



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: *January 2025*

## *A Note from Haven's Dementia Care Manager*

*Happy New Year!*

It seems like yesterday that I was introducing the Dementia Care Program to all of you and sharing how excited we are at Haven to be rolling it out in all our service areas. It's hard to believe that a year has passed by so quickly and that we are available in all 18 counties. We also have 10 support groups and lots of education to offer our patients, caregivers and communities. It is our plan to expand this program in 2025 so keep watch in the newsletter and on our website for growth.

None of this would be possible without you so I want to take a moment to say thank you for allowing us to be part of your journey, to help care for your loved one and for the support you have given to Haven. More importantly, I want to commend you on the love, care and compassion that you provide to your loved one living with dementia every day. Everyone has different needs and a different story to tell. We hope that you find some useful information in these monthly newsletters and that you will have the opportunity join us in one or more of the support groups available in 2025 to share your experiences with each other.

If there is a topic related to dementia that you would like more information on, please email me at [anita.howard@havenhospice.com](mailto:anita.howard@havenhospice.com).

Sincerely,  
**Anita Howard**  
*Dementia Care Program Manager*



Learn more at  
[BeYourHaven.org/Dementia](https://BeYourHaven.org/Dementia)

## *New Year's Resolutions*

History of new year's resolutions can be traced back almost 4000 years to the Babylonians. They held annual celebrations in March known as the Akitu festival which lasted for 12 days to honor the beginning of their farming season, crown their king and make promises to return borrowed money or equipment. The Romans adopted the traditions of celebrating the New Year and making resolutions. However, in January 46 BC, they moved the celebration to January 1 which is the first day of the year on the Julian calendar. They did this to honor the Roman god, Janus, who is said to be able to see the past and the future and is the guard of doorways and passages. The Romans wanted to start each year in good favor by making promises to Janus as they believed that he controlled their pathway in life.

Fast forward to today, where people all around the world celebrate the new year with their own traditions. Many people still make resolutions such as spending more time with family and friends, exercising, eating more healthy foods, reducing stress, paying off debt and saving money. Some people resolve not to resolve so that they don't break a promise to themselves. Whether you resolve or not, I hope that 2025 is filled with good health, happiness and love for you and your family.

In this edition, we will be sharing how travel can be a benefit to cognitive growth and some tips to make traveling more successful for those living with dementia.

## *How Travel Benefits Our Mental and Physical Health*

1. Stimulates creativity and problem solving skills- Being exposed to new surroundings, people, languages, experiences and changes in travel plans forces the brain to expand neural pathways and connect in different ways. Our brain must use the executive functions that involve logic, reasoning and decision-making to adapt to a new environment, adjust to different cultural or

social situations, and to overcome the challenges encountered during travel. These mental exercises get the creative juices flowing and help the brain develop strategies to complete tasks and solve problems.

2. Improves memory and learning – When we go to a new place, we tend to focus more on what is happening and our actual surroundings because it is unfamiliar. This can increase the neuroplasticity in our brain leading to the formation of vivid and lasting memories.

3. Sightseeing not only stimulates thinking, concentration and memory, but also improves physical fitness and vascular health by increasing physical activity such as walking.

4. Engaging in sensory experiences such as aromatherapy or massages may foster relaxation, decrease stress and agitation and improve sleep.

5. Improves emotional intelligence, empathy and social connections – There is a lot of research that shows how important acceptance, love and belonging is to the health of all humans. Travel often involves sharing an experience with other people from different backgrounds, engaging in a different custom or tradition, asking for help to get from one place to another or to complete a task. Traveling helps families and friends (old and new) make lasting memories and builds stronger bonds. Taking pictures or videos and journaling are great ways to capture moments that can be used later to stimulate memory recall.

## *Travel Considerations*

- Plan trip in advance and include the person living with dementia. Identify signs of anxiety and agitation and how to reduce them. If traveling with multiple people, one person may travel ahead to make sure that the destination is equipped with drinks, food and other necessities while the other person(s) travel with your loved one.
- Evaluate options for the timing and mode of transportation based on the needs, abilities, and safety of the person living with dementia. For example, if a person is more agitated in the evening, travel earlier in the day, and rest at night.
- If you are flying, consider booking with the airline directly or use a travel

agency. This will allow you to add instructions for special needs, request wheelchair assistance or a motorized cart, and map out the airport for bathrooms and checkpoints. Requesting wheelchair assistance may help expedite the process and reduce stress at check points even if it is not needed for mobility purposes. Some airlines require at least 48 hours of notice. Plan to be at the airport early and request extra assistance with the screening process.

- When selecting a travel destination, consider the person's routine and being able to stick to that as much as possible (especially meal and bedtimes). Keep in mind that environmental changes may increase confusion or wandering. You may want to give your loved one an ID bracelet for added safety.
- If a person has a pet, consider a destination that will allow pets. Otherwise, he or she may spend time looking for their fur baby every day.
- If staying with family, friends, or at a hotel, consider letting them know about specific needs or behaviors so that they can be prepared and assist, if needed.
- Choose sightseeing and excursions that accommodate everyone's needs. If traveling with multiple people or with family, you may choose to plan different activities to meet the needs of all involved. Be realistic about abilities and limitations.
- Have a backup plan in case your trip needs to change unexpectedly. This may mean purchasing travel insurance if you have booked flights, excursions, or hotels.
- Carry with you an itinerary that includes details about each destination. Give copies to family members or friends that you will be visiting or to emergency contacts at home.
- Make sure that you always have a bag with you that has a copy of the travel itinerary, emergency contact list, medications, list of medications, photocopies of important legal documents, insurance information, a change of clothes, water, snacks and a personal item that soothes the person when they are agitated (i.e. picture, stuffed animal or activity).
- Focus on being together telling stories, sharing meals, and laughing. These are the moments that you will cherish most.

## *Travel Alternatives*

- Staycation – Book a few nights at a local hotel, spend a few hours driving around and taking in some local sights, eat all your meals at restaurants and sleep at the hotel. This will give you a test run of how your loved one will react to changes in routine and environment.
- Video Chats – Allows the individual to participate in sightseeing, ceremonies (weddings, graduations, etc.), and talking with family or friends in the comfort of their home.
- Virtual Reality – With all the advances in technology, you can now take a trip anywhere in the world, go on a guided tour, take an excursion, or meditate from the comfort of your home. There have been studies that show that engaging with virtual reality can have positive effects for those living with dementia to include: (1) combats feelings of loneliness and isolation, (2) improves memory recall, reasoning, and language skills, (3) reduces anxiety and aggression, and (4) improves relationships with caregivers.

# Haven Dementia Caregiver Support Groups

## Alachua County

### **Haven Hospice, E.T. York Hospice Care Center**

4200 NW 90th Blvd, Gainesville, FL 32606 | Conference Room 2

Next meeting: January 14, 2025, 4- 5 p.m.

Contact: Anita Howard at 352.215.7465 or [anita.howard@havenhospice.com](mailto:anita.howard@havenhospice.com).

### **Senior Recreation Center**

5701 NW 34th Blvd, Gainesville, FL 32653

Next meeting: January 8, 2025, 3 - 4 p.m.

Contact: Anita Howard at 352.215.7465 or [anita.howard@havenhospice.com](mailto:anita.howard@havenhospice.com).

## Clay County

### **Allegro Senior Living - Fleming Island**

3651 US Hwy 17, Fleming Island, FL 32003

Next meeting: January 23, 2025, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Contact: 904.204.5659

### **Seagrass Village**

1949 East West Parkway, Fleming Island, FL 32003

Next meeting: January 21, 2025, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Contact: 904.592.1100

## Duval County

### **The Windsor at Ortega**

5939 Roosevelt Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32244

Next meeting: February 18, 2025, 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Contact: 904.353.9500

# Haven Dementia Caregiver Support Groups

## **Gilchrist County**

### **Tri-County Nursing Home**

7280 SW State Road 26, Trenton, FL 32693

Next meeting: January 28, 2025, 4- 5 p.m.

Contact: Anita Howard at 352.215.7465 or [anita.howard@havenhospice.com](mailto:anita.howard@havenhospice.com).

## **Levy County**

### **Haven Hospice of the Tri-Counties**

311 NE 9th Street, Chiefland, FL 32626 | Community Room

Next meeting: January 7, 2025, 4 - 5 p.m.

## **Putnam County**

### **Vintage Care of Palatka**

203 S Moody Road, Palatka, FL 32177

Next meeting: January 16, 2025, 3 - 4 p.m.

## **Online**

### **First Thursday of Each Month**

Next meeting: January 2, 2025, 4 - 5 p.m.

Email Anita Howard at [anita.howard@havenhospice.com](mailto:anita.howard@havenhospice.com) to receive the meeting link.

## **St. John's County**

### **Starling at Nocatee Assisted Living and Memory Care**

999 Crosswater Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32081

Next meeting: January 9, 2025, 4 - 5 p.m.

## Resources for Support

### **Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Education and Referral Center**

Email: [adear@nia.nih.gov](mailto:adear@nia.nih.gov)

Phone: 1-800-438-4380

[www.alzheimers.gov](http://www.alzheimers.gov)

The ADEAR Center can provide information on diagnosis, treatment, patient care, caregiver needs, long-term care, research and clinical trials. Staff can refer you to local and national resources.

### **Alzheimer's Association**

Phone: 1-800-272-3900

[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

Offers information, a help line and support services for those living with dementia and their caregivers.

### **Eldercare Locator**

Phone: 1-800-677-1116

<https://eldercare.acl.gov>

Provides information about local resources such as home care, Meals on Wheels, adult day care and nursing facilities.

### **National Adult Day Services Association**

[www.nadsa.org/consumers/choosing-a-center](http://www.nadsa.org/consumers/choosing-a-center)

Phone: 1-877-745-1440

Provides a safe environment, activities and staff that pay attention to the needs of the person while under their supervision. Adult Day Care Services typically charge an hourly rate.

### **National Institute on Aging**

Email: [niaic@nia.nih.gov](mailto:niaic@nia.nih.gov)

Phone: 1-800-222-2225

Offers free publications about aging that can be viewed, printed or ordered online.



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