



ALZHEIMERS MANAWATŪ NEWSLETTER



Help us raise funds and enjoy a heartwarming movie

We will be showing *Caterpillar* at Focal Point Cinemas:

Palmerston North on July 2

Feilding on July 9

and Levin on July 16.

All events have the same arrival time of 5.30pm and the movie will start at 6pm.

The film is shot in NZ and directed by Kiwi actress Chelsie Preston Crayford. It explores how a family cope when dementia shows up unannounced.

Email grants@alz-man.org.nz to secure a \$30 ticket that includes a complimentary drink.



Levin ladies make blooming beautiful bouquets for Mother's Day

Glenys bought in flowers for Levin MKC members to make arrangements for Mother's Day.

Another grant from NZCT helped us replace carpet in our Featherston St offices

Hot on the heels of the grants we received for two cars, we got another one- this time so we could replace unsafe carpet. The carpet had become so worn out and holey so we are very grateful that we were able to purchase new carpet.

Thanks to The Flooring Room Palmerston North who installed the carpet and also moved the furniture around for no extra cost.

We also have purchased a few artistic prints and wall art to make our Palmerston North office more homely.





“You're the expert on your loved one so trust your gut and intuition” - health care expert to carers at dementia Q and A.

Carers of people with dementia were encouraged to keep pushing for information from healthcare experts at Alzheimers Manawatu's dementia Q and A after it became clear that many carers were frustrated by the health system.

Dr Matthew Tremaine, Chris Pedersen and Sharon Matthews-Smith from the Midcentral Older Adult Mental Health Services team explained to an audience of 15 on May 13 at Alzheimers Manawatu that doctors may need to rely on carers during dementia assessments as people with dementia may mask their symptoms. ("Show timing" (or showboating) in dementia is a common phenomenon where individuals temporarily mask symptoms, appearing lucid, articulate, and "normal" in front of doctors, visitors, or in social situations, while showing severe confusion to caregivers at home).

These are questions from our audience:
Why is it important to know what type of dementia you are dealing with?

The team said it was important to know about the different types of dementia as different types can cause different behavior and it is empowering to know what to expect.

The different types of dementia:

Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of conditions that usually occur later in life that are degenerative and cause brain shrinkage and dysfunction.

Alzheimers: affects memory.

Vascular dementia: may make someone act disinhibited or with apathy. Can be caused by stroke(s).

Lewy Body: symptoms of Lewy Body are odd beliefs, hallucinations, sleep walking and sleep talking.

Frontotemporal dementia: symptoms included inappropriate behavior as though the person has no filter.

You can have multiple types of dementia at the same time.

Dr Tremaine also admitted that doctors have unconscious bias; they may subconsciously believe that because a patient has or had a high-demand, intellectual job, they cannot be experiencing significant cognitive decline. If carers were dissatisfied with conversations with their GP about dementia, the team encouraged carers to email their doctor with their concerns about cognitive and functional changes they have seen in the last 10 years. “You are the experts when it come to your loved ones so trust your gut and intuition.”

One carer felt she was “floundering” as her GP refused to refer her to a geriatrician, who specializes in elder health issues including dementia, as “they would not know anymore than them”. The team encouraged them to keep advocating for their loved one and to utilize advocates like Alzheimers Manawatu and Age Concern. “Your job is to push for your partner,” although they acknowledged that carers had a lot on their plate as they be running the household, taking over the partner’s role in the family and begging for help from services. Their advice was to offload what they could to others and to take care of themselves.

At what stage do you downsize?

There is a tendency for older people to downsize their homes, move off farms to towns and move closer to families but the team said their personal opinion was again that the carer is the expert when its comes to their partner. Moving to anew place could break a person with dementia’s routine and this could cause long term distressso the decision needs to be made in line with the couples’values.



If at any time you have any questions about dementia you can find information on our website alzheimersmanawatu.org or contact our Dementia Advisers.



The Quiet Strength Of Patience

Patience is something we often talk about, but rarely stop to truly understand – especially in the context of supporting someone living with dementia. It's not about "getting it right" all the time, and it's certainly not about being endlessly calm. More often, patience is a quiet, ongoing effort. It's the pause before responding. The decision to try again. The ability to sit alongside someone in their reality, even when it feels unfamiliar or difficult.

Caring for someone with dementia can bring moments that test even the most resilient person. Repeated questions, changes in mood, confusion, or resistance to support can feel exhausting – particularly when you're already carrying so much. It's important to acknowledge this honestly. Feeling frustrated, tired, or even overwhelmed at times does not mean you're failing. It means you're human.

Patience in this space doesn't mean ignoring those feelings. Instead, it's about recognising them, and then choosing how to respond. Sometimes patience looks like taking a breath before answering the same question again. Other times, it might mean gently changing the subject, or stepping away for a moment to reset. It's not about perfection – it's about intention.

One of the most helpful shifts can be letting go of the need to correct or bring the person back to "our" version of reality. For someone living with dementia, their experience feels very real and very true in the moment. Meeting them where they are – rather than trying to pull them back – can often reduce distress for both of you. This might look like going along with a story, validating a feeling, or simply listening without needing to fix things.



It's also important to remember that patience has limits, and that's okay. You are not expected to carry everything on your own. Taking breaks, asking for support, and finding moments of rest are not luxuries – they are essential. Looking after yourself is part of being able to continue showing up with care and compassion.

Small strategies can help in the moment. Slowing things down, using simple language, offering one step at a time, or allowing extra time for responses can ease pressure on both sides. Creating calm routines and familiar environments can also reduce confusion and make daily interactions feel more manageable.

At its heart, patience is an act of kindness – not just towards the person you're supporting, but towards yourself as well. It's found in the small, everyday moments: the second explanation, the gentle tone, the decision to let something go. These moments may not always feel significant, but they are deeply meaningful.

And on the days when patience feels out of reach, that's okay too. Tomorrow is another chance to begin again.



Some Ideas To Make The Day A Little Easier

Many of our carers share how exhausting it can be trying to motivate your loved one to get up, get involved, or simply engage with the day. You are absolutely not alone in this. It is one of the most common and most draining parts of caring for someone with dementia.

I wanted to share some low-pressure ideas that other carers have found helpful. The key is keeping things simple, familiar, and pressure-free. There's no need for anything elaborate – small moments count for a lot.

SIMPLE ACTIVITIES AT HOME

Some of the best activities are the ones woven into everyday life:

- Making a cup of tea together – letting them stir, pour, or just sit alongside you in the kitchen
- Looking through old photos or a memory box – this can spark wonderful conversations
- Folding washing or tidying a drawer – familiar tasks that feel purposeful
- Listening to music from their era – even just having it on in the background can lift the mood
- Tending to a pot plant or a small garden patch – watering, pruning, or just sitting outside together
- Baking something simple like scones or biscuits – the smells alone can be really grounding
- Watching a favourite old TV programme or film together
- A gentle hand or foot massage with some nice lotion – nurturing and connecting.

The trick is not to present these as activities, but just to start doing them nearby and let your loved one join in naturally if they want to. Taking the pressure off makes a big difference



GETTING OUT AND ABOUT

Outings don't need to be big or complicated. Sometimes a short trip out can shift the whole mood of the day:

- A slow drive through a familiar neighbourhood or past a place that holds memories
- A visit to a garden centre – lovely sensory environment with no pressure to do anything
- A quiet café for a cup of tea and a piece of cake
- A gentle walk along a beach, park, or riverside – somewhere calm and familiar
- A visit to a local market – interesting to look at without being overwhelming
- Attending a church service if that has been part of their life
- A drive-through for an ice cream – simple, enjoyable, and no walking required!

Timing matters too – most people with dementia tend to have better energy and mood in the morning, so if you can plan outings or activities for earlier in the day, you may find things go a little more smoothly.

Some days will be harder than others, but there will also be moments of joy, connection, and even laughter along the way.

I hope some of these ideas help you find a few more of those moments together.



Winter Warmers

Keeping Warm Without the Extra Cost

As the colder months settle in, keeping warm becomes more important than ever – but with the rising cost of living, it can also feel like a real challenge. For those supporting someone living with dementia, warmth isn't just about comfort. Feeling cold can increase confusion, impact mood, and make daily life that little bit harder. The good news is that staying warm doesn't always have to mean higher power bills. Small, thoughtful changes can make a big difference.

One of the simplest ways to stay warm is by layering clothing. Several thin layers trap heat more effectively than one thick one, and they're easier to adjust throughout the day. Thermal tops, cardigans, scarves, and warm socks can all help. For someone living with dementia, comfort is key – soft, easy-to-wear clothing without complicated fastenings can make this much easier. Don't forget about overnight warmth too. Extra blankets, flannelette sheets, or a hot water bottle (used safely) can help maintain warmth through the night.

Heating the home can be one of the biggest costs, so it helps to be strategic. Rather than trying to heat the whole house, focus on one main living area and keep doors closed to trap the warmth. Making the most of natural heat during the day – opening curtains to let the sun in, then closing them before evening – can also help hold onto warmth. Blocking draughts under doors with rolled towels or draught stoppers is a simple, low-cost fix that can make a noticeable difference.

Sometimes it's the smaller things that add up. Warm drinks like tea, soup, or even just hot water with lemon can help lift body temperature from the inside.



Having a cosy blanket within reach, especially in the lounge, can provide instant comfort without needing to turn the heater up. Wheat bags or microwave heat packs are another affordable option that can be reheated and reused.

For carers, it's also worth keeping an eye on whether the person you're supporting is recognising when they're cold. People living with dementia may not always express discomfort or may not think to put on another layer. Gently offering a jumper, blanket, or warm drink can go a long way in keeping them comfortable.

If power costs are a concern, it may be worth exploring what support is available in your area. Some energy providers offer payment plans or advice for reducing bills, and there may be community support services that can help during the colder months. Reaching out can feel like a big step, but support is there for a reason.

Most importantly, staying warm doesn't have to be about big changes or added stress. It's about creating a space that feels safe, comfortable, and manageable – using simple, practical ideas that work for you. A warm home, a cosy blanket, and a hot drink shared together can go a long way in making winter feel that little bit easier.

First evening Carer Support Group a great success

The group was emotional, as it was the first time some carers had time and space to discuss the challenges they face caring for partners or parents affected by dementia.

The need for this group reflected the increasing diagnoses of Younger Onset Dementia (affecting people under the age of 65) in the community.

The evening group will happen every month.

The next one is in Palmerston North at 5.30pm on June 17.

Carer Support Groups and Memory Cafes

June

Carer Support Groups

Palmerston North June 3

Dannevirke June 4

Palmerston North Men June 5

Feilding June 8

Palmerston North 5.30pm

June 17

Levin and Levin Men June 26

1pm

Memory Cafes

Woodville June 10

Palmerston North June 16

Dannevirke June 17

Feilding June 18

Levin June 19

July

Carer Support Groups

Palmerston North and
Palmerston North Men July 1

Dannevirke July 2

Feilding July 6

Palmerston North 5.30pm

July 15

Levin and Levin Men July 24

Memory Cafes

Woodville July 8

Dannevirke July 15

Feilding July 16

Levin July 17

Palmerston North July 21

August

Carer Support Groups

Feilding August 3

Palmerston North and
Palmerston North Men August 5

Dannevirke August 6

Palmerston North 5.30pm

August 19

Levin August 26

Levin Men August 28

Memory Cafes

Woodville August 12

Palmerston North August 18

Dannevirke August 19

Feilding August 20

Levin August 21

Important dates



Matariki Friday July 10

Volunteers needed for street appeal in September; Lions, Rotary and others we are looking at you!

The Memory Walks will be happening early September.

We are also planning to run a street appeal in September and would need volunteers to collect money outside supermarkets. We are looking at hiring eftpos machines as many people do not have cash to donate anymore.

Lions and Rotary members have helped us out with previous street appeals and we are hoping they do that again.

To register your interest in volunteering as a collector please email grants@alz-man.org.nz.



2025 survey responses

"Increased confidence and self-esteem"

"Anchors her week."

"Fun, empowering and welcoming"

"We are grateful for the difference the MKC club is making in our lives."

"The highlight of the week"

"Gives her motivation to get out more."

"Companionship, friendliness and activities"

"I can be myself"

"Getting out of the house and meeting people AND HAVING FUN!"

"I'm not alone"

You can chat to other carers who have a similar lived experience. "Knowing we are not alone helps immensely."

"No judgement"

All the carers understand how challenging it can be.

"Lived experience"

You can chat to other carers who have a similar lived experience.

MKCs also provide respite for carers

"A lifesaver!"

Keeps my circle of support healthy

"Gives me 'me time'"

Expert guest speakers

You gain a "wealth of knowledge".

Surveys out now, including a new one for our volunteers

Please fill these out and give them back to Alzheimers Manawatu staff.

These surveys help us know if there is things we can improve and we appreciate the positive feedback, like we got last year about our Marion Kennedy Clubs and Carer Support Groups- pictured- as well.

Marion Kennedy Club - Levin

MID WINTER CHRISTMAS

FUND RAISING EVENT

FRIDAY, 03 JULY 2026
FROM 1:30 PM TO 2:30 PM
AT FREEMASONS CENTRE

**\$3
EACH**

for food and live
entertainment.

**PLEASE RING THE CLUB FOR
RESERVATIONS AS THERE ARE
LIMITED SEATS.**

Mobile Number: 027 357 9577

Clients that don't attend Fridays must
be accompanied by a carer. Thanks

Come snag a sausage and raise funds for us

A sausage sizzle on June 6 from 12pm at Jax Workshop will raise funds for Alzheimers Manawatu and other agencies.

We will have a stall there and will be educating the public about our services.

**Want to get a loved one into a MKC day program but
waiting for funding?**

We do accept private payments.

Chat to our Dementia Advisors,

Levin: Liam: 027 600 4408

Manawatu and Horowhenua: Andrea: 027 357 9560

We thank the following for their ongoing support



Thank you to the PNCC

The council are donating a space on the mezzanine floor of the Palmerston North Library for us to meet after the Palmerston North Memory Walk. The space, and tea and coffee, is being provided free of charge for us to congregate after we have walked around the square.

Donations always welcome

There are various membership options:

Family Membership - \$35 per year (for individuals and/or families)

Corporate Membership - \$100 per year

Life Member - \$200 one off cost

Become a Champion - Make a regular monthly donation of your choice.

Our Bank details: Alzheimers Soc Manawatu Westpac Account: 03-1521-0013792-01

Under 'reference' please put membership and email admin@alz-man.org.nz

or ring us on 06 357 9539



Rotary, Neighbourhood Support and Freemasons impressed

The Milson Rotary Club were so impressed by Dementia Adviser Liam Walsh's and Manager Verity Murphy's speeches recently that they presented \$10,000 to the Manager and the other DA Andrea Hodgetts. The Rotary club will also volunteer their time at a working bee at our Palmerston North office. Neighbourhood Support also asked DA Liam to speak at the Levin library recently, educating people about dementia. Lodge Waikanae Freemasons and Lodge St Andrew Freemasons donated \$1200 towards laptops after Liam spoke at their lodge.