



THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY of IRELAND

# oASIs

ISSN: 0790-8792

Quarterly Newsletter of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland

Volume 27 Issue 1

Spring 2009



"Join me this Tea Day, and raise money for people with Alzheimer's and their carers"

Alzheimer's Tea Day, 7 May 2009

REGISTER TO HOST A TEA PARTY & RECEIVE YOUR PACK

FREEPHONE

**1800 719 820**

ONLINE

**www.teaday.ie**

EMAIL

**teaday@alzheimer.ie**



www.alzheimer.ie  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

15th Alzheimer's Tea Day  
Local Elections  
Staying in Touch



# Message from the CEO

Friends,

The news continues to be dominated by commentary and speculation on the country's economic situation and reductions in public spending. The Society will continue to lobby all political actors to ensure that your needs – the needs of those affected by dementia and their carers and families – are recognized and met. In the coming weeks I am hoping to meet with Minister for Health & Children Mary Harney TD, Minister for Older People Maire Hocht TD and Minister for Social & Family Affairs Mary Hanafin TD to discuss your issues and concerns. I am also planning to meet with members of the opposition parties and relevant senior civil servants.

But lobbying isn't just linked to Leinster House or the 'halls of power'. Lobbying is something we can all do on a daily basis within our given situations. It may involve writing to local TDs, Councillors or indeed government Ministers to tell them about the journey in caring for a loved-one with Alzheimer's and the support and services needed by families; visiting or phoning local TDs and Councillors to make them aware of what is needed locally; or even persuading neighbours, family and friends to also lobby in these ways. The more lobbying we do, the greater the power of our voice and our influence.

THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW! Approximately 44,000 people in Ireland have Alzheimer's or

dementia. There are more than 50,000 carers and hundreds of thousands of friends and families also effected by these conditions. The local and European elections next June give us the opportunity to work together to highlight the impact of Alzheimer's and dementia in Ireland, to ask the hard questions of the candidates and canvassers calling to our doors. And to make sure that the candidates are coming back to us with answers!



Enclosed is a flyer which outlines some of the issues families have raised with us. It also contains some sample questions to ask canvassers (see below) but I encourage you to air your own concerns and issues. I urge you to exercise your voter power and to ensure your family, friends and neighbours to do so also.

Looking forward to your continued support. Together we can make a real difference!

Maurice O'Connell

## bealtainefestival celebrating creativity in older age

The 14th Bealtaine festival is taking place throughout May to celebrate creativity in older age. Now one of Ireland's largest festivals, Bealtaine 2009 is inviting all older people to take part in the festival – encouraging their participation in the arts as artists and performers as well as event organizers and audience. Why not try something new, rediscover hidden talents, show what you're worth and invest in yourself this May. To find out the events and activities in your area, visit [www.bealtaine.com](http://www.bealtaine.com) or contact the Bealtaine office (01) 8057709. It's all there waiting for you – simply go and open the door!

## Key Questions to Ask the Candidates

- What do you plan to do for the people with Alzheimer's and dementia and their carers living in this community?
- Are you willing to support our call to make dementia a health priority in this county and nationally?
- What contribution can the Council make to support people living with dementia and those who care for them?
- Will you play a part in raising awareness of dementia in the local area?

# Alzheimer's Tea Day 2009 - The Big Brew

Everyone's favourite time of year is just around the corner! The day when thousands of people all over Ireland get together and put on a 'Big Brew' and raise money for the Alzheimer Society of Ireland. In this, the 15th year of Tea Day, we will be joined by Pat Kenny, who would like us all to get join him in hosting a Tea Party.

Pat's mother Connie, who died last October, lived with Alzheimer's disease for the last 14 years of her life. He has said that it was only because of the services of the Society, that Connie was able to stay at home and be cared for by family. Pat's family's story, like so many others, reminds just how important Tea Day is, in helping to provide funding for vital support services for those affected by dementia.

Pat believes that Alzheimer's Tea Day is one of the most wonderful days of the year for people affected by Alzheimer's. As not only is it a time when we can all come together to raise much needed funds for Alzheimer's services, but it's also a unique opportunity to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

Alzheimer's Tea Day is May the 7th, why not join Pat and the thousands of others around the country and make this our 15th year, the best tea party Ireland has ever seen!



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the BIG BREW  
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Pat Kenny

To register for your Tea Day pack FREEFONE 1800 719 820 or check out [www.teaday.ie](http://www.teaday.ie)

## Tea Party Tips

Previous tea day hosts have suggested the following tips to help this year's hosts out...

1. Have your tea party themed, eg have an afternoon tea party or a children's tea party and get the whole family involved.
2. If you're hosting a tea party in work, turn the tables and get the boss to make the tea!
3. Cake sales, table quizzes and golf 'Tee-Off's' are all great fun ways to get more people involved in your tea party, but the ideas don't stop there, why not have a competition beforehand for the most original tea party idea...

...the winner can be announced at your Tea Party.

Last year Mrs. Jill Armstrong from Wicklow raised over €1,200 when she added a bring and buy sale to her tea party, a fantastic example of a fun way of raising more money for the Society. Well done Jill!



## Older and Bolder

The Alzheimer Society is an active member of Older & Bolder, an alliance of eight older persons' organisations



committed to campaigning for a National Positive Ageing Strategy for Ireland. This strategy would be a long-term plan for making Ireland a better place to grow older in and would cover policies, services and practices in areas such as health care, housing, transport, income, employment and independent living. It will also influence the activities of organisations in the private and voluntary sectors. The Minister for Older People, Máire Hoctor, is leading this initiative and she has said that she wants to hear the opinions of individuals and organisations through series of regional meetings and written submissions. Though the public call for submissions has not been announced yet, the Alzheimer Society and Older & Bolder are encouraging citizens of all ages to start getting ready. If you would like to hear more about Older & Bolder phone 01 878 3623 or visit [www.olderandbolder.ie](http://www.olderandbolder.ie).

***“The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate”***

Joseph Priestly

Staying in touch with someone as their dementia progresses is one of the largest challenges facing caregivers. However the key to staying in touch is indeed about touch and the other four senses. When more sophisticated ways of communicating are lost, we rely on the senses as a channel by which we can reach and support a person with dementia. Communicating through the senses is appropriate for all stages of the condition, but becomes more important as language fades for the person.

Our five senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell can all be used as avenues through which we can communicate and hopefully create a pleasurable experience for someone with dementia. Many of the sensory experiences will tap into more than one sense at a time, although caution needs to be taken not to overload someone with too many experiences.

Much has been written about sensory stimulation, sensory rooms and Snoezelen as methods and places for providing sensory stimuli. It is important we understand that sophisticated equipment or a dedicated room are not pre-requisites to have a sensory experience. The principles of communicating through the senses can be easily transferred to the home. Better still, everyday objects can be used but like all tools in our care-giving toolbox, it is how they are used and applied that is the key. Knowing the person well, understanding their likes and dislikes are all part and parcel of introducing them to sensory experiences, and better still, understanding if they are enjoying the experience.



Often times in a sensory room, lots of attention is paid to light and how we can use it to create stimulus and



pleasure for someone with dementia. A dimmed light in the room creates atmosphere, but leaves enough light so as to allay any anxiety. Projectors are often used to project light or objects onto a wall which move and provide stimulus. Often times, you can buy night lamps, usually in the children's section with shapes of animals or moons on them, which move around the room when the light is turned on. Don't be put off by picking them up in the children's section, what has been soothing to us as children, works also when we're older.

A torch shining on a sparkly piece of material also works well for creating something visually stimulating, and something that can also be touched. Fabric shops will often have remnants (left over from Christmas or Halloween costumes) that provide sparkle and will reflect a torch light well. Disco balls or small baubles (again left over from the Christmas tree) when a light/torch is shone on create a visual experience that is hard to match.

Of course, there are more expensive items like bubble tubes and fibre optic lights, but these are unlikely to be found in homes. Instead, consider a small fish tank, or a small lava lamp as ways of recreating these experiences. Computer software has developed screensavers of all kinds - including flying toasters and fish swimming across the screen. These too may be used if appropriate to the person's likes and dislikes.

Or indeed, a simple tea-light in a coloured holder can again provide simple visual experiences and promote pleasure for the person.

The important part to it all, is that we are using these materials or suggestions to engage the person with dementia. Whilst trying out the different experiences, watch for signs of pleasure or relaxation or interest from your loved one. You will recognize what works for them, what they appear to like or indeed dislike. It's as much about the shared experience for you both, an activity that can be done together, with no reliance on words, just the very enjoyment of engaging our

senses. Remember the importance of just being with someone, sitting beside them, enjoying the same experience is rewarding for both of you. Sensory experiences can encourage you both to relax together.

Hearing. Think about how we hear and listen ourselves. How, we tune into something that's interesting, or a favourite piece of music, or how you may be able to recognize the sound of a blackbird from the sound of a robin. Think about your loved one with dementia, what has been the soundtrack of their lives? What do they like to listen to? Music is of course an obvious choice in connecting to the person. Play their favourite music, create an atmosphere with sound. Think about what other sounds they like...do you live near the sea or countryside, what are the daily sounds they have lived with? It is unlikely that dolphin or whale CD's will recreate a familiar sound for someone, but you never know, it may create a new experience. Or indeed, CD's that recreate the sounds of the garden or the ocean may be particularly relevant. Are there ways to tap into the person's spiritual side if that's appropriate, a CD of chants, or hymns or common rhythmic prayers being said like the rosary.



Touch is one of the best ways to keep in touch. Again, though only relative to how the person would normally have liked or disliked touch. Not everyone will respond to a hug, or someone holding their hand, so bear that in mind. People with dementia, however can choose to touch other things that will provide tactile stimulation for them. Textiles, fabrics made of fleece, or silk, or velvet all provide stimulus to someone. Holding onto a stress ball that can be squeezed, a stone that can be rubbed smooth, a pair of beads that you can move your finger along. Rubbing a dog or cat or pet can provide sensory pleasure and feedback. Have a rummage box with plenty of different types of materials and buttons and zippers which will provide the hands with interaction and in some cases, a meaningful purpose.



Smell is often considered with another sense. Take taste for example- they are interactive and one will often prompt the other. There's little point in creating the smell of freshly baked bread if there's no reward of eating some with butter and jam after. The smell of onions frying, or a Sunday roast are all enjoyed better with taste following suit.

In other areas, smell and touch are considered together, a hand massage with some scented lotion, a bath with scented water and a warm towel to wrap up in after. Shaving lotion and aftershave also provide sensory experiences for men who live with dementia.

Our endeavours to find pleasure and communicate in small ways every day with someone who is progressing in their dementia, can only but be rewarded by a sense of well-being - for the person and the caregiver. Look around your house, look at objects and try to see them all in a new way - a way that involves the senses and watch closely at how the person with dementia interacts with them. You may get a smile, or a raise of an eyebrow, which in itself is achievement and communication.

**Catherine Keogh MScBScOT**  
**Care Practice Co-ordinator**  
**Alzheimer Society of Ireland**

**For further information on sensory experiences or on designing a sensory room, please visit**  
**<http://www.multi-sensory-room.co.uk/>**  
**where you will find helpful tips and useful links.**

# Branch News

## Donegal

The Donegal Branch of the Society is one of three charities to benefit from the 2009 NorthWest Charity 10K Run, which takes place in Letterkenny on Sunday 3 May.

The branch runs some very successful church gate collections throughout the year. At the time of going to press they had raised a whopping €30,000! A massive thank you to both those doing the collections and those donating. Well done!



Alastair McKinney, Mary Connaghan accepting a cheque from the proceeds of Strictly Come Dancing from Grace Kelly.



Patricia Dowds and Laura Beirne Gormley at the 'Good as new shop' in Donegal Town

## Blackrock Concert

Crux Vocal Ensemble, Dublin Bach Singers and Musica Antiqua will be performing a special concert in aid of the Blackrock Branch of the Society in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. This public concert of beautiful classical choral music is taking place on 22nd April at 8pm.



For tickets or further enquiries about this unique event contact Jean Scanlon Ph: (01) 207 3836

## Cork

Marilyn O'Riordan, Eileen Horgan and 4 other dedicated fundraisers are undertaking Marilyn's Miles 4 Memories, a 7 day walk in Santiago de Compostela, Spain from May 23rd. They are hoping to raise a huge amount of money for the Society's day care centre in Bessboro.

The Launch of this walk takes place on Thursday 26th March in Heineken Ireland at 5.30pm where finger food and light refreshments will be served. If you would like to attend this evening or would like to sponsor the walk please contact Bessboro Day Care Centre 021 497 2504

## Westmeath

A massive thanks to the Alzheimer Society in Westmeath who held a Christmas Coffee morning and raised a wonderful €475.

The Shanahan Family in Athlone also held a Christmas Coffee morning and raised a massive €1260. A huge thanks to everyone on that great achievement.



Trevor McCay Morrissey (Regional Manager) and Margaret Maguire (Manager, Cavan Day Care) collecting at the Culchie Festival, in Kilnaleck, Co Cavan. Many thanks to the organisers of this great event – Paddy Rock and Brendan Morrissey

## Offaly

The Alzheimer Society in Offaly would like the Ballycumber Foroige Club for their kind donation of €600.

The County Arms Hotel in Birr, Co Offaly is the venue for a social dance, which is taking place on Friday 24th April. And on 4th June, Mike Denver will be playing a very special concert in the Tullamore Court Hotel. All proceeds from these fun evenings go towards the Society in Offaly.

## Snippets

**Cork City Branch** – Received €14,000 from Cork and Bishopstown Rotary Clubs in February 2009. The donation was from the proceeds of the Remembrance Tree which was in Patrick St, Cork City, just before Christmas.

**Tralee** – Members of Tralee Fire Service raised €3,910.13 for the Rosemary Centre.

# Fundraising News

## Cuba - Update on the Cuba Cycle Challenge

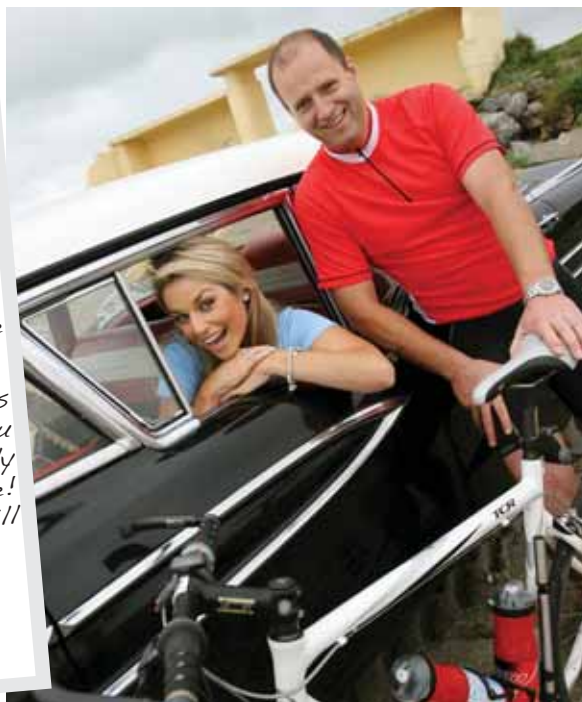
Hi guys!

Training has officially started and we are all working really hard. Nearly everyone is cycling daily and the group meet every second Sunday to head off on a good long trek along country roads. Last Sunday we did a 50K cycle from Greystones to The Beehive and back again...that's about the same distance we will be cycling each day over in Cuba. Everyone seems to be coming along well, however we did have an incident where one of the girls got two punctures within 10 feet of each other! Another person left a pair of gloves lying on the M1...which are probably still there!

We are having great craic working off the winter bulges and doing our bit by fundraising for the Society. You could be joining us in Cuba in May but there are only two places left so you would want to get on your bike! Just give Emily in National Office a buzz and she will send you out an information pack (01) 2073816.

Chat soon!

Stuart



## Mini Marathon

Join in the fun and help raise money for the Society by taking part in this year's Flora Women's Mini Marathon on bank holiday Monday, 1st June 2009!

Prepare for your summer holidays now, walk, jog or run, on your own or with your friends, it is a great way to get fit, stay healthy and help people living with dementia across Ireland.

For training tips and a sponsorship pack which includes our new look t-shirt and sponsorship cards please contact the fundraising team at (01) 207 3800 or [marathon@alzheimer.ie](mailto:marathon@alzheimer.ie).



### To Register:

Participants must enter on an official registration form which can be accessed online at [www.womensminimarathon.ie](http://www.womensminimarathon.ie)

## Wedding Favours



Getting married?! Instead of giving your guests wedding favours why not consider supporting the Alzheimer Society by making an in lieu donation. When you make a donation to The Alzheimer Society in lieu of giving wedding favours to your guests, we can supply you with forget-me not cards for the tables with a message inside informing your guests you have made a donation. Alternatively, you can purchase forget-me-not pins to give to your guests as a token. Of course if you have any ideas just let us know and we will do our best to help make your day even more special!

## BOSI Charity of the Year

We would like to say a huge thank you to Bank of Scotland Ireland for giving us the opportunity to pitch for their charity of the year programme. We were shortlisted in the last three but unfortunately were not chosen. We would like to thank Bank of Scotland, Ireland.

## Membership Renewal

As members, your contribution to the Society is extremely important to us. Without your support our work would not be able to continue. Your membership helps fund our work and also gives us stronger lobbying power when dealing with various government agencies and political parties. We depend on you.

As you know the Society has made tremendous progress over the last few years, but there is still a huge amount to be done.

We would therefore like to invite you to please renew your membership at your earliest convenience. Please contact Anne Harrington (01) 2073815 or fundraising@alzheimier.ie for further details.



## THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY of IRELAND

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland,  
National Office, Temple Road,  
Blackrock, Co. Dublin.  
Tel: 01-207 3800 Fax: 01-210 3772  
Email: info@alzheimier.ie  
Website: www.alzheimier.ie

### Become a Member of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland

I wish to become a member/renew my membership of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and receive a quarterly newsletter. I enclose my subscription for:

€15  €25  €50  €100  Other €

or a donation of €

Credit Card No.:  CVC:

Expiry Date:

Card Type (Visa, Access, etc)

Signature:

There is no fixed subscription. The minimum subscription is €15.

Please give as generously as you can. *Thank You*

Name:

Address:

Tel:  Mobile:

Email:

I am a: Present Carer  Past Carer  Professional

Concerned Relative/Friend  Interested  (please tick as appropriate)

#### BANKER'S ORDER FORM

Name and Address of Subscriber's bank:

To:

On this date, please pay the sum of €  to the Permanent tsb, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin for the credit of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, National Office, Temple Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. - A/c No.: 80000630 Sort Code: 990629 and thereafter make like payments on the same date of each subsequent year/month\* and debit my account No.:

accordingly until this instruction is cancelled or amended by me.

Signature:

Name:

Address:

Date:

*\*please delete as appropriate*

I would like to receive information on Legacies and Bequests



## IN MEMORIAM

Mrs Brid Clifford  
Ms Nancy Fahy  
Mr Larry Murphy  
Ms Treasa Ni Dnuinn  
Mrs Connie Kenny  
Ms Anna Lonergan  
Ms Oonagh Alexander  
Mr Eddie Gough  
Ms Maria Creighton  
Mrs Rene O'Neill  
Mr Reggie Kelleher  
Mr William O'Donnell  
Mr Thomas Murrain  
Mrs Maura Magennis  
Mr John Reid  
Mrs Irene McLindon

Mrs Margaret/  
Marjorie O'Sullivan  
Mrs Nora McDermott  
Ms Mary Goaley  
Ms Teresa McCabe  
Mr Edward Nolan  
Mrs Annie Kenny  
Mrs Angela Slevin  
Mrs Margaret  
(Peggy) Nally  
Mr Terence Dunning  
Mrs Mary Savage  
Mrs Alice Kelly  
Ms Maureen Gilsenan  
Mr Joe Forsyth

**May they Rest in Peace**

## Dates for your Diary

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
<b>May</b>		
7th	Alzheimer's Tea Day	Nationwide
5th-14th	Cuba Cycle Challenge	Cuba
<b>June</b>		
1st	Flora Women's Mini Marathon	Dublin
8th -14th	Carer's Week	Nationwide
8th - 10th	Mediation Conference	Dublin
<b>September</b>		
21st	World Alzheimer's Day	Worldwide

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Next Issue: Summer 2009 Deadline for Copy: 1st July 2009

The comments and views expressed in this issue are often personal and do not necessarily represent the position of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland.