

care Fall 2011 SHARING

Resources for Family Caregivers of Older Adults

www.overlakehospital.org/seniorcare

Editor: Alison Nesmith. For your free subscription to Caresharing call Overlake Hospital Senior Care at 425-688-5800 or email seniorcare@overlakehospital.org.



Reacting to a piece of art is something everyone can share.

The art of connecting

From the Museum of Modern Art in New York to the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, people with dementia and their care partners are experiencing how art can ignite memory and self-expression.

Research has shown that art can prompt the memories of people with dementia and help them to communicate when language becomes problematic. In a 2007 study, for example, two groups of older people, one with dementia and one not, were asked their preferences for particular paintings and styles of paintings¹. Two weeks later the groups repeated

the exercise. Although they did not remember specific pieces, people in the memory-impaired group responded to the different styles of artwork in similar ways as they had originally. Researchers observed that, despite their memory problems, the dementia sufferers retained their aesthetic preferences, an essential part of their identities. In conclusion, the

study's authors encouraged families and patients to engage in art appreciation activities.

Recognizing the role that art can play in helping people connect to all aspects of life, last year Seattle's Frye Art Museum introduced *here:now*, a series of art programs specifically designed to engage people with dementia and their care partners in shared activities. The *here:now* programs include both gallery tours and art-making classes.

The gallery tours, which take place once a month, are conversation-based and not focused on art history or criticism, but rather on themes such as pastoral paintings or seascapes. Using the themes as a starting point, the specially-trained gallery guide asks the group open-ended questions and the discussion evolves from each participant's experience in that moment and his or her relationship to the paintings. Sometimes the paintings evoke memories from the past, but wherever the conversation goes, it offers the opportunity for people with dementia and their care partners to

continued on page 2

INSIDE: *Diabetes fair · Cancer support · How's your insurance?*
Fall calendar:
Balance classes · Eye care · Support groups

continued from page 1

share an experience in the present. As one participant expressed it, “We really appreciate your invitation to come and be part of the museum! It’s wonderful! Considering that myself and others have Alzheimer’s; this is really a way to think outside the box and our voice is translated in art and feelings and conversation.”

The *here:now* gallery tour and art-making class is a six-part class held over a twelve-week period. Participants begin with a gallery tour and then move to the Frye’s art studio where they can create their own pieces using various media including watercolor, paint, clay, and collage. A brief social time ends each class. The art-making classes provide a welcome respite for

“We talked about how Alzheimer’s created this wonderful opportunity to share an appreciation for beauty and art. With Alzheimer’s it’s hard to communicate, but art-making it becomes your voice.”

here:now participant

all participants, giving people a chance to share an experience and interact within in a frame-work that is not disease-focused. As one caregiver reported, “I love this time when there is nothing to do, but think about a painting and create art. I can’t tell you how great it is to see the Alzheimer’s ‘to-do’ list take a back seat to art!”

The Frye developed its *here:now* programs in partnership with both Elderwise and the Alzheimer’s Association - Western & Central Washington State Chapter. Elderwise is an established local non-profit that offers a unique Adult

Enrichment Program including art, music, relaxation, and various forms of movement for people with cognitive disabilities. Elderwise’s expertise and philosophy helped to inform the *here:now* series.

The Frye collaborated with the Alzheimer’s Association to learn about dementia and how to structure an experience that would involve both patients and their care partners. All of the people working at the Frye – from the gallery guides to the cafe



respected as a contributor, to have a fresh opportunity for communication and connection, and to feel free from the many burdens a dementia diagnosis imposes. Tour groups and classes are small (10 to 12 people usually) so that care partners won’t worry about overstimulation or confusion for their loved ones.

Through the generosity of the Frye Foundation, which has underwritten the cost of this program, both the gallery tours and the art-making classes are open and free to the public. Both have proved extremely popular. Moreover, judging by the feedback, *here:now* has indeed met the organizers’ goals: “Art gives me back my pride,” one Alzheimer’s-affected participant wrote, “because I am creating something. Painting lets you paint without talking about it and that is total freedom. The talking comes after you have painted and that makes you proud. It’s so important to go through that because otherwise I wouldn’t have an opportunity to express myself.”

This article was written by Susan Dailey, MSW, of Overlake Hospital Senior Care.

Check it out

***here:now* - Arts engagement for people living with dementia**

Pre-registration is required for all programs. Contact the **Frye Art Museum at 206-432-8211** or **herenow@fryemuseum.org** for more information.

- Monthly Gallery Tours are scheduled Oct. 26th, Nov.30th, and Dec. 28th, 2:30 - 4pm.
- This fall’s Art-making Class is full, but you can put your name on the waiting list and/or find out about future sessions.
- The Frye Art Museum is located on First Hill at 704 Terry Ave., Seattle, WA 98104

Elderwise

www.elderwise.org

Contact 206-774-6606 or **info@elderwise.org**

Alzheimer’s Association - Western & Central Washington Chapter

206-363-5500, 1-800-272-3900

http://www.alz.org/alzwa

staff – received training in understanding and dealing with dementia. The overarching aim of their carefully designed program was to encourage each participant to feel safe, to feel

1. Halpern, A.R.; J. Ly; S. Elkin-Frankston; and M.G. O’Connor: “I know What I Like: Stability of Aesthetic Preference in Alzheimer’s Patients” *Brain and Cognition*, Feb. 2008.

In your corner

Kelly Zant and Desiree Hobson, oncology social workers on Overlake Hospital's Cancer Care Support team, are as knowledgeable about resources as they are passionate about serving patients and their families. However, they sometimes face a serious hurdle: families dealing with cancer do not understand how a social worker can help.

Desiree says, "We are here to support both the patient and caregiver, we want the caregiver to be able to focus on their loved one and not have to worry about issues like finances or medical equipment." The duo helps caregivers with:

- Financial issues, including insurance, social security disability, and prescription assistance.
- Arranging home health services, respite care and transportation
- Finding educational classes and support services for children and
- Difficult emotional issues such as sexual intimacy.

Kelly and Desiree do a lot of advising by phone and email and



help many long-distance caregivers. They also frequently arrange to meet caregivers while their loved ones are having treatment to save extra trips to the hospital. Their flexibility and depth of knowl-

edge allows caregivers to spend more quality time with their loved ones and not have to reinvent the wheel. To find out how Desiree or Kelly can assist your family, contact **Overlake Cancer Support Services at 425-688-5586.**

Forum for caregivers

The 6th Annual African American Caregivers Forum, "**Living Our Legacy: Caring for Our Loved Ones, Caring for Ourselves,**" will take place **Saturday, October 22nd, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** at the Double Tree Guest Suites, 16500 Southcenter Parkway, Tukwila, 98188. The forum features keynote speaker Dr. Jeanine Skinner, geriatric neuropsychology fellow at the University of Washington, whose current research examines how physical activity improves cognition and affects risk factors associated with diabetes and Alzheimer's disease in African American older adults. Workshops on prevention and management of chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, will also be offered.

The forum is free for family caregivers and registration is on-line at the Alzheimer's Association of

Western & Central Washington Chapter: <http://www.alzwa.org/cms/2011aacfr> or by calling **206-529-3894**. This is a popular event so early registration is recommended.

Living healthy with diabetes

**November 5th,
8:30am -2:00pm
Overlake's PACCAR
Education Center**

If you or your loved one is dealing with diabetes, don't miss this FREE informational event. Attend various seminars, stroll through vendor exhibits showcasing diabetes treatment products and services, and receive free health screenings. Call 425-688-5686 or visit www.overlakehospital.org/diabetesfair for more information.

Open enrollment starts soon

November 15th is the first day of the open enrollment period for Medicare Part D, prescription drug coverage. Every year at this time it is important to compare the options since plans change and your current plan may not continue to give you the coverage you need. Some plans may end and if you do not sign up for a new plan you may be reassigned to another that may not be your best choice.

If you would like assistance in finding the best plan to fit your needs you can arrange to meet a SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisor) representative at Overlake Hospital Senior Care by calling 425-688-5800 to make an appointment. You can also go online to www.medicare.gov and compare plans.

CALENDAR

Fall 2011

CLASSES

Classes are free unless noted otherwise.

A Matter of Balance

This class is designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels. Participants learn simple exercises to increase strength and balance. Complimentary lunch will be served after the first session and registration is required by calling 425-688-5800.

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays, Nov. 1 to 29,
or
Mondays and Wednesdays,
Nov. 28 to Dec. 21;
10 a.m. – noon

Where: The Belletini,
1115 108th Ave. NE, Bellevue

Diabetic Foot Care — Is it Important?

An Overlake podiatrist will review precautions and provide tips for treating problems. Cost is \$7 for Bellevue residents, \$8 for non-residents. Advanced registration required by calling 425-452-7681. Mention class number 59412.

When: Monday, November 28,
1 - 2:30 p.m.

Where: North Bellevue Community Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE, Bellevue

Age-Related Macular Degeneration

Learn early signs of macular degeneration – the leading cause of blindness for people over 50. Advanced registration is required at 425-746-9900.

When: Wednesday, November 9,
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Where: Bellevue YMCA,
14230 Bel-Red Road, Bellevue

Seeing Better While Looking Younger

The eye can often be affected by injuries, infections, inflammation or problems related to aging. An Overlake physician will discuss the treatments available. Advanced registration required by calling 425-556-2314.

When: Wednesday, October 19,
10 - 11:30 a.m.

Where: Redmond Senior Center,
8703 - 160th Ave. NE, Redmond.

Living Wills: Does Your Family Know Your Wishes?

Learn how to develop your own advance directive for healthcare using a workbook covering living wills, durable power of attorney and value statements. Advanced registration required by calling 425-556-2314.

When: Wednesday, November 16,
10 - 11:30 a.m.

Where: Same as above.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Alzheimer's Family Support Group, 3rd Monday each month, 3:00-4:30 pm, Overlake Senior Health Center. Call 425-688-5807.

Caregivers of Older Adults Support Group, 2nd and 4th Thursday each month, 3:00-4:30 pm, Overlake Senior Health Center. Call 425-688-5807.

Family Caregiver Support Group, 2nd Tuesday each month, 3:00-4:30 pm, and 4th Thursday of each month, 10:00-11:30 am, Mercer Island Senior Health Center. Call 425-688-5637.

Grief & Loss Support Group for loss of loved one due to cancer, 1st and 3rd Thursday each month, 6:30-8:30 pm, Overlake Medical Tower, Suite 160, Radiation Oncology. Call 206-709-1400.

Grief & Loss Support Group for adults 65 & older, 2nd Thursday each month, 1:00-2:30 pm, Community Center at Mercer View. Before attending, please call Betsy Zuber at 206-275-7752.

Parkinson's Support Group, 3rd Tuesday each month, 10:00-11:30 am, Northshore Senior Center. Call Andrea Parker, MSW, LSW at 425-488-4821.

Stroke Support Group, for stroke survivors and caregivers meets the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Monday each month, 1:00-2:30 pm, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church. Call 425-746-8396.

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