NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2026

SENIOR MOMENTS

REDMOND, OREGON
SENIOR CENTER
Engage. Connect. Thrive.

PEOPLE | PROGRAMS | WELLNESS | COMMUNITY

A community senior living magazine presented by the Redmond Senior Center.



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WELCOME



When There Are No Right Words

By James Morris

I sat down to write this introduction three times this week. Each time, I deleted what I had written.

Like many of you, I had planned a different opening for this issue, something warm and ordinary, the kind of note that belongs in a community magazine. But on October 15, everything changed. The tragedy at Silver Rail Elementary School touched us all, and it felt impossible—wrong, even—to pretend this issue could arrive in your hands unchanged.

So, I won't offer you polished words this month. I don't have any. What I have instead is what we all have: each other.

In the days since the loss, I have watched this community do what communities do best. I've seen neighbors deliver meals to grieving families. I've seen teachers embraced in grocery store aisles. I've seen grandparents pull their grandchildren a little closer, and strangers hold doors, and hold hands, and simply hold space for one another. If there is any light to be found in these dark days, it is in you—in the quiet, unshakeable goodness of the people of Central Oregon.

We did not choose this sorrow. But we do get to choose how we carry it. And I believe, with everything in me, that we will carry it together.

This issue is dedicated to the three children and one teacher we lost, and to every family, classroom, and heart now learning to live with an empty chair. Please read gently. Please care for yourselves. And please, when you don't know what to say, remember: you don't have to say anything at all. Sometimes just showing up is the whole of it.

With love and resolve,

James Morris

WHEN THERE ARE NO RIGHT WORDS

There are moments when words simply fail us. We reach for something to say—something that might ease the ache or make sense of the unthinkable—and discover that language is too small for the sorrow. When tragedy touches our community, the usual phrases feel hollow. We want to help, to comfort, to offer hope, but sometimes there are no right words.

Maybe, for a little while, we don't need answers. Maybe what we need most is one another.

We've all heard news of heartbreak in distant places. We grieve for strangers, send up prayers, and then, often, life moves on. But when tragedy strikes close to home—when it happens in Bend, at a school many of us know by name—the distance disappears. The

pain feels sharper, the questions more personal.

For many in Redmond and across Central Oregon, this loss stirs deep fears and worries for our own children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. It's natural to feel protective, to want to gather our loved ones close. Some of us may know families connected to Silver Rail Elementary. Others may simply feel the weight of knowing that something so unimaginable happened in a place so familiar.

If you find yourself feeling unsettled, anxious, or afraid, you are not alone.

On October 15, four lives were lost at Silver Rail Elementary School: three children, ages 5, 8, and 11, and one teacher, age 54. At least two others were hospitalized, and the investigation continues. These are the facts, confirmed and heartbreaking.

But numbers cannot hold the fullness of what has been lost. Each person was a beloved child, a cherished teacher, a friend, a neighbor. Each was part of a family, a classroom, a circle of people who loved them. Their absence leaves empty chairs, quiet rooms, and hearts aching in ways that statistics can never capture.

We honor them not by recounting what happened, but by remembering their humanity, and by holding space for all who grieve.

In the days after a tragedy, emotions can be unpredictable. Some of us may feel deep sadness. Others may feel anger, fear, or even numbness. For grandparents and great-grandparents, the event may



bring up old memories or new worries for the children in our lives. Some may find themselves unable to stop thinking about what happened; others may feel strangely distant or disconnected.

There is no single "right" way to respond. Grief is as individual as each of us. You do not have to have known the victims personally to feel the weight of this loss. It is enough to be part of this community, to care, to feel.

If your emotions surprise you, or if you find yourself struggling, know that you are not alone, and that your feelings are valid.

In times like these, it's easy to feel helpless. We want to make things better, but the pain is too great for easy fixes. Still, there are small, meaningful ways we can show up for one another.

We can listen. We can call someone we love or check on a neighbor who might be struggling. We can spend time with family, offer an extra hug to a grandchild, or reach out to teachers and school staff who may be carrying heavy burdens. Sometimes, the most important thing is simply to let someone talk, without trying to solve or explain away their feelings.

Grief does not always need to be fixed. Sometimes, presence itself is enough.

It's tempting to reach for familiar phrases—"we're strong," "we'll bounce back," "time heals all wounds." But grief does not follow a schedule, and healing cannot be rushed. Our community's strength is not measured by how quickly we recover, but by how patiently and compassionately we care for one another.

Let's give each other the time and space we need. Let's offer support without expectation, and patience without pressure. Compassion, not resilience, is what binds us together in moments like these.

Even in the midst of sorrow, hope can be found—not in grand gestures, but in the quiet ways we care for each other. A neighbor checking in. A meal left on a doorstep. A phone call, a hug, a moment of shared silence. These small acts remind us that we are not alone, even when the world feels heavy.

Hope does not mean pretending everything will be okay. It means trusting that whatever comes next, we will face it together.

There are no right words for a loss like this. Perhaps there never will be. But maybe our responsibility is not to find perfect words or easy answers. Maybe it is simply to show up. To listen. To care. To sit beside someone who is hurting. To remind our neighbors that they do not have to carry grief alone.

Right now, that may be enough. •



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At Partners In Care, our Redmond-based staff provide compassionate, expert care to patients right here in our hometown. We're proud to be part of a community that looks out for one another - because when care is local, it's personal.

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- Maintain dignity while seriously or terminally ill with regular bathing and grooming
- Connect with resources throughout the community for additional support

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Move Your Body, Save Your Brain

The Surprising Secret to Dodging Alzheimer's Starts With Your Feet



Here's some good news that might surprise you: protecting your brain from Alzheimer's disease doesn't require brain-training apps, expensive supplements, or a diet that makes you miserable. It starts with something much simpler — moving your body.

Most of us exercise for pretty obvious reasons. We want stronger legs, better balance, a waistline that behaves, and a heart that can handle a couple flights of stairs without setting off alarm bells. We think of exercise as a tune-up for everything below the neck.



But here's the plot twist: while your muscles are doing the work, your brain is quietly cashing in on the benefits.

YOUR BRAIN IS BASICALLY A DEMANDING HOUSEPLANT

Think of your brain like a high-maintenance houseplant. It only weighs about three pounds, but it hogs a huge chunk of your body's energy. And just like a finicky fern, it needs a constant supply of water, sunlight, and nutrients — except in brain terms, that means oxygen, glucose, and healthy blood flow.

Here's the problem: when you sit around for hours, that supply chain slows to a trickle. But when you get moving? Everything speeds up. Exercise opens up blood vessels in your brain, flushing out cellular junk and delivering fresh oxygen. Even better, physical activity releases special proteins — like BDNF — that actually help your brain grow new connections and protect the ones it already has.

And the research backs this up. People who stay physically active have bigger, healthier memory centers in their brains (especially in a region called the hippocampus) and much lower rates of memory loss and dementia as they age. In other words, a brisk walk doesn't just help your lungs — it helps preserve your mind.

GOOD NEWS: "EXERCISE" DOESN'T MEAN WHAT YOU THINK IT MEANS

Let's be honest — the word "exercise" can bring up some pretty intimidating images: grunting weightlifters, boot camps, and that fitness app you downloaded and ignored. If you've never been a gym person, starting a hardcore workout routine in your 50s, 60s, or beyond sounds about as fun as a root canal.

Here's the thing though: your brain does not care about your mile time. It doesn't care if you're wearing fancy workout gear or your lucky slippers.

Your brain just wants movement — any movement. Gardening. Dancing in the kitchen to oldies. Pacing while you're on the phone. These aren't "fake" exercise; they deliver exactly the kind of stimulation your brain craves. Every time you swap twenty minutes of sitting for moving around, you're sending a fresh rush of oxygen and nutrients to your brain cells. No gym membership required.

CONSISTENCY BEATS INTENSITY — EVERY TIME

Your brain isn't impressed by one heroic workout followed by three weeks of nothing. What it loves is rhythm — steady, regular movement woven into your everyday life.

Try this:

- **Pick activities you actually enjoy.** If you hate running, don't run. Dance, garden, walk your dog — whatever gets you moving.
- **Stack movement onto habits you already have.** Step in place during phone calls. Pace while your coffee brews.
- **Break up the stillness.** If you're reading or binge-watching a show, stand up every hour and take a quick lap around the house.
- **Sneak in strength.** Take the stairs, carry the heavy groceries — your muscles will thank you without you ever "starting a program."

A daily walk with a friend beats an intense workout plan you quit after three weeks. You're not training for the Olympics — you're feeding your brain, one step at a time.

LOCAL TIP: THE REDMOND SENIOR CENTER HAS YOUR BACK (AND YOUR BRAIN)

Want an easy way to make movement a regular habit — plus some company while you do it? The Redmond Senior Center offers exercise classes that make staying active fun and social. Check out these options:

- **Therapeutic Mobility** — gentle movement to keep your joints happy and your body limber
- **Groove and Move** — get your heart pumping and have a blast doing it
- **Line Dancing** — your brain and your legs get a workout remembering the steps
- **Pickleball** — the wildly popular paddle sport that's equal parts competition and cardio
- **Yoga for Bone and Joint Health** — build balance, flexibility, and strength the gentle way

Remember: line dancing and pickleball aren't just fun — they're exactly the kind of regular, enjoyable movement that keeps blood flowing to your brain and helps lower your Alzheimer's risk.

YOU'RE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Let's be real: aging and genetics are out of our hands, and no amount of exercise guarantees you'll never face Alzheimer's. But here's what's empowering — your daily choices genuinely shift the odds in your favor.

You don't need a dramatic life overhaul. You just need to stand up, take a walk, plant some flowers, or hit the dance floor at the Redmond Senior Center. Every single time you move, you're sending life-giving blood and oxygen to the neural networks that keep you sharp, independent, and you.

Your brain has been there for you your whole life. Give it what it needs — just get out of that chair and move. •





Welcoming Bristol Hospice as a Redmond Senior Center Partner

The Senior Moments is pleased to announce that Bristol Hospice has joined the Redmond Senior Center as a sponsor. Their support helps fund the programs, activities, and publications that keep our community connected — including the one you're reading right now.

We'd like to introduce them properly, because hospice care is one of those topics many of us know too little about until we suddenly need to know a lot.

WHO IS BRISTOL HOSPICE?

Bristol Hospice is a hospice care organization with two decades of experience serving families nationwide. Their approach is built around an interdisciplinary team — nurses, physicians, home-health aides, chaplains, social workers, dietitians, and trained volunteers — who work together so families can focus on what matters most.

In most cases, care is delivered in the patient's own home. Hospice is not a place you go, but a kind of care that comes to you. Their stated focus is pain and symptom management at the end of life, guided by the principle that "every patient matters to the last moment of their life."

HOSPICE CARE, BRIEFLY EXPLAINED

Hospice care is designed for people with serious illnesses when the goal shifts from curing a condition to maximizing comfort and quality of life. The team develops a care plan tailored to each patient's needs for pain and symptom management. Care is typically provided at home, around the clock, and is covered by Medicare for those who qualify.

That last point matters. Bristol Hospice has published helpful guidance on how the Medicare hospice benefit works and what questions to ask before care begins — a good starting point if cost concerns have kept you from looking into hospice.

One misconception worth clearing up: hospice is not about giving up. It's about changing the goal — from fighting an illness to living as comfortably and meaningfully as possible in the time available.

A PROGRAM WORTH KNOWING: BRIGHT MOMENTS

Among the things that set Bristol apart is Bright Moments, a specialty program for hospice patients with end-stage dementia, created to support patients and the family caregivers who often struggle with late-stage dementia. Anyone who has cared for a loved one with dementia knows how isolating it can be, and structured support is genuinely valuable. Bristol also offers related programs, such as "Sweet Dreams," using non-pharmacological comfort methods for those affected by Alzheimer's or dementia.

WHAT FAMILIES SAY

Feedback from families Bristol has served is consistent: attentiveness, respect, and unhurried care. Families describe team members treating loved ones with gentleness, and caregivers noting that staff stayed until problems were solved rather than rushing to the next visit. That may sound small, but anyone who has navigated the healthcare system knows it isn't.

A NOTE ON VOLUNTEERING

Trained volunteers are part of every Bristol care team. Much of what they do comes down to presence: a conversation, a shared activity, or simply sitting with someone who needs company. If you have time, life experience, and a listening ear, it's a meaningful way to give back.

Learn more at bristolhospice.com.

OUR THANKS

To our new friends at Bristol Hospice: thank you for supporting the Redmond Senior Center. Sponsorships like yours help keep our doors open, our programs running, and this newsletter in your hands. If you see Bristol staff or volunteers at Center events, please give them the friendly Redmond welcome our community is known for.

Welcome aboard, Bristol Hospice. •

A Little About Me

Get to Know James Morris

By James Morris



People sometimes ask me what I do at the Redmond Senior Center. The easy answer is that I'm the Marketing Director.

The real answer? Well, that gets a little complicated.

On any given day, I may be working on *Senior Moments*, designing a flyer, creating something for social media, updating a website, writing an article, promoting an event or trying to come up with the next big idea. Five minutes later, I may be helping someone with their cellphone, answering a computer question, listening to someone's story or trying to figure out why something that worked perfectly yesterday suddenly doesn't work today.

And honestly, I wouldn't have it any other way.

This is probably the busiest job I've ever had that has never really felt like a job at all.

SO, HOW DID I GET HERE?

I grew up in Concord, California, in the East Bay Area. I have one brother, who now lives in Baltimore, and my parents eventually moved from California to Colorado.

Two things grabbed my attention when I was young: creativity and technology.

I took up photography when I was about 16. But I didn't want to just take pictures. I wanted to find unusual ways of looking at things and turn photographs into art.

I think I got that creative side from my mom. She was an artist who worked in wire wrapping and beading, and her work was sold in high-end boutiques around the country.

At about the same time I discovered photography, I discovered computer programming.

And I was hooked.

I moved through my programming classes so quickly that my college instructors made me a teaching assistant while I was still taking their classes. Looking back, the combination of technology and creativity has pretty much followed me ever since.

Eventually, those technology skills led to a phone call that changed my life.

I was recruited by Les Schwab to become a Lotus Notes Administrator at the company's headquarters in Prineville. I got the job and moved to Central Oregon in September 2000.

I spent the next 20 years at Les Schwab. When the company moved away from Lotus Notes, I reinvented myself as a .NET developer. From there, I moved into IT quality assurance and eventually became an IT Release Manager.

Then COVID happened.

I was given the opportunity to retire early, so I did.

Well...sort of.

APPARENTLY, I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT RETIRING

After leaving Les Schwab, I started my own business as a content producer, which I still do today. It allowed me to bring together many of the things I love: photography, graphic design, video production, writing and technology.

I also started writing books.

My first novel, *California Highway*, follows a musician taking a road trip along Highway 1 and learning about himself along the way.

While writing that fairly inspiring story, for reasons I still can't completely explain, I thought, "What if I did the same thing...but with a serial killer?"

That resulted in *Highway 1 Homicides*, followed by *Highway 66 Homicides*.

Don't worry. I've lightened up since then.

Today I'm working on more fiction, but I've also found another reason to write. I've been creating books specifically to help seniors, including *You Got This: Windows 11 Guide for Seniors*, *The Guide to AI for Seniors* and *Peace of Mind: An End of Life Guide for Seniors*.

As you'll see, that desire to help people has become a pretty important part of my life.

FINDING THE SENIOR CENTER

Before working here, I was involved with Dry Canyon Arts Association. I initially helped with its website and eventually became a board member, helping with technology and marketing.

That's where I met Randy Graves.

A few years later, I happened to be looking through available jobs online and discovered a Marketing Coordinator opening at the Redmond Senior Center. Randy was already familiar with me and my work.

He hired me.

And it has been quite a ride ever since.

After working on my own for about four years, being back in an office took some getting used to. But one thing caught my attention immediately.

Everyone was incredibly friendly.

The longer I was here, the more people got to know me. And as they got to know me, something else happened.

They started asking me for help.

Today, people routinely stop by my office with computer or cellphone questions. Sometimes they just want to talk.

And somewhere along the way, I stopped thinking of everyone here simply as members or coworkers.

They became family.

WHY IT MATTERS TO ME

That word, *family*, means a lot to me.

My parents were high school sweethearts and were married for more than 50 years. I lost both of them in 2018.

My dad passed away in February. During the months that followed, my brother and I helped care for our mom. She was bedridden and needed hospice and home care. Eventually, my daughter came to help, too. My mom passed away in August.

It was an incredibly difficult period for all of us, but it also changed the way I look at aging.

I saw firsthand how much help people can need.

Today, whenever I'm working on something creative, I still feel a little bit of my mom there with me. And I think the work I'm doing at the Senior Center would make her more proud of me than ever.

SOMETIMES, YOU JUST NEED SOMEONE TO TAKE THE TIME

One experience here has stayed with me.

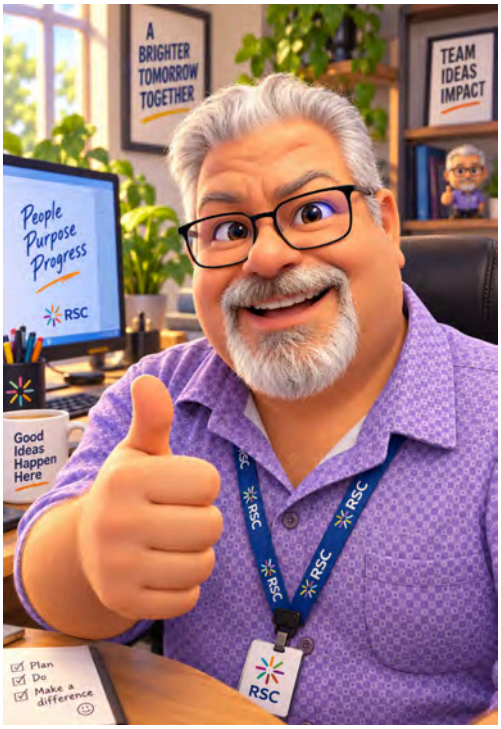
A member heard that I helped people with computer problems and scheduled an hour with me to learn Windows 11. Her son normally helped her, she said, but he was too busy.

When she arrived, I could tell she was frustrated.

We sat down together and started going through her questions.

An hour became two.

By the time we finished, we had covered everything she wanted to learn. She gave me a big hug and started tearing up because, as she put it, someone had **"taken the time to help this old woman."**



After she left my office, I had to grab a tissue myself.

That experience eventually helped inspire my Windows 11 book for seniors.

More importantly, it reminded me why I'm here.

THIS IS THE PLACE TO BE

I'm proud of a lot of things we've created at the Senior Center, but *Senior Moments* holds a special place for me.

Funny enough, when I started, Randy specifically told me he didn't want a magazine.

Sorry, Randy.

I kept finding more things I wanted to put into our newsletter. More stories. More resources. More information. More things happening around the Center.

Eventually, the newsletter grew into the magazine you're holding today.

But whether I'm creating this magazine, promoting an event, helping someone with technology or just listening, it all comes back to the same purpose.

Senior isolation is real. As we get older, we lose friends, family members and acquaintances. Sometimes people simply don't know where to go.

I want them to know they can come here.

And let's get one thing straight: **the Redmond Senior Center isn't just for seniors.**

We aren't sitting around drinking coffee and gossiping all day.

Okay, there *is* coffee.

But this is an active, vibrant community. You can have lunch, take a class, learn something new, meet people, volunteer, ask for help, laugh and simply enjoy being around other people.

That's why I love marketing this place as **"the place to be."**

Because that's what I believe it is.

Someday I'll retire again. Maybe I'll actually be successful at it the next time.

But if another Marketing Director eventually sits where I sit today, there's one thing I hope they understand.

The people who walk through our doors are your family.

Every person matters.

You never know what someone is going through or how much it took for them to walk through that door. You may even be the only person they have that day.

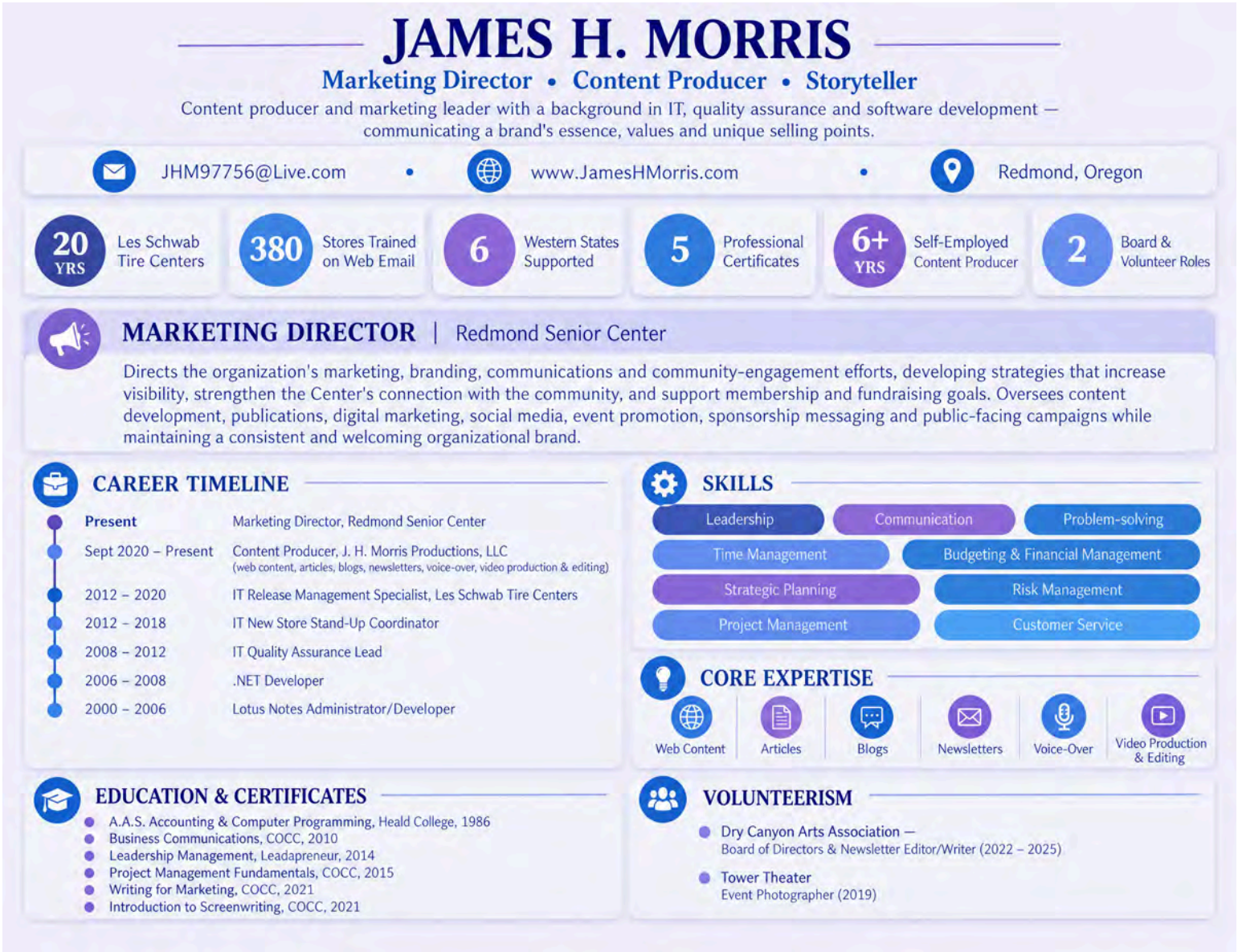
So take the time.

Listen.

Help when you can.

Because if you can make a difference in just one person's life, you've done something pretty wonderful.

That's why I'm here. And I can't think of a better job to have.
•



GET INVOLVED

The Heart of a Community Beats Through Its Volunteers

Small Acts, Extraordinary Impact

By James Morris



Every community has a heartbeat. It isn't found in city hall or on the main street, it's found in the quiet, powerful acts of kindness performed by ordinary people who choose to give their time to others. Volunteering is one of the most profound expressions of humanity we can offer, and nowhere is that more visible than at the **Redmond Senior Center**, a place where generosity transforms lives every single day.

When you volunteer, you're not just filling a shift. You're becoming part of a story much bigger than yourself, a story of connection, dignity, and joy. You're the reason a senior citizen smiles over a warm meal. You're the friendly voice on the other end of the phone. You're the difference between loneliness and belonging.

WHY VOLUNTEERING MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

In our fast-paced, screen-filled world, genuine human connection has never been more precious. Studies consistently show that volunteering doesn't just help those receiving support, it profoundly enriches the volunteer's own life. Research links regular volunteering to **lower rates of depression, reduced stress, increased longevity, and a stronger sense of purpose**.

But the numbers only tell part of the story. The real magic happens in moments: when a Meals on Wheels driver pauses to chat with a homebound neighbor who hasn't spoken to anyone all day. When a kitchen volunteer shares a laugh with a senior over coffee. When a front office helper greets someone by name and asks about their grandchildren.

These moments ripple outward. One act of kindness inspires another, and before long, an entire community is woven together by threads of compassion.

A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO GIVE

The beautiful truth about volunteering is that **there's a role for everyone**, regardless of age, background, or schedule. You don't need special skills, just a willing heart and a few hours to share.

The Redmond Senior Center is always looking for volunteers to help, and the opportunities are as varied as the people who walk through its doors:

- **Front Office Help** – Be the welcoming face of the Center. Greet visitors, answer phones, and help keep this vibrant hub running smoothly. If you enjoy people and organization, this role is for you.
- **Kitchen Assistance** – Roll up your sleeves and help prepare and serve nutritious meals. There's something deeply satisfying about knowing your hands helped feed your neighbors.
- **Meals on Wheels Drivers** – Perhaps the most personal role of all. Deliver more than just food—deliver a friendly hello, a safety check, and a moment of human connection to seniors who might otherwise go days without seeing a familiar face.

Each of these roles is a lifeline. Each volunteer is a hero in comfortable shoes.

THE GIFT THAT GIVES BACK

Here's a wonderful bonus: **volunteering at the Senior Center comes with a free membership to the Center itself**. That means while you're giving your time to others, you're also gaining access to a community rich with activities, programs, friendships, and resources. Many volunteers say they came to give and stayed because they found a second family.

Volunteering is a two-way street of blessings. Seniors receive meals, companionship, and support. Volunteers receive purpose, connection, and the deep satisfaction of knowing they matter. It's one of the rare exchanges in life where everyone walks away richer.

REAL PEOPLE, REAL STORIES

Ask any longtime volunteer what keeps them coming back, and you'll hear answers that no paycheck could ever buy:

"I thought I was signing up to deliver meals. What I didn't expect was to gain a whole new circle of friends."

"The seniors here have taught me more about resilience and gratitude than any book ever could."

"I volunteer twice a month, but honestly? I get back far more than I give."

These aren't isolated sentiments—they're the everyday reality of people who choose to show up for their community.

YOUR INVITATION AWAITS

If you've been waiting for a sign to get involved, consider this it. You don't need to commit your life—just a little of your time. Whether you can help once a week or once a month, every hour you give makes a tangible difference in someone's life. •

READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The Redmond Senior Center would love to welcome you. To learn more about volunteer opportunities—or to ask any questions at all—simply reach out to **Lahna at lahna@redmondseniors.org**. She'll help you find the role that fits your heart and your schedule.

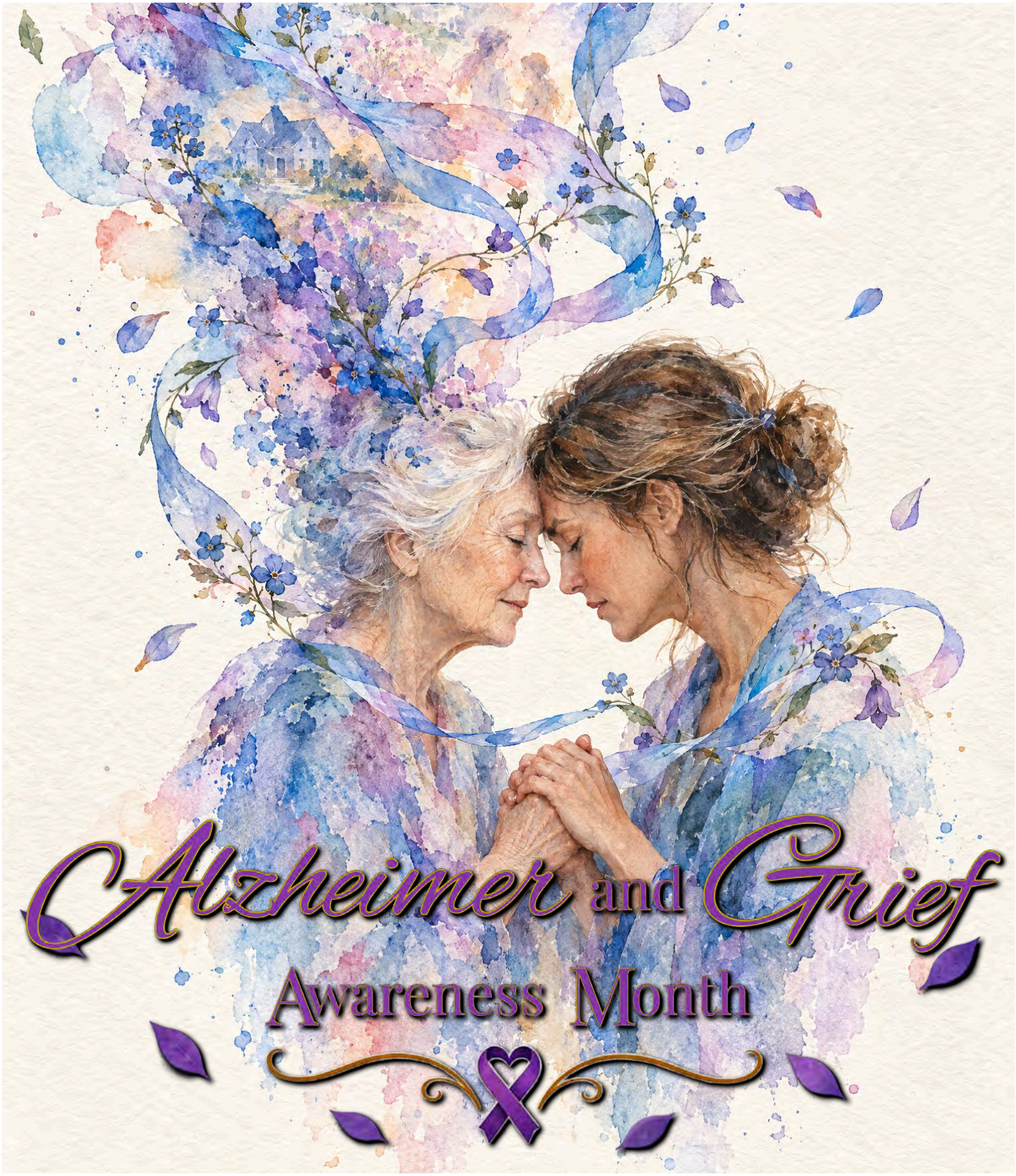
Be the Heartbeat

Communities aren't built by buildings; they're built by people who care. Right now, somewhere in Redmond, a senior is waiting for a meal, a smile, a moment of connection. That moment could begin with you.

So, here's the question: **Will you be the reason someone smiles today?**

Volunteer. Connect. Belong. The Redmond Senior Center—and the seniors who call it home—are waiting to meet you.

THE WELLBEING SERIES



WELLNESS: FACING THE LONG GOODBYE — TOGETHER

This issue, our Wellness section turns to two of the most tender and misunderstood experiences families can face: the journey of Alzheimer's disease and the grief that begins long before a final goodbye. Though our two featured articles approach these subjects from different angles, together they offer a compassionate map of territory no one ever expects to navigate.

In *The Long Goodbye*, we explore a grief that has no funeral, no sympathy card, and no official beginning — the mourning that unfolds in real time while the person being mourned is still sitting across the kitchen table, asking for sugar in their coffee. Psychologists call this anticipatory grief; families know it as something far more disorienting. The article names what so many caregivers carry in silence: the "secret shame" of grieving someone still alive, the corrosive hyper-vigilance of daily caregiving, and even the guilt of secretly longing for an end. Importantly, it offers a reframe that can lift a weight many readers have been carrying alone — that early sadness is not premature abandonment or a moral failing, but an involuntary expression of attachment, the mind's way of adjusting to a reality that changes daily.

In *More Than Memories*, we meet that same journey from the other side of the diagnosis — not as a story of loss, but of adaptation and presence. When Alzheimer's enters a household, fear fixates on everything that might be lost, and we begin mourning a future that has not yet arrived. But this article gently dismantles that illusion. A diagnosis does not instantly erase long-term memories, personality, or the warmth of a shared bond; it simply changes the terms of how we learn to be present. True connection, we learn, asks us not to police the past — constantly correcting forgotten names and mixed-up decades — but to arrive: to stop asking our loved ones to remember, and simply be together.

What unites these two pieces is a single, quietly radical truth: love does not end when memory recedes; it shifts its borders. Connection retreats into micro-moments — four seconds of sudden clarity in a mother's eyes, a hand held a little longer because you know how quickly that skin cools, laughter over spilled tea. Both articles remind us that joy does not disappear when memory fades; it redefines itself, settling into shared breath, unhurried attention, and the simple weight of two hands resting together as the afternoon light fades.

Whether you are a caregiver walking this path right now, a family member watching from a distance, or a reader who may one day face it, we hope these pages offer both validation and practical comfort. Grieving someone who is still here is not betrayal. Meeting someone where they are is not giving up. And the work of letting go, done in daily fragments, is itself an act of profound love.

As one of our articles so beautifully puts it: a soul is infinitely larger than the sum of its memories. You do not need a shared yesterday to share a meaningful today.

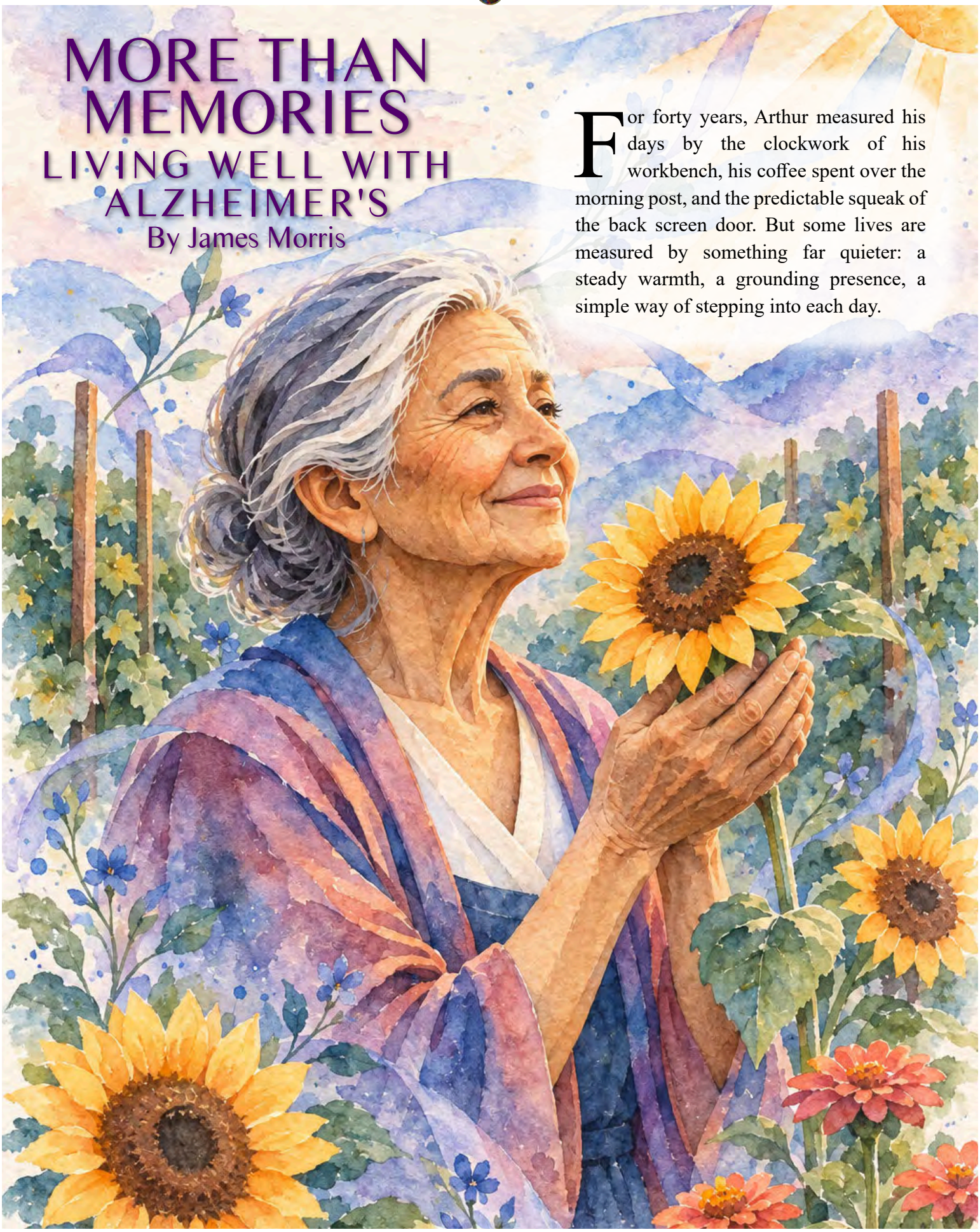
Welcome to this issue's Wellness section — may it meet you exactly where you stand.

MORE THAN MEMORIES

LIVING WELL WITH ALZHEIMER'S

By James Morris

For forty years, Arthur measured his days by the clockwork of his workbench, his coffee spent over the morning post, and the predictable squeak of the back screen door. But some lives are measured by something far quieter: a steady warmth, a grounding presence, a simple way of stepping into each day.



For decades, life moved with a reliable rhythm. She moved through mornings with automatic grace, frying eggs by memory and sorting the mail before the kettle whistled.

Then the small missteps began to accumulate.

It was not a sudden rupture. It was not a sharp, dramatic break in the pattern of things. It was a gentle fading at the edges of routine — a missed turn on the drive home, a kettle left dry on a lit burner, a long pause before naming her own grandson.

"It's just exhaustion," her daughter said, setting the misplaced keys back on the hook. "She's just tired."

We use these soft excuses to protect the rhythm. We want to believe that the foundation remains entirely unchanged. Yet beneath the surface, a quiet realization begins to take hold: the landscape is slowly shifting.

The shift occurred without fanfare, marked only by the steady ticking of the hall clock.

The boundary between yesterday's ease and today's uncertainty begins to blur — gently, steadily, without permission.

The familiar rhythm was gone, replaced by an unmistakable, persistent uncertainty.

THE MOMENT OF DIAGNOSIS

When the clinical word finally settles into the room, it arrives with enough force to freeze the room.

Alzheimer's—a single word that instantly redraws the landscape of a life.

Fear takes over immediately, fixating on everything that might be lost. We sit with the sudden ache of grief, mourning a future that has not yet even arrived.

Caregivers and patients are left asking the same immediate questions: How do we move forward? What is left?

It is easy to view this moment as an ending. We imagine a gradual erasure, a slow stealing away of essential identity. But that is the illusion — a soft trap created by our own anticipation of loss.

Yet immediate panic often obscures what remains in the present.

A diagnosis does not instantly wipe away long-term memories, personality, or emotional capacity, nor does it diminish the warmth of a shared bond. It simply shifts the terms of how we must learn to be present.

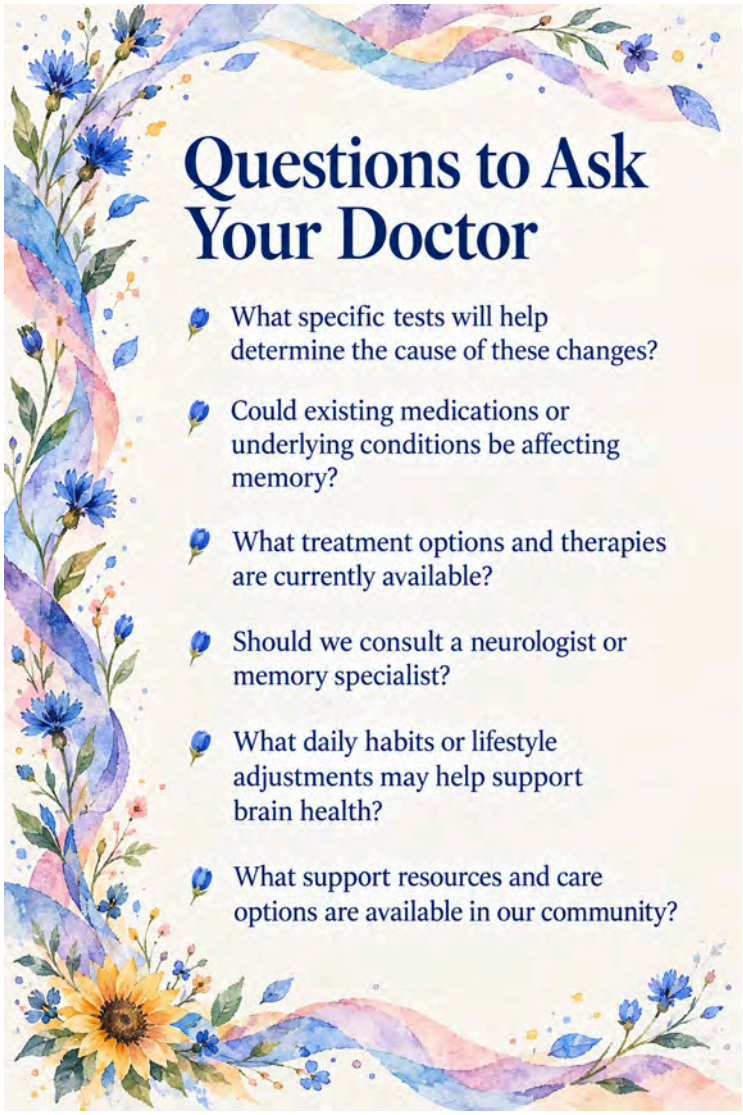
The diagnosis marks a shift in operational reality, forcing a new way of engaging day by day.

That recalibration of focus must begin immediately.

LEARNING TO ARRIVE

When a diagnosis reshapes a household, our first impulse is often to police the past, constantly correcting forgotten names and mixed-up decades.

But true connection requires something entirely different.



It asks us to arrive.

Adapting does not mean surrendering to loss; it means choosing to meet someone exactly where they stand right now. When we stop asking them to remember, we clear the space to simply be together.

A daughter sitting by her mother's chair stops pressing for what happened at breakfast and simply holds her hand. Communication moves past the urgency of facts and recalled details, settling into squeezed hands, hummed melodies, and sitting comfortably in shared silence.

To walk this path with grace, we learn to release the constant urge to correct, listening instead for the emotion beneath the words. We anchor the day in quiet simplicity, offering our total attention without expectation or demand.

Connection does not depend on recalled details. You do not need a shared timeline to exchange authentic warmth—you only need to step into the present hour together.

Presence lives in the simple weight of two hands resting together as the afternoon light fades across the floor.

THE PURPOSE OF BEING

Caregiving dismantles the modern obsession with output—the metrics and schedules we treat as proof of worth.

As memory recedes, it exposes a quieter truth: purpose relies less on performance than on awareness.

When we surrender the demand to recall and perform, the simplest daily rhythms become sanctuaries of shared attention — deliberate pauses where the urgency of the clock gives way to unhurried attention.

Joy does not disappear when memory recedes.

It redefines itself.

It steps away from complex achievements and settles into a shared breath, a warm hand held longer than usual, or sudden laughter over spilled tea that illuminates the space between two people.

These moments arrive to remind us of a profound clarity:

The mind is more than an archive; it is a place where two people still meet.

When we stop searching for what was lost, we find ourselves suddenly available to what is right here.

We become available to the quiet, uncluttered reality of the room.

Identity does not vanish with memory; it persists in physical habits, flashes of recognition, and lingering affection.

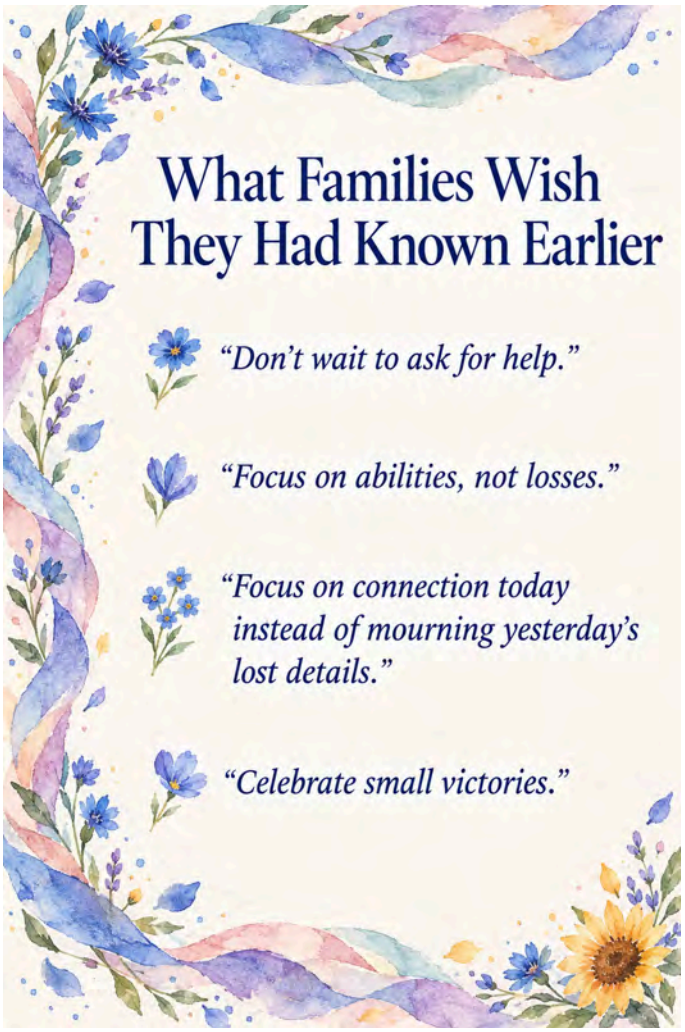
REFLECTIONS ON WHAT REMAINS

Looking back over these past years, we realize how much energy was spent fearing a future that had not yet arrived. We were mourning a distant tomorrow, blind to the quiet truth of the hour right in front of us.

Clarity comes quietly. It does not arrive with grand answers or dramatic certainty. It arrives in the soft realization that living strictly in the present isn't a consolation prize; it is the only solid ground left.

What remains is simple: immediate presence, quiet attention, and the raw connection between two people.

A diagnosis does not pause a life. It strips away the nonessential and offers a new way of seeing. It



demands offering complete attention without expectation, releasing the ghost of who someone used to be, and resting quietly in whatever clarity remains.

If you are walking this path, the invitation is gentle. The imperative is not to force an end to grief, but to allow room beside it for what remains.

What remains is enough.

LARGER THAN MEMORY

When we stop measuring a life by what it retains and begin honoring what it offers right now, the illusion of loss fades.

A diagnosis alters how a person navigates their day, but it does not diminish their humanity. Identity is not a collection of recalled facts, stored dates, or rehearsed stories—it is the quiet, steady warmth of being itself.

Grace exists in the quiet reality of the present.

Time does not erase who we are. It invites us to shift our connection from intellectual recall to emotional presence. When memory drops its hold on the past, love remains fully anchored in the present.

The invitation is not to grieve what has drifted away, but to step forward into what stands before you:

... To meet every shared minute without expectation

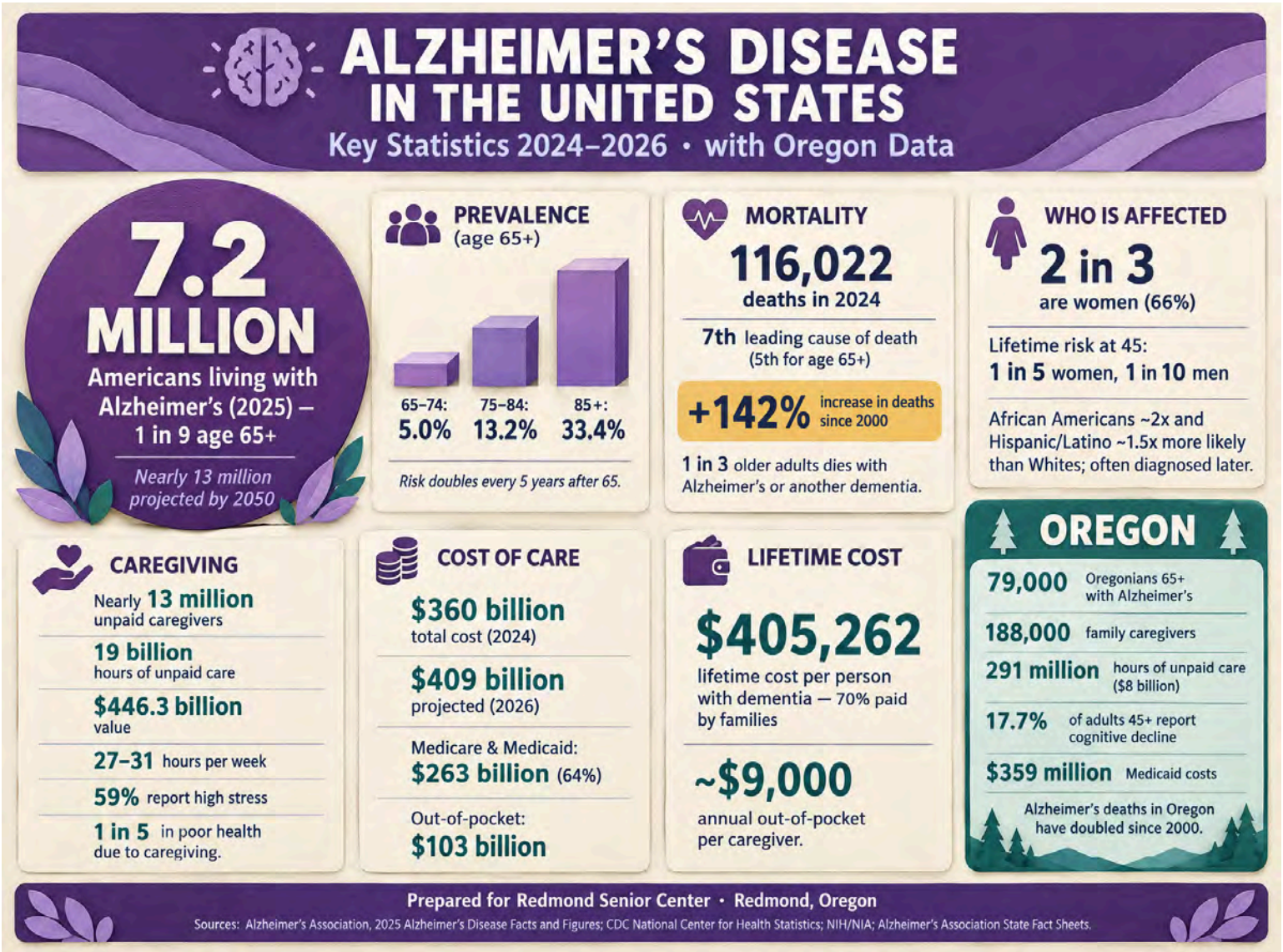
... To offer patience instead of correction

... To choose connection over recalled details

... To listen deeply to the silence between words

A soul is infinitely larger than the sum of its memories. You do not need a shared yesterday to share a meaningful today.

Long after names and dates slip away, connection remains. •



THE LONG GOODBYE

GRIEVING BEFORE THE LOSS

By James Morris

There is a peculiar kind of grief that has no funeral, no sympathy card, and no official beginning. A mourning that unfolds in real time, while the person being mourned is still sitting across the kitchen table, asking for sugar in their coffee. When a progressive illness like dementia or ALS takes hold, families enter a strange psychological territory where the present and the future collapse into each other: you butter toast for someone whose voice is still familiar, even as you quietly calculate the cost of a hospital bed.



Psychologists call this **anticipatory grief**; caregivers experience it as something far more disorienting—a "long goodbye" in which the body remains present while the person inside slowly recedes. This article explores that ambiguous loss: the secret shame of grieving someone still alive, the corrosive hyper-vigilance of daily caregiving, the guilt of longing for an end, and the quiet, fragmented way love learns to adapt—finding meaning not in grand farewells, but in four seconds of clarity, a hand held a little longer, and the daily, invisible work of letting go before the final breath ever comes.

THE DISAPPEARING PRESENT

It rarely begins with a catastrophe. More often, it starts with a quiet crack in the daily machinery. A checkbook tucked neatly inside the freezer. A father sitting on the edge of his bed, holding a shoe in his lap, suddenly unable to find the syntax for putting it on.

At first, family members smooth over these fractures with nervous humor or excuses about stress and sleep deprivation. But then comes the neurologist's office—the faint smell of antiseptic, the crinkle of paper on the exam table, and the clinical finality of a progressive diagnosis. Whether it is the cognitive unraveling of dementia or a physical decay that traps an intact mind, the diagnosis acts as an anchor of unsettling certainty that begins a slow, ambiguous erosion.

Psychologists call it anticipatory grief. Families call it something far more tangled: a low-frequency panic, a mourning conducted in real time. The person you love is right there—sitting in the armchair, breathing, asking for sugar in their coffee—yet their quick wit and your shared history are slipping away.

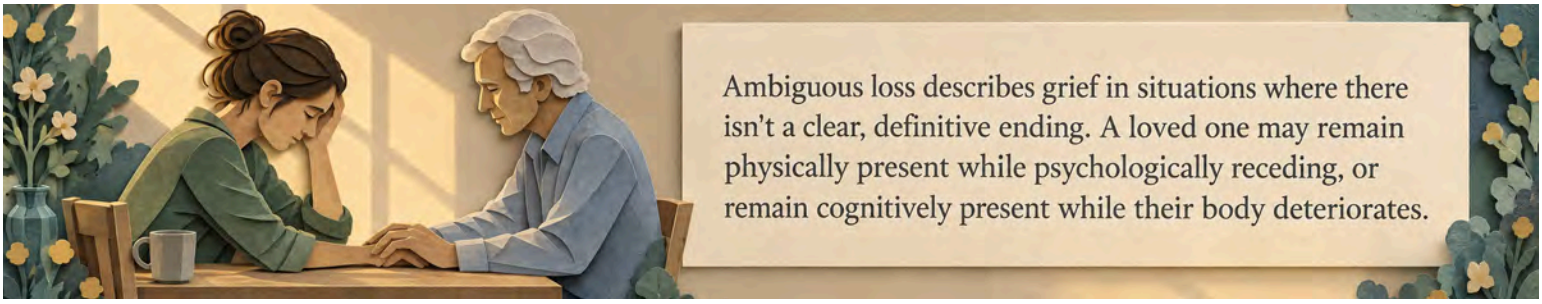
This is the disorienting shock of early loss: the physical presence remains, even as the person inside recedes. You stand in the doorway, watching as they struggle with the misaligned buttons of a cardigan.

STRADDLING TWO WORLDS

There is an eerie difference in making a pot of tea while quietly calculating the monthly rental lease on a hospital bed. You butter toast, sort mail, and sweep the kitchen floor, all while handing a mug to a person whose voice remains familiar, but whose future has already been truncated. You are forced to live in two dimensions at once: the mundane present, where daily routines insist on continuing, and an impending finality that quiet math cannot delay.

This split existence breeds a particular, corrosive kind of shame. To grieve someone who is still sitting across the kitchen table feels less like devotion and more like betrayal—a premature surrender. Sarah remembers the sudden panic of slipping into the past tense mid-thought: *He was always so sharp,* you catch yourself thinking, before glancing up to see him staring quietly out the window. This early mourning transforms routine caretaking into an act of secret grief. You become a secret mourner, performing the daily logistics of care while eulogizing the person sitting across from you.

Researchers call this emotional paralysis 'ambiguous loss'—a term coined by therapist Pauline Boss to describe frozen grief—a psychological suspension where a loved one is physically present but psychologically receding, or cognitively intact while their body deteriorates. Unlike traditional bereavement, which begins with the undeniable clarity of a single moment, ambiguous loss offers no ritual, no sympathy cards, and no



resolution. It leaves the mind hanging between two irreconcilable facts.

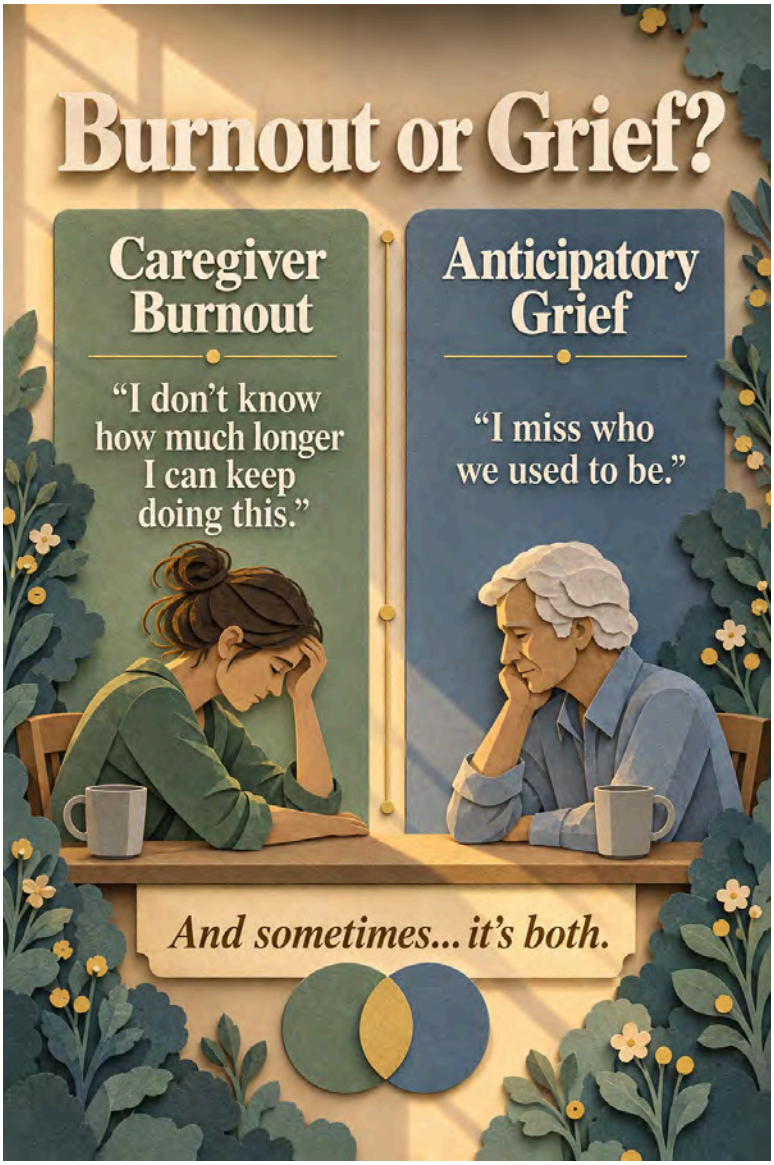
Compounding this state is an even more guarded taboo: the secret arrival of relief. As the illness drags on, the desire for the end to finally arrive often creeps into a caregiver's mind. This wish is rarely born of cruelty; it is the mind's desperate plea for an exit from the exhaustion of perpetual vigilance. Yet when that impulse surfaces—the brief thought that finality might bring peace—guilt instantly swallows it. The caregiver is left holding an impossible contradiction: grieving the loss of someone who has not yet left, while shamefully longing for the grief to finally have a boundary.

THE WEIGHT OF THE WATCH

Before Sarah could process her mother's ALS diagnosis, mobility gear had already cluttered the living room—and rewired her own nervous system. A phone ringing on a Tuesday afternoon ceased to be a simple notification; it became a jolt of adrenaline, a sudden contraction in her chest. A thud in the hallway, an extra thirty seconds of silence behind a bathroom door, an unexpected pause between breaths—each small deviation from her mother's baseline demanded immediate, hyper-vigilant assessment.

When chronic anticipatory grief collided with the relentless mechanics of daily caregiving, the result was a quiet, cumulative depletion. It was not merely physical fatigue, though Sarah's sleep deprivation was real enough, carved up by midnight medication schedules and the strain of listening through a bedside monitor for signs of distress. It was the erosion of the self under the weight of perpetual readiness.

In this space, Sarah felt a strange, protective numbness setting in. Her mind, unable to sustain the peak intensity of grief alongside the grueling logistics of spoon-feeding, lifting, and bathing her mother, dialed back its own emotional responsiveness. A daughter might adjust a pillow with clinical precision while privately mourning the person lying beneath it.



Living in this state meant walking a narrow ridge between two opposing psychological demands. On one side lay hope: the instinct to search for a spark of recognition, to celebrate a stable morning, to pray for a plateau. On the other lay the quiet, heavy work of acceptance—admitting that her mother's trajectory was downward, that the good days were merely pauses in a long descent. Holding both realities leaves caregivers depleted not just by present losses, but by the relentless watch for the next decline.

THE ANATOMY OF PRE-MOURNING

For mid-century psychology, grief remained largely tied to post-mortem bereavement, despite Erich Lindemann identifying anticipatory grief as early as 1944. Attachment theory and predictive neuroscience show that grief engages cognitive circuitry long before physical death, forcing the brain to recalculate social expectations in real time.

While caregivers often misinterpret early mourning as moral betrayal or a callous rehearsal for abandonment, clinicians recognize it as an involuntary psychological adjustment to track a deteriorating reality.

When a progressive diagnosis begins to dismantle a loved one's cognition or body, our internal maps of attachment must be continuously redrawn. The mind naturally seeks stability in relationships; when the architecture of a person changes week by week, the brain works overtime to reconcile the person in front of us with the person cataloged in memory.

Psychologists emphasize a vital distinction between caregiver burnout and anticipatory grief, though the two often inhabit the same exhausted body. Burnout is a systemic collapse—the physical, emotional, and logistical depletion caused by unremitting care demands. Anticipatory grief, by contrast, is an active psychological function. It is the acute ache of processing loss in real time while attachment bonds are being forcibly reconfigured.

Distinguishing burnout from grief clarifies why a caregiver can experience profound mourning while methodically managing medication schedules or helping a spouse dress. Feeling the weight of loss while serving lunch or buttoning a coat is not a sign that a caregiver has surrendered. Clinical understanding reframes this pain not as a moral failing, but as an involuntary expression of attachment. Early sadness is not premature abandonment; it is the mind adjusting its cognitive baseline to a reality that changes daily.



LOVE IN THE FRACTION

When a relationship loses its symmetry, love does not end; it simply shifts its borders. In the late stages of a progressive illness, connection no longer looks like shared calendars, quick advice, or balanced conversation. It retreats into micro-moments. It becomes the sudden, sharp clarity in a mother's eyes that lasts four seconds before clouding over again. It is the quiet ritual of spreading marmalade on toast the exact way she used to prefer it, even if she only eats two bites. To stay present through these months requires relinquishing the demand for reciprocity. You learn to stop listening for the echo of who they used to be and begin sitting with who they are right now, in this chair, under this blanket.

You hold a hand a little longer because you know how quickly that skin cools. You play an old record not to test their memory, but simply to fill the afternoon with a cadence you both once loved. No quiet room will deliver a sudden, neat forgiveness for every past hurt before the end.

Instead, the long goodbye asks us to accept a more complex truth: departure is rarely a single, catastrophic event marked on a calendar. The goodbye happens in pieces, scattered across months or years. It is the abandoned recipe, the forgotten name, the quiet melancholy of a final holiday spent around a table where one seat feels already half-empty. Loss does not wait for the heart to stop beating to make its presence known. Long before the final breath, it begins quietly, with the daily, quiet work of letting go. •

Excersize Your Mind

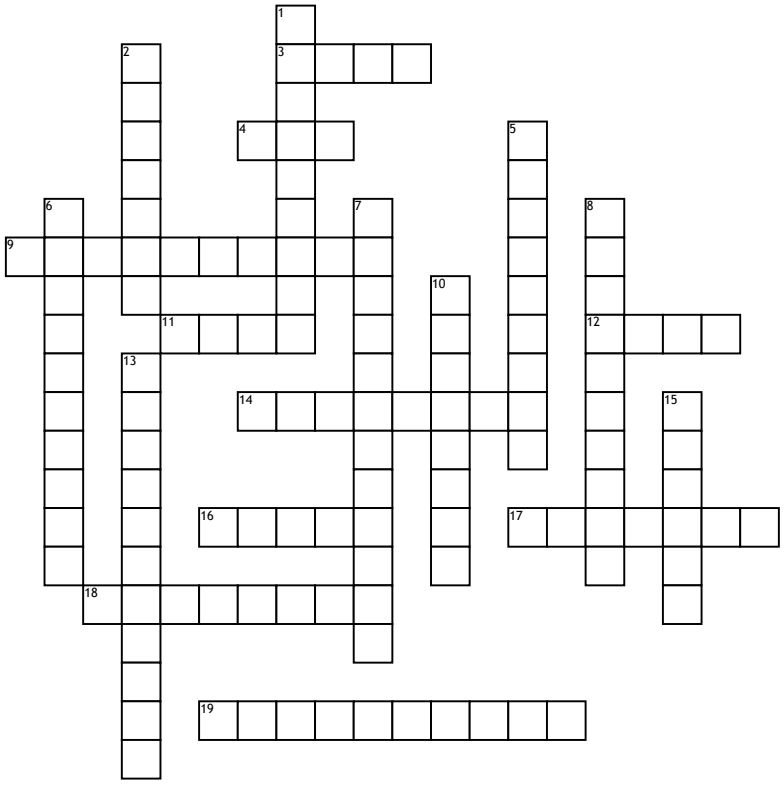
Staying active isn't only about walking, stretching, or lifting weights. Our minds need opportunities to stay engaged too. Games, puzzles, word challenges, and trivia offer enjoyable ways to think, concentrate, recall information, and solve problems.



And exercising your mind doesn't have to feel like work. A crossword over morning coffee, a card game with friends, or a few minutes spent working through a challenging puzzle can turn mental activity into something you actually look forward to. Better yet, games often bring us together, giving us another reason to laugh, talk, compete a little, and enjoy each other's company.

In *Life & Fun,* we believe a little mental challenge should also come with a little enjoyment. So sharpen your pencil, settle in, and give your brain something fun to do. And don't worry if you get stumped now and then. That's part of the fun!

Alzheimer & Grief



Across

3. Therapist Pauline _____ coined the term “ambiguous loss.”

4. Progressive physical illness discussed alongside dementia in “The Long Goodbye.”

9. According to “More Than Memories,” long after names and dates slip away, this remains.

11. Ambiguous _____ occurs when someone is physically present but psychologically receding.

12. One side of the emotional ridge caregivers walk, opposite acceptance.

14. What caregivers should offer instead of constant correction.

16. The emotion caregivers may experience when longing for an end to prolonged suffering.

17. Caregiver _____ is physical, emotional, and logistical depletion from ongoing care demands.

18. Month recognized as National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month.

19. The other side of that emotional ridge, opposite hope.

Down

1. Families are encouraged to focus on these rather than losses.

2. The Oregon community served by the Senior Center featured in this issue.

5. Families are encouraged to celebrate small _____.

6. Families are encouraged to choose this over recalled details.

7. The type of grief experienced before a loved one dies.

8. A progressive disease that affects memory and daily life.

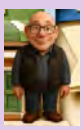
10. What does not vanish simply because memory fades?

13. A medical specialist families may consult about memory changes.

15. What can fade with Alzheimer’s, even while connection remains?

Find Randy!





Somewhere in this issue of Senior Moments, a cartoon Randy is lurking in plain sight—hidden among the stories, photos, and surprises. He could be anywhere. Watching. Waiting. Blending in until only the sharpest eyes can uncover his secret location.

Can you spot him before it’s too late? Search carefully, find Randy, and email your answer to James@RedmondSeniors.org for your chance to win a prize. The mystery has returned… and this time, Randy is counting on you to find him.

Last issue's answer: Page 15, in front of the house in the Home Safety graphic.

CLOSING COMMENT

End of Life

Who Chooses When?

By James Morris



Some of us get five years. Some of us get eighty-five. A rare few get more than a hundred. And not one of us gets to see the number beforehand.

Nobody handed us a receipt at birth. There's no warranty card; no expiration date printed on the heel of a foot. So, who decides? Is it God, writing each length in a ledger we'll never see? Fate? Biology — a lottery of genes? Chance, or a thousand small decisions made by people who never knew they were deciding anything? Or is there no "who" at all?

I don't know. I'm not going to pretend to know. But I can't stop asking, and I suspect I'm not alone.

"THAT'S NOT FAIR"

Somewhere early — before we even have the words for it — we absorb a belief that life is supposed to be fair. Good things should happen to good people. Children should grow up. Grandparents should get to tell the same three stories at Thanksgiving until everyone can recite them from memory.

Where did we get that idea? Not from experience. Maybe from each other — from parents who split the last cookie down the middle, from every adult who said life isn't fair while behaving as though it should be. We build small systems of justice around our children and mistake them for the architecture of the universe.

Then something happens that violates that order completely. A diagnosis. An accident. A phone call in the middle of the night. And the first thing out of our mouths is: "That's not fair." A child's protest, spoken by grown adults with mortgages and decades of wisdom. Because that childhood conviction never dies: the scale should balance. The young should bury the old, never the reverse.

WHY THEM? WHY NOT ME?

Fairness isn't an abstraction. It has names and faces. The man who ran five miles a day and ate kale — gone at fifty-one. The neighbor who smoked for sixty years and lived to ninety-four, sharp as a tack. One person survives an illness and gets forty more years; another walks in for a routine checkup and walks out with a life changed forever.

We ask: Why them? But underneath burns a question we're ashamed to say aloud: Why not me? Why did I get yesterday — the burnt toast, the traffic, the complaints about weather — while someone who deserved more mornings got none? Survivor's guilt isn't only for disasters. If you've been alive a while, you've outlasted people who deserved to outlast you.

LIVING WITH THE QUESTION

Humanity has produced magnificent attempts at an answer: God's plan, fate, hidden reasons, or the honest admission that the universe isn't a moral accountant. Each brings real comfort to real people, and none settles the question. Maybe they aren't answers at all — maybe they're the ways we've learned to live with the question. Perhaps that's what wisdom is: not possessing an answer but discovering a way to keep standing while the question remains.

This past week, Central Oregon was given another terrible reason to ask. Children died. I won't write about how — this isn't a story about how. But one thought kept circling: Why did they get so few years? Long enough to lose a tooth, to have a best friend, to love dinosaurs. Not long enough for anything else. The order was wrong, and no explanation makes it less wrong.

THE DASH BETWEEN THE DATES

Every gravestone carries two dates, and between them a tiny dash. But that dash is the whole thing: every argument and apology, every hand held in a hospital room, every song sung badly in a car. A dash doesn't measure length — it measures what happened inside it. You cannot choose the years on either side. But inside the dash, there is some say. Who you loved. Who you forgave. Whether you said I'm sorry. Whether you said I love you while the person who needed to hear it could still hear it.

The people who loved those children don't speak about the missing years. They speak about what was in the dash. Small dashes. Filled completely.

GETTING THROUGH THE CRISIS

If you or someone you love is carrying this kind of grief right now, please know you don't have to carry it alone. The Redmond Senior Center offers a grief counseling class and a wellbeing series designed to help people navigate exactly these kinds of crises — moments when the questions feel heaviest and the ache sharpest. Sometimes the first step toward living with an unanswered question is simply sitting with others who are asking it too.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH THE TIME I HAVE?

I've spent my life asking why did they die? But there's a stranger, harder question: Why do any of us get to live as long as we do? Nobody guaranteed me yesterday. I received it anyway. And precisely because tomorrow isn't owed to us, it's a gift.

So maybe the better question isn't How much time do I get? but What am I going to do with the time I have?

I woke up this morning. Nobody promised me that.

I think I'll try to be worthy of it. •

REDMOND, OREGON

SENIOR CENTER

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A welcoming place to learn, socialize, and thrive.







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- Arts, Crafts & Lifelong Learning
- Games, Social Events & Clubs
- Nutrition Programs & Meals
- Community Resources & Support

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