



The McDowell Memory Café for Those Affected By Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease is Looking for Volunteers

According to the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Disease is the sixth 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 began their first Memory Café in May 2017 with the assistance of trained volunteers and support from several local organizations who recognize the value of the events for our community.

A Memory Café is a place where individuals with memory loss and their caregivers can get together in a safe, supportive, and engaging environment. For the four events scheduled this year, 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. Refreshments are served without charge to the client with memory issues and their caregiver. Clients with dementia must be accompanied by a friend, caregiver or loved one.

After two years of offering the McDowell Memory Café, the volunteers have new plans for 2019.

The McDowell Memory Café will be moving to a quarterly event and will occur on a Friday afternoon from 1:30 until 3:30 p.m. in the McDowell Senior Center's dining room. The 2019 McDowell Memory Cafés are tentatively scheduled for March 22, June 21, September 20, and November 15, 2019.

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.

Training for new Memory Café Volunteers will be held Thurs. Feb. 21 from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with lunch provided.

There will be no charge for the training, but trainees are expected to volunteer at a minimum of two (2) McDowell Memory Cafés during 2019 at the McDowell Senior Center. If you are interested in becoming a Memory Café volunteer, call the McDowell Senior Center at 828-659-0823 to register and plan to attend the training meeting.

The first McDowell Memory Café is scheduled on Friday March 22, 2019 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. Music will be the focus of the café. If someone you know or care would benefit 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 2019 McDowell Memory Café .

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