



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER: *May 2026*

A Note from Haven's Dementia Care Manager

Greetings!

Still less than two years old, Haven's Dementia Care Program has quickly grown into a comprehensive, multi faceted program dedicated to supporting hospice patients living with dementia and those who care for them. The program provides compassionate, specialized care for patients; education and support for caregivers; and collaborative partnerships with assisted living communities and nursing homes that many of our patients call home.

In addition, Haven currently offers over twenty support groups for anyone in the community navigating the challenges of caring for a loved one. Through hands on dementia simulations and workshops, caregivers, family members, healthcare professionals, and others gain a deeper understanding of the lived experience of dementia. The program also remains committed to continuous learning to strengthen the skills and knowledge of our dementia care team.

In 2025, the dementia care team provided:

- 2,118 patient visits
- 140 family & caregiver sessions
- 143 community education sessions
- 173 caregiver support groups

Haven's Dementia Care Program has been made possible by the generous support of the Haven Foundation and unwavering dedication of our Dementia Care Program team members - Jessica Bell, Kyla Hartman, Kaili Hansen, and Crystal Minshew.

If there is a topic related to dementia that you would like more information on or you would like to set up education for your organization, please email me at anita.howard@havenhospice.com.

Sincerely,

Anita Howard
Dementia Care Program Manager

Why is a Dementia Program Essential?

- In the year 2020, over 580,000 Floridians aged 65 and older were living with dementia.
- That number is expected to increase by 21% to 720,000 this year.
- In 2024, it was reported that approximately 870,000 unpaid caregivers provide care to those living with dementia. Many of these caregivers have no formal training and have little to no help from other family members or friends.
- One out of two Haven patients are admitted with a dementia-related diagnosis.

How does the Program Help?

- Hospice Patients
 - We conduct visits to identify and engage in meaningful activities based on life history and current capabilities
- Families and Caregivers
 - We interview families and caregivers for patient history, invite them to participate in the visit, and provide education and support
- Community Partners and Healthcare Organizations
 - We coordinate and provide education to other healthcare organizations and community partners

What Type of Community Education Does the Program Offer?

- In-person and virtual support groups
 - Designed to bring caregivers together to address emotional, educational, and practical needs in a confidential, non-judgmental environment.
- Certified in Positive Approach to Care
 - Trainers provide three 2-hour sessions in dementia care that allow participants to gain a better understanding of the progression of cognitive decline and ways to engage as progression occurs
- Dementia awareness training
 - Education tailored to the needs of the requestor
- Dementia simulations
 - Hands on training in which the participant experiences some of the challenges faced by individuals with dementia
- Memory Café
 - Social gatherings designed for individuals with memory loss and their care partners to connect with others, share information, and engage in activities.
- Monthly newsletter

Celebrating Older Americans Month: Champion Your Health

Celebrated every May, Older Americans Month (OAM) is led by the Administration for Community Living (ACL). Established in 1963, OAM is a time to recognize older Americans' contributions, highlight aging trends, and reaffirm commitments to serving older adults in our communities.

This year's theme, "Champion Your Health," focuses on prevention, wellness, and personal responsibility as cornerstones of healthy aging. It encourages older adults to take an active role in their health – advocating for themselves, accessing preventive care, and making informed decisions that support independence.

5 ways we can take charge of our health at every age

- Stay up to date on preventive care and screenings.
- Build and maintain social connections that support emotional well-being.
- Choose nutritious, minimally processed foods.
- Incorporate regular physical activity to maintain strength and mobility.
- Practice daily habits that support mental health and resilience.



Physical Wellness Checklist

Positive physical health habits can help decrease your stress, lower your risk of disease, and increase your energy. Here are tips for improving your physical health:



GET ACTIVE

Sedentary behavior has been linked to many medical problems. Moving more and sitting less can have major health benefits. Experts recommend adults get at least 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of moderate physical activity a week. You can benefit from even a little activity at a time. Every minute counts when it comes to movement.

To increase your activity:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk on a treadmill while watching TV or stand while using your computer.
- Try an online exercise class to stay active from home.
- Set an alarm to go off every hour as a reminder to move around.
- Have small weights in your office or home for doing arm exercises.
- Take a walk on your lunch breaks.



MAINTAIN YOUR MUSCLE

Building muscle helps you keep up the activities you enjoy. Some types of strength training keep your bones healthy, too. Experts recommend doing strength training for all the major muscle groups two or more days a week for adults and three for kids and teens.

To build muscle safely:

- Start slowly. Pay attention to your body. Pain means you're overdoing it.
- Use small amounts of weight to start.
- Use smooth, steady movements. Don't jerk or thrust weights.
- Avoid "locking" your joints.
- Don't hold your breath during exercises.



EAT A HEALTHY DIET

We make dozens of decisions every day. When it comes to deciding what to eat and feed our families, it can be a lot easier than you might think to make smart choices. A healthy eating plan not only limits unhealthy foods, but also includes a variety of healthy foods. Find out which foods to add to your diet and which to avoid.

To eat a healthier diet:

- Eat a variety of foods—vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds, lean meat, seafood, eggs, milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Limit foods low in vitamins and minerals.
- Cut down on sugar.
- Replace saturated fats in your diet with unsaturated fats. Use vegetable oils instead of butter, meat fats, or shortening.
- Get more fiber.
- Choose more complex carbs, like whole-grain breads, starchy vegetables, or legumes.
- Watch out for foods high in salt.



MIND YOUR METABOLISM

Your metabolism changes as you get older. You burn fewer calories and break down foods differently. You also lose lean muscle. Unless you exercise more and adjust your diet, the pounds can add up. Middle-age spread can quickly become middle-age sprawl. Carrying those extra pounds may be harming your health.

To combat age-related changes:

- Commit to a healthy diet. Focus on nutrient-dense foods.
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Move more. Take the stairs and add walking breaks to your day. Experts recommend getting at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Limit alcohol use.
- Avoid tobacco products.
- Visit the doctor regularly.



BUILD HEALTHY HABITS

We know that making healthy choices can help us feel better and live longer. Maybe you've already tried to eat better, get more exercise or sleep, quit smoking, or reduce stress. It's not easy. But research shows how you can boost your ability to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

To build healthy habits:

- Plan. Set realistic goals.
- Change your surroundings. Remove temptations.
- Ask for support.
- Fill your time with healthy activities.
- Track your progress.
- Imagine the future.
- Reward yourself.
- Be patient. Improvement takes time, and setbacks happen. Focus on progress, not perfection.



FIND A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Keeping your body at a healthy weight may help you lower your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer that can result from carrying excess weight or obesity. Take charge of your weight and your health.

To reach your weight loss goals:

- Calculate how many calories you need for your weight goals. Visit bit.ly/3rQXQGj.
- Record your daily food intake and physical activity.
- Weigh yourself at least once a week.
- Set specific goals. Be realistic.
- Choose healthy meals and physical activities you enjoy.
- Plan activities with friends or family.
- Identify temptations.
- Learn from your slips. Find out what triggered the slip and restart your plan.
- Be patient. Changing habits takes time.

Horticulture and Cognition

Activities like gardening and time with plants offer gentle, meaningful benefits—stimulating the senses, encouraging familiar routines, and creating moments of calm and connection. For individuals living with dementia, horticulture can support cognitive engagement and emotional well-being, while caregivers often find shared joy, reduced stress, and meaningful time together. In July, we will be partnering with Barbara Edmonds, TH, at the Levy County Extension Office to do four weeks of horticultural activities (see attached flyer). We would love you to join us as we embark on this endeavor and gain more ideas to bring meaningful activities to our patients, caregivers, and community.

Benefits of Horticultural Therapy

- Stimulates Sensory Engagement – engaging with plants involves all five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch) which may improve attention spans and memory retention.
- Reduces Stress and Anxiety which have a negative impact on memory, attention span, and decision-making abilities.
- Spending time in nature has been proven to naturally reduce cortisol levels (stress hormone)
- As stress diminishes, the brain can function more effectively
- Enhances Memory Skills – gardening requires us to follow steps for task completion such as prep the soil, plant the seed, water the plant, remove weeds, etc. This practice builds short and long-term memory which may enhance memory retention.
- Encourages Social Interaction – encourages use of cognitive skills such as communication, decision-making, and collaboration to complete projects. This helps prevent depression and enables participants to learn from one another.
- Encourages Physical Activity allowing participants to benefit both physically and mentally from participation.
- Movement and exercise increase blood flow to the brain which promotes the formation of new neurons and improves cognitive abilities.
- Provides Purpose – Humans need a sense of accomplishment to feel valued. As each task is completed (seeds planted, flowers appear), one may feel improved self-esteem which leads to engagement in more activities.

References:

[Older Americans Month | ACL Administration for Community Living](#). Accessed April 30, 2026.

[Physical Wellness Toolkit | National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#). Accessed April 30, 2026.

[10 Ways Horticultural Therapy Enhances Cognitive Function](#). Accessed April 30, 2026.

Petals & Pathways: A Plant-based Wellness Program

Participants learn while making “something to take home and nurture.” The social “gathering” makes it even better – just a group of people enjoying being creative together.

All materials and instruction are provided *FREE of charge. No gardening experience needed.*



Therapeutic horticulture (TH) is an evidence-based approach that decreases social isolation, stimulates cognition, and improves overall well-being with active and passive engagement in nature and plant-based activities. Program held indoors with walker and wheelchair accessibility.

Barbara L. Edmonds is a UF therapeutic horticulture (TH) student conducting a 4-week pilot research program for socially isolated people, people diagnosed with dementia, and all caregivers.



Wednesdays, July 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2026
10:00 a.m. to 11 a.m.

CAFETERIA @ Old Bronson High School
310 School Street, Bronson, FL. 32621



GET REGISTERED TODAY spots are limited and filling fast.

352-486-5131 - Register with Levy County Extension
Or sign up online at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) (search Levy County)

Prefer quick access? Scan the QR code with your phone camera.



Questions, ASL interpreter, or additional program needs call Barbara L. Edmonds, 452-486-5131.

An Equal Opportunity Institution.



Dementia Caregiver Support Groups: May 2026

If you are caring for a loved one with a dementia-related diagnosis and need some additional education and support, please join us. The topic will be **“Understanding Hospice Care.”**

Please RSVP to Anita Howard at 352.215.7465 or Anita.Howard@HavenHospice.com

Online Meeting

Second Monday of Each Month | 5 - 6 p.m. | **Next Meeting: May 11**

Email Anita Howard at Anita.Howard@HavenHospice.com for a link to the meeting, or visit [HavenHospice.com/Dementia](https://www.havenhospice.com/Dementia) and find the link under “Upcoming Online Support Group”



Alachua County

- » Second Wednesday of Each Month | 3 - 4 p.m. | **Next Meeting: May 13**
Senior Recreation Center, Eldercare of Alachua County (5701 NW 34th Blvd, Gainesville, FL)
- » Second Tuesday of Each Month | 4 - 5 p.m. | **Next Meeting: May 12**
Alachua County Library District, Alachua Branch (14913 NW 140 St., Alachua, FL)

Clay County

- » First Tuesday of Each Month | 6 - 7 p.m. | **Next Meeting: May 5**
Canterfield of Clay County (1611 Winners Circle, Theatre Room – 3rd Floor, Middleburg, FL)
- » Third Tuesday of Every Other Month | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | **Next Meeting: May 19**
Seagrass Village (1949 East West Parkway, Fleming Island, FL)
- » Fourth Thursday of Each Month | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | **Next Meeting: May 28**
Allegro Senior Living - Fleming Island (3651 US Hwy 17, Fleming Island, FL)

Duval County

- » Second Wednesday of Each Month | 3 - 4 p.m. | **Next Meeting: May 13**
Camellia at Deerwood (10061 Sweetwater Parkway Jacksonville, FL)
- » Second Tuesday of Each Month | 10 - 11 a.m. | **Next Meeting: May 12**
Riverside Post Acute (1750 Stockton St., Jacksonville, FL)
- » Second Tuesday of Each Month | 6 - 7 p.m. | **Next Meeting: May 12**
Sunrise of Jacksonville - Activities Room (4870 Belfort Rd., Jacksonville, FL)
- » Third Wednesday of Each Month | 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. | **Next Meeting: May 20**
Starling at San Jose Assisted Living and Memory Care (9075 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville, FL)

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Duval County (Continued)

- » **Third Thursday of Each Month | 6 - 7 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 21**
Fellowship Cove Marsh Landing (1700 The Greens Way, Jacksonville Beach, FL)
- » **Third Tuesday of Each Month | 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 19**
The Windsor at Ortega (5939 Roosevelt Blvd., Jacksonville, FL)
- » **Fourth Tuesday of Each Month | 6 - 7 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 26**
Bartram Lakes Assisted Living Facility (6209 Brooks Bartram Dr., Jacksonville, FL)
- » **Last Wednesday of Each Month | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 27**
Grand Living at Tamaya - "Studio Room" on the 4th floor (3270 Tamaya Blvd., Jacksonville, FL)
- » **Last Thursday of Each Month | 5 - 6 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 28**
Alto at Duval Station (1035 Starratt Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32218)

Gilchrist County

- » **Fourth Tuesday of Each Month | 2 - 3 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 26 | Coffee and Conversation**
Tri-County Nursing Home (7280 SW State Rd 26, Trenton, FL)

Hamilton County

- » **Third Thursday of Each Month | 3 - 4 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 21**
Suwannee Valley Nursing Center (427 15th Ave NW, Jasper, FL)

Putnam County

- » **Third Thursday of Each Month | 3 - 4 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 21**
Vintage Care of Palatka (203 S Moody Rd, Palatka, FL)

St. Johns County

- » **First Wednesday of Each Month | 12 - 1:30 p.m. | Next meeting: May 6**
Starling at Ponte Vedra (405 Solano Rd., Ponte Vedra, FL)
- » **Second Thursday of Each Month | 4 - 5 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 14**
Starling at Nocatee Assisted Living and Memory Care (999 Crosswater Pkwy, Ponte Vedra, FL)
- » **Third Wednesday of Each Month | 10:30 -11:30 a.m. | Next Meeting: May 20**
The Blake at St. Johns - Theatre Room on the 2nd Floor (2430 County Rd 210, St. Johns, FL)
- » **Third Wednesday of Each Month | 1 - 2 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 20**
The Addison of St. Johns (115 Benton Lane, St. Augustine, FL)
- » **Fourth Tuesday of Each Month | 2 - 3 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 26**
Senior Living at the Greens (4950 State Rd. 16, St. Augustine, FL)
- » **Fourth Tuesday of Each Month | 4 - 5 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 26**
Ponte Vedra Gardens Memory Care Community - TPC Room (5125 Palm Valley Road, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL)

Memory Cafés

What is a Memory Café?

A welcoming social gathering where people experiencing cognitive challenges and the people who care about them come together for friendship, fun, and acceptance.

Who Can Attend?

Both the person living with a cognitive decline, Alzheimer's Disease, or related dementias, along with their primary caregiver or a loved one.

What Happens There?

At a memory café, we focus on bringing people together and meeting new friends through socializing, interaction, and activities.

Alachua County

- » **Thursday Tuesday of Each Month | 10 :30- 11:30 a.m. | Next Meeting: May 19**
The Gables of Gainesville (1415 Fort Clarke Blvd., Gainesville, FL)

Duval County

- » **Fourth Wednesday of Each Month | 10 - 11 a.m. | Next Meeting: May 27**
Beach House Assisted Living and Memory Care (1315 2nd Ave N, Jacksonville Beach, FL)

Levy County

- » **Second Tuesday of Each Month | 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 12**
Haven Hospice Community Building (311 NE 9th St, Chiefland, FL)

St. Johns County

- » **Second Friday of Each Month | 1 - 3 p.m. | Next Meeting: May 8**
Island University - Island Doctors (2477 US-1, St. Augustine, FL)
(Next to the Haven Hospice Attic Resale Store)

Refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to Anita Howard at 352.215.7465 or Anita.Howard@HavenHospice.com



Resources for Support

Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Education and Referral Center

Email: adear@nia.nih.gov

Phone: 1-800-438-4380

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

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.

Elder Affairs Florida

Phone: 1-850-414-2000

<https://elderaffairs.org/programs-and-services/caregiving/>

Provides information on services available for adult family members caring for a person aged 60 or older, grandparents and relatives aged 55 or older caring for children 18 and younger, or children of any age with disabilities. Programs include National Family Caregiver Support, Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families (RELIEF) and Home Care for the Elderly (HCE).

Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology

Phone: 1-877-506-2723

Provides free access to information, referral services, education programs, and publications related to disability rights, laws and policies, and funding opportunities for assistive devices and durable medical equipment that are largely covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

Resources for Support

Florida Department of Elder Affairs: Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE)

Phone: 1-800-963-5337

<https://floridashine.org/>

Free program assisting older adults and their caregivers with Medicare, Medicaid, and health insurance questions.

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Phone: 1-844-693-5838

<https://floridavets.org/benefits-services/>

Connects Florida veterans to earned federal and state benefits and support services.

National Adult Day Services Association

Phone: 1-877-745-1440

www.nadsa.org/consumers/choosing-a-center

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

Phone: 1-800-222-2225

www.nia.nih.gov

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