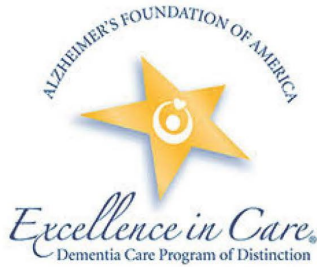


# Serendipity Adult Day Services News



September 2026



3550 E. 20th Ave.  
Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone: (907) 279-0501

Fax: (907) 279-0502

[serendipity.salvationarmy.org](http://serendipity.salvationarmy.org)

Renee Riggs-Kaiser, Program Manager  
[renee.riggs-kaiser@usw.salvationarmy.org](mailto:renee.riggs-kaiser@usw.salvationarmy.org)

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**9/7: Closed, Labor Day**

**9/16: Field Trip. To the Zoo!**



“By all these lovely tokens,  
September days are here, with  
summer's best of weather and  
autumn's best of cheer.”

-- Helen Hunt Jackson --



DOING THE  
MOST GOOD™

# UPDATES

## Alaska State Fair

Well, we made it to Palmer for the Alaska State Fair! Could not have been a more beautiful day. We arrived at open, in style, and saw all there was to be seen. This year, we transitioned from groups of 5-6 to groups of 2 and 3. It made the experience so much enjoyable, and all could visit whatever booth or exhibit they wanted. It was a lovely time, financially made possible by the contributions of one donor, in memory of his mother. We thank Holland Princess Cruises and their wonderful drivers Bruce and Janice, the fabulous folks at AnchorRides and our thirteen (!!!) amazing volunteers that made our participants day as special as it could be!

Until next year!

## Alzheimer's Resources Mini-Grant

Mini Grants help improve the quality of life and independence of Alaskans living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias (ADRD). This program is funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and administered by [Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska](#). The grant amount has been increased from \$2,500 to \$3,000.

For more information, call  
907-561-3313.



Mini Grants may be used for a wide range of practical needs, including but not limited to:

Caregiver respite

Accessibility improvements

Hearing aids

Adaptive or safety devices

Alert safety systems

Dental services

Eyeglasses

Home repairs

Medical or therapeutic equipment

Musical instruments or hobby supplies

## Caregiver Corner

### **Dementia: Coping with common, sometimes distressing behaviors** *Personality changes can be the most challenging aspect of dementia care.*

**By Heidi Godman**, Managing Director

Reviewed by **Howard E. LeWine, MD**, Chief Medical Editor, Harvard Health Publishing;  
Editorial Advisory Board Member, Harvard Health Publishing

Dementia poses many challenges, both for people struggling with it and for those close to them. It can be hard to witness and cope with common behaviors that arise from illnesses like Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, or frontotemporal dementia.

Caring for a person who has dementia may be frustrating, confusing, or upsetting at times. Understanding why certain behaviors occur and learning ways to handle a variety of situations can help smooth the path ahead.

#### **What behaviors are common when a person has dementia?**

People with dementia often exhibit a combination of unusual behaviors, such as:

making odd statements or using the wrong words for certain items

not realizing they need to bathe or forgetting how to maintain good hygiene

repeating themselves or asking the same question over and over

misplacing objects or taking others' belongings

not recognizing you or remembering who they are

being convinced that a deceased loved one is still alive

hoarding objects, such as mail or even garbage

exhibiting paranoid behavior

becoming easily confused or agitated

leaving the house without telling you, and getting lost.

#### **Why do these behaviors occur?**

Inside the brain of a loved one with dementia, picture a wildfire shifting course, damaging or destroying brain cells (neurons) and neural networks that regulate our behavior.

What drives this damage depends on the underlying cause, or causes, of dementia. For example, while the exact cause of Alzheimer's disease is not known, it is strongly linked to proteins that are either gunking up or strangling brain cells. Someone with vascular dementia has experienced periodic insufficient blood flow to certain areas of the brain, causing neurons to die.

As dementia progresses, the person loses brain cells associated with memory, planning, judgment, and controlling mood. They lose their filters.

## Six strategies for coping with dementia-related behaviors

Dealing with distressing or puzzling dementia-related behavior can require the type of tack you'd take with a youngster. Due to declines, older adults with dementia can seem like children. But people are generally more patient with children. You should consider using that approach with older adults.

- **Don't point out inaccurate or strange statements.** It can make people with dementia feel foolish or belittled. They may not remember details but hold onto those emotions, feel isolated, and withdraw. Instead, put them at ease. Just go with what they're saying. Keep things light.
- **Don't try to reason with the person.** Dementia has damaged your loved one's comprehension. Attempting to reason might be frustrating for both of you.
- **Use distraction.** This helps when the person makes unreasonable requests or is moderately agitated. Acknowledge what the person is saying, and change the activity. You could say, "I see that you're upset. Let's go over here for a minute." And then do an activity that engages the senses and relaxes them, such as sitting outside together, listening to music, folding socks, or eating a piece of fruit.
- **Keep unsafe items out of sight.** Put away or lock up belongings the loved one shouldn't have - especially potentially dangerous items like car keys or cleaning fluids. Consider installing cabinet locks.
- **Supervise hygiene routines.** The person with dementia might need a reminder to bathe, or might need to have the day's clothes laid out on the bed. Or you might need to assist with bathing, shaving, brushing teeth, or dressing.
- **Spend time together.** You don't have to convince your loved one of your identity or engage in fascinating conversation. Just listen to music or do some simple activities together. It will help keep the person from withdrawing further.

## When dementia behaviors become more severe

Sometimes simple strategies aren't enough when a loved one has dementia. For example, if the person frequently tries to leave home, you might need to add child-proof covers to doorknobs, install additional door locks or a security system in your home, or get the person a GPS tracker bracelet.

If the person is frequently upset or even violent, you'll need to call the doctor. It could be that a new medical problem is causing agitation. If the agitated behavior isn't due to a new health problem and is predictable and severe, the doctor might prescribe a medication to help regulate mood, such as an antidepressant or an antipsychotic in cases of extreme agitation or hostility.

## **As dementia changes, seek the help and support you need**

No one expects you to know how to interact with someone who has dementia. There's a learning curve for all of us, and it continues even after you get a feel for the situation. The process keeps changing. What works today may not work next week or the week after that for your loved one. So keep trying different strategies.

And get support for yourself, such as group therapy for caregivers and their families.

You can also find information at the [Alzheimer's Association](#) or [Family Caregiver Alliance](#).