

# Brain Waves

JANUARY 2026



## Inside This Issue ...

Leah's Notes

Memory Minute

MM Course Dates

Upcoming Events

Volunteer Corner

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## CHRISTmas QuoTe ...

*"Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."*

~Marcel Proust

## Leah's Notes ...



Leah Zehel, Director

### Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had very blessed holidays, and that you enjoyed your time with all your loved ones.

The Gathering Place is looking forward to a new year and spreading more joy to our participants during their time with us! Everyday your loved one is with us; we find ways to celebrate their success. Whether our participants have success socially,

physically, creatively, or cognitively, we celebrate it! Our programming is purposefully structured with engaging activities so that our participants are successful and experience fulfillment and joy. When we plan our activities, we try and follow a couple key components to keep the program a success. #1 is that we want everyone to be socially engaged. We want the participants input about the activity, whether it be suggesting what paint colors to use on a piece of art, or instruction on the best way to organize the tool cabinet because we want the participants to have

ownership. #2 We love laughter! There is never a dull moment, and we can all handle more laughter! #3 We support friendships among the participants, and we want everyone to feel comfortable to talk to each other and create a supportive peer group. #4 Opportunities to be creative; we ensure the projects are the participants, and let them be creative as they wish... encouraging the participants to actively engage in whatever activity they are doing. We find by following these components, we build self-confidence and foster more independence and give them success! ■

**This is just a reminder to our volunteers how special you are and we are looking forward to a successful year of enriching lives in 2026!**

***Volunteer - The Heart of The Gathering Place!*** Recently I overheard one of our volunteers talking to a family member, telling them about their loved one's day. And I could not help but have a happy heart because this simple conversation was what it was all about. Our volunteers here do a lot in a day, we get to do a lot of fun things, play games, do art, listen and be entertained by great musicians. During these regular activities their job is to engage your loved one while doing that activity. But when you think about it, it is SO much more than that!!! See it was not necessarily that volunteer's job to tell that family about their day, but they did, and they did it with joy and true happiness because they are truly happy for your loved when, they are invested, they care, they want them to have the best day possible!

Thank you to ALL of our Volunteers you are simply the best! 😊 🍷





## Memory Minute

By Leah Zehel

This is the time of year we all start to settle into the long days of winter here in Wisconsin, these days can get long dark and lonely, especially being older and maybe more home bound these factors really play into your mental health.

**What can you do? Open your curtains.** Even if the day is overcast, sitting near an unshaded window is helpful. Turn on your lights at home. Keeping your regular hours, getting up and going to sleep at the same time every day, even on weekends, will help you feel like being more active.

**What else can you do? Exercise regularly.** Regular exercise is key to feeling good any time of year, but especially on the dreary days of winter. The endorphins that are released during exercise are natural mood elevators that can make you feel happier and more relaxed.

**Eat smart.** When it's cold and cloudy outside, it's natural to want to be comforted by warm drinks and hot hearty food. The good news is that hot and hearty can be healthy too. It's just a matter of making smart choices. Eating a variety of foods, especially fruits and vegetables is especially important during the winter months.

**Stay engaged.** It's easy to feel like huddling indoors when it's cold, but it's important to stay engaged with the world and maintain social contacts. Stick with your schedule as much as possible, continue to attend religious services, keep volunteer commitments, meet friends for coffee or lunch and exercise with a group. Feelings of isolation, loneliness and depression are more common during the winter and are a major component of the "blahs".

Be extra good to yourself during cold weather. Enjoy a relaxing bath, read a favorite book or watch a good old movie with friends or family. Try putting on your favorite upbeat music, it can be a real mood changer, and dance even if you are alone! ■



## Memory Matters Calendar

- |            |                                    |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| January 8  | Welcome Back, New Year, New You!   |
| January 15 | Music with Jaimie                  |
| January 22 | You Be the Judge                   |
| January 29 | Dan and Larry's Birthday Breakfast |



## TGP Special Events & Activities

*Families always welcome to our Entertainment Events!*

- January 7     *Music with Tom Luke*
- January 13   *Sing-a-long with Karen and Thomas*
- January 14   *Music with Daniel Lovett*
- January 21   *SPARKS*
- January 27   *Bell Chori with Ruth*
- January 28   *Music with Bob Welsch*

