



The MASE Monthly Newsletter

February 2017

Winners of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service



On Valentines Day - A Promise to a Loved One with Alzheimer's



Please remember I will always love you. The way I feel about you is based upon all of our shared history, all of our memories, all of the experiences over the years that make up the unique story of our relationship. It breaks my heart that you are unable to remember the ties that bind us as clearly as I do. But, I remember. I know that if you had the power to change things you would too.

I will look for your love not in words, but in the way you depend on me because you feel safe with me. I will look for your love not in tangible gifts but in the touch of your hand. I will recognise the love you offer me in your desire to be near me, your wish to talk with me and in the way you search my face for answers to your unasked questions.

When you ask me the same questions over and over, I will remember that part of the reason may just be because you want to talk with me.

When you follow me around the house most of the day, I will remember that it may be because you want to be with me.

When you pace or get agitated and upset, I will remember that part of the reason may be because this is hard on you. It has to be frustrating to want to say and do and remember things that seem just out of reach

I will always love you and I recognise now that despite this devastating disease, you will always love me too and I promise to better honor the way that you show me how you feel.

I promise to better appreciate the gifts you give me every day; I know you are giving to me everything that you now have to offer.



Please know I will always love you - Happy Valentines Day



Moving On Group celebrates Second Anniversary



Rosemary Whittaker is not only a Volunteer for the MASE at the Cannock and the Hednesford Groups, but this lovely lady has also set up her own 'Moving on Group' in Cannock, which this year celebrates it's second anniversary. Rosie began the Group when it became apparent that many Carers who had lost their loved ones to Dementia/Alzheimer's needed a place to meet and have a good chat with others in a similar situation. Although still welcome at the MASE Groups, Rosie felt it would be a good idea to set up a place where ex-Carers could meet and socialise with each other. We are very proud of the work that Rosemary is doing and the Groups have been incredibly valuable to many ex-Carers.

Keep up the good work Rosemary you are a wonderful person, with a very kind and generous heart..

The Groups take place **the second Thursday of each month in the Community Room at ASDA Cannock**. They start at 2.00 and end at 4.00. The afternoon is full of fun and laughter, and at the same time offers the hand of friendship and support to Carers who have recently lost a partner. Refreshments are available at the Groups and occasional trips out take place. Please contact Rosemary direct to discuss the Groups on: 01543 276712.

Please note: The MASE Groups are NOT connected to The Alzheimer's Society

People are under the impression that the MASE is part of the Alzheimer's Association; which we are not. We need to make it perfectly clear The MASE is a self-sufficient Charity run totally by volunteers and although we do have a great deal to do with the Alzheimer's Society and work very closely with them, we are NOT a part of the organisation in any way whatsoever.

The MASE is an unfunded Charity Group, there are NO paid workers. All money to run the groups is done through fundraising and charitable donations. To put that in perspective the Trustees Daphne, Elaine, Jim and Richard have to ensure they raise over £25,000 per year for the Groups to continue.

We have been successfully running the MASE now for over eight years but people still confuse us with The Alzheimer's Society. It is difficult when donations are made to us by cheque and people write 'The Alzheimer's Society' on them. We then have to forward these cheques onto the Alzheimer's Society even though we know the money was meant for the MASE. We are proud to be associated with The Alzheimer's Society which is a wonderful organisation - however please remember we at the MASE also rely a great deal on every single donation to enable us to keep the groups running.

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MASE Co-ordinators

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

Dementia and how pictures can help

For most people, sight is their most critical sense. 50% of all the information comes in the form of pictures arriving into our brain through our eyes. When we develop severe dementia and our ability to get out and about in the real world is limited, pictures can play a vital role in making us feel that we are still engaging with life.

Equally, some pictures can lead to disengagement and withdrawal and some to anxiety or distress. If we are to use pictures successfully with people in the later stages of dementia, we need to understand more.

Family photographs

These are commonly used when people develop dementia. Relatives and carers will often use them to help someone remember past events or people that were important to them. However, the problems of mid to later stages of dementia can create difficulties with the recognition and interpretation of many family photographs. Even a wedding photo can become just another irrelevant image for someone who doesn't remember getting married. The following is typical of the experience of many family Carers.

Local landmarks

Old street scenes or photographs of local landmarks are used by many care homes. This type of picture can be very effective in creating a talking point between those with earlier stage dementia, as long as memories remain intact and as long as someone can verbalise them.

However, this type of image will be less meaningful to those in the later stages of dementia, who may find the complexity of the images too challenging, or who can no longer remember or verbalize their stories. In the later stages, people need to have a much stronger and more personal emotional connection with an image.

What other pictures have meaning?

If you spent your working life making cheese, or you had a special childhood picture book, a poster of your teenage heart-throb or a favourite music album cover, then it's likely that these will always be images that have very special and very personal meaning. That meaning won't be shared by the general population, but may be understood by family or friends. The difficulty lies in knowing what images might have meaning for someone and locating the right quality of image to use.

Tips for Carers of people with dementia

- Think about how art can engage people with and without dementia at an emotional level
- Recognise that dementia interferes with the amazing ability of the brain to understand and interpret two-dimensional pictures
- Find ways to communicate through visual images, which may have particular relevance.

We have recently purchased some really lovely books at The MASE. Please take a look at them and see if they can be useful to your cared for. You can borrow the books as long as they are taken care of and returned safely to the MASE.

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: www.themasegroup.com

Registered Charity No: 1137193 - The Monthly Alzheimer's Support Evening Limited (MASE)

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