



Annual
Report
2020



The dementia journey can be overwhelming,
but no one has to walk it alone.

At Dementia Together, we provide meaning for today and help for tomorrow for those living with dementia, their care partners, and the community. Dementia Together is on a mission to see that no one has to walk the dementia journey alone. We cultivate joy, build connections, and lead and support innovative efforts to enhance well-being and hope.

Dementia Together

1540 Main St. Ste 218/231
Windsor, CO 80550

970.305.5271

help@dementiatogether.org

A Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Stakeholders,

This nonprofit organization started out of a passion to make my dad's journey with dementia count for a greater good. Others have joined us on our path to leverage their own experiences to help others know they are not alone and that joy on the journey and living well with dementia are entirely possible. Our new name, Dementia Together, reflects who we are as an organization. Because of the continued collaboration and support we are enjoying in Northern Colorado and beyond, together, we are all making our mission a reality: To create communities in which no one has to walk the dementia journey alone.

Because of the community support we receive, we are privileged to offer:

- Memory Cafés for people living with dementia and their care partners to discover there is still joy to share and living to do with each other and others on similar journeys
- Mobile Memory Cafés for residents and staff in care communities
- Care partner, community, and professional dementia education and consultation
- Patient resource folders for medical providers to share with patients experiencing cognitive changes
- Support groups for care partners and people living with dementia.
- Monthly meal drops for our participants

We are leading North America in sharing the Contented Dementia approach (SPECAL® Method) – teaching families how to work positively with loved ones living with dementia and provide lifelong well-being for them.



We are the first organization in the Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah tri-state area to utilize Embodied Labs Virtual Reality for people to actually experience what it is like to live with dementia. We participate in evidence-based research with CSU on the effectiveness of our virtual care partner support groups, Contented Dementia education, and the B Sharp Arts Engagement program.

We are grateful to collaborate with compassionate, creative individuals and organizations locally, nationally, and internationally, as we all work toward our vision of making LIVING WELL WITH DEMENTIA the expectation, not the exception. We are offering our programming at no charge to participants so that cost is not a barrier for connection and education. That's why the generosity of our private and corporate donors makes all the difference in allowing us to serve and impact our communities.

Looking Ahead to Fiscal Year 2021

As a relatively new nonprofit organization, we are boldly continuing to mature the organization to ensure strong sustainability and presence in both Weld and Larimer counties.

For all of you who support our work and invest in our mission, thank you.

With much gratitude,

Cyndy Hunt Luzinski, MS, RN
Founder and Executive Director

2020 Highlight: In October, we were honored to be recognized with a personal visit by Colorado Governor, Jared Polis, who wanted to learn how we are working to transform social isolation into social connection.



About Dementia Together

Right now, 7 million Americans are living with dementia, and the number of people living with a dementia-related diagnosis is expected to triple by 2050. Despite these staggering numbers, those living with dementia and their care partners still have plenty of living to do. At Dementia Together, this is our passion – to cultivate joy and connection for those touched by dementia and to make living well the expectation, not the exception. Our approach to care is person directed, family driven and guided by our commitment to listening to the true experts – those living with dementia. By listening to the experts living with dementia, we've established three pillars in which our organization works and thrives.

Education

Providing businesses, health care providers, and community partners the resources and training to create a culture of understanding, kindness, and compassion.

Enrichment

Helping people impacted by dementia to live and finish well through programs, coaching, and support groups.

Hope

Providing answers and help for today while leading or joining efforts to improve outcomes in the future.

Guided by these three principles, we build connections, enhance overall well-being, and nourish the togetherness needed to avoid the isolation which is still all too common with a dementia-related diagnosis. We remain ever-vigilant in the advancement of our work – crafting events, creating and developing original education and support, conceiving enrichment opportunities, and exploring new ways to bring people together across all points of the dementia journey.



Who We Are

Dementia Together is a local, grassroots, “in the meantime” nonprofit organization. We started as a volunteer initiative in November 2015 with the name “Dementia-Friendly Communities of Northern Colorado.” Just two years later, in January 2017, we became a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed

to ensuring that people walking the dementia journey don’t have to walk alone. We are supported by private donations, corporate sponsorships, grants, and a lot of collaboration and passion. This passion can be seen most clearly through the eyes of our committed team, Board of Directors, and Advisory Board.

Our Team

Dementia Together is led by our Founder and Executive Director, Cyndy Hunt Luzinski. Cyndy is an advanced practice nurse and dementia practitioner.



Cyndy Hunt Luzinski,
MS, RN
Founder and Executive
Director



Andrea Scandrett,
MA Gerontology
Program Manager



Meghan Wall,
BS Health & Exercise Science
Administrative Assistant
& Program Coordinator

Board of Directors

Lisa LaFehr,
President of
the Board

Elisabeth Olson,
Vice President
of the Board

Paul Matthews,
Secretary of
the Board

Lisa Loehr,
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the Board

Gil Atanasoff

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Carol Fanning

Cynthia Jensen

Ross Lane

Dorsi Smith

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New in 2021

Gary Amato

Becky Lepinski

Monica Londoño

Claire Richardson

Advisory Board

Jim Ruff,
expert living with dementia

Walta Ruff,
care partner

Phil Leathery,
expert living with dementia

Joan Leathery,
care partner

Carla Jeffrey,
expert living with dementia

Lee Jeffrey,
care partner

Sue Branch,
expert living with dementia

Bob Branch, care partner

Andrea Scandrett

Dawn Simmons,
Alzheimer's Association,
Weld County

Angel Hoffman,
Alzheimer's Association,
Larimer County

Peggy Budai,
UCHealth

Phoebe Hawley,
Banner Health

Eileen McCluskey,
Poudre River Library

Claire Richardson,
Preserving with Purpose

Whitney Janzen-Pankratz,
Weld County

Cyndy Luzinski



I truly appreciate all the wonderful programs and support resources Dementia Together offers as I learn how to care well for my parents. It has made a world of difference for me already. Your name – Dementia Together – is so fitting, since none of us have to feel that we are alone on this journey.”

- Eve, Dementia Together participant



What We Do

We listen

We listen to the voices of the experts – those living with dementia. Not only do we listen, but we take their words and experiences to heart to directly impact our programming. Several experts living with dementia and their care partners serve in leadership and advisory capacities for all we do.

We educate

We offer education, consultation, and support for those who care for loved ones living with dementia. We teach and advise participants from a framework which works positively with dementia to sustain lifelong well-being.

We help

We help staff in businesses, health care, and senior care organizations throughout Northern Colorado learn dementia-friendly communication strategies.

We support

We provide collaborative community resources for people who are living with dementia so they discover they are not walking the dementia journey alone.

Our overall approach to dementia care and advocacy is what has enabled us to become recognized as the local “in the meantime” organization. We help people discover that “in the meantime,” until cures for the various causes of dementia are found, we can make life-changing differences NOW for people striving to live well with dementia.





I don't have to pretend.

- Phil, local expert living with dementia, Memory Café and support group participant, and provider of jokes and laughter for anyone he meets, commenting on why he likes to attend Dementia Together activities



Programs

Dementia Together is committed to fostering meaningful interactions for those living with dementia, their care partners, and communities. Our programs intentionally include rather than passively accept those who are experiencing changing cognitive abilities.

Life Enrichment Opportunities

Memory Cafés

Memory Cafés are social gatherings for people with mild to moderate cognitive impairment and their care partners who want to remain engaged with others traveling the dementia journey. We offer:

In-person Memory Cafés

Intergenerational reminiscing, inspiration, laughter, music, and snacks. Memory Cafés help participants discover that there is a lot of joyful living to do even when dementia is a part of the journey.

Virtual Memory Cafés

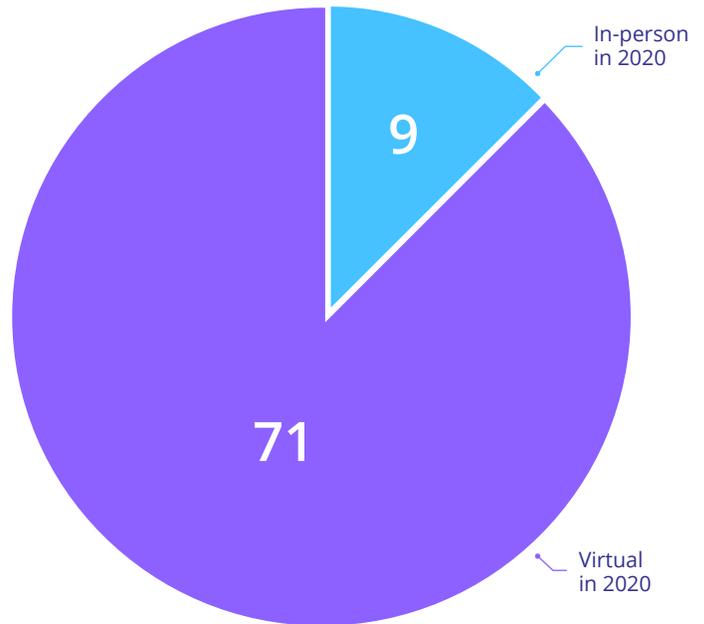
Interactive social gatherings for people with mild to moderate cognitive impairment and their care partners as well as community friends. Program includes reminiscing, games, laughter, music, and friendship.

Virtual "Mobile" Memory Cafés

For residents and staff in care communities (inside the buildings), along with family members living outside the care community buildings, so that loved ones can attend "together."

Memory Cafés in 2020

1766 attendees at
80 Memory Cafés

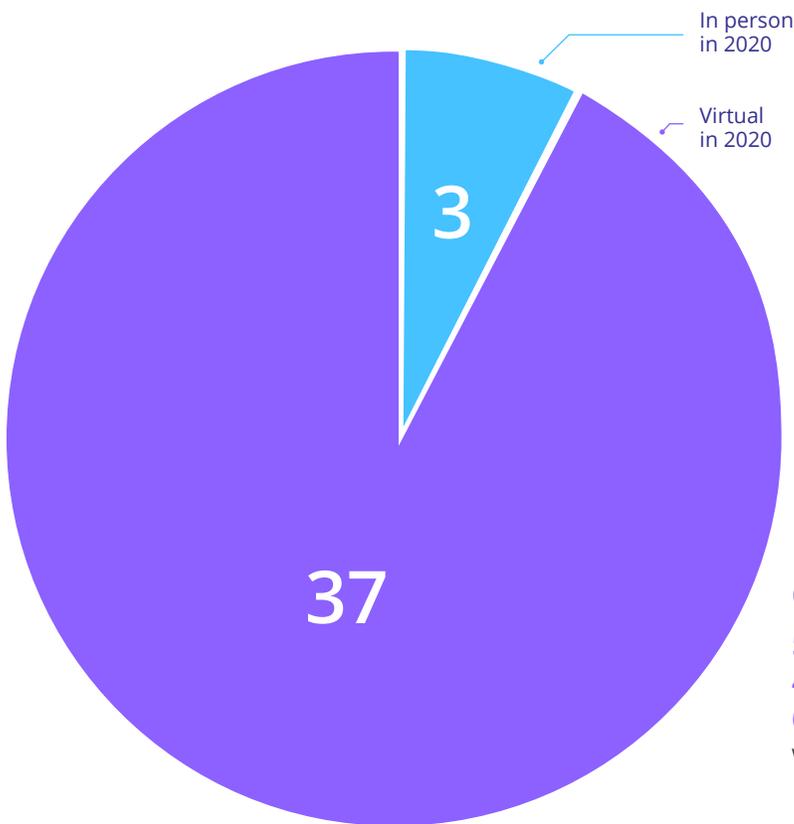


Support Groups

Serving in a dementia caregiving role can often feel overwhelming and isolating. This is why we currently offer:

Virtual Care Partner Support Groups

In a safe and supportive environment, caregivers can express feelings, learn helpful information, and feel supported by others with shared experiences.



Care Partner Support Group

508 attendees

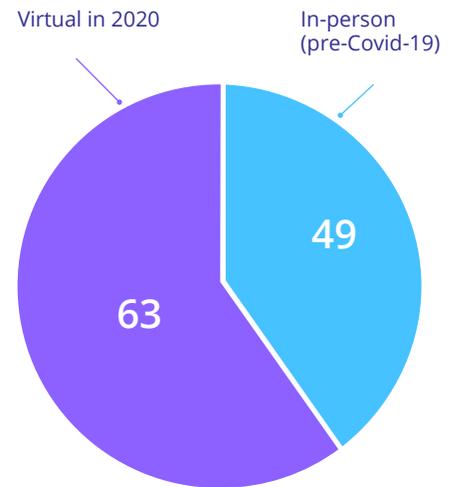
40 gatherings

69 individual care partners, some who also attend Memory Cafés

Mobile Memory Cafés

1534 attendees at

112 Mobile Memory Cafés



Education

At Dementia Together, we are also dedicated to assisting families, friends, and communities in becoming more dementia-friendly so that people with cognitive changes are enabled to live with purpose, dignity, contentment, and joy. We are also committed to partnering with senior care and healthcare businesses which invest in education that empowers their staff to provide excellent dementia care.

Contented Dementia

This is a course for family care partners who are seeking immediate and long-term benefits for themselves and those in their care. We help care partners achieve not just joyful moments, but lifelong contentment for loved ones living with dementia.

Patient resource folders

Our patient resource folders are created for patients who are being evaluated for cognitive decline or are living with dementia-related diagnoses. These folders help people get connected to community resources right away so they discover hope and support immediately upon diagnosis. People living with dementia, their care partners, and community friends compile these resource folders and distribute them to family practice, internal medicine, and neurology organizations throughout Northern Colorado.

Business training

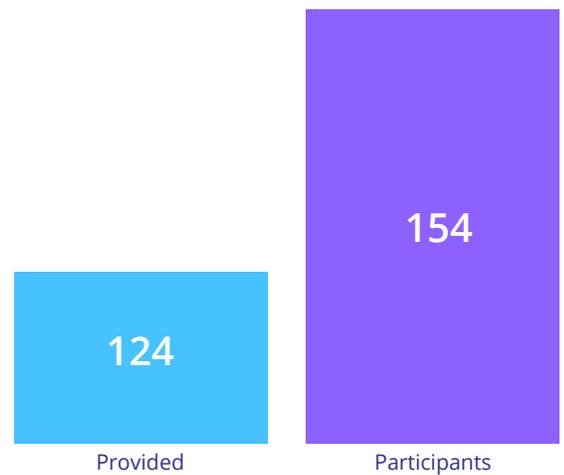
We offer education for personnel in businesses which serve anyone who may be living with cognitive impairment. We focus on empowering the staff to gain confidence in providing excellent customer service. We also teach added compassion needed to help those with cognitive changes stay socially engaged in the community. And of course, we share resources and support for those in the workforce who are serving in caregiving roles.

Dementia-friendly leader training

We offer senior professional organizations the opportunity for staff to learn the why, what, and how of person-directed, family-driven dementia care. We also offer real-time strategy sessions and Embodied Labs Virtual Reality experiences.

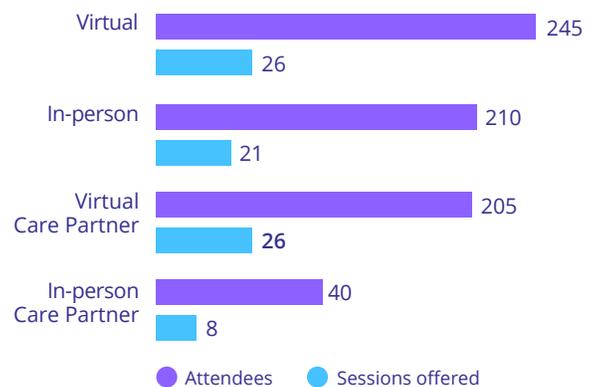
Personal consultations in 2020

124 consultations with
154 attendees



Dementia education

700 attendees at
81 Dementia education sessions in 2020





As a result of the Dementia
Together education, I'm doing a
lot more listening and observing
than talking now.

- Janet, local care partner



2020 Financial Information

Income:

Contributions

General, Corporate, Year-end Campaign: \$100,621

Grants

Grants & Foundations: \$133,412

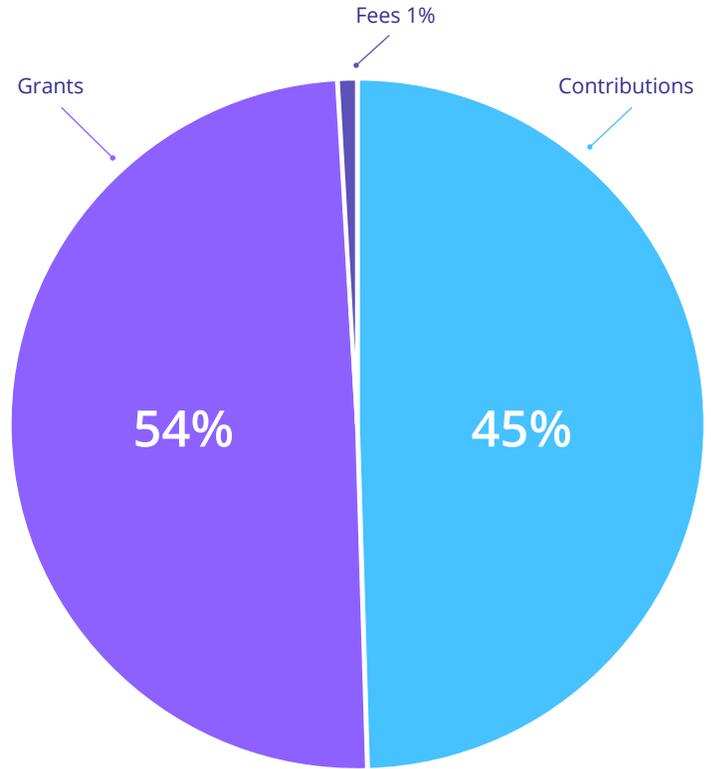
PPP Loan (forgiven): \$14,430

(\$25,000 of this accrued for use in 2021)

Fees

Program Fees: \$1,875

Total Income: \$250,338



Expenses:

Program Services

Programs: \$154,625

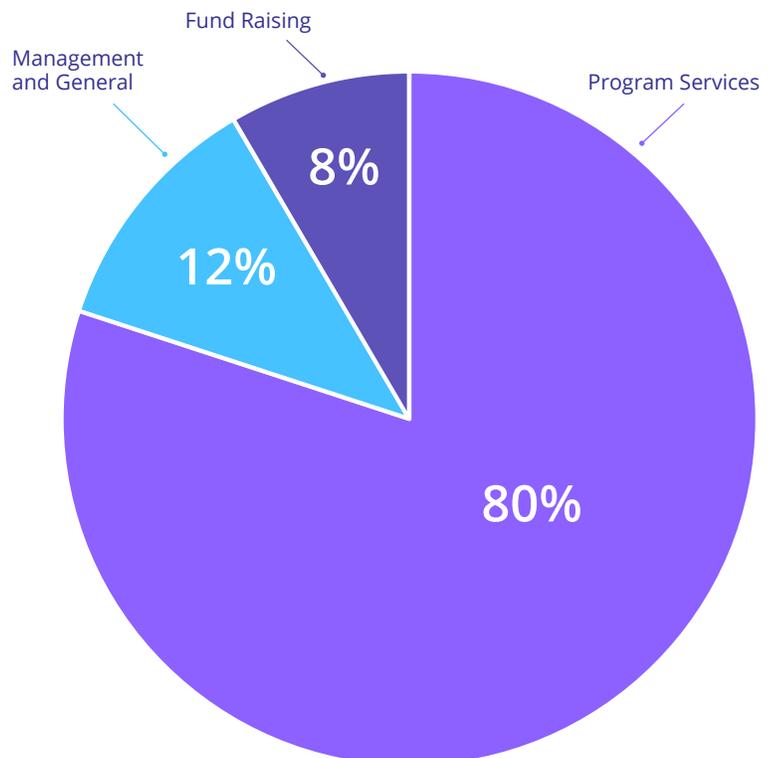
Management and General

General Business: \$22,244

Fund Raising

Outreach and Awareness \$16,331

Total Expenses: \$193,200





Your donations keep our programs and services free of charge so that cost is not a barrier to finding connection and support.

How to donate

970.305.5271

1540 Main St. Ste 218/231
Windsor, CO 80550

help@dementiatogether.org

Visit our website to donate one time, monthly, or at end of life.

dementiatogether.org/give

Corporate Sponsorship Packages

Advocates: \$1,000

It is only through community support and participation that we will make a difference in the lives of those living with dementia. At the Advocates level of giving, you will receive:

Sponsorship recognition, which includes listing your name on our website and at one community event during the year, and rack cards with 2 meal drops/year.

You're in good company:

Better People Care
Insitu Life Coaching
Senior Helpers
Walmart

Friends: \$2,500

We couldn't do what we do building connection and enhancing well-being for those touched by dementia within our local community without our friends. At the Friends level of giving you will receive:

Sponsorship recognition includes logo on website and at one community event during the year, social media posts with Dementia Together staff or family educational sessions, rack card with 2 meal drops/year, and 4 hours of dementia education/consultation with staff or family members related to Contented Dementia and/or Embodied Labs Virtual Reality experiences.

You're in good company:

Associates in Family Medicine
Good Samaritan
Water Valley
MacKenzie Place
Fort Collins Seniors
Helping Seniors
Seven Lakes Memory Care
Windsong Northridge, Greeley

Collaborative Impact Sponsors: \$5,000

Join us and make a collaborative impact in our community by making living well with dementia the expectation, not the exception. Please consider our Collaborative Impact Sponsorship level in which you will receive:

Sponsorship recognition includes prominent logo on website, semi-annual social media posts, featured blog post, and promotional materials with 4 meal drops/year and at Memory Cafés or other community events. 4 hours of dementia education/consultation with staff or family members related to Contented Dementia and/or Embodied Labs Virtual Reality experiences.

You're in good company:

Banner Health
Right at Home
UCHealth

Mission Investors: \$10,000 or >

Make a powerful statement and a profound difference today by joining us on our mission to see that no one walking the dementia journey in Northern Colorado has to walk alone. At the Mission Investors level of giving, you will receive:

Sponsorship recognition includes prominent logo on website, link to your website, email blasts, quarterly social media posts, featured blog post, and promotional materials with 6 meal drops/year and at Memory Cafés or other community events, 8 hours of dementia education/consultation with staff or family members related to Contented Dementia and/or Embodied Labs Virtual Reality experiences.

You're in good company:

Bonfire Effect
Larimer County
NextFifty Initiative
The Weld Trust

If you have a heart for serving potentially some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, please consider sharing generous financial support for our efforts. For all of you who support our work and invest in our mission, thank you.



A lot of groups are very focused on the care partners and not the life of the one with dementia. This group does a very good job of getting that focus balanced.

- Deborah Crandell, local care partner for her husband living with dementia





Kelly and John

Our journey with Kelly and John began with a private consultation which gave Kelly hope that she could indeed enable her beloved husband to live well with dementia. Kelly started attending our support group and Memory Cafés. After attending one of our virtual cafés in 2020, she shared: “The Virtual Memory Café was SUCH a blessing to John and me. All the sweet, smiling faces, the music, the old TV show clips...I was in tears by the time we logged off! THANK YOU for persevering and figuring out a way for John to have a special time like that with others he can relate to... you have shown great ingenuity, creativity and love to us all!” Kelly is also investing her time and energy in our care partner Contented Dementia course, learning strategies to help John live with contentment and dignity.

Kelly discovered that John's well-being improved when she learned to avoid contradictions and direct questioning, while carefully observing the words and actions John was using. From that close observation, she even noticed how John held the stick that helped him reach the window to open the blinds. “He held it like a pool cue. It occurred to me that John used to love playing pool.” Kelly shared her insight with other support group spouses whose husbands also liked pool. From that, the Dementia Together pool club was launched.



Jim & Walta

Jim and Walta serve on our Dementia Together Advisory Board. They share ideas as experts on the journey for how our community can become increasingly more dementia-friendly.

Walta often shares our pocket cards with clerks and attendants in businesses they frequent and encourages businesses to contact us for quick and easy training in becoming dementia-friendly.

Jim and Walta participate in the B Sharp Arts Engagement® program, and volunteer to assemble the patient resource folders which we give to medical clinics throughout Northern Colorado for medical providers to have tangible connection and hope to offer their patients.

Walta and Jim attend our Memory Cafés, life enrichment activities, support groups, and even went with us on the first ever dementia-friendly cruise (sponsored by Alzheimer's Speaks) to the Caribbean with their family.

Walta and Jim are choosing to make every day count for good. They are courageous culture changers sharing joy and making a difference together in our community – even when dementia is part of the journey.

Contact us to donate

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dementia **together**

Addendum—participant quotes



Advisory Board members who help with **dementia-friendly business training**: “My husband, Jim, who holds four engineering degrees and an emeritus professorship, also holds a diagnosis of dementia. It was in 2014 our investigation began, after calls for Jim’s consulting expertise had become fewer and fewer, after our son wondered why Dad wasn’t quite as sharp as he used to be, and after Jim’s answers to questions about anything mathematical frequently were inaccurate. We received the diagnosis: dementia, probable Alzheimer’s. The results were in. It was time to learn about the rest of our lives.

A neurologist told us to put our affairs in order. Necessary advice. Another organization provided slideshows to explain what was happening in Jim’s brain and to project what is likely to happen in the future. Necessary information. But when we found Dementia Together, we found people whose purpose is to give us strategies, support, and confidence to live well and be strong in our daily lives, people who also educate the larger community to support us in that process. Jim and I, along with many others, personally are grateful for the ways Dementia Together has touched our lives. We’re thankful the organization has put down roots in our community, as an immense need for its compassionate services will continue for years into the future.”

(In 2018, it was Jim and Walta who gave us the idea of getting patient resource folders into the hands of medical providers to change the way people receive dementia related diagnoses. As a result, patients and care partners are connected right away to community resources and support. (Referrals to our friends at the Alzheimer’s Association increased 274% after the first six months of distribution.) We continue to have new participants each month in our programs, and medical providers can offer hope to live well—even with dementia.)

2020 Programs in action—participant quotes

Embodied Labs Virtual Reality Technology, Participants consistently share, “I have a greater understanding of what it is like to live with Alzheimer’s Disease now.” When asked “What will you do differently on your next shift as a result of this VR experience?” answers included: “I will make sure I keep better eye contact with my clients.” “I will be more understanding, showing instead of telling my residents what to do.” “I won’t ever rush my clients again.” “I will be more patient, kind, and understanding, slowing down...”



Virtual memory café attendee: “Dementia Together has had a tremendous impact on my life as a care partner and for my husband who has mid stage Alzheimer’s. The staff have offered highly entertaining Memory Cafes, wonderful caregiver support, monthly meal drops to encourage us and make us feel loved and many other training sessions for me to better equip myself for caring for my husband.”

“Even before COVID we benefitted by all they had to offer and since COVID they have offered weekly virtual support/training groups and continue to expand their very beneficial programs. We feel blessed to have access to this organization and value the friends we have made along the way!”



Virtual mobile memory café for care communities: From a daughter outside one of the participating facilities: “That was such an amazing experience!!!! I am so so grateful for the opportunity to see Mom and other residents, the staff, and you! It was heartwarming and emotional for me! A brilliant idea of yours! Kudos, and much gratitude!!! And thanks for welcoming me!”





Care partner support group attendee: "I was so disappointed when our support group had to be cancelled last week. We've felt other friends backing away ever since my spouse got the diagnosis. This social distancing isn't new for us. That's why Dementia Together and you guys are so important. We don't have to explain ourselves. Understanding is assumed. It's such a relief to talk with you again."

We started the **meal drops** in May when some of our care partners expressed feeling weary and needing a little extra encouragement. Our one-time meal drop turned into monthly opportunities for our board members and community friends to connect with our memory café and support group participants the old-fashioned way.



"To all the blessed people who brought my wife and myself lunch today. It is such an honor to have the care you gave us. Thank you all again and we can't wait to meet up with you all soon. Stay safe and well!"



Professional staff education 97% of participants in home care and long term care settings reported "more confidence/much more confidence" in caring for people living with dementia after participating in 90 minute SPECAL (Contented Dementia)

introduction. "I learned to understand the "experts"" (people living with dementia) thought processes with the SPECAL Photograph Album explanation."



Patient Resource Folders recipient: "I heard about the support group and memory cafes when my doctor gave me one of your folders. You are just what I needed. Thank you for being here for us on this journey. I know I will never have to be alone in this again."

From a local neurologist: Thank you for supplying us with these folders. It is so nice to offer resources and hope to our patients."

Virtual Burford (England) course for family care partners, quotes include: "Well, the whole concept of SPECAL I had never even heard of. So, that photograph album analogy was incredibly helpful. I just never would've been able to conceptualize how his brain was working and functioning in the act of trying to have a conversation or trying to do something. And so understanding and learning how to talk to him in a different way, applying the SPECAL 3 Golden Rules helped immensely... I actually cannot think of anything that was not necessary or helpful in the entire program."



Pre-Covid business training: "This was so helpful for showing us how to interact with our clients, and several of us discovered we weren't the only ones caring for a loved ones with dementia outside of work. The information you shared was so enlightening. Thank you!"



Since 2015 through 2020, more than 18,000 new and repeat attendees have participated in our **315+ memory cafes**, **448+ mobile memory cafes** in care communities, and our **350+ dementia friendly educational sessions** for care partners, professionals, and community organizations. Just in 2020 during the pandemic, we hosted more than **265 virtual gatherings** as we worked to transform physical distancing into social connection.

We were greatly honored in October with a personal **visit by Governor Polis** to hear about our work (See letter from Cyndy in our Annual Report.) We plan to resume in-person gatherings and continue virtual gatherings in 2021 and beyond...anything to let our people know, "no one has to walk the dementia journey alone."

1/15/2021

