



THE ALZHEIMER  
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

# OASIs

Quarterly Newsletter of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland

Volume 21 Issue 1

Spring 2004



## Activities at Home for People with Dementia



**Announcing Tea Day 2004**

**Spotlight on the West and  
Northwest**

**Fundraising News**

**Research on Early Onset  
Dementia**

# Message from the Editor

Welcome to the newly revamped newsletter – now known as oASIs. The name was the brainchild of two national office staff – Angela Keegan and Conor Crowley (great minds.....!). The name was selected from a range of possibilities presented in-house. Not only is it a good word-play, but, we also hope it represents the work of the Society in that we aim to offer a 'retreat' by providing a range of supports for people with dementia and their carers.

A newly established editorial group, whose role is to support the development of the newsletter and generate some new ideas, agreed the revamped look. The Editorial Group also agreed to have 'themed' editions and the theme for this edition focuses on **activities at home for the person with dementia**. We hope to combine a range of in-house and external writers to pen articles for inclusion, particularly on the themes selected.

We intend continuing to cover the usual features on fundraising and news from the branches, the regions and National Office and in this edition you can read about innovative fundraising in Sligo, our new research project and the forthcoming tea days, the biggest national fundraiser in the Society's calendar. Thanks also to the volunteers and staff from around the country for taking the time to make a contribution to this edition. It is much appreciated.

I hope you enjoy this edition and would be delighted to have your comments, feedback and ideas.

Till next time.....

**Gráinne McGettrick**

**Editor**

**Information and Research Officer**

## Public Relations

### TAP Awards and World Alzheimer's Day



Launching the TAP Award were from L-R Maurice O'Connell, CEO ASI, Ellen Gunning, Director Irish Academy of Public Relations, Mary Hickey, PR student (Walsh PR) and Declan Connolly, Pfizer Ireland

The newly established Theory into Practice (TAP) Award is targeting third level Public Relations students throughout Ireland. The award is jointly run by the Irish Academy of Public Relations in conjunction with ASI and sponsored by Pfizer Ireland. Students were asked to develop a communication programme culminating in a national fundraising project for the Alzheimer Society of

Ireland which in turn will mark World Alzheimer's Day on 21 September 2004. An external panel of judges is coming together to judge the winner who will receive the award and prize money of €2004.

In addition to this the winner will get to work directly on the implementation of their project idea.



**Alzheimer's Disease International**

Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) is the umbrella organisation for national Alzheimer associations all over the world. It is celebrating its 20th Anniversary this year. In 1984 the Alzheimer's Association (USA) with support from the World Health Organisation called a meeting in Washington DC with representatives from Alzheimer associations in Canada, Australia, the UK and individuals from France, Belgium and

Germany and hence ADI was born. Princess Yasmin Aga Khan has been the President of ADI since it was founded. Princess Yasmin is the daughter of Rita Hayworth who had Alzheimer's Disease. ADI promotes World Alzheimer's Day – 21 September 2004 – on the theme of 'No Time to Lose'. This is the 10th year of the World Alzheimer's Day event. The Alzheimer Society of Ireland will be organising an awareness campaign and second national fundraising event to mark the day in September, based on the winning entry in the TAP Award.

### Research Project on Early Onset Dementia (People Under 65 years)

The Society is planning to embark on a major piece of research entitled 'Early Onset Dementia in Ireland: A Statistical and Needs Analysis'. 'Early onset dementia' relates to the progressive degeneration of the brain in people under the age of 65 years. Encountering younger people with dementia on a day-to-day basis, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, as the key dementia-specific service provider in the country, has a growing awareness of their needs and their carers' needs as a specialist group. To date, however, the information available to the Society of those with early onset dementia is limited and primarily anecdotal in nature. The Society is aware of the existing 'vacuum' in national social policy and the lack of appropriate services for this minority grouping. Therefore, the need for a piece of national research to address the

situation is required. The research would, for the first time in Ireland, provide reliable and accurate statistical and needs analysis regarding the issue of early onset dementia. This in turn would enable an informed national social policy response to emerge and corresponding statutory service responsibility to develop. Furthermore, it would allow the Alzheimer Society to develop a strategic approach and service response to the issues. The Society is currently in the process of engaging an external researcher and the fieldwork element of the research will commence in April. In the meantime, if you would like further information on the project, please contact Gráinne McGettrick, Research and Information Officer, National Office TEL: 01 284 6616.

## President Visits Whistlemount Day Centre, Navan

There was great joy and excitement at the Whistlemount Alzheimer Day Centre on the recent visit of President Mary McAleese.

The President had requested a visit to the Alzheimer Centre to meet the clients and see a "working day centre" which is why the whole visit was kept low-key. The President was greeted by the Chairperson of the local Branch Stephanie Kiernan and then introduced to each Committee member. Gerry Leech (Treasurer) gave a short speech expressing the Committee's delight that the President had asked to come and see the Centre on a regular working day. He gave a brief history of the Centre and thanked all the supporters, with

special thanks to Tara Mines for the provision of the premises.

The President gave a very warm and heartfelt speech which focused on the family carers and the day-to-day problems they face while looking after their loved ones. She was very impressed with the facilities and how they had developed over the years. She acknowledged that only for the dedication and perseverance of all the Committee, past and present, and the people of Navan and Meath, the Centre would not be here today. The President was then presented with a piece of Tara Mines Ore extract and a bouquet of flowers by two of the clients attending the Centre. She was introduced to each of the clients by Nurse Ailish Clay and

spent time mingling with everyone. Music and song was provided by "You're a Star" contestant James Kilbane who kindly came to entertain the clients. Everyone enjoyed the fun.



Pictured is James Nannery making the presentation of the Tara Mines Ore to President McAleese in the Whistlemount Day Care Centre

## Spotlight on ASI in the West and North West

The North West and Western regions cover counties Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Donegal, Leitrim and Roscommon. As a result of putting in place a more standardised format for collecting statistics from all the regions, there are some interesting figures available on all the regions throughout the country. Statistics in relation to the Northwest and Western regions indicate that:

- There are currently 3 Day Care Centres, 3 Home Care Services, 2 Home Support Services and 2 Support Groups in the 2 regions.
- A total of 38 staff are directly employed by the Society and 32 through FAS CE schemes providing services to approximately 201 clients on a monthly basis.
- The amount spent on the delivery of services throughout the regions was €582,878 in 2002. This was funded partly by Health Board grants and the balance through fundraising. In addition, the Home Support Services are operated through FAS-funded Community Employment schemes.

For more information on these regions contact Des Mulligan, ASI Regional Officer, c/o LES, Mountain Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. TEL: 094 9037875. email: dmulligan@alzheimer.ie

### Sligo Branch of ASI

#### History

The Sligo Branch Committee of the Alzheimer Society was formed in 1992. Currently there are 11 members on the Committee, chaired by Brian Holland, who is also a member of the Board of Directors of ASI. Four years after the founding of the Branch, the Dunally Day Care Centre was established, with four clients initially. Today there are 23 clients attending the Centre on a regular basis, with an average daily attendance of 17-18 clients. Day care is offered on a four-day week basis Monday to Thursday 9.45am – 4.15pm. The Branch also operates a Home Care Service with care being provided to 19 families in Sligo and the surrounding counties.

#### Activities

At the Day Care Centre in Dunally, clients enjoy and regular music, song and dance. They also enjoy doing craft work such as basket weaving, and the making of St. Bridget's crosses as well as engaging in reminiscence therapy. 'Go for Life', a programme for sport and physical activity for older people, is on-going and is facilitated by North Western Health Board.

#### Future Developments

In 2003 the Branch purchased a site adjoining the Day Care Centre, including the premises of the old Dunally school (where day care is presently delivered). There are plans to develop a social housing complex on this site. The Committee identified a need where there are people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias who are living at home but experience difficulty either because of rural isolation or the fact that they live alone. In many of these cases they are not in need of full-time nursing home care as they will be capable of independent living in

a group home setting. With this in mind, the ASI established a Voluntary Housing Association in 2003, and it is envisaged that the site in Dunally will be the first development for the Society offering accommodation and supported living for those with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

#### Staff Training and Development

Currently there are 15 staff employed on the FAS Community Employment Scheme, and one Supervisor. In addition, there is a Nurse Manager, a full-time Administrator, 3 full-time Care Workers, a full-time Bus Driver and two part-time Care Workers, looking after 2 families.

#### ASI Branch Committee Members

The Branch is operated by an active committee. The members are Brian Holland, Margo Kilroy, Max Kilroy, Margaret Barker, Helen Kerrin, Margaret McBrien, Mai Neary, Mary Campbell, Lorna Moylan, Mervian Crowley and Sr. Fidelma, the latest member. Sr. Fidelma has just retired as a Public Health Nurse and is a most welcome volunteer in the Centre.



Some of the staff outside the Dunally Day Care Centre. From L-R Fabian White, Robert McGoldrick, Teresa McCann, Siobhan Healy McGowan, Anne Kiernan, Tonya Lynch and Monica Sherlock

# Activities at Home for People with Dementia

## The Importance of Activities

When considering activities for people with dementia it is important to define what we mean by activities. Activities take many forms and represent different facets of our lives. Although special events and recreational activities are enjoyable and important, it is our day-to-day activities that define us, enhance our self-esteem and give purpose to our lives. Activities also provide a structure for the daily lives of people with dementia but they need help organising their day. Activities enable them to retain their life skills and learn some new ones. Activities done with a carer in the home or with others in a day care centre provide opportunities for social interaction. By providing an occupation and an outlet for energy, activities may help lessen anxiety or boredom and consequent behaviour such as rummaging in drawers or pacing around.

*If we think of activities only as outings, visits, or hobbies, we can overlook the importance of ensuring that people with dementia experience meaningful occupation as part of their everyday lives.*

To ensure activities are suited to a person with dementia the following factors be considered:

## The Person

What are the person's likes and dislikes, abilities, and past interests? Is the person able to initiate activities independently? Is the person physically able to do an activity? Does the person have sight, hearing, or perceptual problems that might significantly affect his/her capacity to undertake an activity? Over time dementia does affect a person's confidence, intellect, memory, ability to think logically and ability to understand and process language.

## The Activity

It is important to make activities for the person with dementia part of the daily routine. The person with dementia can do a variety of tasks (see List of

Household Tasks). It does not matter if the task is not completed properly. If the table is not fully set or the towels are not folded neatly, a carer can discreetly make adjustments later. What matters is that the person with dementia feels a sense of inclusion in the tasks being done. As dementia progresses it may be necessary to change the tasks to more simple and more repetitive ones.

## Carer Input

A carer has an important role in prompting the person to do an activity. A carer can break an activity into small manageable parts, assist with difficult parts of a task, and offer encouragement. A person with dementia may respond positively if a specific request for help is made—"Would you please stir this for me?" or "Please sweep the floor" (while handing a brush to the person). If a carer shares an activity with the person with dementia it provides an opportunity for social contact and conversation. Some activities provide opportunities for moderate exercise e.g. standing up to dry dishes, sweeping the floor, or sweeping the path. The approach of the carer needs to be flexible and realistic; criticism and correction should be avoided.

## The Environment

A person with dementia may become uncomfortable, frightened, or confused by the environment if it is too hot or too cold, if it is noisy, or if there are too many people around. A person with dementia may be distracted by background noise from a radio or TV. Ensure the person with dementia uses materials that are safe, e.g. non-toxic paints, and avoid sharp tools. The environment can be used to stimulate activities. Indoors, items such as photo albums and old magazines, cards etc can be used for activities as well as household items. Outdoors, light gardening and bird tables can generate activities.

## General Home Tasks

General household tasks can provide a variety of activities for the person with dementia. The person may have previously enjoyed household tasks and may feel more useful if encouraged to do some simple ones. The person might not previously have participated in household tasks, or might not have enjoyed them, but would enjoy tasks like watering plants, arranging flowers or feeding pets or birds.

It is important to think creatively and adapt the task to fit the ability level of the person. Some people with dementia would be unable to use an electric vacuum cleaner but might find it easy to use a lightweight carpet sweeper. Some tasks, which are usually done standing up e.g. drying dishes, might be done sitting down.

Avoid giving too much supervision and direction. If the person is criticised and corrected he/she will become reluctant to engage in the activity again. If the floor has to be swept again it can be done later to avoid drawing attention to a task that has not been done properly. Some tasks such as washing and drying dishes or folding sheets can be joint activities and can promote conversation and social contact. Many people with dementia can miss out on the experience of sharing activities with their carers or members of their extended family.

## Different Kinds of Activities

People with dementia participate in routine activities of personal care and eating and drinking but many may not have the opportunity of helping with household tasks, or undertaking intellectual, spiritual, or creative activities. Many do not have the opportunity of taking enough exercise. If they spend too much time sitting, dozing, or watching television all day it may cause them to be restless and wakeful at night. If possible carers should vary activities from day to day.

## Examples of Tasks at Home

Cleaning a window (water and wiper)	Re-organising food cupboard
Hand washing small items e.g. socks	Setting/clearing the table
Hanging out the washing	Washing/drying dishes
Folding sheets/towels (with help)	Tidying drawers
Sorting/matching socks	Arranging flowers
Dusting	Watering plants/window boxes
Sweeping/mopping floor	Feeding pets
Using carpet sweeper	Stocking a bird table
Polishing brass or silver	Making a shopping list

***It is important to focus on the benefit of exercise and occupation to the person and the sense of achievement and inclusion that the person can derive from participating in a household activity even if the person can do the task for only a few minutes at a time once or twice a day.***

### Daily Routines

- Personal Care Activities: bathing, showering, shaving and dressing
- Mealtime Activities: preparing food, cooking, eating and drinking
- Household Tasks: dusting, sweeping, cleaning worktops, washing

### Other Activities

- Physical: taking a walk, dancing, light gardening
- Social: having tea/coffee, attending a family gathering, talking or playing cards or bingo, reminiscing with friend or neighbour
- Intellectual: reading a book or magazine or doing a crossword puzzle
- Spiritual: praying, listening to religious service, singing a hymn
- Creative: painting, using pottery clay, playing musical instrument, creating a Life Story book with family help
- Relaxing: resting, looking out the window, petting an animal, having a foot bath or hand massage
- Spontaneous: going on a picnic or visiting friends

### Sorting Items

*When we sort we use our senses of sight, touch and memory. If dementia has affected the perceptual, organisational and logical skills of a person, sorting in a systematic way might be too challenging. However, it might still be possible for them to enjoy the visual and tactile experience of picking items up and exploring and rearranging them. The person may also enjoy talking about the items*



### Favourite Radio and TV Programmes

People with dementia will enjoy some radio and television programmes, particularly in the early stages of the illness. Favourite programmes of music, nature, sport etc can be taped on video and shown repeatedly. It is important to remember that as a person with dementia loses the ability to follow the story lines of many of the 'soap operas' or news documentaries, it is unlikely that watching TV will continue to be enjoyable. At a certain stage some people with dementia may lose their ability to recognise familiar objects and may develop perceptual problems. They may become frightened, confused and

disturbed by violent or noisy programmes.

### Activities for Later Stages of Dementia

These activities may be undertaken at any time but are particularly relevant in later stages of dementia. Sensory stimulation given with affection and gentleness will be enjoyed even if the person cannot respond verbally and is not physically active. Some ideas include:

- listening to familiar music
- listening to favourite books or poetry collections being read
- having prayers said
- looking at family photographs
- watching babies or young children or animals
- smelling flowers
- eating small tasty treats
- feeling a variety of different fabrics, objects, and soft toys

Personal care activities that involve touching such as gentle brushing of hair, using a foot spa, and having a neck or hand massage with scented oils or lotions are also soothing and comforting to a person with dementia.

### Concluding Remarks

The suggestions contained in this article are intended to help both carers and people with dementia. Many principal carers may feel overwhelmed by their caring role and the scope of their family, employment and/or household duties. It may not be possible for some to implement many of the suggestions here. However it may be possible to occasionally arrange for other family members, including grandchildren, or friends and neighbours to participate in an activity with the person with dementia. The activities of our lives provide us with opportunities for expressing ourselves, experiencing a sense of identity, a sense of inclusion in life tasks, a sense of contributing to others, comfort, fun, and enjoyment, as well as meeting our need for occupation. We all have deep psychological needs that are met through engaging in a variety of activities, alone and with others

***They do not diminish with the onset of dementia, but people with dementia need help in having these needs met.***

**Article written by Anne Mescal,  
Training Manager, ASI**

# Fundraising



## Lyons Tea Days 2004 6, 7, 8 May 2004

This year Alzheimer Lyons Tea Day celebrates its 10th Anniversary and we are aiming for the biggest and best Tea Day ever! So much so that it is now a three-day event: 6, 7, 8 May. Drink a cuppa tea on whatever day suits you.

Once again, Lyons Tea is our main sponsor and we are incorporating an Egyptian theme to tie in with the launch of Lyons pyramid tea bags. Supporting the campaign will be an intensive radio schedule of ads, which can be heard on Today FM and on RTE Radio right up to 6 May.

Our goal is to increase the number of Tea Day hosts to ensure we reach our target of over €1,000,000 this year! If you would like to play your part in achieving this goal, either at work or at home, contact Orla Concannon at the National Office on 01-2846616 or email [occoncannon@alzheimer.ie](mailto:occoncannon@alzheimer.ie). To register as a tea day host telephone: 1800 946 301.

Alzheimer Tea Day is the Society's biggest fundraising event and all monies raised locally stay local – so your support will go directly to helping provide services and support for people whose lives are affected by dementia in your area. You can make the difference!

## Clare Branch Annual Burren Walk

There was a great level of support and participation, exceeding all expectations, at the Annual Burren Walk, organised by the Clare Branch on 11 February 2004.

Pictured at the event were (L-R) Bishop Willie Walsh, Killaloe Diocese, Marie Molony, Chairperson, Clare Branch and Bridget Hoey, Home Care Co-ordinator.



## Open Garden in Wicklow

Joy Guard in Blessington is inviting the public to visit her delightful garden from May to September 2004. The address is Hawthorn Cottage, Ballyknockan, Blessington, Co. Wicklow. Joy's phone number is 045 867979. All proceeds to the Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

## Burren Run



Pictured is our multi-talented PRO Ian McKeever who along with 60 other people completed a 10K run in the beautiful setting of the Burren on 30th December 2003. The event managed to raise €10,000 for the Society. Some of the proceeds will go towards the development of services in Drogheda. Our thanks to all the group who gave willingly of their time to support the work of the Society, many of whom enjoyed the great opportunity to 'run-off' all the excesses of Christmas!!

## Getting Out and About - Waterford Day Care Centre



Visiting Kennedy Park in New Ross in the summer time.



Clients enjoying mulled wine, mince pies, song and dance at Christmas.



On an outing by train from Kilmeeaden to Waterford.

# Fundraising News

## Sligo Branch Fundraising Successes

The Sligo Branch has been busy with a number of fundraising ventures in recent months. The proceeds of a series of events in West Sligo including a ceili and a raffle, together with support from the Sligo People's Association in London, raised a total of €6,500. The Sligo Branch will utilise this funding to develop their services in the county. The huge community effort by the organisers of the events is truly appreciated by the Branch.

### Dunally Day Care Centre

The staff and clients of the Dunally Day Care Centre were delighted to receive a donation of a beautifully crafted piece of garden furniture for the garden. The garden is extremely popular with the clients and the new addition to the garden is much welcomed. Roll on those balmy summer days!



The €6,400 proceeds of a fundraising effort in the West Sligo area for the Sligo Branch of the Alzheimer Society were presented at an event in the Castle Arms Hotel in Enniscrone. Pictured above, Raymond Belgane, third from left, hands over the cheque to Brian Holland, Chairman of the Sligo Branch. Also in the photo are Siobhan Healy McGowan, Service Manager, Dunally Day Care Centre and Margaret Baker, Sligo Branch committee member.

### Women's Mini Marathon 2004

This year the Evening Herald Women's Mini-Marathon is taking place on Monday 7 June 2004. We are looking forward again to the



support of the many women (and men!) who will run, walk or crawl this event.

To get your free pack, please contact Orla Concannon on 01-2846616 or email:

[oconcannon@alzheimer.ie](mailto:oconcannon@alzheimer.ie)

Brian Holland, Chairman Sligo Branch and committee member Margaret McBrien (centre) receiving a cheque for €9,738 from the Carter Family, Mary and George and their children Darren and Dayna. The Carters raised almost €20,000 in a most unique way by lighting up their house and gardens at Rathcormack, Sligo for Christmas. A staggering 25,000 light bulbs covering miles of electrical cable along with a nativity crib and Santa's cabin attracted much attention, bringing visitors and TV crews from all over the North West. The proceeds were divided between the Alzheimer Society and another local charity. Thank You!



# Fundraising Manager Appointed – National Office

The Society is delighted to announce the appointment of Orla Concannon as its new Fundraising Manager. Orla comes to the Alzheimer Society from the United States where she worked in an advertising corporation specialising in direct marketing. Orla graduated from Villanova University with a degree in Business Administration. She also completed further study on the EU here in NUI Galway. In the US, Orla worked as a volunteer with Meals on Wheels and Friendly Visitor to Ageing Adults. We welcome Orla to both Ireland and the Society and wish her every success in her role.



## In MEMORIAM

Maura Byrne  
Elizabeth O'Brien  
Thomas O'Reilly  
Elizabeth Fields  
Noimín O'Brian  
Michael Breslin  
Agnes Byrne  
Margaret Walsh  
John McMullen  
Margaret Roach  
Frances Byrne  
Michael Kavanagh  
Evelyn Roberts  
Brigid Cormack  
Edward Sweeney  
Roger Confrey  
Debbie Duggan  
Brendan Corcoran  
Frances Whelan

May they Rest in Peace

# Announcing New Resources for Healthy Ageing



The National Council on Ageing and Older People is pleased to announce the launch of a **Directory of Healthy Ageing Information Resources for Older People**

Are you or your family seeking information on healthy ageing? This Directory provides a list of materials (leaflets, videos, guidebooks etc) designed to inform you on ageing well. Topics covered include health and illness, lifestyle, housing, accident prevention and rights and entitlements as well as information on opportunities in life-long learning and personal development. Materials listed in the Directory are produced by a variety of information-providers whose contact details are also given for those wishing to order materials. The Directory can be ordered by forwarding a cheque or postal order for €2.80 (inc p&p) to: NCAOP, 22 Clanwilliam Square, Grand Canal Quay, Dublin 2. It is hoped that this Directory will act as a useful resource for older people, health and social care providers, carers and community groups working with older people.

## Healthy Ageing Database:

Are you interested in finding out what's happening in promoting health in later life? Are you involved in innovative projects that others could learn from? Log on to the new Healthy Ageing Database at [www.ncaop.ie](http://www.ncaop.ie) and view details of projects and services promoting healthy ageing around the country. The database can be used to search for projects and services for improving the health and quality of life of older people with dementia and of their carers around the country. If you would like to add details of your own project to the database, please e-mail [helen@ncaop.ie](mailto:helen@ncaop.ie) for further details.

## Tea Day 2003 Raffle Results

- 1st Prize:** Ms. Joyce Donohue of Co. Meath - Weekend for 2 in the Talbot Hotel, Co. Wexford
- 2nd Prize:** Ms. Rose Twohig of Co. Cork - Weekend for 2 in the Devon Inn Hotel, Co. Limerick
- 3rd Prize:** Ms. Anna May McCormack of Co. Dublin - Weekend for 2 in any Jurys Doyle Hotel or Inn in Ireland
- 4th Prize:** Ms. Anne Lumsden of Co. Dublin - Weekend for 2 in the Inishowen Gateway Hotel, Co Donegal
- 5th Prize:** Ms. Maria Foster of Co. Carlow - Weekend for 2 in the Wyatt Hotel, Co Mayo

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