



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY of IRELAND

OASIs

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Quarterly Newsletter of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland

Volume 27 Issue 3

Winter 2009



Cuba Cycle Challenge 2010

Reminiscence therapy

Pre-Budget Submission



Message from the CEO



Dear Friends,

Winter is well and truly upon us, and this year is drawing to a close. 2009 marked another very busy and challenging year for everyone here at the Alzheimer Society. Ireland's economic situation has seen a further tightening in the public purse strings. Cuts in all areas of public

spending means we have had to campaign even harder to ensure that your needs – the needs of those affected by dementia - are recognised and met. The first half of the year saw the local and European elections; we called on you to help us lobbying all levels of government. Our collective voice helped highlight the impact of Alzheimer's and dementia in Ireland.

Fundraising has played a key role in helping us in these difficult times to further develop our services. Like last year, our funding streams are ever shrinking, while our waiting lists continue to grow across all services. The tireless dedication and imagination of supporters, volunteers and staff, where fundraising is concerned, is

helping to bridge the gap between HSE funding and the cost of service provision.

The latter months of the year saw the Society's new Strategic Plan being rolled out to all staff and volunteers across the country. The five year strategy will provide future direction and focus for staff and volunteers throughout the organisation.



I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of our volunteers and staff throughout the organisation in governance, service delivery, helpline, advocacy and administration. Thanks to all our fundraisers, from Tea Day hosts, mini marathon participants, corporate donors, private donors etc.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones peace and happiness this festive season and into the New Year.

Maurice O'Connell

Submissions

National Positive Ageing Strategy

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland recently made a submission on the development of a National Positive Ageing Strategy to the Minister for Older People Aine Brady T.D. In the submission we acknowledged that tackling the larger issues of what is required for older people to age positively is a first step, but special attention must also be paid to what is required for people with dementia to live positively.

In the submission we highlighted some key issues including health care, the environment, stigma and social inclusion. We also stressed the complex nature of the various forms of dementia and the impact on the lives of the person with the illness, their wider family and community, and the need for a co-ordinated multi-faceted response. The Alzheimer Society made an overall recommendation to the National Positive Ageing Strategy for a National Dementia Strategy to be developed as a matter of urgency.

If you would like a copy of the submission please contact National Office on 01 207 3800.

Pre-Budget Submission

Budget 2010 is going to bring harsh fiscal measures that will negatively impact on individuals' income and funding of services such as those provided by the Alzheimer Society of Ireland. In October the Alzheimer Society published its Pre-Budget Submission outlining the needs of the organisation in the year ahead. Central to the submission is our call on government to avoid any cutbacks in funding of our care and support services. November meetings are planned with the Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney T.D., Minister for Older People & Health Promotion Aine Brady T.D. and Minister for Labour Affairs, Dara Calleary T.D. to discuss the submission and the issues facing the 44,000 people living with dementia and their carers and families. Volunteers, staff, members and families are encouraged to lobby local politicians about funding for Alzheimer Services locally.

Copies of the submission are available on www.alzheimer.ie or by contacting Katie Campbell on 01 207 3800.

Helpline - Christmas Tips for Carers

Caring for someone with dementia during the Christmas season can bring many joyful moments but it may also bring some difficult moments. It is important that during this season of peace and goodwill you have some time to focus on your own needs. This Christmas don't forget to:

- **Accept a helping hand** – Christmas is the season of good will and many people have some free time to help out. If you receive an offer of help accept it as you would any other gift.
- **Talk to someone** – talking to someone about your thoughts and feelings can help release tension. Talk to friends and family this Christmas season or contact our National Helpline Service by calling 1800 341 341 or emailing helpline@alzheimer.ie. Our Helpline Service opening hours are below.
- **Take some time out** – take some time out for yourself each day – go for a walk, phone a friend for a chat,

read a chapter of a new book or simply just take time to be still and allow yourself relax.

Further tips for caring for a loved one's are available on our website www.alzheimer.ie.

Helpline Christmas Opening Hours



OPENING TIMES

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 22nd and 23rd December | Open 10am – 4pm |
| 24th, 25th, 28th December | Closed |
| 29th – 30th December | Open 10am – 4pm |
| 31st December | Closed |
| 1st January | Closed |

**The Alzheimer National Helpline is manned by a dedicated group of volunteers*

Strategic Plan Roll Out

During October the Alzheimer Society conducted a 'roadshow' tour to rollout its new 5-year Strategic Plan 2009-2013 – 'Caring in Challenging Times'. In total 11 meetings were hosted by services and branches around the country, with more than 210 volunteers and staff in attendance. The new plan was developed from the comprehensive strategic planning process carried out in 2008 and charts the future direction and focus of the Alzheimer Society's development. The document outlines the organisation's goals and six strategic priorities for the period 2009-2013.

Copies of the plan can be obtained from www.alzheimer.ie or by contacting Katie Campbell on 01 207 3800. A big thank you to all the branches and services to hosted and facilitated the roll out sessions and to all those who attended.

National Summit 2009

At the time of going to print we are making final preparations for a one-day National Summit to be held in the Stillorgan Park Hotel, Dublin on Friday 27th November. The summit is part of the current rollout of the Strategic Plan 2009-2013 and is designed to provide participants with opportunities to meet and mingle with other delegates and old friends.

In line with the plan, the summit is themed 'Caring in Challenging Times' and the programme will comprise a short plenary session and workshop sessions to showcase good practice and innovation from the regions and explore how they can be applied in other areas.

We are delighted that legend Mickey Harte, Manager of the Tyrone GAA Football Team will be joining us as our post lunch guest speaker. Further details and photos will follow in the next issue of oASIs.

Older and Bolder

This is a challenging time for older people who are both feeling the effects of the recession and dealing with the erosion of services and entitlements. Many of these supports are now under threat in the December 2009 Budget. Proposals include a 5 per cent cut to the State Pension, the taxation of household benefits (ESB etc), the introduction of additional charges for Medical Card holders and the discontinuation of the Rural Transport Initiative. Members of the Alzheimer Society, who participated in Older and Bolder's consultation meetings played an important role in highlighting specific concerns on behalf of people with dementia, their families and their carers. Those contributions have made Older & Bolder acutely aware of gaps in services and the effect that further cuts to home care, respite and carer supports

will have on this particularly vulnerable group of older people.

Older & Bolder's message to older people and their carers is clear. This is not the time for silence but for action. You are the experts on how gaps and cuts to basic services affect your wellbeing and quality of life. Take every opportunity to speak up. The Office for Older People has promised consultation meetings with older people in relation to the National Positive Ageing Strategy. Before and after the budget, ask your TDs where and when these consultation meetings will take place, go along and have your say.

For further information visit www.olderandbolder.ie email: info@olderandbolder or call 01 878 3623.

Thinking back over past times, remembering people, places and events. Reminiscing. It's something almost everyone does, and yet it is something that can be used as a very powerful tool to reconnect with your loved one, by recalling good memories of times gone by.

Reminiscence is associated with increased self esteem and self identity and improved mood and well being. When a person develops dementia, it is important to remember this is only part of who they are. He is Michael who lives with dementia, but also Michael, who ran a pub for 40 years, who was a great footballer in his day, who is a husband, a father, a friend. Reminiscence can help connect us to all these parts of Michael. It helps us communicate and connect through the sharing of memories which can help strengthen the relationship between the person living with dementia and his/her carer and sustain us through difficult times.

The fabric of life is created from events in our daily lives, and it's these events, both happy and sad that give life its richness. All of us at some stage have been through periods that can upset or distress us; this is something that should be taken into consideration when reminiscing. Some people are not interested in the past and this should be respected. Take your cue from the person you are caring for. Look for a smile, or other examples of the person enjoying themselves.



Tom Kitwood, discusses personhood as not just a matter of making people happy; at least not in a superficial way. Kitwood argues that being a person involves having the capacity to experience both joy and anguish in our daily lives. Respecting and maintaining personhood is about providing a safe and supportive



environment in which individuals with dementia can experience both. While reminiscing, if the person you are caring for is experiencing some sadness or disappointment, it is important to validate and respect these feelings. Sit with the person, comfort them as they experience their emotions and then help them to move on.



Reminiscence is often associated with looking at old photographs but there are many other ways to reminisce. Shared activities such as baking, polishing, gardening or folding ironing can all be enjoyable ways of connecting. The focus for these shared activities should be on the time spent together rather than the end result. The good thing about reminiscence is that it can be done any time during the day, by incorporating it into other daily activities, e.g. singing a tune that someone loves whilst helping them bathe.

If you have specific time to put aside, a really pleasurable reminiscence activity can be compiling a life story book together. Life story

books can be bought or you can easily compile one yourself. The book can become a record of a person's life. Some people like to record the life story in a chronological fashion, starting at birth. Others prefer to concentrate on specific topics such as holidays, Christmas celebrations, jobs, favourite foods or films. The list is endless. Photographs are frequently used but other items can be used too. Old school reports, old wage slips, pieces of material that have significance. Items from the present can also be included. A photograph of where a person is living now is an example. Again, take your cue from the person you are caring for, it is up to them what they want to include in the book. This can be an enjoyable activity to do together, or sometimes a younger relative might want to help with this. Grandchildren can enjoy helping to compile a life story book. Looking through the life story book can be a source of pleasure for the person with dementia on their own or as a shared activity.

Whatever way you choose to reminisce, the intention behind it is the same – to connect to memories, to remember who we are, what we've achieved, how we've lived our lives so far, to share what has brought us to this point so it can help to sustain and support us as we continue to journey with dementia.

God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December.

James M. Barrie (1860 - 1937)

Benefits associated with Reminiscence

Research has suggested that reminiscence is associated with:

Increased self esteem and self identity

Enhanced communication

Improvements in relationship between the person with dementia and their caregiver.

Ways of prompting reminiscence

- Everyday shared activities such as baking, polishing, gardening, folding clothes; focussing on the process.
- Listening to music
- Singing or being sung to – the lyrics of favourite songs and hymns may be remembered long after other things have been forgotten.
- Humour is a useful prompt – the retelling of old jokes and anecdotes, watching old comedy films especially those that include visual humour
- Also remember, reminiscence can involve all the senses. So think about things to smell, to see, to taste, things to touch and things to listen to.



The Alzheimer Society has produced a Life Story Book, which is available to buy from (01) 207 3800, e-mail info@alzheimer.ie or visit www.alzheimer.ie.

The book costs €15 plus postage.

Treena Parsons is a PhD student, with the DSIDC's Living with Dementia Programme, The School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College, Dublin. The Living with Dementia Programme is funded with a grant from The Atlantic Philanthropies.

For further information contact Treena at parsonct@tcd.ie

Branch News



1 Liffey Descent - The “Liffey Descent” took place on the 5th September, it was the 50th anniversary of the event. The course ran from The K Club in Straffan, Co. Kildare to Island Bridge in Dublin City, a total of 29 kilometres!

Harry Acheson and Paul Goff have been paddling Canadian Canoes for only a year and a half. It has been their ambition to compete in the Liffey Descent since 2005 and they used this opportunity to raise funds for the Pine Grove centre of The Alzheimer Society in Waterford.

2 Cork Mini Marathon - The Cork Ladies mini marathon was held on 27th September and both Cork City and North Cork branches had entrants in this great event. In fact, this year more people than ever joined Cork’s ‘A’ Team and helped raise vital funds for the Cork region. Both branches would like to thank all participants for their continued support and the Imperial Hotel, Cork for providing facilities on the day.

3 Westmeath would like to thank Athlone Fire Station for their kind donation of €1569.60

4 Pictured after Sunday Service at Ray Presbyterian Church on 20th September (which was broadcast on Highland Radio to mark World Alzheimer’s Day) are staff, supporters and members of the Committee of the Donegal Branch of the Alzheimer’s Society of Ireland.

5 Walkers pictured at last years’ Burren Walk. **The Annual Burren Walk** will take place on Sunday 3rd January. If you are interest in participating this year, please contact Ann Bedder on 065 6868621.

➔ **Donegal Branch** - The Alzheimer Society of Ireland [Donegal Branch] are opening a Good-As-New charity shop from the 9th November to 19th December [10am – 5pm Monday to Saturday; open late to 8pm on Fridays and Saturdays] in the Unit known as The Boutique at Supervalu Shopping Centre, Donegal Town.

All donations gratefully received – good quality clothing, shoes, bags and household items. No electrical items, CDs, or games please. Contact the Branch Office on 074 97 22795.

Dates for your diary

| Date | Event | Venue | Date | Event | Venue |
|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| 3rd Jan | Burren Walk | The Burren Co. Clare | 15th-21st March | Brain Awareness Week | Nationwide |
| 11th Feb | World Day of the Sick | Worldwide | 6th May | Alzheimer’s Tea Day | Nationwide |
| | | | 7th June | Flora Women’s Mini Marathon | Dublin |

Fundraising News

Announcement - Alzheimer's Tea Day 2009 – The Big Brew

We are delighted to announce that this year's "Big Brew" raised over €515,000! We would like to extend a huge thank you to all of you who hosted tea parties, attended tea parties, sold raffle tickets and volunteered - without your support this National Fundraising event would not be possible.

Next year's Alzheimer's Tea Day will be held on **Thursday 6th May 2010**. We do hope that you can all take part again and help us help the 44,000 people in Ireland living with Alzheimer's disease.



Cuba Cycle Challenge 5th - 13th May 2010

On these blustery, dark, winter evenings the last thing you want to think about is cycling but let me tell you the weather is nothing like this in Cuba! It's Caribbean sun and tropical breezes!



We have several people signed up to go on next year's challenge since we launched last month so places are filling up fast! Ethna McGowan from our very own HR office is joining the group and has convinced a friend to go along with her- it's safe to say she can't contain her excitement. She has started her fundraising and is making great progress.

We are getting very techie here in The Society and have set up a Facebook page to promote our Cuba Cycle Challenge! We already have lots of fans and are regularly updating them on what is happening.

If you have a local gym or cycling club that you think might be interested in finding out more about the challenge please contact Emily on 01 207 3816 or email ebrew@alzheimier.ie.

Christmas Cards - Now Online

If you have not yet sent in your order you can now order online at www.alzheimier.ie.

We have had great feedback about our selection of cards this year.

For booking forms contact Emily on 01 207 3816 or email ebrew@alzheimier.ie.



Organise your own event

Organising your own event is a worthwhile and enjoyable experience and one in which your friends, family or work colleagues can get involved to help you reach your goal. Our recent supporters have come up with some very innovative ideas for fundraising!

Stephen Smyth from Dalkey organised a football match in July between the shop he works in (Supervalu) and the local Centra. His team were kitted out on the day in The Alzheimer Society's purple t-shirts and even managed to source purple football socks!

There was a great atmosphere at the match, huge effort was put in to organising the day. There was a real feeling that everyone was there to support Stephen and his family.



"Movember" (formally known as November!) is an annual, month-long celebration of the moustache! Men get sponsored to grow a moustache in aid of their favourite charity. The original idea was used to highlight men's health issues, specifically prostate cancer. Now our supporters have adopted the idea to raise funds for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.



If you would like to organise your own event please contact Emily for more ideas and a fundraising pack 01 207 3816 ebrew@alzheimier.ie.



Cuba Cycle Challenge 2010

8 days, 325km, Cuba, a bike and YOU!

Challenge yourself to make a difference – contact Emily on (01) 207 3800 or email fundraising@alzheimer.ie for more info

Christmas Campaign



Christmas is a great time for memories so you might like to hear about something very special we are doing this Christmas to remember all the people in Ireland living with Alzheimer's disease. We have put up a huge Christmas tree in our lobby. And we are going to cover it with special Christmas memory ribbons to remember everyone in Ireland who has been touched in some way by Alzheimer's.

We are asking all our supporters to help keep memories alive by sending us in their Christmas memory ribbons and setting up a monthly gift. When we have received all the ribbons we will take a photo of the tree and send it back to you.

To find out more please contact Emily on 01 207 3816 or email ebrew@alzheimer.ie.

Swine Flu

The HSE have advised that the Swine Flu vaccine is now available for people at high risk of Swine Flu.

Throughout November and December the HSE will write to people over 65 years and parents of young children to invite them to attend a HSE Vaccine Clinic.

For further information on Swine Flu and the vaccination process log on to

www.swineflu.ie or Freephone 1800 94 11 00



IN MEMORIAM

Shiela Fealy
Willie McEwan
Joyce Allbutt
Dorothy Owens
Conor Russell
Geoffrey Bull
Carmel Ryan
Patrick Duggan
Margaret Evans
Paddy McCormack
Mary Coleman
Albert Cunningham
Alfie Bailey
Georgina Graham
Lily Holmes
Margaret Ann Mullaney
Mary Kehoe
William McEwan
Alan Horner
Monica Montgomery
Colm McKeown
Thomas Kearney

Desmond Byrne
Colum McKeown
John Brady
Kevin O'Regan
Winnie Carroll
Leo O'Driscoll
John Lynch
Ronald Sheane
Ellen Arnold
John Brady
Kathleen Travers
Mrs Dorothy Taylor
Winnie Carroll
Mark O'Malley
Vincent Nolan
John Gregan
John Hurley
Mrs Gaye Malone
George Malone
Vincent Nolan
Brian Fagan
Kevin O'Regan

Carmel Ryan
Mervyn Belton
Sr Laboure Keogh
John Gleeson
Phyllis Tiernan
Mary Landers
John Gregan
Peggy Foody
James Connolly
Mary Miney
Rita O'Byrne
Sarah Rountree
Lily Cooney
Eileen Broderick O'Reilly
Mrs Bridie O'Regan
Mark O'Malley
Anne McGeer
Elizabeth Rigney
Thelma Cassidy
Seamus Mulvey
Kathleen McDonnell
Mrs Arnold

Lily Cooney
Anna Connolly
Christy O'Toole
Maura Atkinson
Capt Derek Furniss
Christy O'Toole
Sarah Gallagher
Anne Behan
Lily Bennett
Michael (Mick) Noonan (Nunan)
William Henry (Harry) Whittaker
Bridie O'Regan
Mark O'Malley
Maurice Dore
Dorothy Owens
Bir Kenny

May they Rest in Peace