



# MASE Monthly Newsletter - January 2019



Proud recipients of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service & the British Citizen Award for work in the Community

## All Good Wishes for 2019



Well another has passed us by. With every new year comes greater challenges and further obstacles in life. For all our Carers we wish you courage, hope and faith to overcome all the hurdles you may face in this coming year and the strength to deal with the unexpected.

If you have lost someone over the last year, remember your friends at the MASE are still here for you. The last thing we want is for people to become socially isolated after a bereavement. That is why the hand of friendship will ALWAYS be there for you at our Groups. After all who better to speak to people who have had a recent diagnosis and be able to impart their knowledge and experiences, than that of someone who has actually been on the dementia journey. The tips and tricks you found useful during your journey could be a lifeline to other Carers. Please remember our doors will always be open to both past and present Carers.

This is also a big year for the MASE as we will be celebrating our 10th Anniversary on Sunday 7th April at Lea Hall, Rugeley. Please make sure the date is in your diaries; we will be giving out further details around February/March.

*The MASE Trustees and volunteers wish you all a very Happy and Healthy 2019.*

## Thank You to Everyone who has raised and donated money to the MASE in 2018

Over the past year so many Volunteers and Carers have raised and donated money to the MASE. It would be difficult to highlight each and every one of them individually. However, by way of our Newsletter we will try to mention a few people who have been so generous throughout 2018 and who have worked tirelessly to raise funds for our groups. It is impossible to mention everyone but please be assured you **ALL** have our sincere thanks for your kindness and your support to the MASE throughout the year.

To the Carers who have donated money from funerals we send our sincere thanks and gratitude for thinking of us at such a sad and difficult time. We are always humbled to receive these funds, and proud to think that the MASE made a difference to your lives.

At Rugeley there was a Christmas Concert organised by Maxine, a lovely Christmas cake was baked and raffled by Ann, and a huge Elf brought in by Jackie also was raffled. In total these three fundraisers raised £600.

Margaret, Eileen and Mary put on an incredible Christmas Raffle once again for us at our Cannock Group and raised £350. All these ladies have had such a difficult year and yet STILL went the extra mile to raise funds for the MASE!

Rosie, Pauline and Julie (Rosie's daughter) attended each one of our five Groups with their wonderful Tombola stall and raised £435. To get a prize with every ticket purchased was a real treat and so many people said how much they had enjoyed receiving beautifully wrapped individual parcels.

Audrey & Verna donated two fantastic cheese and wine hampers, which were raffled at Haughton and Rugeley and raised £265.

Mrs Bostock and her family sent in an incredible food hamper, which we sold tickets for at our Elvis evening and raised £185.00. Thank you also to everyone who attended the Elvis fundraising evening; we raised £1,700.00.

In December Brian Hill gave us a donation of £1,957. **1957** was the year in which Brian married his dear wife Doris, hence the significance of the amount donated. This money will go towards our new MASE vehicle, which will help to make life easier for everyone by reducing time currently spent packing and unpacking things at each group.

*Our sincere thanks go to each and every one of you for your incredible support!*

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

## Other Carers seem to cope better than you are!

Meeting up with other carers at support groups or reading about other people's experiences might make you think other carers are coping better than you are. You may feel guilty, you haven't lived up to your own expectations, or to the expectations you believe other people have of you.

But remember, there's no such thing as the 'perfect carer', and it's important not to be too hard on yourself. Are you being realistic about what you can achieve? If not, can you reduce any of the expectations you have of yourself, or get any more help? Sometimes just letting family and friends know how you feel may give them the opportunity to help out.

### 1. How you treated the person before they were diagnosed

Sometimes, carers feel bad about how they behaved towards the person before they were diagnosed with dementia. For example, you might have shown feelings of irritation or criticism towards them at some point.

Try to remember that everyone gets frustrated with their partner or family members from time to time. You weren't to know that they had dementia and you couldn't have foreseen what the future held. Dementia can have a profound effect on a person's behaviour and without advice, guidance, or the knowledge of an underlying condition, these changes can be very difficult to understand.

### 2. Getting angry or irritated

If you feel angry and frustrated, you might occasionally have angry outbursts towards the person you're caring for. Many carers find it hard to forgive themselves in this situation.

Try to remember that caring can be very stressful, and anger or frustration are natural in this situation. Taking some time for yourself to do something that you enjoy – such as reading or cooking – can help to improve these feelings. Exercise and relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, can make you feel happier and less stressed, and can relieve your anger and frustration. At times when you do find yourself becoming angry or frustrated, it can help to leave the room for a while to allow things to settle.

### 3. Wanting time apart

You may feel guilty about having time to yourself, but everyone needs to recharge their batteries now and again. It's very important for carers to enjoy some time away from their caring role.

Many carers find that giving themselves some time apart, and doing things that make them feel happy and positive, makes them more able to fulfil their role.

### 4. Accepting help

Many carers feel they should be able to manage without any help. But looking after a person with dementia can be exhausting. You may be able to free up some valuable time by accepting respite care, such as help in the home, day care services, or residential care services. This will give you more energy and may enable you to go on caring for longer.

Even if the person with dementia is initially upset about others becoming involved, they may well come to terms with the idea. The first experience of separation often makes carers feel guilty and unable to relax, but in time you will probably get used to the separation and will be able to see the benefits this can bring

### 5. Moving into residential care

Carers often feel that moving the person into a home is a betrayal. You might think you've let the person down, or that you should have coped for longer. You may have previously promised the person you would always look after them at home and now feel forced to break that promise. Remember that any promises were probably made in a completely different situation. The move to a care home doesn't need to mean that you give up your caring role completely – it's just a different way of caring.

### 6. When you lose a loved one

When someone with dementia dies, many carers say they initially feel some sense of relief. Then they feel ashamed or shocked that they have had these feelings. Rest assured, relief can be a normal reaction. Many carers go through much of their grieving process throughout the illness, as they notice each small deterioration in the person. Talk to family and friends about your feelings and remember there is no 'right' way to feel when someone you have been caring for has died. Reflect on your good times together and take comfort in the fact that your loved one is finally at peace. Please do keep coming to the MASE as your friends are there to help you through your difficult days.

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: [www.themasegroup.com](http://www.themasegroup.com)