

# GEM ASKS YOUR HELP TO RECOGNIZE NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS AND FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH THIS NOVEMBER.



October 26, 2020

Dear Friends,

November is *both* National Alzheimer's Awareness Month and National Family Caregivers Month! The theme this year was inspired by Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) "Reducing Stigma by Increasing Knowledge"

GEM, for over 14 years, has provided an annual Candlelighting to "**Honor, Remember and Care!**"

WE HONOR the caregivers and the individuals they support through this disease  
WE REMEMBER those who are living with illness now and those who have passed  
WE CARE for our community and all who provide support by our families and for our families.

Over the years we shared up-lifting music performed by many local musicians including The Outer Banks Chorus. The Chorus has performed for us since 2006.

During the Candle lighting we would each Light a candle and say the name of a loved one. What we learned is almost everyone there had a friend or a loved one who was touched by Alzheimer's.

Our support for care partners and the individuals they care for will be a little different this year. Due to Covid we are not able to host this event live, we are requesting that each faith community select a Sunday Service in November and dedicate a song and light a candle for our loved ones, those caring for an individual, experiencing memory loss, or those who have passed.

Some suggestions for songs include: You'll Never Walk Alone; You're the Wind Beneath My Wings; Bridge Over Troubled Water; From His Window; Memories. Or select a song that has meaning for your congregation.

We can share a moment to recognize our families with a song and by lighting a candle. We invite you to be a part of it! Please call Gail (252-480-3354) and let her know if you can participate this year?

***Did you know*** Families provide at least 80% of all long term care—an enormous contribution to the long term care system. In North Carolina, 1.7 million adults are caring for an older person—more than 28% of the adult population. Over 40% of North Carolina caregivers take care of someone with a memory disorder like Alzheimer's disease. Their "caregiving career" will last an average of 8 years but may be as long as 20.

One in ten Americans say that they have a family member with Alzheimer's and one in three know someone with the disease. Alzheimer's disease is now the fifth leading cause of death in the United States following heart disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, and chronic lower respiratory diseases.

In North Carolina alone, an estimated 180,000 have the disease. This number is expected to increase to 210,000 residents in 2025. More than 70% of people with Alzheimer's disease live at home and are cared for by family and friends.

Please join us in November and light a candle, sing a song, to acknowledge the impact of this disease! Our hope is that the flame of each candle will enlighten our communities and state leaders as to the growing numbers of those living with Alzheimer's and the critical need to support all family caregivers.

Gail Sonnesso  
GEM Adult Day Services, Inc.  
252-480-3354