

## Joyful Voices with Dementia

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Joyful Voices, a community chorus, capitalizes on the functional reality that the amygdala, a seat of emotional and musical memories in the brain, is one of the sturdiest fortresses against dementia. It often resists decay well into the advances of Alzheimer's disease and other dementing illnesses.

As is common with many brain structures, there are two amygdalae, located in the frontal portion of the temporal lobe, each close to the hippocampus, which is thought to be central for forming, storing, and retrieving memory. While the hippocampus is affected early in dementia, the emotional resources of the amygdalae tend to endure. Enter Joyful Voices.

Joyful Voices is, so far, a small nationwide movement where adults with dementia, their caregivers, and community volunteers gather together in chorus to sing and "elevate the spirit." There is a chorus just outside Richmond, VA, at Salisbury Presbyterian Church in Midlothian.

Members of the Joyful Voices Chorus gather on Thursday mornings at this church for rehearsals, but they often experience quite a bit more. Laughter, fellowship, and the warm memories that singing familiar melodies can bring. Music is increasingly becoming recognized for its beneficial roles in dementia care, such as stimulating positive emotions and having a calming influence.

Joanne Sherman, Artistic Director of the Chorus, engages the 40 or so chorus members during these rehearsals to contribute what they can. The result can seem greater than the sum of these parts.

Recently, the Joyful Voices Chorus held its debut performance at the church. Chorus co-founders Mark

Patterson, Laura Miles, and Joanne Sherman welcomed a large audience. The chorus sang a dozen songs, most being from the earlier days of the older adults, such as *Over the Rainbow* and *This Land Is Your Land*; this set included three well-known melodies for audience sing-along. And sing they did.

By the concert's conclusion, it was apparent the chorus and audience thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Caregivers and volunteers can obtain more information about Joyful Voices by contacting Joanne Sherman at [JoyfulVoicesSherman@gmail.com](mailto:JoyfulVoicesSherman@gmail.com).

## Management of Later Life Pain: Free Webinar Series

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The Translational Research Institute on Pain in Later Life (TRIPLL) offers a web-based training resource for health professionals, researchers, and others with interest (or working) in the aging field. Beginning in February, there will be a free series presented by Cornell University's Edward R. Roybal Center and University of Florida's Pain Research and Intervention Center of Excellence entitled *Mechanisms and Management of Later Life Pain*. The dates and specific topics of the first webinars are:

February 25, 2019, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. EST  
Presenter: Robert D. Kerns, PhD, Yale School of Medicine, *Psychological Therapies for Pain*

March 18, 2019, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. EST  
Presenter: Fadel Zeidan, PhD, University of California San Diego School of Medicine, *Mechanisms Supporting Mindfulness Based Pain Relief*

April 29, 2019, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. EST  
Presenter: Lynn Martire, MD, Penn State College of Health and Human Development, *Close relationships and Chronic Pain Self-Management*

May 20, 2019, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. EST  
Presenter: Joseph Riley, PhD, University of Florida, *Assessment of Pain Modulation in Older Adults*

Please visit the TRIPLL website at [www.tripll.org](http://www.tripll.org) for more information.