

McDowell Memory Café for Those Affected By Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease: still looking for volunteers

According to the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Disease is the 6th leading cause of death in the USA. In a 2014 study in North Carolina there were 448,000 caregivers for Alzheimer's and other dementia patients at an estimated total unpaid care of 510,000,000 hours. In the March 2016 Neurodegenerative Disease Management Journal, it states, "Caregiver stress is an under-recognized and undertreated health risk that can lead to poor outcomes for both caregivers and patients with dementia." The McDowell Senior Center along with local citizens considers this an area of concern for those touched by Alzheimer's disease and dementia. The Senior Center with the support of volunteers plans to offer a Memory Café for any person with dementia and their care giver.

A Memory Café is a place where individuals with memory loss and their caregivers can get together in a safe, supportive, and engaging environment. Once a month, it is a time and place where people can interact, laugh, cry, find support, share concerns and celebrate without feeling embarrassed or misunderstood. The Memory Café encourages friendship and acceptance. A small meal is served without charge to the client with memory issues and their caregiver. Clients with dementia must be accompanied by either a caregiver or a loved one.

A memory care training session for volunteers for the McDowell County Memory Café will be Wednesday, May 10 from 10:00- 12 noon at the McDowell Senior Center. Volunteers will be trained in effective interaction to provide a pleasant and safe experience for the client with dementia and their caregiver by Jeffrey Dula, MSHS, QMHP, GERO Specialist and members of the Vaya Health Geriatric & Adult Mental Health Specialty Team.

There will be no charge for the training, but trainees are expected to volunteer at a minimum of three (3) McDowell Memory Cafés from May 2017-June 2018 at the McDowell Senior Center. If you are interested in becoming a Memory Café volunteer, please plan to attend the training meeting.

The first McDowell Memory Café is scheduled as a Brunch on Thursday May 25, 2017 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Senior Center. If someone you know or care for could profit from attending the Memory Café, please call Weyland Prebor at the McDowell Senior Center at 828-659-0823 to reserve a slot for this first Memory Café Brunch.

References:

*Alzheimer's Association. 2015 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures. Alzheimer's & Dementia 2015;11(3)332+.

* Hebert LE, Weuve J, Scherr PA, Evans DA. Alzheimer disease in the United States (2010–2050) estimated using the 2010 Census. Neurology 2013;80(19):1778–83.