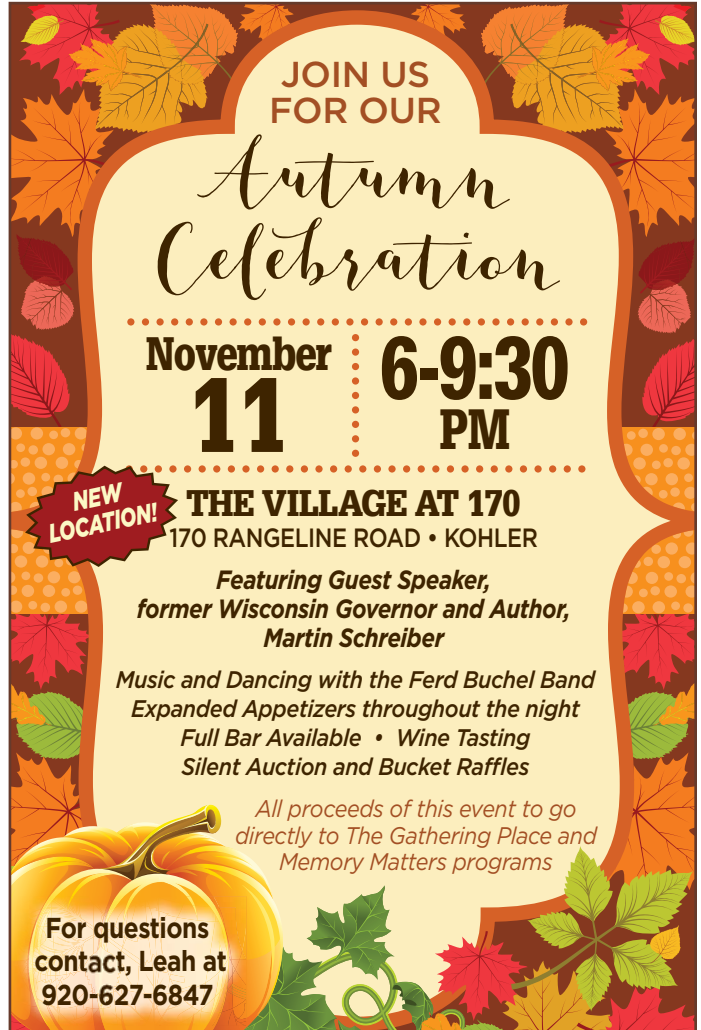
### October 19: Music Entertainment with Wymann Drake

### October 26:

- Art with Joann
- Preschool Visit

### October 30: Sing-A-Long with Dan Ognevic

### October 31: Halloween Party with Music Entertainment with Bob Welsch



JOIN US FOR OUR

# Autumn Celebration

**November 11 6-9:30 PM**

**NEW LOCATION!** **THE VILLAGE AT 170**  
170 RANGELINE ROAD • KOHLER

*Featuring Guest Speaker, former Wisconsin Governor and Author, Martin Schreiber*

*Music and Dancing with the Ferd Buchel Band  
Expanded Appetizers throughout the night  
Full Bar Available • Wine Tasting  
Silent Auction and Bucket Raffles*

*All proceeds of this event to go directly to The Gathering Place and Memory Matters programs*

**For questions contact, Leah at 920-627-6847**

