



ALZHEIMERS MANAWATŪ NEWSLETTER

Manager's message: We have had a lovely start to 2026

We would like to introduce our new Feilding MKC Coordinator Virginia Dyall- Kalidas, left, who helped members make great Valentine's Day art.



Former Club Coordinator Barbie Knox is enjoying her retirement and we thank her for her hard work over the last 13 years.

We also thank NZCT and AGT for providing us with funding that helped us get two belated Christmas presents; two new cars! This was also made possible because of a bequest.

See the back page for advice on how to do a bequest.



AOTEAROA GAMING TRUST

We still are also enjoying looking back at photos of our MKC Christmas parties!



A recipe for true love

- A Sprinkle of Truth – A healthy serving of honesty enhances any relationship. Lies and true love cannot coexist. Those who substitute fiction for fact, or tell only a portion of the truth, damage relationships.
- A Pinch of Protection – Protect yourself from anything or anyone who might compromise your love relationships.
- A Portion of Hope – When things are tough, love hangs on and works through difficulties.

WORD SEARCH BATTLE

Valentine's Day

Difficulty: Hard

M H S U R C A G N V F N B E O
E Y J Z O L Q B B B Q P A D C
O O C B S Z M U B V C O L U A
P J L I K E M R X Y H A L W R
H O N E Y J R E T Q E J O U N
C R K K R D H H D F R P O E A
R O M A N C E C K R I J N A T
L D U B K Y E S E K S G S O I
N J E R E S P T I M H T O X O
C Q D R T L D S A R A L U Y N
S L K E E I S O Z R E L Z G E
J X O G A R N R V R O A F T A
R I N V G R O G L E R C A R E
D A A U E L M D W C S D E P X
U D H H E C B R A V U F N D E

Play this puzzle online at: <https://www.wordsearchbattle.io/topic/valentines-day>

ADORE
ANGEL
BALLOONS
CARNATION
CHERISH
CHERUB

COURTING
CRAZY
CRUSH
DATE
DEAR
DECORATE

DESIRE
DOVES
FLAME
GIFT
HONEY
HUG

KISS
LIKE
LOVE
POEM
RED
ROMANCE

Navigating Carer Guilt

Letting Go of Self-Blame

Caring for someone with dementia is a journey filled with both beautiful and difficult moments. Allow yourself grace, patience, and kindness—just as you do for your loved one. You are doing enough, and you deserve care, too.

Caring for a loved one with dementia is both rewarding and emotionally challenging. Many carers experience guilt—guilt for feeling tired, for wanting a break, for losing patience, or for not doing enough. While these feelings are common, it's important to recognize that they are not a reflection of failure. Learning to manage carer guilt can help you maintain your well-being while continuing to provide compassionate care.

Recognising these feelings as natural can help you start addressing them with self-compassion.

Strategies to Overcome Carer Guilt

1. Reframe Your Thoughts

- Instead of saying, “I should be doing more,” remind yourself, “I am doing the best I can with the resources I have.”
- Acknowledge the love and effort you put into caregiving every day.

2. Accept That Perfection is Impossible

- No one can provide perfect care 100% of the time.

It's okay to have moments of frustration or fatigue—it doesn't mean you care any less.

3. Take Breaks Without Guilt

- Resting and recharging allow you to be a better carer in the long run.
- Ask family and friends for help.
- Talk to our Dementia Advisers about respite and our Carer Support Groups. Families have said that our Carer Support Groups helps them feel less alone and more empowered with practical advice and tools from guest speakers and other carers.

Leslie Harrison from the Easie Living Store has been a guest speaker at Carer Support Groups and demonstrated the benefits of some of her stock for our carers and people with dementia.



4. Recognise the Benefits of Seeking Help

- Placing a loved one in care or using support services is not a failure—it ensures they receive the best care possible while protecting your own well-being.
- Support is a strength, not a weakness.

5. Focus on What You Can Control

- Some aspects of dementia are beyond anyone's control.
- Shift your energy towards providing love, patience, and support in the present moment.

Carer Support Groups and Memory Cafe dates

Carer Support Groups

Feilding March 2
Palmerston North March 4
Dannevirke March 5
Palmerston North Men
March 6
Levin March 25
Levin Men March 27

Memory Cafés

Woodville March 11
Palmerston North March 17
Dannevirke March 18
Feilding March 19
Levin March 20

Carer Support Groups

Palmerston North April 1
Dannevirke April 2
Palmerston North Men
April 10
Feilding April 13
Levin April 22
Levin Men April
24

Memory Cafés

Woodville April 8
Dannevirke April 15
Feilding April 16
Levin April 17
Palmerston North April 21

Carer Support Groups

Palmerston North Men
May 1
Feilding May 4
Palmerston North May 6
Dannevirke May 7
Levin Men May 22
Levin May 27

Memory Cafés

Woodville May 13
Levin May 15
Palmerston North May 19
Dannevirke May 20
Feilding May 21

Sundaes to celebrate warm weather

What better way to enjoy the sunny weather than to create your own banana split?

Palmerston North MKC members, and staff, made some marvellous creations.

There are lots more tasty times coming up with Easter on its way.



Important dates as all MKCs are closed

Good Friday (April 3)

ANZAC Day (April 27)



Easter Monday
(April 6)





Music and Memory

How Songs Can Bring Back the Past



Why we use music as part of our cognitive activities at our MKCs.

Because it's fun!

Members and staff alike enjoy the bands that come and perform at our MKCs and also the outings to watch performances in community. Our singalongs and music bingo sessions are a big hit with both members and staff at all the MKCs.

Other benefits to music:

Music has a unique ability to unlock memories and emotions, making it a powerful tool for people living with dementia. Familiar songs can help stimulate recall, reduce anxiety, and bring moments of joy and connection.

Why Music is Powerful for Memory

Connects to emotion:

Unlike spoken words, music taps into deep emotions, which are often preserved even as dementia progresses.

Stimulates multiple brain areas: Listening to music activates different parts of the brain, including those linked to memory and emotions.

Triggers autobiographical memories: Songs from childhood and young adulthood are often deeply ingrained and can bring back vivid memories.



How you can use music for memory support at home:

1. Create a Personalized Playlist

Compile a list of songs that hold special meaning. Focus on music from early adulthood (ages 15-30), as these songs often have the strongest connection to memories.

2. Sing Along to Familiar Songs

Singing can engage the brain even more than listening alone. It can also boost mood and create a shared experience between the person with dementia and their loved ones.

3. Use Music to Soothe and Reduce Anxiety

Soft, slow-tempo music can help ease restlessness or agitation, especially in the evening when sundowning symptoms may appear.

4. Encourage Gentle Movement

Clapping, tapping to the rhythm, or slow dancing can provide a sense of engagement and joy. Even small movements can enhance mood and physical well-being.

5. Pair Music with Daily Activities

Playing calming music during meals or familiar songs while getting ready can make routine activities more enjoyable and structured.

What is Dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a group of symptoms and conditions that affect how well our brains work.

Dementia is a neurodegenerative disease that can affect anyone, and as people get older, the chances of developing dementia increase.

Dementia is a progressive disease that spreads through the brain over time, worsening the symptoms. The damages that dementia makes to the brain can start up to 20 years before the first symptoms appear, which means that once a person starts to show symptoms, significant damage has already been done to the brain.

The symptoms each person experiences depends on the parts of the brain that are affected. However, the most common dementia symptoms include changes in memory, thinking, behaviours, personality and emotions. These changes affect a person's ability to perform everyday tasks and interfere with their daily lives.

Dementia is different for everyone

– what people experience and how quickly they are affected is unique. What they can do, remember and understand may change from day to day.

Common Types of Dementia

Alzheimer's Disease: The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, responsible for around 60 to 80% of dementia cases, impacting memory, thinking, and behavior, typically progressing slowly.

Vascular Dementia: Results from reduced blood flow to the brain, often linked to strokes or heart conditions, causing sudden drops in abilities, planning issues, and confusion.

Lewy Body Dementia (DLB): Characterized by abnormal protein deposits (Lewy bodies) affecting brain chemicals, leading to hallucinations, balance problems, sleep issues, and cognitive fluctuations.

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD): Involves nerve cell loss in the frontal and temporal lobes, often affecting personality, behavior, language, and executive function, frequently seen in younger people.

Mixed Dementia: A combination of two or more types, often Alzheimer's and vascular dementia, common in older adults.

Parkinson's-Related Dementia: Cognitive decline developing in people already living with Parkinson's disease.

Young-Onset Dementia: A diagnosis before age 65, often FTD or Early-Onset Alzheimer's.

Kevin's Story

A family member's experience of Behavioural Variant Frontotemporal Dementia

We started noticing changes in Kevin about four years ago. At first, we put it down to a midlife crisis and shrugged it off.

But over time, things began to shift again, he started avoiding work, making up stories that sounded completely real, and talking about things he'd just heard as if they were his own memories, or reminiscing endlessly about the old days.

Then one day, Kevin did something so out of character that I thought, "this isn't Kevin." I assumed it might be depression or a cry for help. I got him into a men's group and arranged a phone screening for depression, which he passed, and they found no concerns.

This pattern went on for around three years.

Then, in April this year, something very concerning happened, and he needed medical clearance to have his licence reinstated. He failed his cognitive test. Blood tests showed his vitamin B12 was extremely low, and we thought, "great we can fix that"!

But after treatment and another cognitive test, he failed again.

By this stage, his workplace had started noticing a big change in his performance. They raised concerns and held a meeting, and they were extremely supportive and wanted to help with whatever was going on, at that stage we all thought it was B12 deficiency.

We went back to the doctor, who arranged a CT scan. It showed "mild atrophy". We were sad, but we thought, mild dementia we can manage that, many years with patience, understanding and grace....however.



Dementia hides behind so many faces, depression, stress, burnout, even midlife crisis.

On August 24th we got a call from the doctor. She told us Kevin's CT had been misread; it actually showed severe atrophy. Two days later, on August 26th, he was diagnosed with Behavioural Variant Frontotemporal Dementia (BvFTD). We were left shocked and heartbroken.

Yet suddenly, everything from the past few years started to make sense.

Within six weeks, Kevin was not only diagnosed with BvFTD (we'd never heard of it), he also lost his job, his income, and his driver's licence. We're now selling his truck, it's like losing another piece of him. He's lost his purpose and structure, and the decline is becoming more obvious every day. The vacant look in his eyes, the changes in his behaviour... sadly, the beautiful husband, dad, brother, and friend we know is slipping away right before our eyes. This disease steals and it will never give back. It will keep taking.

It's stolen so much, yet in its cruelty, it's also given back a sense of respect, dignity, and his Mana, and brought with it more grace, patience, and love. FTD is a cruel, exhausting, heartbreaking disease. It's incurable, progressive, and ultimately terminal. We don't know how long we have left with Kevin, but the progression is noticeable.



Alzheimers Manawatu's Dementia Advisers.

*Palmerston North and Horowhenua Dementia
Advisor:*

Liam Walsh

Email: Liamw@alz-man.org.nz

Phone: 027 600 4408

Manawatū and Tararua Dementia Advisor:

Andrea Hodgetts

Email: AndreaH@alz-man.org.nz

Phone: 027 357 9560

**If you notice a change in someone's
personality or behaviour,
don't take it lightly;
contact our Dementia Advisers.**

What does a Dementia Advisor do?

A dementia adviser can help families come to terms with a diagnosis and find support.

Alzheimers Manawatu has two dementia advisers servicing the Manawatu, Horowhenua and Tararua regions who:

- Conduct in-house assessments to see if a person with dementia who is living at home would be suitable as a MKC member
- Provide one-on-one support
- Run Carer Support Groups for spouses, carers and families/whanau
- Run Question and Answer events about dementia for the public.

♥️🦋THE LONGEST GOODBYE🦋♥️

by Jacqui Sawford

In 1987, two hearts began, A love that grew, hand in hand.

Through laughter, trials, hopes, and fears, A journey carved by passing years.

Seven children filled the days, Chaos, wonder, countless ways.

Through scraped knees, tears, and joyful songs, You held each other, steady, strong.

A father's hug, a steady voice, And when the world would seem too tall, Your love would help us when we fall. All now echoes— grief, no choice.

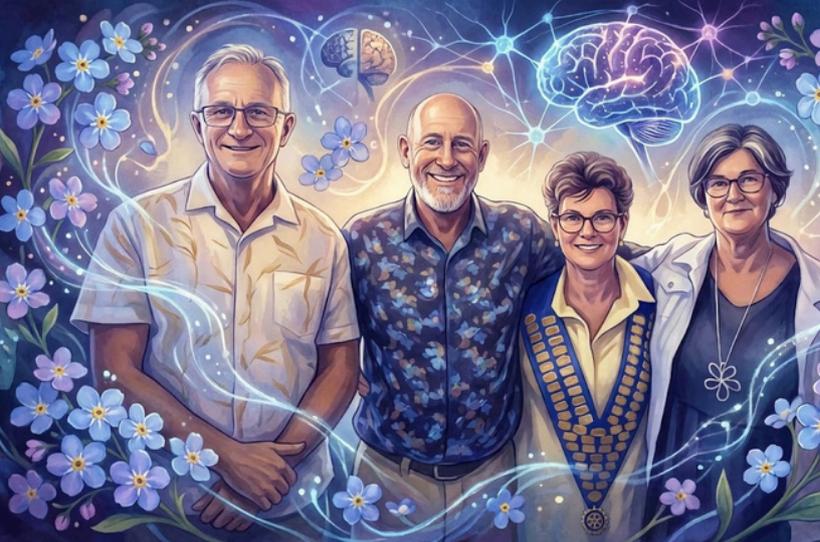
Amid life's trials, joy remained, Grandkids whisper Poppa's name. Love still blossoms, bright and true, In every hug, they carry you.

There were hard times, nights of doubt, Choices made, both right and out. Questioned paths and roads unknown, Yet always, love had made its home.

And now a shadow, soft but near, The whisper of FTD you hear. It steals the light, the words, the song, Turning right into something wrong.

Husband, Father, Poppa, Friend, Brother, Son— these roles won't end. Though sadness drapes the fading sky, Your story shines, it will not die. This is our longest, hardest goodbye, With aching heart and tear-stained eye.

But love began in eighty-seven, And love will carry you to heaven.



Rotarians inspired by Alzheimers Manawatū

Milson Rotary described a talk by some Alzheimers Manawatū staff at a recent meeting as “engaging and unexpectedly uplifting”.

Verity Murphy, Manager of Alzheimer’s Manawatū, alongside one of our Dementia Advisers, Liam Walsh, spoke about our services in “a warm, humorous, and deeply human” way.

The Rotarian’s key takeaway was that dementia is not “the end”—it is a different way of living that requires understanding, adaptation, and community support.

The evening left Milson Rotary members not with fear, but with a renewed appreciation for the power of community in helping people live well with dementia.

A new addition to the Mid Central OPAL team, Occupational Therapist Michael Parker, was also invited to speak. He will be working closely with Alzheimers Manawatū as he will be referring relevant clients to our services and will be a guest speaker at some of our upcoming Alzheimers Manawatū events.

Keep an eye on our website for upcoming dementia question and answer events

Our website is alzheimersmanawatu.org

Our Facebook page is [Facebook.com/alzheimersmanawatu](https://www.facebook.com/alzheimersmanawatu)

Our Instagram is [alzheimersmanawatu](https://www.instagram.com/alzheimersmanawatu)

To contact Alzheimers Manawatū please call 06 357 9539 or email manawatu@alz-man.org.nz

libraries
HOROWHENUA

Free event



Get ready to rock your denim... and yes, double denim is absolutely encouraged.

Guest speakers from Alzheimers Manawatū and Libraries Horowhenua will be joining us to share their knowledge, experiences, and the ways they support people living with dementia and their whānau. Throw on your denim, get involved, and help make a real difference.

Friday 6 March | 10am - 12pm
Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō

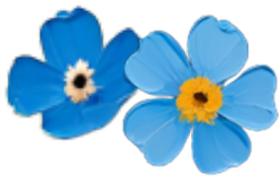


TeTakeretangaKura-hau-po.org.nz | /Te.Takere
info@horowhenua.govt.nz | 06 368 1953

Don some denim at Levin Library and learn with Liam

The Horowhenua and Palmerston North Dementia Adviser Liam Walsh will be speaking at this event so come and learn more about dementia and Alzheimers Manawatū’s services in Levin that includes a day program that runs four days a week and a monthly Carer Support Group.

Library staff will also speak about their collection of dementia resources.



We thank the following for their ongoing support



Alzheimers New Zealand

Membership & Donation Form

Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Membership Fees

Individual \$35

Organisation/Corporate \$100

Lifetime Membership \$200

Become a Champion by making a regular monthly donation

Champion Donation: \$ _____

How to pay:

Internet Banking - You can pay the membership fee directly into our bank account. Account number 03 1521 0013792 01 (Alzheimers Society Manawatu Inc). Please add 'membership' as reference and email your details to us at manawatu@alz-man.org.nz or call us on 06 357 9539.

Please accept our sincere thanks for your support.



Dementia Friends

NGĀ POU WHIRINAKI MATE WAREWARE



We have made it easier for you to become a Dementia Friend and givealittle

All the information is now on our website
- alzheimersmanawatu.org - under Dementia Friends.
You can also donate via givealittle via our website.

Bequests made cars possible

A gift in your Will is a very special way to continue to support the work we do.

There are two types of bequests:

- Leaving a specific amount
- Leaving a percentage of your estate

Whether you are making a new Will, or updating an existing one, please consult a professional legal adviser.

Let us know if you set up a bequest so we can thank you.

Thank you to the MacIntyre family for their recent bequest.

Late MKC member Lesieli MacIntyre really enjoyed attending the Tuesday and Thursday club days for at least two years, her husband Bill said. "She was ready to go at 7 o'clock." The bequest went towards purchasing a vehicle.