

ADRC of Jackson County and Interfaith Volunteers

Press Release

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Dementia Support in the Community Continues to Grow as Needs Rise

Caring for a loved one with dementia creates many challenges for families and caregivers. As these needs continue to rise, the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jackson County (ADRC) and Interfaith Volunteers continue to partner, finding ways to improve resources for families in Jackson County.

According to a report conducted by the Alzheimer's Association, there are over 120,000 Wisconsinites living with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, and over 196,000 unpaid caregivers assisting them. These numbers continue to rise nationally and in Jackson County.

To provide support to these families, the ADRC and Interfaith, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association, started a Dementia Caregiver Support Group in 2019. This group meets the first Thursday of each month from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the Jackson County Department of Health and Human Services, providing emotional, educational, and social support for individuals caring for someone with dementia.

The support group monthly topics include information on communication, finances, guardianship, adaptive equipment, and other resources. Each session allows time for caregivers to share their situation and work individually with the new Dementia Care Specialist & Outreach Coordinator, Darby Rush. Darby started in April of 2022 and is helping to expand services to families living with dementia.

A support group picnic was held on August 11th at the Lunda Community Park Pond shelter, with 22 people attending. Caregivers and their loved ones enjoyed a picnic lunch, and yard games, giving them a chance to have some fun together. Relationships between caregivers and care receivers can easily become strained so finding ways to improve emotional bonds is important for the well-being of both.

“Locally we are seeing more families being impacted by dementia, and we are trying to help families to age in place,” stated Interfaith Director, Lori Chown. In 2018, Interfaith Volunteers developed the Time for You Dementia Group Respite Program to provide much-needed respite to caregivers of individuals with dementia. This program provides activities for individuals looking for more socialization. “Time for You is ideal for those

who are living alone, individuals suffering from memory loss, or families needing some much-needed respite time,” stated Chown.

Time for You focuses on person-centered care, tailoring activities to the individual. Engaging older persons with dementia increases positive emotions, their activities of daily living (ADL), and ultimately their quality of life. The additional engagement from programs such as Time for You and the Memory Café can combat the conditions associated with dementia boredom, depression, and loneliness.

With the growth in all their programs, Interfaith Volunteers will be moving into an independent facility in December of 2022. The new site will allow them to increase their programs and staffing to meet the ongoing community needs. This building will be located on the corner of Tyler Street and Rye Bluff Road and is currently under construction.

In 2020 the ADRC of Jackson County developed a Dementia Friendly Coalition to engage community partners in ways to improve resources for individuals living with dementia. This coalition meets virtually, every other month on the fourth Wednesday from 11:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. All community members are welcome to attend. For more information, you can call Darby Rush at 715-284-4301, ext. 521, or email darby.rush@jacksoncountywi.gov.

Support services that have been added include Dementia Live presentations, offering individuals a glimpse into the life of someone living with dementia. The coalition is also working to certify businesses and organizations to become dementia friendly throughout Jackson County.

In September a Memory Café will begin at the Black River Falls Public Library, offered every other month, on the third Wednesday from 1:00 P.M. to 2:30 P.M. A Memory Café invites individuals with dementia and their care partners to a safe and supportive environment to enjoy a social event, with a special activity. The Memory Café is a partnership with the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jackson County, the Black River Falls Public Library, and Interfaith’s Time for You Group Respite Program.

“We are excited to see the dementia-related programming grow in Jackson County,” stated Lyn Gates, Aging and Disability Services Supervisor for Jackson County ADRC. “The partnership between Darby Rush, Jackson County’s ADRC Dementia Care Specialist, and Interfaith continues to spark new ideas!”

The prevalence of dementia and caregiving will continue to increase in the coming years. For more information on services available, contact Interfaith at 715-284-7058 or ADRC of Jackson County at 715-284-3978.