



Collaborating for a Dementia-Friendly Washington: **Building Momentum**

A gathering to promote the growth of dementia-friendly communities in our state

Monday, October 27, 2025

10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



Tukwila Community Center

Organized by the UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center, on behalf of the Washington State Dementia Action Collaborative, with primary funding provided by the Department of Social and Health Services' Home and Community Living Administration, and with a planning committee made up of advisors from across the state.

UW Medicine

MEMORY & BRAIN
WELLNESS CENTER

 **Dementia
Action**
Collaborative
Washington State

 **DSHS**
WASHINGTON STATE
Department of Social
and Health Services

Welcome to Collaborating for a Dementia-Friendly Washington: Building Momentum!



Today's gathering aims to promote the growth of dementia-friendly communities throughout our state, by showcasing promising local and national initiatives and providing a platform to connect, share ideas, and be equipped and inspired for action. After offering three events virtually in 2020, 2021 and 2023, this year is the first time we're offering the event in person. We're glad you're here!

We hope you connect with at least one new person, gain at least one new idea, and leave with at least one concrete step you can take to make your community more dementia-friendly. Enjoy your day!

Sincerely, the event planning team:

Marigrace Becker, UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center

Lynn Crawford, HOPE Dementia Support

Tara Hill Matthews, Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington

LuPita Gutierrez-Parker, Community Advocate

Lindsey Hotchkiss, Pierce County Aging and Disability Resources

Beverly Kimmons, Alzheimer's Association

Lynne Korte, Home and Community Living Administration/DSHS

Kelsey Lovik, Northwest Regional Council

Mary Pat O'Leary, Aging and Disability Services

Juliet Sevume, Washington State Department of Health

Jamie Teuteberg, Washington State Department of Health

Michael Woo, Kin On Health Care Center

Katie Zeitler, UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center

**"Being part of a dementia-friendly community means
it is ok to simply be me, without judgement."**

-Community Member

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Event Agenda

9-10 AM	CHECK-IN & OPEN TIME <i>Refreshments, Sponsor Tables, River Stroll</i>
10-10:15 AM	Welcome & Event Overview Marigrace Becker (she/her) , Conference Coordinator, UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center
10:15-11:15 AM	Keynote & Reflection: Toward a Dementia-Friendly Community In this opening presentation, discover what makes a community dementia-friendly, and why it matters. Be inspired by the success stories of Dementia Friendly Nevada, including grassroots work across urban and rural communities and tribes. Consider takeaways for the dementia-friendly communities movement here in Washington, as we hear reflections from local community members with a personal connection to memory loss or dementia. Casey Venturini (he/him) , MA. Assistant Director, UNR DEER Program; and Director, Dementia Friendly Nevada, Dementia Engagement, Education, and Research (DEER) Program; School of Public Health; University of Nevada, Reno PANELISTS: • Kimberley Rettig, Memory Loss Spokesperson • Frank Cary, Mild Cognitive Impairment Spokesperson • Ginger Opdyke, Caregiver/Community Advocate • Jordan Kvarda (she/her), Community Advocate • Rose Cano, Caseworker Cultural Mediator
11:15-11:30 AM	Program Demonstration – Tai Chi with Kin On Health Care Center Enjoy an active break as you get a taste of tai chi, a program Kin On Health Care Center offers to promote healthy living for older adults and persons living with dementia.

11:30 AM-12:15 PM LIGHTNING TALKS: DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY IN ACTION!

Be inspired by brief talks showcasing dementia-friendly innovations and success stories.

- TALK 1** **Memory Cafe Alliance-** A new national initiative which aims to increase the number of Memory Cafes tenfold in ten years!
Sam Goodrich (she/her), BFA. *Program Director of TimeSlips, Program Manager of Memory Café Alliance.*
- TALK 2** **Amy's Place at Bellis Fair Mall-** A new community center based in Bellis Fair Mall, serving people with dementia and their families.
Bethany Chamberlin (she/her), PhD. *Planner and Interim Dementia Support Program Coordinator, Northwest Regional Council.*
- TALK 3** **SHARP (Sharing History through Active Reminiscence and Photo-Imagery) Program-** A culturally-celebratory brain health program for older African Americans, featuring walking in small groups through historically Black neighborhoods and reminiscing about significant landmarks, events and people.
Anthony Cryer, *Social Worker, Central Area Senior Center.*
- TALK 4** **"Meet Me At The..." Series-** A series featuring inclusive, dementia-friendly outings—such as Meet Me at the Movies, Meet Me at the Wildlife Refuge, and Meet Me at the Museum—designed to foster joy, connection, and community engagement for people living with dementia (PLWD) and their care partners.
Lynn Crawford (she/her), RN, BSN. *Program Manager, HOPE Dementia Support, CDM Caregiving Services.*
- TALK 5** **Partners in Dementia-Northwest-** A program fostering the future of dementia care by pairing first year medical students with mentors and their care partners who live with early memory loss, for social meetups throughout the school year.
Mengru "Ruru" Wang, (she/her/hers), MD MPH. *Clinical Assistant Professor, Division of Gerontology & Geriatric Medicine.*
- TALK 6** **Mobilizing Dementia-Friendly Transportation in Clark County-** A unique initiative using the Dementia Friends program to promote dementia awareness among public transit (C-TRAN) employees.
Chasity Charette (SHER-RET) (she/her), BA *Human Services-*

*Gerontology. Community Services Health Educator, Dementia Friends
Regional Coordinator – SW WA, Area Agency on Aging
and Disabilities of SW WA.*

12:15-12:30 PM BREAK AND SEATING FOR THE MEANINGFUL MEAL

12:30-1:45 PM Meaningful Meal – Facilitated by Marnita’s Table

Enjoy a meal together while exploring what it means to have a dementia-friendly community. In this facilitated experience, Marnita Schroedl of Marnita’s Table will guide us through a time of sharing, learning and peer-to-peer connection. Based in Minnesota, Marnita’s Table specializes in building bridges of understanding across difference. Get to know others and exchange ideas over a delicious meal.

Marnita Schroedl (she/her/they/them), *CEO & Founder, Marnita’s Table.*

1:45-2 PM BREAK/MOVE TO BREAK-OUT ROOMS

2-3 PM Break-Out Sessions

SESSION A Becoming Dementia-Friendly: Action Steps for your Community

What are the key action steps a city, tribe or region can take to become dementia-friendly? Who needs to be at the table, and how do you gather them? What resources are available from Dementia Friendly America and other sources? In this session, learn practical tips and strategies you can apply as your community moves forward in becoming dementia-friendly – from convening stakeholders, to assessing dementia-friendliness and creating an action plan. Includes a local example from Spokane County – Washington’s first dementia-friendly community.

- **Casey Venturini (he/him), MA.** *Assistant Director, UNR DEER Program; and Director, Dementia Friendly Nevada, Dementia Engagement, Education, and Research (DEER) Program; School of Public Health; University of Nevada, Reno*
- **Tara Hill Matthews (she/her),** *Dementia Resource Catalyst, Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington.*

SESSION B Exploring Culturally-Celebratory Dementia-Friendly Programs and Initiatives

Explore two innovative culturally tailored programs for older adults

and people with dementia. Raina Croff will describe the SHARP walking and reminiscence program for older Black adults which is ongoing in Seattle, Portland and Oakland, and strategies for using the resulting oral history narratives to generate community conversations about memory health. Jingyi Li will discuss her work partnering with Kin On to develop and launch Washington's first Memory Café offered in Chinese, including lessons learned and practical tips. Leave inspired by these compelling approaches and ways they can influence dementia-friendly initiatives in your own communities.

- **Raina Croff (she/her), PhD.** *Associate Professor, Oregon Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, Oregon Health & Science University.*
- **Jingyi Li (she/her), PhD, RN.** *Assistant Professor, University of Washington Tacoma, School of Nursing & Healthcare Leadership.*

SESSION C

Memory Cafes: Enhancing Meaningful Connections

Memory Cafes are welcoming gatherings where people living with dementia and their care partners can connect and engage in stigma-free activities. Hear from the national Memory Cafe Alliance and be inspired by a successful local Cafe. This workshop will share the core ingredients of a strong Cafe and provide practical tools to help you launch or sustain one in your community. You'll leave equipped to create spaces of joy, belonging, and connection.

- **Sam Goodrich (she/her), Bachelor of Fine Arts.** *Program Director of TimeSlips, Program Manager of Memory Café Alliance.*
- **Erika Campbell (she/her), Ed.D, MA, LMHC.** *Memory Loss Coordinator, Greenwood Senior Center.*

SESSION D

Experiential Session: Dementia-Friendly Arts Programs (Visual Arts & Seated Dance)

Enjoy a taste of two outstanding dementia-friendly arts programs offered in Washington state! Lea Lovelace will facilitate discussion of an artwork from the Frye Art Museum's galleries, modeling an approach used in their nationally recognized Here Now program. Julia Becke will demonstrate Dancing Together, a seated dance and movement program designed for individuals with dementia, based on an adaptive approach designed by Canada's National Ballet School and featured in

the Fall 2024 Memory Hub Artist-in-Residence program.

- **Lea Lovelace (she/her), MA in Art Education from School of the Art Institute of Chicago.** *Associate Director of Creative Aging Programs, Frye Art Museum.*
- **Julia Becke (she/her), MD.** *Assistant Professor of Clinical Practice, University of Washington.*

3-3:15 PM

BREAK/RETURN TO MAIN ROOM

3:15-4 PM

Taking Action: Next Steps – Individual and Group Reflection

Come together to reflect on the day and what you would like to take back to your own communities.

4-4:30 PM

Gratitude and Closing

Marigrace Becker (she/her), *Conference Coordinator, UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center*

“Simple actions can make a difference.”

-A Dementia Friend

Speaker Bios



Julia Becke (she/her), MD. Assistant Professor of Clinical Practice, University of Washington.

Dr. Becke is an internal medicine physician and dancer who is actively involved in the Seattle dance community both as a mover and, since early 2024, as an instructor of adaptive dance classes for people living with dementia and Parkinsons. She is trained in the “Sharing Dance, Older Adults” format developed by Canada’s National Ballet School as well as Dance for PD. She loves offering moments of creativity and connection for her dancers using movement as a means to share thoughts and experiences that words can’t quite capture.



Marigrace Becker (she/her), MSW. Director, the Memory Hub; Program Manager for Community Education and Impact, UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center.

Marigrace has worked with persons with dementia and caregivers for over 15 years in community settings such as senior centers, adult day programs, and parks and recreation. Currently she develops and facilitates dementia-friendly programs for the UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center while spearheading their collaborative community center on Seattle’s First Hill, the Memory Hub.



Erika Campbell (she/her), Ed.D, MA, LMHC. Memory Loss

Coordinator, Greenwood Senior Center.

Erika Campbell is a geriatric mental health counselor and certified geriatric care manager who provides individual coaching and support for seniors as they navigate transitions and helps families make sound choices for safe living accommodations and enrichment opportunities. Erika facilitates myriad memory loss classes in person and online at Greenwood Senior Center, as well as hosting death cafes and memory cafes for the community at large.



Rose Cano, Caseworker Cultural Mediator, UW Medicine.

Rose Cano has personal experience with dementia, as her mother and sister were both diagnosed during COVID. Her mother passed away at age 98 in 2022, and her little sister continues her journey with early onset dementia in Down's syndrome.



Frank Cary, Mild Cognitive Impairment Spokesperson

Frank Cary is a retired U.S. Army helicopter pilot and Boeing flight instructor. He instructed worldwide, including Germany, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan. He is sharing today from his perspective living with mild cognitive impairment.



Bethany Chamberlin (she/her), PhD. Planner and Interim Dementia Support Program Coordinator, Northwest Regional Council.

Bethany Chamberlin has been working in the aging industry for over 25 years. She has worked in many service roles including assisted living front line worker, senior center programming, HUD Service Coordinator, SNF Social Service Director, adult day program director, county government program coordinator and adjunct gerontology instructor. Her graduate work focused on dementia and continued to remain a priority for her after caring for both her grandfather and mother who had brain change.



Chasity Charette (SHER-RET) (she/her), BA Human Services-Gerontology. Community Services Health Educator, Dementia Friends Regional Coordinator – SW WA, Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of SW WA.

Chasity Charette has served the community through the Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of Southwest Washington since 2017. As the Community Services Health Educator and Dementia Friends Regional Coordinator, she plans and assesses wellness and dementia programs. These initiatives focus on supporting older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers. Her work emphasizes promoting quality of life, enabling aging in place, and fostering a dementia-friendly community.



Raina Croff (she/her), PhD. Associate Professor, Oregon Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, Oregon Health & Science University. Raina Croff is Associate Professor at the Oregon Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. She received her PhD in Anthropology from Yale University and designs brain health interventions that celebrate Black culture, history, and community memory. Dr. Croff was the 2024 Mid-Career Senior Awardee for the American Academy of Neurology's Health Care Equity Research Award and has received funding from the National Institute on Aging, the CDC, the Alzheimer's Association, and others.



Lynn Crawford (she/her), RN, BSN. Program Manager, HOPE Dementia Support, CDM Caregiving Services. Lynn Crawford is the Program Manager for HOPE Dementia Support, where she leads caregiver education, peer support, and community outreach across Clark County. She coordinates the "Meet Me at the..." series, which brings care partners and individuals living with dementia together for inclusive, memory-friendly experiences in local venues like movie theaters and museums. Lynn's background in nonprofit program development and her passion for building dementia-friendly communities guide her work in fostering connection, dignity, and joy.



Anthony Q. Cryer. Social Worker, Central Area Senior Center. Anthony Q. Cryer is a compassionate social worker committed to empowering individuals and communities. With strong skills in case management and outreach, he builds meaningful connections and supports diverse populations. Passionate about social justice, inclusivity, and self-care, Anthony brings empathy, resilience, and dedication to every role. His ability to navigate complex social issues and advocate for change reflects the core values of social work and leaves a lasting impact.



Sam Goodrich (she/her), Bachelor of Fine Arts. Program Director of TimeSlips, Program Manager of Memory Cafe Alliance. Sam Goodrich is the Program Manager of Memory Cafe Alliance. She has designed the newly launched Memory Cafe Alliance training, which supports community leaders to create stigma-free spaces for people living with dementia and their care partners to meaningfully connect. Goodrich holds a BFA in Musical Theater from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and has deep personal experience integrating the arts into the tender work of caregiving.



Jordan Kvarda (she/her), Community Advocate Jordan Kvarda, a 17-year-old senior at North Creek High School, has been exposed to advocacy work for almost eight years. Her father, Kevin Kvarda, passed away in July 2024 from early onset Alzheimer's/dementia. She is currently a Teen Lead at Lorenzo's house for the 2026

Youth Summit promoting young voices in advocacy for support in loss and grief around Alzheimer's/dementia. She has found purpose and solace in using her experience with these diseases to help others, as well as carry on her father's legacy.



Jingyi Li (she/her), PhD, RN. Assistant Professor, University of Washington Tacoma, School of Nursing & Healthcare Leadership.

Jingyi Li is an Assistant Professor at UW Tacoma and a nurse researcher dedicated to promoting healthy aging and dementia-friendly practices in diverse communities. She partners with community-based organizations to co-develop culturally tailored programs, including Washington State's first Chinese-language Memory Café. Her work focuses on culturally responsive health education, family caregiving, and accessible brain health promotion.



Lea Lovelace (she/her), MA in Art Education from School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Associate Director of Creative Aging Programs, Frye Art Museum.

Lea Lovelace is the Associate Director of Creative Aging Programs at the Frye Art Museum and leads a small but mighty team of staff and contracted teaching artists dedicated to fostering creative arts experiences for older adults, including those on the memory loss journey. Since 2010, The Frye has been at the forefront of Creative Aging programming in museums offering dementia-friendly arts programming focused on present moment awareness, community building, and creative engagement.



Tara Hill Matthews (she/her). Dementia Resource Catalyst, Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington.

Tara Hill Matthews, the Dementia Resource Catalyst at Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington, has been a healthcare trainer for over 10 years. Having both worked in dementia care and watched family members experience dementia, she is passionate about reducing dementia stigma, connecting families to resources and advocating for early diagnosis. Tara is a member of the Spokane Regional Dementia Friendly Community and offers no-cost dementia education to community groups and professionals.



Ginger Opdyke. Caregiver/Community Advocate.

As a caregiver to her husband with dementia, Ginger Opdyke longed for dementia programming close to home. In 2023 she organized Whidbey Island Momentia. The group hosts a memory café, a caregivers support group with a reminiscence group, and partners with Northwest Regional Council to offer educational discussions. She loves to connect families with resources that help them navigate the dementia journey. She enjoys gardening, coffee with a friend, and walks at the beach.



Kimberley Rettig, M.Arch./B.A. & Master's Degree-Architecture, Memory Loss Spokesperson.

While living with mild cognitive impairment and profound memory loss, I became challenged by fear of not being able to articulate my story with others around me. Communicating through art opened new opportunities for me to share valued fragments of life in a book called "Art in Mind." The UW Memory Hub provides an enormous sense of community and opportunities for expression, often through unspoken activities. I am personally grateful!



Marnita Schroedl (she/her/they/them). CEO & Founder, Marnita's Table.

Marnita Schroedl began life in foster care, an experience that fueled her lifelong commitment to inclusive belonging. In 2005, she founded Marnita's Table and pioneered Intentional Social Interaction (IZI), a human-centered model that builds bridges across difference using neuroscience, design thinking, and experience engineering. IZI has become a nationally recognized method for catalyzing authentic relationships, reducing disparities, and transforming public engagement—ensuring those historically excluded can lead and shape policy alongside civic and business leaders.



Casey Venturini, (he/him), MA. Assistant Director, UNR DEER Program; and Director, Dementia Friendly Nevada, Dementia Engagement, Education, and Research (DEER) Program; School of Public Health; University of Nevada, Reno.

As Assistant Director of the Dementia Engagement, Education, and Research (DEER) Program in the School of Public Health at the University of Nevada, Reno, Casey Venturini supports individuals, organizations, and communities across Nevada (and beyond) in building capacity for living well with dementia. As part of this work, Casey serves as Director of the statewide Dementia Friendly Nevada initiative, helping communities become more respectful, educated, supportive, and inclusive of people living with dementia and their care partners. Casey received his Bachelor of Arts in Human Ecology from College of the Atlantic, and his Master of Arts in Media Innovation from the University of Nevada, Reno.



Mengru "Ruru" Wang (she/her/hers), MD MPH. Clinical Assistant Professor, Division of Gerontology & Geriatric Medicine, University of Washington.

Mengru "Ruru" Wang is a geriatrician based at Harborview Medical Center and core teaching faculty at the University of Washington School of Medicine. Ruru sees patients in skilled nursing facilities and in the hospital. Ruru enjoys supporting premedical students and medical students in volunteer programs (service learning) in the community and in the hospital and helping to foster intergenerational relationships.

THANK YOU FOR GENEROUS SPONSORSHIP AT THE FOLLOWING LEVELS:

Dementia-Friendly Champion (\$2000)



Community Changemaker (\$1000)



Key Supporter (\$500)



*STAY CONNECTED!

Check our conference webpage for post-event resources:

<https://depts.washington.edu/mbwc/events/dfc> >>>



If you offer dementia-friendly programs or events in your community, you may enjoy the **Dementia-Friendly Washington Learning Collaborative**, a free monthly virtual session to connect and share on this topic:

<https://depts.washington.edu/mbwc/resources/learning-collab>

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS: Marigrace Becker, Conference Coordinator,
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