



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY of IRELAND

oASIs

ISSN: 0790 - 8792

Quarterly Newsletter of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland

Volume 28 Issue 5

Winter 2011



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Message from the CEO



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Autumn/Winter edition of oASIs magazine. It is hard to believe that Christmas is nearly upon us and that another year has passed. It has been a tremendous year for The Alzheimer Society with not only many new service developments, but in particular, the commitment of the new Government in February of this year, to develop a National Dementia Strategy by 2013. This could not be better news for those living with dementia, and their carers, and we will commence consultation with the appropriate Government departments and key stakeholders in early January 2012.

This is the national strategic approach to dementia that we, together with our supporters, have worked towards for many years, and it is thanks to the committed and tireless lobbying at all levels, that we have achieved this important development. The ground work from our grassroots supporters, alongside our public awareness and anti-stigma campaigns that ran in February and September this year, have ensured that the message from people with dementia and their carers is finally being heard.

With World Alzheimer Day falling on the 21st of September, we were very active with seven information and awareness events taking place across the country. The underlying and key message at all events, in keeping with our public awareness campaign, was that early diagnosis matters. Key speakers from local medical and legal fields together with Alzheimer's Society representatives provided information. A short film 'Living with Alzheimer's', directed by Ken Wardrop, was launched at the Dublin event featuring April and Joe English. It has now been distributed virally and is available to view on www.remember.ie.

The launch of the Pre-budget Submission 2012, took place on October 18th at Buswells Hotel, Dublin, and was very well attended with over 30 cross party TDs and senators. The key message of this year's launch was to ensure that the commitment to dementia in the programme for Government is followed through by ensuring that there are no cuts to

dementia funding in Budget 2012. We are also seeking a response to waiting list figures which have risen a further 20% since last year, and for a case management service for younger people with dementia. Whilst we recognise the current funding challenges, planning now for dementia care in the community makes economic sense, while also helping the struggling health services, resulting in less admissions to A&E and nursing homes, increasing focus on the needs of carers and the under 65's and maintenance of existing services. The Alzheimer Society has also developed a priority political contact programme and met with Dr James Reilly T.D., Minister for Health, during October and meetings are being planned with Deputy Jerry Buttimer, Chair of the Oireachtas Health and Children Committee.

There has been significant service development over recent months with Pat Doherty, Head of Services and the Regional Managers, in the six regions, working toward expansion of existing services and the development of new ones. Day care centres have been opened in Le Cairde, Cashel, Co Tipperary and No. 2 John's Place, Birr, Co Offaly. There has been an expansion to services in Castlebar, Co Mayo, Failte Day Care Centre, Cherryfield, Dublin 15 and Bethany House in Carlow Town and we are working towards the development of new services in Cork City, Tallaght, Dublin 24 and Cloghan and Bunrana in Co Donegal. We are also actively working towards establishing new branches across the country to support and grow new and existing services.

As always, none of this important work could happen without the dedication and commitment of you, our key supporters. We remain indebted to your hard work and determination in supporting people with dementia, and their carers, in this country.

On behalf of the Board, the Senior Management Team and staff of the Society, I wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year and look forward to being in touch, with you, during the Spring of 2012.

Warmest regards

Maurice O'Connell

Early Diagnosis Matters

Dementia affects almost 44,000 people in Ireland and touches the lives of 50,000 carers and hundreds of thousands of family members. With our ageing population, it is estimated that within 20 years the numbers of people affected in Ireland will double and by 2036 this number will rise to over 100,000 people. While research is ongoing worldwide, at present there is no cure for dementia. However, all the experts agree that an early diagnosis is fundamental in tackling dementia for individuals, carers and for the public at large.

The World Alzheimer Report 2011 (Alzheimer's Disease International) explored the benefits of an early diagnosis of dementia. The report highlighted that, *'earlier diagnosis has the potential to change the way societies view and approach Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias. Unfortunately, the main barriers to access to care – the stigma of dementia that prevents open discussion, the false belief that memory*

problems are a normal part of ageing, and the false belief that nothing can be done for people with dementia and their families – are too prevalent even in well-resourced, well informed, high income countries'.

This year, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland carried out two public awareness campaigns in February and October focusing on the message "Don't Just Worry about Memory Loss, Do something about it!" Radio, online, bus and DART advertising encouraged people who were worried about memory loss to call the Alzheimer Helpline at 1800 341 341 or see their GP. These effective advertisements saw a huge increase in calls from people who were worried about their own or someone else's memory. The campaigns aimed to increase public understanding about the early signs of dementia and what next steps to take if someone is worried.

Early Diagnosis Matters

Are you worried about memory loss?

Many people worry about changes in their memory. It can be hard to know what to do or who to talk to. If you are worried about your memory, then you should talk to your GP without delay. You may find it helpful to talk to a trusted loved one before your visit and ask them if they have noticed any changes. You could also ask them to come with you to your GP. Some people may feel frightened or embarrassed, but talking to your GP could make all the difference.

You should especially visit your GP if you:

- Feel your memory has changed significantly or rapidly
- Forget the names of friends or everyday objects regularly
- Find it hard to follow conversations or television programmes
- Notice that you regularly repeat yourself or lose your train of thought when speaking
- Find managing money or everyday tasks increasingly difficult
- Find it hard to remember things you have seen, read or heard
- Feel anxious, angry or frustrated by the changes you are experiencing

It is important to remember that there are many possible reasons for memory loss and confusion - all of which require an appropriate intervention. These include:

- Anxiety and stress, particularly following a bereavement
- Depression
- An infection such as a chest or bladder infection
- Thyroid disorders
- Vitamin deficiency
- Side effects of some medications
- Long term overuse of alcohol
- Conditions such as mild cognitive impairment or a stroke
- Dementia, such as Alzheimer's

If there is still no cure, what is the point in getting a diagnosis?

Getting an early diagnosis is very important for the person with dementia and their loved ones. The World Alzheimer Report found that 85% of respondents would prefer to know if they had Alzheimer's or another type of dementia if they were experiencing confusion or memory loss. It found that 94% would want the same if a family member was experiencing these symptoms.

Getting an early diagnosis allows the person with dementia to make decisions about their future, while they still have the capacity to do so.

An early diagnosis means

- You can access appropriate treatments (which may help slow down the progression of the disease), information, services and supports
- You can plan your legal and financial affairs
- Make important decisions about your future care

The report also acknowledged that advanced planning for dementia can help reduce the strain and stress experienced by carers.

Concerns about memory loss are often followed by other questions such as:

Am I at risk of getting dementia?

There are certain risks associated with dementia, however many people can develop dementia without having any risk factors. Risk factors include:

Age: Age is a significant risk factor for developing dementia (and unfortunately many other illnesses). The risk increases, the older we get. However, that is not to say that dementia is a natural part of ageing. Many people live into their 80's and beyond and do not develop dementia.

Lifestyle: Mounting research suggests that a healthy lifestyle is associated with a lower risk of dementia. This is especially true for vascular dementia which can follow a stroke.

Factors which have been found to reduce risk of dementia include:

- **Brain activity** – Stimulating and challenging the brain with complex mental activities has been associated with lower levels of dementia. These can include gardening, crosswords, board/card games, cooking or yoga.
- **Social Activity** - Being more socially active is associated with a reduced risk of dementia. People who participate in more social activities, have larger networks of friends and who feel less lonely, have on average a lower risk of developing dementia. Ways to increase your social activity include, joining a club, enrolling in a course, volunteering with a charity or simply making the effort to meet up with, or call family and friends more regularly.
- **Diet and Exercise** - Other current research suggests that being physically active, eating a healthy diet, not smoking, drinking in moderation and having your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly are all associated with a lower risk of dementia.
- **Head injury** - A history of serious head injury, especially with loss of consciousness, is associated with an increased risk of developing dementia. That doesn't mean that everyone who injures their head will get dementia, just that they are at a slightly higher risk on average
- **Family history** - The role of genetics in the development of dementia is not yet fully understood. There has been some progress in this area and certain genes have been identified as playing a part in the development of different types of dementia. However, people with this gene have not developed dementia and people who do not have it, have developed the condition. Therefore, it is an area that warrants further research. If you are concerned about having a family history of dementia, please speak to your GP who can refer you to a genetic specialist, if necessary.

If you are worried about memory loss or changes in behaviour, please call
The Alzheimer National Helpline at **1800 341 341**
Monday-Friday 10am-4pm
or view www.alzheimer.ie / www.remember.ie

Ann-Marie Coen,
Helpline and Information Co ordinator

Pre-Budget Submission



Limerick Branch Chairperson, Marilyn Sheehan with Dublin South Branch Chairperson Muriel Banks.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has called on the Government to honour its Programme for Government commitment to publish a National Dementia Strategy by 2013.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Budget 2012 demands are:

- NO CUTS to funding in Budget 2012
- Respond to people awaiting services
- Ensure regional case management for 4,400 people with younger onset dementia (under 65s)
- Publish a National Dementia Strategy by 2013

The Society made its call at the launch of our Pre-Budget Submission 2012 in Buswell's Hotel, Dublin on Tuesday 18th October where Maurice O'Connell, CEO, revealed that many carers are now at crisis point, as figures show waiting lists for dementia services have increased by 20% in the last year to a number of 1,212 across the country.

Mr O'Connell reminded a strong attendance of over 30 cross party Senators and TDs that if the Government does not take immediate action to address the hidden health crisis of dementia, Ireland will face a much worse crisis in the future as the country has an ageing population. In the next 15 years alone, the amount of people living with dementia will increase from 44,000 today to 70,115 in 2026.

This year represented a pivotal moment for the 44,000 people living with dementia and 50,000 carers when the new Fine Gael Labour Government prioritised dementia as a health issue. The Programme for Government 2011-2016 states that:

"We will develop a national Alzheimer's and other dementias strategy by 2013 to increase awareness, ensure early diagnosis and intervention and development of enhanced community based services. This strategy will be implemented over five years."

Maurice O'Connell, CEO, launched The Society's Pre Budget Submission 2012 by saying:

"We welcome the strides that have been made through the Government's commitment to improving the lives of people living with dementia and support everyone's efforts to focus on this critical health policy issue. However, we need to ensure that short term financial concerns do not impact on existing services and undermine the delivery of the National Dementia Strategy over the next two years. We recognise the fiscal difficulties that the Government is facing and we wish to take a flexible response to working with policy makers regarding funding structures, service delivery and to ensuring the Strategy is delivered successfully."

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has now launched a campaign to encourage elected officials to drive the Programme for Government's commitment from within the Houses of the Oireachtas through the roll out of an "Alzheimer Pledge".

By encouraging elected officials to sign up to the Alzheimer Pledge, The Society hopes to mobilise further support for the National Dementia Strategy, through the development of a 'Friends of Dementia' cross party group which already includes over 33 cross party TDs, including seven front bench TDs, two Junior Ministers and An Ceann Comhairle.

To register your support for a National Dementia Strategy please log on to www.alzheimer.ie



Deputy Sean O'Fearghail T.D. and Deputy Caomghín O'Caolain T.D.



Maurice O'Connell, CEO, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland with speakers Jenny Kent and Dr. Colin Doherty.

“Dementia Awareness in our Community” Workshop



The third annual Social Inclusion Week took place in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown from 8th-15th October 2011. Social Inclusion Week is a local celebration of the great work that is being undertaken by all residents of the area. Broadcaster, Olivia O’Leary, launched Social Inclusion Week at the New Civic Square “The Metals”, Dun Laoghaire, in late September. The programme featured more than 70 events and showcased best practice across the county. Speaking at the launch, Ms O’Leary said: *“This is a celebration of equality, inclusion, participation; a celebration of community and of togetherness. Above all, it is a celebration of people.”*

To mark Social Inclusion Week 2011, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland was delighted to host an interactive workshop, “Dementia Awareness in our Community”, exploring the issues which face people with dementia living in the wider community of Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown. Our key note speaker was Dr. Louise Daly from The School of Nursing & Midwifery, Trinity College, Dublin. The title of Dr Daly’s presentation was “Understanding Dementia” - One word with many meanings. Dr Daly spoke about the meaning of dementia and how it impacts on people in very different ways in many different contexts. Dr Daly also explored how our own perceptions of dementia can play a role in how we interact with people with dementia.

Richard Dolan, a member of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Bray Social Club, then spoke about how the social club operates and the role that it has played in supporting him to care for his wife. Richard explained that it is an informal gathering of people with dementia, and their carers, who come together in a social context to support each other, share experiences and enjoy each other’s company. The Club is run in a relaxed and informal way and the members’ are each actively involved in the running of the club and organise their own outings and social occasions. The Social Club is an intrinsic link for Richard to stay involved and keep connected with his community.

Bairbre-Ann Harkin from Dublin Contemporary spoke about a pilot art programme that was designed specifically for people with dementia and their family members. “Discovering Dublin Contemporary” was an interactive tour which provided a welcoming, informal environment and focused on participants’ abilities. Bairbre-Ann spoke about how the act of looking at art allows for a satisfying, intellectual experience without relying on short-term memory. The tour facilitated both the person with dementia and their loved one to participate on an equal platform. Participants shared ideas, personal experiences and long-term memories while gaining insights into others’ thoughts and opinions.

Finally, Avril Dooley, Grassroots Coordinator with The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, spoke about what we mean by the concept of Dementia Friendly Communities and the role that The Alzheimer Society is taking in promoting the development of this concept. The workshop was an opportunity for organisations and services in the wider community to discuss ideas around how they can play a bigger role in being more inclusive and dementia friendly.

There were many different representatives from people working and providing services in the community at the workshop including: Gardai, libraries, staff from various departments in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, carers of people with dementia, Active Retirement Dun Laoghaire and health & social care professionals working in dementia care.

If you would like any further information about the event or Social Inclusion Week please visit the website:
www.dlrcoco.ie/socialinclusion
or contact Avril Dooley: adooley@alzheimer.ie
Tel: 01-207 3802 - Grassroots Coordinator,
The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

News from around the country

Cork



Thank you to all of the Cork Mini Marathon participants who took part on behalf of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland on the 25th September. Well done to all!



A cheque for €1000 from Walk for Life was presented to Jon Hinchliffe, Service Manager, in Cork City.



Staff from Bessboro Day Centre, Blackrock, Cork. This picture was taken at Sarah Delea's Wedding on 25th June 2011.

Back L-R: Kay McCarthy, Maura McCarthy, Sarah Delea, Teresa Peyton, Margaret Coughlan.

Front L-R: Greg Carroll, Ailsa Thompson, Gillian O'Mahony.



Cork Golf Club presented a cheque for €1500 to Ursula Collins, Regional Manager on 5th August. The money was raised through a Ladies Golf Charity Invitation Day.

Left to Right: Ursula Collins, Regional Manager, Carolyn Cashman, Lady Captain & Mary O'Callaghan, Lady President

Mallow



Mallow World Alzheimer Day event, Pictured are Sheena Cadoo, Occupational Therapist, HSE and Liz Kelleher, Nurse, Mallow Day Centre.

Donegal

Attending The Ladies Who Lunch event organised by the Donegal Branch in Donegal Town

(from L to R),
Mary Conaghan (Treasurer),
Eamon Brogan (Secretary),
Alastair McKinney (Chairperson),
Laura Beirne-Gormley (Fund-raising Co-ordinator), guest host
Lisa Cannon (TV3's Xposé),
Maureen Keenaghan (Assistant Treasurer) and Delia McGuinness (Vice-Chairperson).



Presentation of Delectable Memories hand-made quilt made by Kathleen Burke, Nicola Doherty-Rae, Cecile Flagg and Florence Roulston and autographed by Daniel O'Donnell to the raffle winner – Bridie Moore of Killybegs. Money raised from the quilt will be used to support the work of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (Donegal Branch).

Pictured: (L to R) Bridie Moore (raffle winner), Florence Roulston, Daniel O'Donnell, Cecile Flagg.



Left to Right, Maeve, Patrick, Alan, Grainne & David



Left to Right, Grainne, Mary - PRO, Maeve

Five local people braved the waters of Lough Swilly on Saturday 3rd September to raise funds for the Alzheimer Society Donegal Branch.

Patrick Quinn from Buncrana, who has completed the swim from Rathmullan Pier on the Fanad Peninsula to Buncrana Pier on the Inishowen Peninsula, over ten times himself, coached a group of swimmers throughout the summer, none of whom had done the swim before.

The swimmers were Alan McElhinney from Derry, David McGinley (age 12 years) from Buncrana, and sisters Maeve and Grainne Gillen (daughters of Mary Gillen the Donegal PRO) from Carndonagh, accompanied of course by Patrick himself.

They raised the fantastic sum of €4,000. All the swimmers paid tribute to the volunteers who helped them on the day and to all the very generous people who donated money.

News from around the country

Offaly



The Clareen traditional group committee ran a traditional music day on Sunday 5th June, which gave €7000 towards local services.

Clare



John Murphy from Hospital Saturday Fund presenting a cheque to Kay Flynn, Vice Chairperson Clare Branch of the value of €1,200.

Carlow



The staff of Bruce Betting had a pyjama day and raised €4,300 for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland. From left Jackie Comiskey, Brenda Dowling, Kate Brennan (ASI), Thomas Byrne, Caroline Kennedy (ASI) Emma Walsh and Matt Walsh. Photo: John Courtney.

Would you go to the bookies dressed in your best nightie if you were guaranteed a free bet? A few Carlow punters certainly did when Bruce Betting held an unusual fundraiser for The Alzheimer's Society of Ireland.

The charity weekend was held at the end of June and a whopping €4,300 was raised.

Waterford

Pine Grove Day Centre, Waterford would like to acknowledge and thank Colour Fast for voluntarily painting the centre and Morris's Builders Providers for the materials, in loving memory of Teresa Browne and for all who attend the centre.



Fundraising News

Charity Partnerships

Increasingly, companies are developing formal strategies in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Corporate Partnerships are vitally important to The Alzheimer Society of Ireland as they help us to tackle one of the most pressing public health challenges facing this country today.

Since the beginning, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has created and sustained excellent partnerships and working relationships with organisations from all areas of the spectrum, some of which include: Pfizer, Toyota, CIT, Tesco and Citibank.

We help our corporate partners to achieve as many benefits as possible from their partnership with us. We develop tailored plans to meet the needs of the organisation. We also have a dedicated partnership coordinator, backed up by our Fundraising team and PR support from our Communications team.

As we approach our 30th Anniversary in 2012, your company may be interested in finding out more about partnering with The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

For more information contact Emily Brew on 01 2073816 or email ebrew@alzheimer.ie to receive our Corporate Partnership brochure.

Congratulations!

A huge congratulations to our wonderful team of dedicated cyclists who completed a 260K cycle in Cuba in November to help raise funds for our important services. Here they are pictured in Terminal 2, Dublin Airport.



The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has a range of different challenges and events you can get involved in. To find out more call the fundraising department on **01 207 3800**.

Thank You

We would like to say a very special thank you to all our workshop volunteers, who so kindly give up their time to help us to pack up and send out our Tea Day packs and Christmas Card orders. Your support and dedication is so important to us and without you we would not be able to achieve the success that we do with our ongoing events and campaigns.

The Fundraising Department would like to wish everyone a happy, peaceful and restful Christmas and New Year.
Thank you for all your hard work on behalf of people with dementia and their families.

Christmas Cards

Christmas Cards are now available to purchase directly from The Alzheimer Society of Ireland. If you have not yet ordered your Christmas Cards you can do so online at www.alzheimer.ie or by calling Claire Concannon on 01 2073833.



Christmas Memory Ribbon Campaign

Share a treasured memory of someone special in your life

This Christmas, families all over Ireland, just like yours, will decorate trees with special baubles, decorations and lights that remind them of treasured Christmas memories. The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has created a special way for people to share these treasured memories at Christmas.

The Christmas Memory Ribbon Campaign is a wonderful way for you to remember someone in your life who has or had Alzheimer's or dementia. Firstly, by creating a special Memory Ribbon in their name, and secondly, by making a vital donation to ensure that important Alzheimer's services are available to families when they need it.

You can create your special Memory Ribbon today at www.memoryribbon.ie or by calling Emily Brew on (01) 2073816 or email ebrew@alzheimer.ie



Wedding Favours

If you, or someone close to you, is planning a wedding soon, consider making a donation to The Alzheimer Society of Ireland in lieu of favours. This is a wonderful way to remember your loved ones with Alzheimer's or dementia, on your special day.

We will supply you with our new Wedding Favour cards that fold, tent-style, to sit elegantly on the tables at your wedding reception. The hand drawn illustration on the front of the card has been designed especially for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland by Pretty as a Picture.

To receive a sample of our beautiful cards call Claire on 01 2073833 or email cconcannon@alzheimer.ie



Date For Your Diary **The Annual Burren Walk** 12th February 2012 - 12.30am start



Congratulations

We wish to congratulate **Samantha Bunny**, Home Care Coordinator, Westmeath and Nurse manager of The Alzheimer Society Saturday Day Care service in Longford, on her marriage to **Leo Scally** which took place on 17th August in Mullingar.

Liam Tyrell

We wish to mark the passing of Liam Tyrell on 28th August 2011. Liam was a founding member and the Branch Chairperson in Galway. His wife Rita was also an active member of the branch, and their family often helped out with fundraising events in Galway. He will be missed. May he Rest in Peace.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland would like to take this opportunity to express our condolences to all friends of The Society who have recently lost a loved one.

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE.

A death is not the extinguishing of a light, but the putting out of the lamp because the dawn has come.

Poem kindly sent in by Hillary Janice Berber who wrote the poem about her Mother

MY BEST FRIEND

What is the meaning of true friendship
I often ask myself?

Friends want to be treated
with respect, loyalty and trust,
They don't want to be treated like
china ornaments gathering dust,
Good friends to some mean
everything and really are a must.

Good friends can be from anywhere
and from all walks of life,
They can even be a sibling,
a husband or a wife,
My mother is my best friend,
my teacher and my guide,
A gift passed on to me and taken
with great pride.

Sadly under no delusion when
faced with what we see,
Knowing it's not an illusion,
fearing what's to be,
A woman so vivacious
and strong in many ways,
How kinder years gone by have been
but not up to the present day.

As a young woman you inspired and strong
friendship was your trait,
To be locked inside your body
now those feelings must turn to hate,
But now with your memory failing
and some friends you can't recall,
You smile and pretend to everyone
as if you're on the ball.

HILLARY JANICE BERBER

I often think do you know what's happening
in the world outside your own,
Surrounded by your loved ones
but realistically all alone,
Happy times of yesterday and
all the years gone by,
Do you ever ask yourself some questions
or even wonder why.

You'll always be the Matriarch,
who brings the family together,
The times you lost your patience nearly
coming to the end of your tether,
These things now seem so trivial when
at times you can't recall your name,
Just wishing we could turn back the clock
and pretend it's all a game.

I wonder what you're thinking and
what you really want to say,
Perhaps frustration, anger, and hate
would be the order of the day,
I hope you know we love you,
as we may not always tell,
Just coping with Dementia
is like a living hell.

You taught us a family to
care for one another,
So now the time has come for us
to look after you our Mother,
To everyone who knows you they
hold you in high esteem,
And we as a family are known
as your little team.

OASIS was edited by Grace Cassidy, Communications Executive, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

Address: The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, National Office, Temple Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

Phone: 01-207 3800 **Fax:** 01-210 3772 **E-mail:** gassidy@alzheimer.ie **Website:** www.alzheimer.ie

Next Issue: Deadline for Copy: 20th February 2012.

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