

# PVMMCI

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative | Summer 2023

# QUARTERLY

FUNDED BY THE EISENBERG FAMILY TRUST

**I**n New England, we welcome the summer and, with it, better weather and longer days.

People with dementia often have reversed sleep-wake cycles and are prone to sun-downing. Studies have shown that being outside in the sunlight, especially in the morning when the sun is at its brightest, can help improve functioning, increase alertness, decrease risk of falls and reset the body's internal clock. ([www.alzinfo.org/pym/feature/improving-sleep-and-sundowning-with-sunlight/](http://www.alzinfo.org/pym/feature/improving-sleep-and-sundowning-with-sunlight/)). Further, more exposure to brighter light has been shown to improve depression and increase levels of vitamin D, which is important for good bone health. We recommend making the time and effort to get out of the house in the morning and soak in the sunlight! Plus, it is usually the cooler part of the day. So, make time to get outside and go to a local park or bike path or walk around the neighborhood. We would love to see everyone out and about. If you like, take photos and share them with us!

In New England, summer often means travelling to the sea or lakeside and getting together with friends and family. For many, these are important traditions that have been going on for years. We travel a good distance to see our parents in the Finger Lakes. Our kids love being together and are fine with keeping things low key. We play cards, paint and sit in awe watching the amazing variety of colors of each sunset. Sharon Asher shares her experiences of travelling with her step mom, who had dementia, to their house on Lake Winnepesaukee. We know that cognitive impairment can make things more challenging. Hopefully, the tips that Sharon has pulled together will make for an easier trip for all involved

and give everyone a chance to do things that bring them joy.

With the heat from summer, we know that it is easier to get dehydrated. As we get older, we lose our thirst drive. Hydration doesn't have to be just water—it can come in the form of sweet, juicy fruit, as in our recipe for watermelon soup.

We have also included a great list of summer activity ideas as well as information on our local summer concert series, most of which are free.

Finally, I am excited to announce that we had our first Memory Café at the Northampton Senior Center (NSC)! Our team and the NSC staff worked diligently to bring this to fruition and we are excited to be able to offer this on the 4th Tuesday of every month. Memory Cafes were started in Holland in the late 1990's, spread to England in 2000 and are now expanding in the US. Jewish Family & Children's Services has a directory of memory cafes in Massachusetts and their website ([Jfcsboston.org](http://Jfcsboston.org)) notes that "each memory café is different. Some cafés invite guest artists, some offer education about memory changes, and some are just for relaxing and chatting. But all cafés share one goal: to help guests feel comfortable and to know that they are not alone. Cafés are a place to talk with others who understand what you are going through, to forget about limitations and instead focus on strengths, to enjoy other's company, and to explore something new." We hope you will be able to attend and welcome any suggestions and feedback if you do.

Wishing you all a lovely summer,

*Rebecca Starr, MD, Medical Director, Geriatrics,  
MGB Cooley Dickinson Healthcare*



Top left: Ray and his wife, Mary Beth, work together while PVMCI volunteer, Kathy Service, looks on; top middle: Gail and John show off their finished succulent; top Right: a finished product in loving hands; below: Aubin and Francine show off their succulent.



# Northampton Memory Cafe

Presented by Northampton Senior Center,  
Northampton Neighbors,  
Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative  
& Highland Valley Elder Services



Upper left: Lisa and Kay with their finished succulent; middle: Sara and her lovely smile; right, Lynn and Sura; bottom left: Leon, Kathy and Sara get acquainted; right: Ruth and Frank, showing their succulent.  
Photo credit: Christine Grimaldi



# Traveling with Dolores

~Sharon Asher, RN, BSN, MBA, PROGRAM MANAGER

**My** stepmom Dolores passed away last July after a 10 year journey through Alzheimer's. I was thinking about summertime and how Dolores would love to be outside enjoying her gardens. This longing for being outside did not fade with her advancing illness. Dolores was happiest if she could spend time outside and feel the breeze and sun on her skin.

Our family was blessed to have a house on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire. As Dolores's disease progressed into the middle to late-middle stages, traveling became more difficult. Dolores was usually happy to go along with the flow but would get disoriented once she arrived at the lake. She would often wander through the house at night, and at times she couldn't find the bathroom. She wasn't sure what she should be doing and would sometimes get agitated or sad. She needed more guidance, direction and loving support at these times.

Once back at home in Hatfield, it would then take a few days to get settled back in. She would wander more outside in Hatfield and we needed to be careful that she didn't wander down the street. I did find her one day walking down the street with her stuffed animal that she believed was her dog, Jack. With the warm weather upon us, traveling and increased wandering are things to consider as a care partner with someone with dementia.

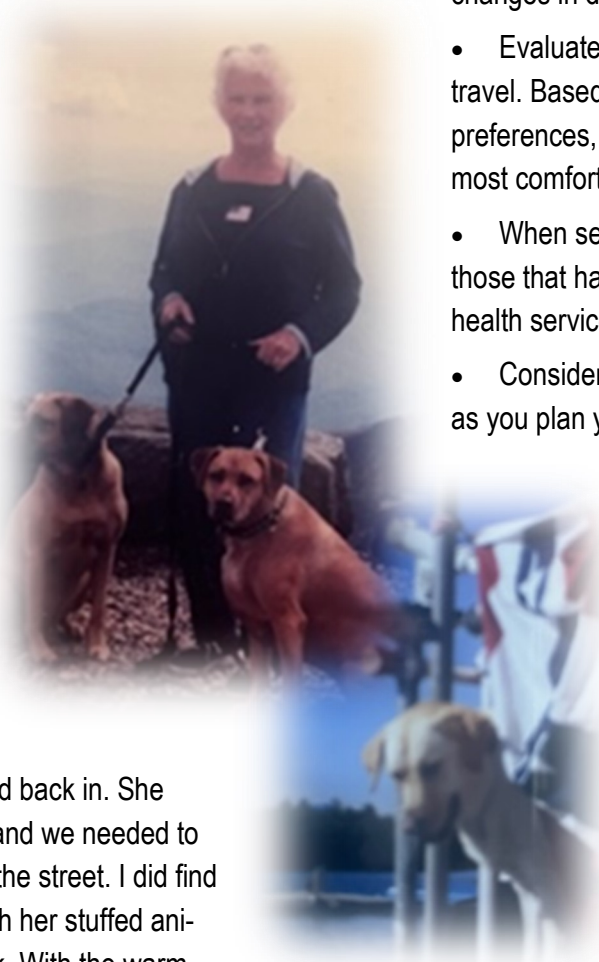
## Tips for care partners traveling with someone with dementia from the Alzheimer's Association

### Suggestions for a calm traveling experience:

- Plan ahead.
- Learn to recognize the warning signs of anxiety and agitation and identify strategies to reduce them. Discuss

this plan with the person living with dementia.

- Try not to overload the person with a lot of directions or too much information. General travel considerations:
- Environmental changes can trigger wandering or confusion. Consider enrolling in a wandering response service. Contact the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) for more information.
- It may be helpful to stick with the familiar. Travel to known destinations that involve as few changes in daily routine as possible.
  - Evaluate options for the best mode of travel. Based on needs, abilities, safety and preferences, decide what would provide the most comfort and the least anxiety.
  - When selecting destinations, consider those that have easy access to emergency health services and pharmacies.
  - Consider everyone's needs and desires as you plan your trip; elaborate sightseeing trips or complicated tours may cause anxiety and confusion.
  - If you will be staying in a hotel, consider informing the staff ahead of time of your specific needs so they can be prepared to assist you.
  - Have a backup plan in case your trip needs to change unexpectedly. This may mean purchasing travel insurance if you have booked flights or hotels.
- Carry with you an itinerary that includes details about each destination. Give copies to family members or friends you will be visiting or to emergency contacts at home.
- Travel during the time of day that is best for the person. For example, if he or she becomes tired or more agitated in the late afternoon, avoid traveling at this time.



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- Have a bag of essentials with you at all times that includes medications, your travel itinerary, a comfortable change of clothes, water, snacks and activities.
- Remember to pack necessary medications, up-to-date medical information, a list of emergency contacts and photocopies of important legal documents.
- Allow plenty of time for rest. Don't over-schedule.
- Contact the Alzheimer's Association® to learn if services are available at your destination.
- Make your reservation through a travel agency or by working with the airline directly. Doing so allows you to add notes or instructions to the reservation for special needs such as wheelchair assistance or in-flight meals.
- Avoid scheduling flights that require tight connections.
- If traveling through an unfamiliar airport, review a map of the facility to plan for distance between connecting flights, locations where security re-entry may be required and locate convenient locations such as restrooms.

***What to keep in mind for visits to family and friends:***

- Prepare friends or family members for the visit by explaining dementia and any changes it has caused.
- Go over any special needs and explain that the visit could be short or that you may need to change activities on short notice.
- If walking is difficult, consider requesting a wheelchair or motorized cart so that an airport employee is assigned to help you get from place to place. Most airlines ask for at least 48 hours of notice.

***Some additional considerations:***

- It may be helpful to stay as close to your normal routine as possible. For example, keep meal and bed times on a similar schedule to that followed at home. Eating in may be a better choice than at a crowded restaurant.
- Be realistic about abilities and limitations. Allow extra time when scheduling activities.

***Consider the following for air travel:***

*Moving through an airport requires focus and attention, as the level of activity can be distracting, overwhelming and difficult to understand.*

- Even if the passenger does not require support for mobility, consider requesting wheelchair assistance to help with navigation through security checkpoints. This support may help expedite the process and reduce stress.
- If you think the TSA screening process may be confusing for the person living with dementia, inform the TSA agents about the person's diagnosis. Do not hesitate to ask for assistance from airport employees and in-flight crew.
- If the person needs help using the restroom, look for companion care bathrooms so you can more easily assist.
- Stay with your travel companion at all times as it can be easy to get confused or lost in a busy airport. ❖



# Northampton Memory Cafe

Presented by Northampton Senior Center, Northampton Neighbors, Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative & Highland Valley Elder Services

**WHERE:** Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street, Northampton MA.

**WHEN:** 4th Tuesday of each month from 1:00-2:30pm. A fun activity, a light snack, coffee, tea or beverage will be offered.

**RSVP REQUIRED:** Please call the Northampton Senior Center at 413-587-1228 to register. Space is limited so please RSVP early to assure a space!

**ABOUT MEMORY CAFES:** Memory Cafes are social get togethers for people living with memory loss or dementia and their care partners. The meetings offer a fun activity as well as time for caregivers to share experiences and connect with other care partners. Care partners are strongly encouraged to stay for the duration of the meeting.

*Funded in part by a grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation.*

## Tips for Staying Hydrated During the Summer

Staying hydrated is important for mind and body and can be more challenging for people living with dementia. Below are some suggestions to increase fluid intake:

- ◆ Keep a lidded cup with a straw nearby filled with water. Encourage frequent small sips.
- ◆ Offer fruits and vegetables that have a high water content.
- ◆ Make hydration fun.
- ◆ Combine a mix of fresh or frozen chopped fruit for a fruit salad.
- ◆ Add a twist to your fruit salad with lime juice, balsamic vinegar or some fresh herbs, such as mint or basil.



- ◆ Make fruit kebabs with fresh cut, mixed fruit.
- ◆ Grill your veggies and fruits, such as peaches and pineapple.

- ◆ Make a tropical green smoothie with mango, pineapple, banana and spinach.
- ◆ Use sliced cucumber, carrots or bell peppers instead of chips for dips and salsas.
- ◆ Make a refreshing salad topped with fresh berries or peaches.
- ◆ Substitute rice with grated or finely chopped cauliflower.
- ◆ Puree frozen peaches to make a very simple “nice cream.”
- ◆ Enjoy soups! See our recipe below for a wonderful summer watermelon soup.

### **Cold Watermelon Soup - Serves 4-6**

Watermelon in all forms is a great summertime food - delicious, nutritious, and hydrating. Try this easy recipe adapted from The New York Times for a refreshing meal on a hot day.

Puree 5 cups of diced watermelon in a food processor or blender and blitz to a purée.

- **7 cups cubed watermelon**
- **1 tablespoon red wine vinegar**
- **4 tablespoons fresh lime juice**
- **2 cups cubed cantaloupe**
- **2 cups diced cucumber**
- **2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **½ cup blueberries (optional)**
- **Handful of small basil leaves chopped fine**
- **Handful of small mint leaves chopped fine**
- **Dash of crushed cayenne (optional)**
- **Pinch of salt (optional)**

Season with salt, pepper and cayenne (optional), 1 tablespoon vinegar and 2 tablespoons lime juice. Taste and adjust seasoning. Refrigerate.

To serve, place remaining watermelon, cantaloupe, cucumber and blueberries (optional) in a small mixing bowl. Toss with a little salt and pepper, 2 tablespoons lime juice and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Add to chilled puree. Sprinkle with basil and mint. Enjoy!



# In the Spotlight

## **Staff Member Name:**

Deb Peavey, LMHC, ATR, CDP

## **Current role at PVMCI:**

Memory Care Specialist

## **Your professional background:**

After studying art as an undergraduate and earning a BFA from UMASS in 1986, I spent 10 years in the graphic design field, ending that career chapter as the publishing director for Mirage Studios, creators of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

Then after staying home for a few years to raise two daughters—in a rural neighborhood where we had chickens, dogs, cats and gardens—I decided to take my career in a new direction and went back to school for a Master's Degree in Art Therapy and Counseling at Springfield College. The internships and early work after earning this degree exposed me to several settings, including hospitals, retirement facilities, and residential mental health facilities.

## **What drew you to work with older adults with memory loss?**

While finishing my Master's research on the benefits of art therapy for memory impaired older adults, I had the pleasure of working at Hebrew Healthcare in West Hartford. In that role, I gained valuable experience in supporting the wellbeing of older adults with memory impairment. While there, I also developed a show of work produced by residents, designed to educate board members and the larger community about memory impairment and the benefits of art therapy. This show later traveled to the capital in Hartford. I found this work to be really meaningful and fulfilling, and I enjoyed the feeling of making a difference in the lives of others.

## **What is your educational background?**

In 2009 I earned my MS in clinical art therapy and in 2011 I earned my license as a mental health counselor (LMHC) while working at River Valley Counseling Center, an outpatient mental health agency based in Chicopee and Holyoke. Working mostly in schools and on an outreach basis, I provided cognitive behavioral therapy and art therapy as well as other traditional mental health interventions. I went on from River Valley to work in the nonprofit senior living realm, in resident services and life enrichment.

## **What do you love about your job?**

I love our wonderful team and being part of an organization that is developing new models of care for people with memory impairment. Supporting families and helping them thrive and live as fully and independently as possible for as long as possible makes me feel like I'm making a little difference in the world.

## **Do you have any hobbies?**

I love gardening, birdwatching (especially hummingbirds), being outdoors, walking with my dog, hiking, making things by hand, sewing, growing orchids, learning birdcalls, painting, reading, traveling, spending time with friends and being with my adult children and grandchildren.



**Deb Peavey, LMHC, ATR, CDP**  
**Memory Care Specialist**  
**(and Gigi, best dog ever)**

# SUMMER ACTIVITY IDEAS

**S**ummer is here, and with it, all the enjoyable activities we know and love. Regular activities for people with dementia are incredibly beneficial and engaging in summertime activities can help boost everyone's mental health. Below is a list of activities to consider.



**Plant a Garden** - Planting a small garden lets those with dementia enjoy the summer sun, increases their vitamin D, regulates circadian rhythms, and strengthens muscles as they pour soil, dig holes, and insert seeds. If that sounds like too much physical work, buy a few pots of flowers, small plants, or herbs to tend to. Gardening is an excellent activity

because it is ongoing and offers tangible results.

**Watch the Birds** - Bird-watching is an excellent option for people with dementia. It is not physically or mentally demanding and people can do it from inside or outside their home. You can buy a birdhouse or add to the experience by building a birdhouse. You can even get a variety of feeders to attract different types of birds or even get a feeder for squirrels. Watching squirrels eat shelled peanuts is quite fun! Hang the feeders near where you or your loved one likes to sit and enjoy.



**Make Frozen Treats** - The summer sun puts older adults at risk for dehydration and other heat-related illnesses. Making frozen treats, such as fruit pops or flavored ice cubes, requires little effort and keeps your loved one cool. Experiment with different flavors of juice, tea, and soda to find the perfect frozen treat.

**Enjoy a Picnic** - When the weather is nice, pack a light lunch and head outside for a picnic. Bring a blanket and some lawn chairs, and head to your favorite park – or stay in your own backyard, if that works better for you. Simple sandwiches, fruit, cold beverages, and crackers are all excellent choices for summertime snacking.



**Visit a Park** - During the summer, local parks come alive with the sounds of laughing children, people exercising, and chirping birds. Your loved one may have fun chatting with other park visitors or simply enjoy staring peacefully at a pond or fountain.

**Go to a Farmer's Market** - Summer is the prime time for farmers' markets. Many of these markets have outdoor stands during the summer months, so you can spend time outdoors while hunting for nutritious, memory-preserving foods such as carrots and leafy greens.



**Go Swimming** – Nothing says summer like outdoor swimming. Head to an outdoor pool or, if your loved one is steady on their feet, a local watering hole or beach. There is adaptive equipment available at some beaches.

**Watch Old Movies** - If the day is too hot or it is raining cats and dogs, make the most of it and hold a TV or movie marathon with your loved one. Pop some popcorn, grab a few delicious snacks and sit down to watch a favorite funny movie or classic TV show from their childhood. Bonus points if it was a “top summer flick” from when your loved one was young.

**Take a Trip Down Memory Lane** - Summer memories from



years past are some of our most beloved. Using reminiscence therapy may help your loved one recall those

cherished moments from their childhood. Gather old scrapbooks from summer vacations, find souvenirs from previous trips, or make a memory box with materials that evoke a scene (like a beach). As you share your observations and memories, your loved one may be prompted to do the same. Be sure to keep a notepad handy to write down any surprising stories or memories that come up.

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**Go to a Game** - If your friend or loved one enjoys summer sports like baseball, take them to a game. Revisiting the sports and activities they loved in their younger years can help bring back positive memories. Encourage them to tell you how it was when they played and what they enjoyed the most about it.




**Take in a Concert** - Music is a magical tool for helping people with dementia. Few things have the power to soothe and generate memories like tunes from their past. Many cities and towns have free concerts all summer long, featuring an array of musical genres. So, whether your loved one is into jazz, classical, country, or gospel, there'll be a concert for them.



**Go for a Country Drive** - A drive in the country is fun and relaxing for everyone, but it might be extra special to someone raised on a farm or in a rural environment. As you go, try to point out the things they might recall from their own lives, like corn growing in the fields or cows and horses out to pasture; even something as mundane as a barn or silo could make their day. If appropriate, you can try to engage them in a conversation about what life was like when they were growing up. You might even find out something you never knew about them.

**Paint with Watercolors** - An inexpensive set of watercolors, brushes, and paper can make for a fun, creative, and quiet visit. If you can, go outdoors and choose a tree or flower for you both to paint so your loved one doesn't have to struggle with that decision. Guide them and help them as needed to rinse their brush and try new colors. When you're finished, don't forget to sign and date the pictures and find a place to display them in your loved one's room. Having the pictures visible will be a nice reminder of the day you spent together.



 **Go for Ice Cream** - Who doesn't love an ice cream cone on a hot summer day? Make an adventure of it by searching for the best ice cream in the area.

**Arrange Flowers** - This is a simple task your loved one might enjoy if they ever had a passion for flowers, gardening, or other related pastimes. All you need are cut flowers (try your local grocery store), a vase (preferably plastic), and a little patience. As you cut the stems to size, hand them to your loved one and instruct them gently how to arrange each.

**Sit by the Water** - Whether you have access to a lake cottage, a pool, a flowing creek, or a rambling river, find a comfortable place to sit back and relax. Water can be a very calming and soothing element for someone with dementia. You will want to be extra careful not to leave your loved one unattended by water, but the sound of moving water and the reflections cast by the surface of a water body can be comforting and beautiful. If possible, you might even take a little stroll in the sand and let the waves lap at your bare feet.

**Stargaze on a Clear Night** - Summer is one of the most temperate times to sit outside late into the evening. Stargazing can include the use of a telescope, or just the naked eye. Check your library or the Internet for guides on the stars, planets, and constellations visible in your hemisphere at any given time. By following the local news, you can also find out when a meteor shower is likely.



**Visit a Local Museum** - Museums are great options on hot summer days when spending too much time outside could be dangerous or uncomfortable for your loved one. Before heading out, check to see if your local museum offers a senior discount or senior-friendly visiting hours. Plan your parking and mealtimes ahead of time to ensure the day goes smoothly.

With a little bit of planning, you can create a summer filled with fun and meaningful activities for both you and your loved one.

*~Christine Grimaldi, OTR/L, Memory Care Specialist*





### **Florence Summer Concert Series, Florence**

[Concert Series - Florence Civic & Business Association \(florencemass.com\)](#)

Concerts are free and will take place every Thursday from 6:30-8:00pm at the Florence Civic Center from June 1 through August 31. Food trucks will be on-site each and every week as well! Bring your lawn chair, relax, and enjoy the music! See above website for performance lineup.

### **Millpond Live Concert Series, Easthampton**

[Millpond Live | FREE Outdoor Concerts](#)

The Easthampton Parks and Recreation Department will hold free concerts in the park beginning on June 23. July 7; Sarah the Fiddler, August 4; Jimmy Mazz, August 11; Heritage Pops, August 18. Showtimes are 6:30 p.m. Bring chairs and a picnic or enjoy treats from local food trucks. For more information visit [easthamptonma](#).

### **Stanley Park Summer Concert Series, Westfield**

[Stanley Park 2023 Summer Concert Series & Programming - Stanley Park Westfield MA](#)

The fresh air and scenic tapestry of Stanley Park in Westfield serves as the backdrop for its Westfield Bank Sunday Night Concert Series in the Beveridge Pavilion, weather permitting. The Eagles Experience, July 9; Jesse Liam Band, July 16; Eddie Forman Orchestra, July 23; Valley Kats, July 30; Hard Knox Band, Aug. 6; Bad News

Jazz and Blues Orchestra, Aug. 13. Showtime is 6 p.m. and the concerts are free. Chairs and food service will be available until 8:00 p.m. in the Beveridge Pavilion. Concerts are free to the public. If inclement weather, check Stanley Park Facebook page, [stanleypark.org](#) or call for event confirmation, 413-568-9312.

### **Wednesday Folk Traditions at the Porter Phelps, Hadley** [South Hadley Summer Concert Series - South Hadley, MA - The Q 99.7 WLCQ \(theq997.com\)](#)

The 42nd season of Wednesday Folk Traditions at the Porter-Phelps-Huntington House Museum in Hadley kicks off on June 14 and continues every other week with Rebelle, The Pangeans, Klezmir, Tony Vacca with World Rhythms, and Afro-Semetic Experience. Concerts are held in the museum's sunken garden at 6:30 p.m. For prices, dates and more information call 413-584-4699 or visit website at [www.pphmuseum.org](#).

### **Village Commons Summer Concerts, South Hadley**

[South Hadley Summer Concert Series - South Hadley, MA - The Q 99.7 WLCQ \(theq997.com\)](#)

Presented by South Hadley Recreation Department in conjunction with The Village Commons, South Hadley holds its free Summer Concert Series on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. at Village Commons. Midlife Crisis on July 6, Whitaker Hill on July 13, Night Moves on July 20, The Dave Colucci Show on July 27, Moose & the High Tops on August 3, Off the Record on August 10, Peter J. Newland and RadioX on August 17, Cottonwood on August 24, and the Capabilities & Sound Squad of Berkshire Hills Music Academy on August 31. Rain dates are the following Sunday. For more information, call 413-538-5030.

### **For more local events, visit the following websites:**

- <https://explorewesternmass.com>
- <https://visithampshire-county.com>



# BRAIN HEALTH CAN START IN THE KITCHEN

COOKING DEMONSTRATION AND BRAIN-HEALTHY SNACKS PROVIDED

**Friday, August 4, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

*Presented In-Person*

**HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race Street, Holyoke**

To register, email Meghan at [mlemay@alz.org](mailto:mlemay@alz.org)  
or call our 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900

Join us for a presentation on the importance of healthy eating on brain health, and potentially lowering your risk for cognitive decline or dementia. Learn about the research on nutrition, exercise, social engagement and brain health. The program also includes a cooking demonstration and the chance to sample healthy snacks. Presented by the Alzheimer's Association in partnership with the Holyoke Community College MGM Culinary Arts Institute. All are welcome!

alzheimer's  association®

## PIONEER VALLEY MEMORY CARE INITIATIVE

**T**he PVMCI is a coalition of health care and community providers dedicated to empowering and supporting older adults living with dementia and their family caregivers to improve their quality of life. Partnering organizations include Cooley Dickinson Hospital, Cooley Dickinson Medical Group, Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice, Valley Medical Group, the Alzheimer's Association, Highland Valley Elder Services, and local Village Networks, senior services, and Councils on Aging. The PVMCI is a member of the Massachusetts General Hospital Memory Care Initiative.

Based out of the Cooley Dickinson Geriatrics program and led by Rebecca Starr, MD, Medical Director, Geriatrician, the PVMCI serves older adults living with memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's disease and their family caregivers who reside in Amherst, Easthampton and Northampton (including Florence and Leeds). We would be happy to discuss this program and answer any questions that you and/or your loved one may have! You can call **413-582-2357** and leave a message with your contact information. A member of the PVMCI team will return your call.

This program is funded by The Eisenberg Family Trust and made possible in part by a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services through funding under the Federal Older Americans Act. To meet our federal requirements, we have been requested to advise you that "there is no fee for the service; however, a voluntary confidential donation is requested. You will not be refused service for lack of a donation. Your donation helps support the continuation of needed services for elders." Interested in donating? Please call the Cooley Dickinson development office at **413-582-2256**. *Thank you!*