**GREENWOOD HOUSE MEMORY CAFÉ - Overview of Program**

**Memory Café: Definition of Program**

* This program is a social gathering for people with memory loss and their care companions.
* Cafés meet for a couple of hours once or twice a month in accessible community locations.
  + This café would take place at Congregation Beth Chaim in West Windsor/Princeton Junction.
* The program is geared towards people of all ages and along all stages of the dementia journey.
* Care partners can include spouses, children, friends, and professional caregivers.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2017/11/12/memory-cafes-offer-connection-in-dementia/#1151ea8225db>

* The Café may include a presentation on a different topic each month, followed by entertainment / an activity and refreshments / or lunch.
* Guests can share conversation over a cup of coffee in a relaxed atmosphere that includes music, art, or other forms of entertainment and an education component with sharing of resources.
* Cafés strive for an atmosphere that’s more like a coffee house or a neighborhood party than a clinical program.

**Who Is the Memory Café For?**

* Those persons with a diagnosis of a dementia related diagnosis
* Those persons with mild cognitive impairment
* People who are concerned about their memory loss
* Family members and care partners of a person with a diagnosis
* The Memory Café is open to anyone without formal referral or assessment. A person with a history of disruptive and/or aggressive behavior is not appropriate for the group. <http://www.thirdageservices.com/Memory%20Cafe%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>

**What you’ll find at the Café:**

* Education, Information, Support, Entertainment, Socialization, Refreshments or lunch
* Typically, guests are not asked their diagnosis. This way, individuals who have not been diagnosed or are not comfortable with their diagnosis feel welcome.
* While information about resources and services is available for those who seek it, cafés provide a break from focusing on disease and disability.
* Guests come together in a safe, supportive, and engaging environment.
* It is a time and place where people can interact, laugh, cry, find support, share concerns & resources and celebrate without feeling embarrassed or misunderstood.
* The Café encourages friendship and acceptance.

## How it all started:

* Dr. Bère Miesen, a Dutch psychologist, understood this need for social connection when he opened the first such café in Holland.  The idea is now gaining traction in the US, where close to 200 cafés have opened in cities and towns across the nation. But we hope there will be many more, and soon, because they seem to filling a significant unmet need. <https://www.alzheimersspeaks.com/memory-cafes>

**Mission:** The mission of the Memory Café is to create an atmosphere of inclusiveness where people with memory loss and their care partners can laugh, learn, and remain socially engaged with others traveling the same journey in a safe, comfortable, engaging environment.

**The Objectives:** The challenges of living with memory loss can sever social connections at a time when it is needed most. Memory café gatherings are one way people with memory loss and their care companions are coming together to make new friendships and support one another. <https://www.alzheimersspeaks.com/memory-cafes>

* To support the educational, emotional and socialization needs of the attendees.
* To reduce isolation, unite people facing similar challenges, create opportunities to give and receive a deeper level of support.
* To bring joy & a sense of normalcy to an existence that all too often becomes focused on disease and disability.
* To provide a much-needed break from normal routines and provide a source of ideas, information and connection to other community support mechanisms.
* To encourage the building of natural support networks among families and in turn help reduce the isolation often associated with caregiving.
* To offer a stigma free program for those diagnosed with Alzheimer’s or a related dementia.

<https://www.jfcsboston.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Memory%20Café%20Toolkit/Massachusetts%20Memory%20Café%20Toolkit.pdf>

**Why?**

An estimated 5.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s dementia in 2018. This number includes an estimated 5.5 million people age 65 & older & approximately 200,000 individuals under age 65 who have younger-onset Alzheimer’s.

* Of those with Alzheimer’s dementia, 81 percent are age 75 or older.
* In NJ, the projected number of those with Alzheimer’s (in thousands) is 180,000 in 2018 & expected to grow to 210,000 by 2025 – an increase of 17%. <https://www.alz.org/media/HomeOffice/Facts%20and%20Figures/facts-and-figures.pdf>
* According to the Center for Health Statistics, NJ Dept of Health in Mercer County, NJ, deaths per 100,000 standardized populations is 18% within a range of 8.4% - 27%. <https://www26.state.nj.us/doh-shad/indicator/view/AlzDeath.County.html>
* Memory cafés are also a social outlet for caregivers. “Often, they feel like they can’t go out because they don’t know where their loved ones will be supported. Here, it’s OK if a loved one repeats himself, or the words don’t come out real quickly. It’s a safe environment.”
* Memory loss causes increased isolation due to the increasing difficulty of engaging in everyday activities, compounded by the stigma of feeling unwelcome or embarrassed when symptoms occur in public situations.
  + Isolation predisposes one to many health risks, including the rapid worsening of dementia.
  + Fear and stigma create a social environment in which many are afraid to acknowledge symptoms and seek medical evaluation.
* There can still be quality to one’s life after diagnosis and the Memory Café hopes to promote this and restore a sense of “normalcy”, a place to have fun, and feel accepted by a caring network. <http://www.thirdageservices.com/Memory%20Cafe%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>
  + **Note of Encouragement:***"This weekend, a customer came in & proceeded to tell me how thankful he was for Memory Café.  He mentioned that his parents recently started attending as his mother’s dementia has gotten worse.  He indicated that she is very self-conscious about her memory issues, but she has been warmly welcomed at Memory Café.  He also mentioned that his dad is very introverted but has loved his experience at Memory Café.  Finally, he asked me to pass on his thanks because it has become the highlight of his parents’ week!”* <https://www.alzheimersspeaks.com/memory-cafes>

**What are the benefits of memory cafés?**

* Cafés can help communities become more “dementia friendly” & aware of community resources & **utilization of needed services**.
* Many cafés in countries where there is a public health system include **a public health nurse,** and can offer a diagnostic screening right at the café.
* **In 2015 and 2016, three statewide organizations offered seed grants to new cafés.** These are the Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition, the Massachusetts Dept of Developmental Services, and the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging.<https://www.jfcsboston.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Memory%20Café%20Toolkit/Massachusetts%20Memory%20Café%20Toolkit.pdf>
* For those who have not yet been diagnosed, **they may start to open up to more services.**
* Many cafés involve creative arts, because these draw upon aspects of cognitive functioning that are affected last and least by most conditions causing dementia.
  + Cafés can help care partners learn creative activities and techniques that they can do at home.
* Cost-effective way to support both the person living with dementia and care partner
  + For care partners, cafés provide respite *“with”* the person who has dementia - an opportunity to enjoy time together, not just focus on problems and losses.
* Because they are open to people at any stage of disease progression, many café guests are able to continue attending for months or years.
* They help guests form new and lasting friendships.
* Café staff and trained volunteers can model effective ways to communicate with those who live with dementia and provide a low-key teaching opportunity to care partners.
* Cafés offer a great volunteer opportunity.
  + While helping to defray costs, volunteers have the opportunity to interact with people living with dementia in a positive, fun, strength-based environment.
* Cafés can bring in participation from many sectors of a community. For example, businesses can contribute food or sponsor a café. Local artists or musicians can facilitate activities. Students can volunteer.

**How?**

* Develop a **Planning Committee** - To collaborate in the planning and execution of this event
* **In order to reach out to a wide spectrum of community members, ask organizations or businesses associated with those you’d like to reach to be cosponsors or promotional partners.**
* **If there are a couple of referral sources that will be critical to the success of your café, reach out to those organizations while you are developing your plan, to ask for their input, and in some cases to ask them to cosponsor the café with you.** 
  + A cosponsor typically is involved in programmatic decision-making, and may also contribute funds or in-kind resources.
  + A promotional partner has a more limited role. A promotional partner lets you use their name/logo, and agrees to share your flyer/announcement with their mailing list.
* Whenever setting up cosponsor or promotional partner arrangements, put the terms in writing. The name that you give to the arrangement (i.e., “cosponsor,” “promotional partner,” or something else) doesn’t matter as much as the clarity with which you define what you will do and what the other party will do.
* Be aware that some potential collaborators may wish to market their services to your café guests, and that you will need to set clear boundaries so that guests do not receive unwanted solicitations.
* On an ongoing basis, you will need to communicate with a broader circle of referral sources to share your flyer and other information about your café.
* Build a mailing list as you go. Invite professionals to come to your café so that they can see what it’s like.
  + Cafés are an unfamiliar model, & professionals may hesitate to refer until they see a café in action.
    - Let them know that your rule for visitors is full participation! They’ll get more out of the visit & guests won’t feel that they are being “observed.” Visitors tend to have a great time, and truly appreciate your invitation to participate!
* Each Café may develop its own “personality” – the participants’ needs will guide the program’s initiatives.
* Some cafes may want to be only a place of conversation and fun activities, while another may want to include elements of education. <http://www.thirdageservices.com/Memory%20Cafe%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>
* The cafes are typically run by social workers, medical professionals or others familiar with dementia.
* Each meeting of the Neighborhood Memory Café should have a designated host or hostess that greets everyone, ensures they sign-in, and get a name tag. The host will initiate a time for introductions and announcements.
* Ideally, to develop a Memory/Alzheimer's Cafés it’s best to connect, collaborate, share resources, and support one another’s efforts with aligned partners with similar missions.

**Finances: Costs**

* Memory cafés serve those living with dementia and care partners at a modest expense.
* For most cafés, the coordinator’s time is the largest expense. Cafés that provide transportation and/or offer outings can see large costs in these categories.
* For those starting a café with grant funding, it’s important to keep costs sustainable from the start, so that the program can be sustained when grant funding runs out.
* Most cafés cost between $8,000 and $15,000 annually, with an additional $2,500 - $4,000 in start-up expenses. (2011)

**Volunteer Opportunities**

There are many opportunities for everyone to get involved such as:

* Helping serve refreshments and taking photos of the event
* Creating a friendly environment for all attendees
* Talking and listening to people with dementia and their caregivers in a sensitive and supportive way
* Joining in with social activities that benefit the individual
* Help to promote the café through community boards, posters, word-of-mouth, etc.
* Attend regular planning committee meetings
* Help find appropriate guest speakers and entertainment as needed

**Sample:**

**University of Pennsylvania’s Memory Café**

Each month, Penn’s Memory Care patients and caregivers are invited to a free pop-up café at Christ Church Neighborhood House in Old City. Enjoy music from around the world, lectures from Penn experts, and coffee from local cafés.

The Penn Memory Center is pleased to invite our patients and friends to a monthly pop-up café at Christ Church Neighborhood House in Old City. This program is exclusively for people with memory problems, including Alzheimer’s disease, and their partners/families.

**Schedule:** 10:30 a.m. to noon one day each month. See full list below.  
**Location:** Christ Church Neighborhood House, 20 N. American Street, Philadelphia, PA.  
**Cost:** Free

Upcoming Events

Friday, September 28, 2018: Students from the [Curtis Institute](https://www.curtis.edu/) will be performing.

Friday, October 12, 2018: The Philadelphia [Zoo on Wheels](https://www.philadelphiazoo.org/ZooOnWheels.htm) will be doing a presentation.

Friday, November 30, 2018: A Penn *a cappella* group will be performing.

Friday, December 7, 2018: Students from the [Curtis Institute](https://www.curtis.edu/) will be performing.

Past Events

Friday, July 13, 2018: [Beacon Theatre Productions](https://www.beacontheatreproductions.org/) performed the short play “The Red Letter Locker.”

Friday, June 1, 2018: A special activity with PMC social worker Cynthia Clyburn.

Friday, May 4, 2018: [Curtis Institute](http://www.curtis.edu/) students performed.

Friday, April 6, 2018: [The Quaker Notes](http://www.quakernotes.com/), Penn’s premier all-female a cappella group, performed a short repertoire for us and sang with our community members. Videos available on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/PennMemoryCenter/).

Friday, March 2, 2018: [Mutter Museum](http://muttermuseum.org/) held an interactive lesson on Civil War medicine.

Friday, February 2, 2018: [Beacon Theatre Productions](https://www.beacontheatreproductions.org/) performed the short play “Mary Todd Lincoln: The Woman You Thought You Knew.” Photos available on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/PennMemoryCenter/).

Friday, January 12, 2018: [Philly Senior Stage](http://www.phillyseniorstage.com/) performed a musical show featuring old hits like “The Joint is Jumpin’.” Photos and videos available on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/PennMemoryCenter/).

Friday, December 8, 2017: Penn all-male a cappella group [The Pennchants](http://pennchants.com/) performed a selection of contemporary hits. Photos and videos available on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/PennMemoryCenter/).