



Autumn 2023



From The Manager

We have kicked off 2023 with all our Groups full and having some exciting outings during January and February. There have been changes to some of the venues for other activities we undertake this year and we are very grateful to Denis and the St Johns Club for accommodating three different groups each month.

Our first Whānau Wellbeing & Dementia Education Programme has started, all be it a week late, due to the weather conditions and the closure of State Highway 54. It is being held in Raetihi and we had a good turnout of people the first day. There is already a long list of people who have shown an interest in attending the next education programme in Whanganui, which will run in April/May.

Earlier in the year we received a generous donation from a member with the wish for the money to be used in helping people in the Whanganui area. If this is something you would like to do or leave a bequeath to Alzheimers Whanganui, then it is best to contact our Whanganui office so that we are able to provide our bank account details. That way you are ensuring the money is put to use locally for the benefit of people living in our region.

On a sadder note, this is the last newsletter that Sharon will be putting together. After eight years in her current role she has decided to retire. We will all miss having Sharon in the office and for those of you who have been fortunate to sample her wonderful baking (I can't stop thinking of the sponge cake), that will be missed also. She has always been willing to go the extra mile for people in helping them in whatever way possible. She will not be lost to us completely as she will still run the Education programme. Thank you for your wonderful contribution to Alzheimers Whanganui and enjoy your retirement Sharon.

Michael

UPCOMING EVENTS

Alzheimers Whanganui Inc.

5/136 Victoria Avenue

Whanganui 4500

Phone: 06 345 8833

Charity Register No: CC10907

www.alzheimerswhanganui.org.nz

Office Hours

Monday—Friday (9.00am -3.00pm)

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 28th March 2023

5.30 pm

Christchurch Community Centre

(Lower Lounge)

Visitors most welcome

Education Programme For Support People Whanganui

Details on page 5

Carer Morning Tea Support Group

Held at Alzheimers Office

Friday 10.00—11.00 a.m.

(Last Friday of each month)

28th April

26th May

30th June

Further enquiries please
phone our office.

'Whānau Wellbeing and Dementia' Education Programme

Designed for the Carer's and those supporting people with Dementia

Our next programme is in Whanganui

(We are holding the same programme both morning & evening.

The morning session is full, but there is still vacancies available for the evening session)

VENUE: Alzheimers Office, 5/136 Victoria Avenue, Whanganui

DATE: Thursday's from 13th April to 18th May 2023 (6 consecutive weeks)

MORNING PROGRAMME: 10.00 am—12.00 noon (full—no vacancies)

EVENING PROGRAMME: 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm (vacancies available)

If you are interested, please register **before 24th March 2023:** (limited numbers available)

Or if you require further information, please contact our office

Phone (06) 345 8833 or email: admin@alzheimerswhanganui.org.nz

The Education Programme is funded by a Contract with Te Whatu Ora Whanganui

'Alzheimer's Disease'

Where did the name originate from?

In 1906 'Alzheimer's Disease' was named after Doctor Alois Alzheimers, in recognition and acknowledgement of his achievements in the medical field.

Dr Alzheimers—a Clinical Psychiatrist and Neuroanatomist, was particularly interested in a patient who had been admitted into an institution, with symptoms including memory loss, problems with language, and unpredictable behaviour. What concerned him, was the symptoms were progressively increasing and they were happening at such a young age (50 year old woman):

Extensive interviews with the young woman were carried out over the following year, where she was asked to recall common facts about her life and cognitive tests of her understanding.

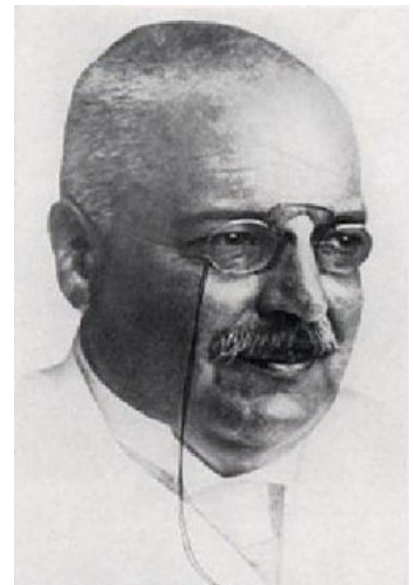
Questions were asked like 'How old are you? What is your husband's name? Where are you right now?'

When unable to respond, her answer would commonly be, "I have lost myself, so to say."

Dr Alzheimers also observed that as well as feeling disorientated, she was often unable to identify names of different things or objects. He also noted that her abilities worsen at night time.

After five years in the institution and unfortunately no treatment for her symptoms, her cognitive ability seriously declined and she passed away.

Dr Alzheimers requested the patient's brain and medical records for further studying. After an autopsy and examining her brain, he observed that it had shrunk in certain places and identified numerous abnormal deposits. Therefore plaques and tangles became the two hallmarks of Alzheimer's Disease. His dedication and observation paved the way for more studies on the disease, which was soon named after him.



'Group Outings'

Social stimulation is a very important part of our support for people with dementia, also those who are socially isolated. Both Fiona (Diversional Therapist) & Lynn (Community Support Coordinator) put a lot of time, thought and planning into all our group outings.

We also have a team of wonderful volunteers who help out with the outings. A huge **THANK YOU! to our volunteers**, because without them, we wouldn't be able to continue holding the groups.

We currently have seven different groups as listed:

- **4 Group Outings** (Fern, Paua & Tui in Whanganui and Kiwi Group in Marton): Each group consists of 7-8 members, 2 volunteers and one staff member. These groups meet twice each month, where we hire a van and get 'out & about' in our community. Our outings involve an extensive range of venues and activities.
- **Over a Cuppa** - Ladies enjoy company, friendship and social get together over a cuppa.
- **Men's Pool & Pint** - Comradeship for a group of men over pool & pint (or a cuppa)
- **Music & Movement Group** - a combined group where there are lots of laughs & fun activities.

We recently sent our Annual Survey to 'The Group' Members. Comments made were very encouraging to receive such positive feedback. We would love to share some of the comments from our Group members:

Q: Why do you like coming out with us?

- *Enjoy the groups company and the variety of outings. Staff members are excellent.*
- *Meeting people. Going to interesting places. Meeting up with friends.*
- *A lot of the places I haven't been or done before and it's fun.*
- *Change of scenery, both physical and personal.*
- *Company of others.*

Q: What activities do you enjoy the best?

- *Enjoyed all the outings so far because they are different. Really enjoyed the riding for the disabled.*
- *Enjoy everything.*
- *Can't remember.*
- *Going to places I have never been to before & also places that I had not visited for a very long time.*
- *Van outings.*

Q: How do the Group outings help you?

- *Enable me to do something with other people.*
- *Great to be with a group who have the same or similar problems to myself.*
- *Enjoy the days outing with others.*
- *Meeting up with people, something to look forward to.*
- *I get to meet other people.*
- *Seeing interesting places and activities.*

(continued on next page)

'Group Outings'

Q: How do the Group outings help your support person?

- *Giving them a break!*
- *(Spouse's comment) Enjoy a day on my own, knowing my husband is being taken care of.*
- *They give my carer same time to themselves.*
- *My wife very happy for the time out.*
- *Out of sight – out of mind. Relief.*
- *He has enjoyed doing something and enjoys the company of the other men.*

Q: Other comments:

- *Alzheimers Whanganui provide a very good service which is very much appreciated. Thank you all.*
- *Helps me feel I am not on my own.*
- *I would like to see things like farm machinery, vintage vehicles, etc. if possible.*
- *Sharing experiences with like people. I am very grateful for all the support I receive from everyone. Thank you.*
- *Thank you / Thank you / Thank you.*



Environmental Triggers

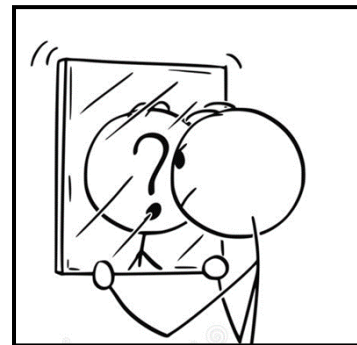
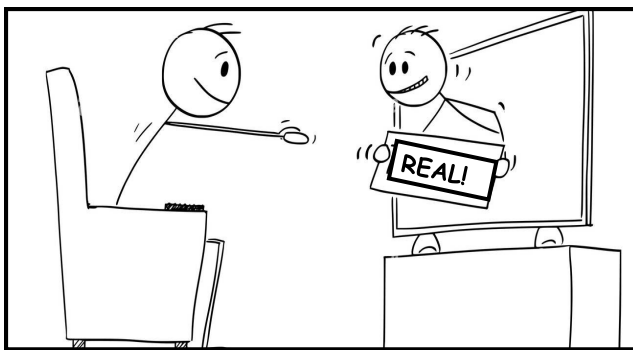
Some people with dementia can be extremely sensitive to their surroundings and this could affect the way they react e.g. unsettled, agitated, frightened, etc.

Trigger - Environmental hallucinations and misperceptions

Hallucinations are the perception of things that are not there, and truly believing what they see or hear is real. They may be triggered by something in the environment.

Examples:

- Some people have difficulty distinguishing reality from representation. They may perceive family photos in the room as people watching their every move, even watching them get undressed. Also mistake people on T.V. for being real.
- Patterned carpet, curtains or furnishings can be seen as frightening 'creatures, spiders, birds, etc.'.
- A room with poor lighting where it's hard to distinguish an object, may appear to be someone else hiding in the room and feel they may want to harm them or take their belongings.
- They may not recognise their own reflection in a mirror or window.



Problem solving tips:

- Mum refused to get undressed (thought people were watching her). Once I turned the photos in her room over on the wall, she relaxed.
- Now that the room is well lit, Mum doesn't see the scary shadows anymore.
- Dad would get upset when watching T.V. especially when someone got shot. Now we watch only good old comedies and fun programmes.
- Dad kept telling me to go behind the T.V. because there's real people there. Now we have got the T.V. right up against the wall and good lighting.
- Mum was really afraid and even rang the Police, because there was a stranger in her bedroom. It turned out that she no longer recognised her own reflection in the mirror. So we removed the mirror from her bedroom and there were no more strangers.

Trigger - Noise

Everyday noises can affect people in different ways. Some people can be super-sensitive or over stimulated with loud noises or lots of different noises at the same time. Others may not actually hear the sound but something else e.g. a phone ringing and to them it may sound like a dog barking. Or music playing and to them it may sound like a lot of people talking.

Problem solving tips:

- My hubby would get so agitated when I vacuumed. Yeah, I realised they can be really loud, so now I sweep with a broom, or wait until he's outdoors, and now often leave it and tell myself, "It doesn't matter, it will still be there tomorrow."
- Mum jumped every time the phone rang, so I reduced the sound volume. We can still hear it, but it doesn't bother her anymore.
- Dad didn't like going into the lounge as the music was really loud. Now we've turned the volume down and play soft background music. Now it's all good.

This will be my last 'Alzheimers Newsletter' as I will be retiring as Office Manager at the end of March.

However, I will still be continuing with the Education Programme. I'm not going to tell you how old I am, (but I've got a whole year & few months before I get my 'Gold Card').

This definitely has not been an easy decision, as this coming June I would have been here 10 years. I first started with Alzheimers Whanganui in June 2013 as a Community Coordinator where I facilitated a new group for outings.

(My first question was, "Can I bike to work?"). I've thoroughly enjoyed meeting lots of new people (staff, volunteers and members) & put my 'creative hat' on, so we had such a variety of activities and outings.

Then in Feb 2015 I applied for the Office Admin position (as Jill was leaving after 11 years). I had a little bit of time with Jill before she retired (about 2 part days); and one hour with the Accountant to give me a quick lesson using 'Bank Link': Back then the Treasurer for Alzheimers Committee was Garth Barlow, and I asked him if he remembered me. Actually he didn't—but I can't blame him, cause it was nearly 37 years ago when I used to work for him at Brandon, Barlow & Roddick (Accountants).

Prior to coming into the office, I worked as a Care Giver in the community for 19 years (cared for my Nana, Father in-law, and many lovely people for years). Also worked with a lot of people with dementia who were living in their own home or with a support person (awesome to have quality time with each person)

I've really had the best of both worlds (office admin & working with people).

There's been a lot of changes throughout the time I have been here both with members, management & staff. I've set up good systems over the years, so I could '*work smarter not harder*': Also my policy has always been '*Head down! Tail up! And just get on with it*'.

My time here has been extremely fulfilling, knowing that I've been part of a team supporting those affected by dementia.

Sharon



A Big **Thank you!**

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the following organisations that have provided Grants, Donations, and Services to Alzheimers Whanganui.

- **Te Whatu Ora Health NZ** - For the following Contracts with **Te Whatu Ora Whanganui**:
 - Social Programme Living Well With Dementia / Dementia Education for whānau /
 - Community Liaison / Older Person Non-Residential Care Facility.
- **St Johns Club** - providing their venue for three of our groups (Music & Movement; Over A Cuppa and 'Pool & Pint')
- **Ricoh Wanganui** - donating our photocopier, charging minimal operating costs.
- **Good Bitches Baking** - wonderful ladies who do home baking for our group members.
- We wish to thank the following businesses for supporting us by having a collection tin at their counter: **Four Square St Johns (Great North Road) and Aramoho Mags & Lotto (140 Somme Parade)**

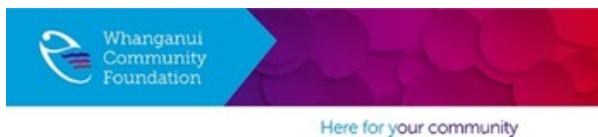
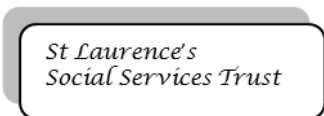
If you would like to support us by having a collection tin; please contact our office.



Thank you for your support



RICOH



Manager
Alzheimers Whanganui
5/136 Victoria Avenue
Whanganui 4500

I would like to support Alzheimers Whanganui by becoming a Member

Membership **\$30.00** (includes \$3.91 GST) (January To December / per calendar year)

I would like to make a donation

Donation \$ _____

Internet banking:
Account Name: Alzheimers Whanganui Inc.
Account Number: 03 0791 0296329 00