Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs ACT on Alzheimer’s action team is bringing awareness and education to northern Mille Lacs communities regarding Alzheimer’s disease through community presentations and Dementia Friends training. However, it is also important to understand how we as a community can come together and reach out to support those families living and caring for someone with Alzheimer’s disease. The Alzheimer’s Association outlines 10 ways to help a family living with Alzheimer’s disease. Here is the Alzheimer’s Association’s list of ideas.

1. Educate yourself about Alzheimer’s disease. Learn about its effects and how to respond.
2. Stay in touch. A card, a call or visit means a lot and shows you care.
3. Be patient. Adjusting to an Alzheimer’s diagnosis is an ongoing process and each person reacts differently.
4. Offer a shoulder to lean on. The disease can create stress for the entire family. Simply offering your support and friendship is helpful.
5. Engage the person with dementia in conversation. It’s important to involve the person in conversation even when his or her ability to participate becomes more limited.
6. Offer assistance to help family tackle its to-do list. Prepare a meal, run an errand or provide a ride.
7. Engage family members in activities. Invite them to go on a walk or participate in other activities.
8. Offer family members a reprieve. Spend time with the person with dementia so family members can go out alone or visit with friends.
9. Be flexible. Don’t get frustrated if your offer for support is not accepted immediately. The family may need time to assess its needs.
10. Get involved with the Alzheimer’s Association. Show your support by becoming an advocate by participating in “Walk to End Alzheimer’s” and “The Longest Day”.

Understanding is the first step to helping.

People living in the early stage of Alzheimer’s would like you to know:
- I’m still the same person I was before my diagnosis.
- My independence is important to me; ask me what I’m still comfortable doing and what I may need help with.
- It’s important that I stay engaged. Invite me to do activities that we both enjoy.
- Don’t make assumptions about me because of my diagnosis. Alzheimer’s affects each person differently.
- Take time to ask me how I’m doing. I’m living with a disease, just like cancer or heart disease.
- I can still engage in meaningful conversation. Talk directly to me if you want to know how I am.
- Don’t pull away. It’s OK if you don’t know what to do or say. Your friendship and support are important to me.

Family members would like you to know:
- We need time to adjust to the diagnosis.
- We want to remain connected with others.
- We need time for ourselves.
- We appreciate the small gestures

Resource: 10 ways to help a family living with Alzheimer’s from the Alzheimer’s Association.

For more information on Alzheimer’s, resources, and caregiver support, visit the Alzheimer’s Association website at www.alz.org.
**Taking Action:**

Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs ACT on Alzheimer’s action team has been very busy these last couple of months.

During the month of October, Dementia Friends trainings took place for the business community and faith community. Community Education Presentations have also been done at Scandia House in Isle, and at the IREC. A presentation was also done at the Onamia Depot Library in November. Many excellent discussions have come about at these presentations. A huge thank you to our volunteer presenters, Kathy Statz, LeAnne Schubert and Gert Lamber. You all did an excellent job presenting the *Know the 10 signs* information to area community members. Also taking place in November is a Dementia and the Spirit training for clergy/faith community leaders presented by the Alzheimer’s Association at the IREC.

Books purchased by Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs have been donated to the community libraries for community members to loan and two children’s books on Alzheimer’s have also been donated to Isle, Onamia, and Na Ah Shing elementary libraries. The DVDs *Still Alice* and *I’ll Be Me…the Glen Campbell story* are also available for community member to loan. These DVDs are located at the Isle and Onamia Community Education offices and Mille Lacs Band Elder Services.

Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs action team is discussing ways to sustain its mission of bringing awareness and education once the grant period ends. The group is also discussing ways to get area youth involved in bringing this awareness.

**Upcoming Events:**

Action Team meeting: November 24th 1:00 pm @ the ROC in Onamia

Action Team meeting: December 15th 1 pm @ the ROC in Onamia

AARP Senior Fraud Presentation December 30th from 1-2 pm at the IREC Community Room.

Join AARP for an informative discussion about protecting yourself and loved ones from FRAUD, SCAMS and IDENTITY THEFT. There is no charge for this presentation.

**Getting Connected:**

ACT on Alzheimer’s
http://www.actonalz.org/

ACT on Alzheimer’s/ Mille Lacs
http://www.actonalz.org/mille_lacs

Alzheimer’s Association
http://www.alz.org

Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/remembering mattersatmillelacs
Early Stage Caregiving

What to expect: "Early stage" refers to people, irrespective of age, who are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or related disorders and are in the beginning stages of the disease. A person in the early stages may experience mild changes in the ability to think and learn, but he or she continues to participate in daily activities and give-and-take dialogue. To others, the person may not appear to have dementia. The early stages of Alzheimer’s can last for years. Read more at: http://www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-early-mild-stage-caregiving.asp#ixzz3rtmk1TBI

Your role as a care partner:
In the early stages, you may act more like a care partner, than a caregiver. Your role is one of support, love and companionship. You are there to help with daily life, as needed, and to help the person with Alzheimer’s plan for the future. Since no two people experience Alzheimer’s alike, the degree of assistance needed from a care partner in this stage varies.

A person with early-stage Alzheimer’s may need cues and reminders to help with memory. For example, he or she may need help with:

- Keeping appointments
- Remembering words or names
- Recalling familiar places or people
- Managing money
- Keeping track of medications
- Doing familiar tasks
- Planning or organizing

Tap into the person's strengths and encourage him or her to continue living as independently as possible. You can help the person stay organized with shared calendars, notes, medication schedules and other reminder systems. Establishing a daily routine and maintaining some regularity will be of benefit.

The person also will need emotional support. He or she may feel frustrated, anxious, embarrassed or isolated. You can help by:

- Encouraging the person to share his or her feelings, and asking how you can be supportive
- Encouraging the person to stay involved in activities he or she enjoys
- Helping the person locate a support group for people in the early stages and their care partners


ACT on Alzheimer’s is a volunteer driven statewide collaboration preparing Minnesota for impacts of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias.

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