Leeza's Care Connection

July 2017

501 S. Buena Vista St
Burbank, CA
(located in South Tower)
(818) 847-3686

Hours:
Monday – CLOSED
Tuesday – 10am to 2pm
Wednesday – 10am to 2:30pm
6pm to 7:30pm
Thursday – 10am to 2:30pm
Friday – 10:30am to 1:30pm

Managing Director: Wendy Saltzburg
Email: wendy@leezascareconnection.org

Follow us!

www.leezascareconnection.org

ABOUT US

Leeza's Care Connection is a place where family caregivers come to get support, ask questions, find answers and learn how to deal with the ever-changing demands of caregiving. The program is a partnership between the **Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation** and **Providence St. Joseph.**

Our mission is to create resourceful & resilient family caregivers through innovative programs that offer education, support, & wellness

RESOURCE TUESDAY

Do you need help or to be connected to resources in your community?

Resource Tuesdays are for you. Please call for an appointment.

4 MESSAGES TO LIVE BY FROM LEEZA

1.) Choose to take charge of your life.
2.) Love, honor and value yourself.
3.) Seek, accept, and at times, demand help.
4.) Stand up and be counted.

Ever Forward,
Leeza

Caregiver Spa Day

Tuesday, July 25: 10:00am-1:00pm

Are you a caregiver that needs a break? Please let us pamper you with manicures, facials, haircuts and make-up application.

Space is limited and RSVP is required.

RSVP: (818)847-3686 to Wendy or wendy@leezascareconnection.org

A very special thank you to our friends at Beauty Bus.

Beauty bus FOUNDATION bringing beauty home

Scentsy INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

JUICE BAR

HEALTHY BRAIN TIP:

Engage Yourself in the Complex and Novel

Learning new information and skills across your entire lifespan helps to keep your brain strong even in the later years of life. Activities that have the highest value for brain health are those that are novel and complex to each particular person. What is easy for one person may be challenging for another, so the things that challenge you the most have the most value for your brain.

BRAIN CHALLENGE!

Can you find the the **mistake?**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The numbers, which are in color, attract the eye and the reader may automatically find themselves checking those for a mistake. In fact, the error is hidden in the text informing you that there is a mistake to spot.

RECIPES OF THE MONTH: SUMMER GASPACHO

Ingredients
4 SERVINGS

½ English hothouse cucumber, peeled, seeded
½ large red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded
2 pounds very ripe red tomatoes, preferably heirloom, cut into ½-inch wedges, 3 tablespoons seeds reserved
½ large shallot, chopped
1 garlic clove, finely grated
2 tablespoons (or more) sherry or red wine vinegar
Flaky sea salt
3 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling
Quartered cherry tomatoes, chopped chives, and grilled or toasted country-style bread (for serving)

Preparation

- Cut 2" of the cucumber into ¼" pieces and set aside for serving; coarsely chop remaining cucumber and place in a large bowl. Cut one-quarter of the bell pepper into ¼" pieces and set aside for serving; coarsely chop remaining bell pepper and add to bowl with chopped cucumber. Add tomatoes to bowl and toss with shallot, garlic, 2 Tbsp. vinegar, and 1 Tbsp. salt. Let stand 30 minutes at room temperature to let flavors meld.
- Transfer tomato mixture along with any accumulated juices to a blender. Add 3 Tbsp. oil and purée on medium speed until smooth; season with salt and vinegar, if desired. Strain through a coarse-mesh sieve into a large bowl or pitcher and chill until cool, about 1 hour.
- Divide gazpacho among bowls. Top with cherry tomatoes, chives, reserved cucumber and red pepper pieces, and tomato seeds; drizzle with oil and season with salt. Serve with bread alongside.

THIS MONTHS EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

Power Hour–Keep your memory working!-- 1st & 3rd Fri., July 7 & July 21, 11:00am – 12:00pm

NEW *Do you forget names and faces? Do you forget why you walked into a room? Do you forget where you put your keys? Do you say "it's on the tip of my tongue?"*

Well, then… this class is for you!!!

Come, learn to improve your ability to remember and recall information. And, who doesn't want to be smarter, sharper and more focused?! Kim Mitchell, educator, will present innovative ways to help reduce the onset of age-related cognitive delay. She will engage the class using, memory tools and strategies that are simple, fun and can be used at home. Come join in on the fun!

"Lunch n Learn" – Change Your Diet, Change Your Life -- Wed., July 12, 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Guest Speaker: Karen Choske-Anderson, Holistic Health Coach
Please RSVP to 818-847-3686 to attend.

Karen specializes in working with individuals over 50 who want to explore healthy eating lifestyles. She will discuss:

- the connection between diabetes, heart disease and Alzheimer's Disease
- how heart disease and diabetes may be reversed
- which foods to remove from your diet and which foods to add
- cooking strategies, recipes, mindful eating and more!

THIS MONTH'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS:

We offer a variety of groups designed to meet many caregiving situations. Please call before attending, so we can guide you in selecting the most appropriate group for you.

Drum Circle – Group Empowerment Drumming (by Health Rhythms)
2nd and 4th Fri. of each month, July 14 & July 28, 10:30am-11:30am

Group drumming provides benefits such as stress relief, physical exercise, mental stimulation and the opportunity to be creative. Health Rhythms is about creating music in the moment, expression of one's own unique and personal rhythm and connecting with other participants in the drum circle. No prior music or drumming experience is required. Join Bradley Anderson & Chris Miller in what will be a fun and new experience!! Please RSVP to 818-847-3686, so we have enough drums!

SUPPORT GROUPS CONTINUED:

Meet Our Empowerment/Support Group Facilitators

Leta Nadler, Manij Taban, Myrna Gordon, Liz Gregory and Dana Sigoloff are all Human Services Paraprofessionals who were trained at the Wagner Program at American Jewish University. Stephanie Davis, is a licensed, Marriage and Family Therapist. Ann Brunner, MSW has many years working with seniors and families.

Caring for a Parent with Alzheimer's/Dementia

EVENING GROUP – 1st & 3rd Wed., July 5 & 19, 6:00pm–7:30pm

Caring for your mom or dad can present very different challenges than caring for a spouse. Share experiences and ideas; support each other in navigating the care and support of a parent. The group facilitator is Stephanie Davis.

Courageous Heroes Alzheimer's/Dementia Caregiver Support Group

1st & 3rd Thurs., July 6 & 20, 12:30pm–2:00pm

This meeting is open to spouses that are living with and/or caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or Dementia. A time to vent, share, learn and offer to others on a similar path. Led by Myrna Gordon. *Respite offered.*

Wellness Warriors Alzheimer's/Dementia Caregiver Support Group

2nd & 4th Thurs., July 13 & 27, 12:30pm–2:00pm

This meeting is open to spouses that are living with and/or caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or Dementia. A time to vent, share, learn and offer to others on a similar path. Group led by Dana Sigoloff and Liz Gregory. *Respite is offered.*

Alzheimer's/Dementia "Experienced Caregiver" Support Group

2nd & 4th Wed., July 12 & 26, 11:00am–12:30pm

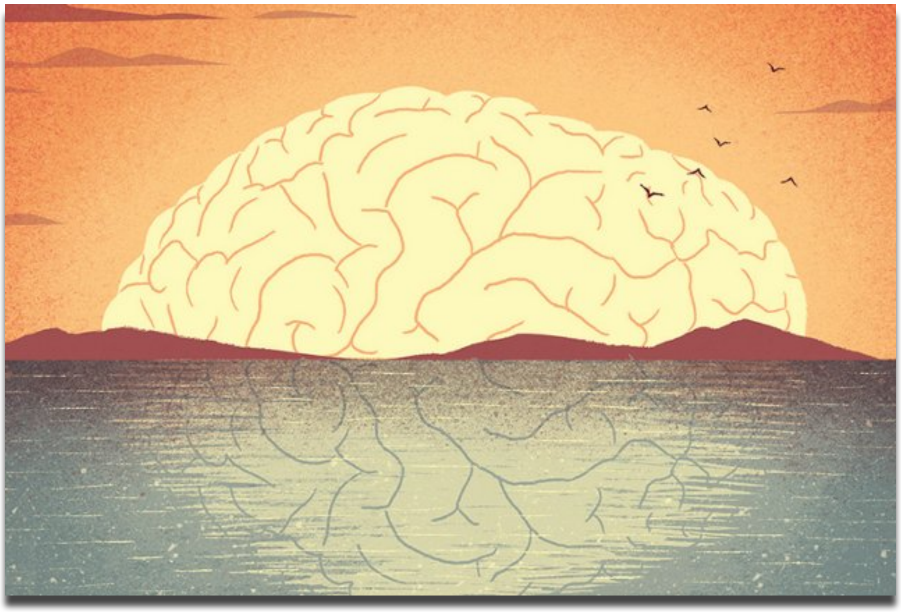
This group is made up of "experienced caregivers" who have attended support group for 2 years or more and are living with and/or caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or Dementia. A time to vent, share, learn and offer to others on a similar path. Group facilitated by Leta Nadler and Manij Taban. *Respite is offered.*

Early Memory Loss Support Group

2nd & 4th Thurs., July 13 & 27, 10:00am-11:30am

This is a support group for those that are recently diagnosed with any memory impairment. Acknowledging a memory loss can bring up many feelings. This is a time to open up, learn and share in a safe environment. Group facilitated by Ann Brunner.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BECOME A “GHOST” ONCE YOU’RE DIAGNOSED WITH ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE



My name is Joe Christensen and I am 56 year old Air Force Veteran. My story is a lot like other people's, but with a different twist because of my outlook about living with Alzheimer's. In 2015, I was happily working at a job I really enjoyed, and then out of the blue, I was let go. I was told that I was forgetting to do the things that I had been doing for the last 10 years. I had no recollection of what they even said I was forgetting when I was laid off. I thought I was just experiencing age related memory loss, that everyone has every now and then. My partner Ron took me for an examination so I could get a diagnosis. After a lot of tests and PET scans...I got my answer.

The phone rang at the house, and it was the Neurologists office calling. We asked her what the diagnosis was, and in a few heart breaking words, she said Alzheimer's. Then she hung up showing absolutely zero compassion and told me, I wasn't worth a follow up conversation. I took her words as a slap in the face, and felt like I wasn't worth her time or effort.

I decided to get another opinion so I went to the VA for a re-diagnosis. After a few months of tests, I was given a diagnosis of Alzheimer's with Lewy Body Dementia. Now what? All conversations with the medical professionals ended. We found out, that since I'm under 65 years old, I met none of the typical Alzheimer's protocols. I wasn't eligible for Medicare, just Social Security Disability.

From this point forward, anytime Ron and I walked into any doctors office, none of the conversations were directed toward me... I was now a "Ghost". I told my family of my diagnosis, and all of a sudden I was "Unfriended". Another slap in the face. I felt like they viewed me as a late stage Alzheimer's patient with minutes to live. All communications were cut off. I was now a "Ghost" of a memory in their minds. I never bothered to ask them why, it was already too painful to deal with. I did start demanding that doctors direct their questions to me, when I'm face to face with them. If I didn't understand them, at least Ron had the information. They still will not call me, or notify me on any medical items I need to address. I'm still an afterthought to them, an adoration that shows up in front of them from time to time. My push to be seen, is very simple. I have been on my own for over 30 years, and never had to depend on anyone.

Now when we have guests over to our home, they have actually gotten up and left the room, leaving me by myself. My "Ghost" self has shown again. They gradually one by one move to a different room, leaving me all alone using excuses such as "I'm going to get a drink" or "I need to use the restroom"...never to return. I felt like I wasn't worth the time for them to come back and that they had more important things to do. On many occasions, I would just go back to my room, and cry. WHY do people not want to be with me? Was it me or the Alzheimer's, they didn't like? I didn't know.

I don't like when guests come over because they feel uncomfortable around me now, and I do not want any negative energy in my life. If you know or care for someone with Alzheimer's, this is might be the reason they want to be alone. If it makes people uncomfortable to be near me, than so be it. I know they don't mean harm, or wish me ill, but to me, it's plain ignorance on their part and I can't fix their ignorance, nor do I want to. My heart aches for their talk, laughter, or friendship. I only want to associate with people that see me. I'm am definitely not a perfect man, nor am I the devil.

I have seen and heard caregivers talk about the people they're with in the third person with them standing there. Most can hold a conversation on their own, but some cannot. If someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer's, I wish people would show them the respect and dignity of being ALIVE. I do hear caregivers talking about their fears and anxiety about their loved ones. One reason we do not talk a lot about our wants, needs, and fears, is that we fear you leaving. Remember, I may not remember the words to something, but my hearing is excellent. I've heard my name in the third person while I'm standing there, and I truly think they don't think I can comprehend what they are saying. Most Alzheimer's patients face the fear of being alone, abandoned, not loved by their caregivers if we confront them. I do not say thing sometimes, for fear of being shut out or shut down. Why? Just think... if you were told you had Alzheimer's, and you had to tell a medical professional or outside professional you had a problem, who would you believe?

An Alzheimer's patient who may be telling the truth, or a loved one or caregiver, who is with you? Exactly! No one would believe me. My mind is so messed up to the outsider, they have no choice but to discard what I say, period. This to me is how I became a "Ghost". People don't see me, hear me or want to deal with me.

One thing I want to share is that in the Early stage of Alzheimer's, even though we may not be able to communicate it - we love you, thank you, and appreciate all that you do for us. Please don't think we're ungrateful for not saying so. We just may have lost the capacity to do so. Even though it is hard, please try to put your selves in our shoes the next time you get frustrated with us.

I know how caregivers feels... I took care of my mother for two years, and she had Dementia. I know the anger that flows through your thoughts because the situation stinks. But the one saving grace we all have is our caregivers. We "Ghosts" appreciate YOU. Be strong...We love you!