

Collaborating for a Dementia-Friendly Washington: **Inspiring Change**

Speaker Bios



Alisa Tirado Strayer, MSW, MPH

Alisa Tirado Strayer holds a dual master's degree in social work and public health from the University of Washington. Her studies focused on aging and destigmatizing dementia. From 2018 to 2019, Alisa piloted the Dementia Friends program in Washington State in partnership with the Dementia Action Collaborative and the UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center.



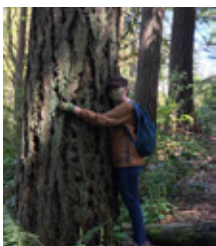
Beth Soltzberg, LICSW, MBA — Director, Alzheimer's/Related Disorders Family Support Program, Jewish Family & Children's Service, Boston

Beth Soltzberg founded and coordinates the Percolator Memory Café Network, a resource for those starting and sustaining Memory Cafés. Beth leads the Dementia Friends Massachusetts public awareness program and is part of the statewide leadership team promoting dementia friendly community initiatives.



Cayce Cheairs — Dementia-Friendly Recreation Specialist, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Cayce Cheairs has worked for a decade with older adults, particularly people living with dementia and their care partners. As Dementia-Friendly Recreation Specialist for the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department, she coordinates creative, social, and outdoor recreation programs including two walking groups. Cayce serves on the Momentia Seattle Stewardship Team, collaborating with community members and other organizations on empowering people with dementia and their loved ones to remain connected and active in the community.



Cecily Kaplan — Senior Programs Director, Phinney Neighborhood Association

Cecily Kaplan has been working for the Phinney Neighborhood Association since 2006 and, with a dynamic staff, has focused on innovation at the Greenwood Senior Center (GSC). The Memory Loss Program at the GSC started the second Alzheimer's Café in the United States. Cecily and the GSC are proud to be one of the founding organizations of Momentia Seattle.



Debi Rinehart — Outreach Technician, Puyallup Public Library

Debi Rinehart has worked at the Puyallup Public Library for 11 years. Two years ago, she began the Memory Café program, a monthly social event for people with Alzheimer's and/or dementia. The group spends an hour together singing songs with piano, doing activities, enjoying snacks and socializing. With a background in programs, music, art, teaching, and music therapy, Memory Café is near and dear to her heart.

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Eileen McKenziesullivan — Former Executive Director, Senior Services for South Sound

Eileen McKenziesullivan enjoyed a 38-year career with Senior Services for South Sound, a multi-service agency serving older adults in Mason and Thurston Counties. As Executive Director of the agency for the past 26 years, she oversaw consistent growth and innovation, including the expansion of services to support people with dementia and their families. Her agency was one of the first in our state to partner with Rotary to offer Music Mends Minds, a national model consisting of a community-based choir or band experience for people with neurocognitive disorders. She looks forward to continuing to play music with the Music Mends Minds group in her retirement.



Erica Phare-Bergh, BMus, DipEd, MMus — Artistic Director, Voices in Motion / University of Victoria

Erica Phare-Bergh is the Artistic Director of Voices in Motion, which is an intergenerational choir for those with memory loss, caregivers, students, and friends. The choir was established as a research project involving four departments at the University of Victoria, BC. There are now six choirs in the Greater Victoria area that follow this model. A conductor, published arranger (Cypress Choral Music), pianist, and adjudicator, Erica earned her Master in Music from McGill University and has directed a wide range of choirs—children, youth, college, community and semi-professional—throughout Canada.



Joel Loiacono, MPA and Masters Level HCA Certificate — Regional Director for Eastern Washington & North Idaho, Alzheimer's Association, Washington State Chapter

Joel Loiacono has been with the Alzheimer's Association for 23 years. He was born and raised in Walla Walla, graduating with a political science degree in 1984 from Washington State University. Joel also holds a master's degree in public administration and a master's level certificate in health care administration from Eastern Washington University. Joel is a recognized regional speaker on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. He has opened and operated a dementia care facility and has over 23 years of experience in providing dementia care training as well as supporting families.



Karen M Winston, MSW — Planning & Development Specialist, Aging and Disability Services

Karen Winston began her career in city government 34 years ago as Legislative Assistant to the late councilman Sam Smith. In 1992, she joined the Seattle Human Services Department, where she works as a Planning and Development Specialist in the Aging and Disability Services division. Karen was instrumental in creating the African American Elders Program, now sponsored by Catholic Community Services, and in creating the Mayor's Council on African American Elders. Both entities focus on addressing the needs of frail, older African Americans in the Seattle/King County area. Some of her other projects include being the Area Plan coordinator for Brain Health, Memory Sunday, and Kinship Care.



Katie Freeman — Memory Loss Program Coordinator, Greenwood Senior Center

Katie has been working with adults with memory loss since 2016. Katie is an experienced group facilitator and is passionate about creating connections with others through art, music, meditation and discussion. During her time at the Greenwood Senior Center, she has facilitated programs such as the longstanding early stage memory loss (ESML) enrichment program The Gathering Place, Creative Journaling for ESML and Dementia Friendly Meditation.

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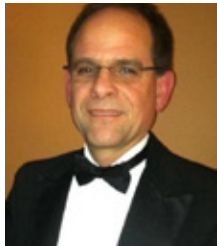
Laurelynn Brooks — Health Advocate/Caregiver and former Science Educator
Joe Liao — Tai Chi Master

Laure's 30-year career as a science teacher focused on how people learn and actualize their development. Her fascination with how our brains work continues. She is on a mission to discover each person's unique gift and contribution to society, especially in her role as family caregiver. Master Joe has studied tai chi since childhood, has taught tai chi for over 30 years, and lives his life practicing its principles of harmony, balance, compassion, diligence and loving-kindness. With the support of Laure's advocacy, he continues to teach the wider community from inside his memory care home. Together they use their gifts to build healthy, connected communities for a dementia-friendly world.



Maria Holt — Program Director, Dementia Services, Lutheran Community Services Northwest

Maria Holt is a native of the Pacific Northwest who has spent the majority of her career working with older adults and their families. She has over 25 years of experience helping families navigate the challenges of aging. As the Program Director for Dementia Services at Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Maria is spearheading implementation of several programs focusing on creating a Dementia Friendly Pierce County, including Dementia Friends. On a personal level, Maria was a caregiver for her mother who had Alzheimer's disease and understands firsthand the joys and frustrations of living with dementia.



Mark Haberman — Planning and Resource Director, Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington

Mark Haberman serves as co-chair of the Spokane Area Dementia Friendly Community initiative and is now in his fourth year at Aging & Long Term Care. Previously, he served for sixteen years as Program Manager and Program Director at Community Action Partnership (Coeur d'Alene, Idaho) leading anti-poverty initiatives. Prior to his work in social services, Mark (a United Methodist clergyperson) served for nearly twenty years in music and program ministry in United Methodist congregations.



Mary Jane Knecht — Manager of Creative Aging Programs, Frye Art Museum

Mary Jane designs, facilitates, and oversees here:now, a museum-based arts engagement program for adults living with dementia and their care partners, and Bridges, home-based creative experiences for adults living with more progressed dementia. She also curates and co-presents Meet Me at the Movies, an interactive film program, and produces educational events on the topic of creativity, aging, and dementia. She received her BA in visual anthropology and poetry from The Evergreen State College and has worked at the Frye Art Museum since 2004. *Photo courtesy of Lou Daprile.*



Meredith Hanley, MSW — Project Director, Dementia Friendly America

Meredith Hanley is the Director of Community Capacity Building with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging in Washington, DC. In this role, she is the Project Director for Dementia Friendly America, which is a multi-sector collaborative on a mission to foster dementia friendly communities across the country. She also provides leadership for Dementia Friends USA, which is part of the global Dementia Friends movement. Meredith also oversees the Information and Planning Program, funded through the U.S. Administration for Community Living, which gathers and disseminates information on Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Native American aging programs through surveys, topical polls, research, and analysis.

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Michael Woo, PhD, MSW, LICSW, NHA — Care Network Director, Kin On Health Care Center

Michael Woo is the Care Network Director for Kin On, an organization specializing in meeting the social service, wellness, in-home, and residential-based long-term care needs of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in the Puget Sound area. He has extensive experience serving the long-term care needs of AAPI older adults in both community and residential settings.



Pam Nolte — Co-Founder and Ambassador, Taproot Theatre

Pam Nolte's career as a theatre professional spans 44 years and over 80 roles. An interest in memory and brain science led her to pioneer "Re-Ignite the Mind," an experience for people with memory loss that incorporates principles of creative play and improv theater. When public spaces closed due to the 2020 pandemic, she created Z-improv, an online participation class for individuals experiencing early stage memory loss.



Peter Trinh — Filmmaker, Director of GAPS

Peter Trinh is a filmmaker and freelance writer based in Seattle. He is a first-generation Asian-American, born to Chinese immigrants from Vietnam. Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, Peter creates film through a cultural lens, exploring identity and tradition. His films have been shown in film festivals across the United States.



Raina Croff, PhD — Assistant Professor of Neurology, NIA Layton Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Center, Oregon Health & Science University

Raina Croff leads the Sharing History through Active Reminiscence and Photo-imagery (SHARP) study, supported by the CDC Healthy Brain Research Network, the Alzheimer's Association, and the National Institute on Aging. She is trained in anthropology with a focus on the histories and cultures of the African Diaspora. Her work is designing culturally engaging brain health interventions that blend individual memory and community memory to bring healthy aging into focus for older adults and their families, and that provides opportunities for emerging scholars of color to engage in aging research.