



## The Alzheimer's Update

A Local Organization Helping Local Families

Spring 2017

### Forecast: 60% Chance of Wandering

If there is a 60% chance of rain do you prepare and consider the weather in your plans? Would you leave your car windows rolled down? After all, there is a 40% chance it won't rain.

Caregivers of dementia patients take a similar gamble when they don't consider the very real possibility their loved one with dementia will wander – 60% of dementia patients wander at some point and many do so repeatedly. This is the most dangerous, and potentially deadly dementia behavior.

**EVERY PERSON WITH DEMENTIA WHO CAN WALK OR DRIVE IS AT RISK OF BECOMING LOST**

Alzheimer's of Central Alabama is working to reduce the dangers of wandering by providing Project Lifesaver bracelets that emit a radio tracking signal. **The bracelets have a 100% success rate in Alabama for safe returns.** ACA bracelets are available in Jefferson and Bibb Counties. Most Alabama Sheriff's departments and the Alabama State Troopers provide bracelets. The bracelets are not intended for patients who are driving because they can quickly get out of range.

Every person with dementia who can walk or drive is at risk of becoming lost which can lead to dangerous consequences. Every person with dementia who is still driving should be protected by a GPS system that can help their family or law enforcement locate them if they become lost.

The nature of this disease creates unique challenges to locating a wandering patient. They can easily become disoriented and can get lost in places that we would normally consider familiar, like their neighborhood or even their local Walmart. They may not hear or respond to attempts to call out to them. Patients are vulnerable and can succumb to the elements quickly.

Nothing takes the place of caregiver vigilance – which means the best way to keep your loved one safe from wandering is to be constantly aware and use your eyes and ears. It can happen at any stage of the disease. The factors that often lead to wandering are restlessness, disorientation and boredom.



Project Lifesaver Bracelet

#### COMMON CAUSES OF WANDERING:

- Searching for something or someone familiar or simply trying to satisfy a basic need, such as hunger or thirst—but they've forgotten what to do or where to go. Many wanderers are looking for a bathroom.
- Escaping from something like too much stimulation—a loud TV or a lively conversation, even the noise of pots and pans in the kitchen.
- Reliving the past by trying to go to work or looking for children.

#### STRATEGIES THAT MAY HELP

- Immediately redirect to a productive activity or exercise if the patient is pacing or restless. Offer constant reassurance.
- Look for patterns. If the patient gets restless in the late afternoon be prepared every afternoon. Go for a walk or a drive. Have a lemonade break. Find what works to distract.
- Never leave the patient alone or unattended. Be sure neighbors know to call if they see the patient unattended.
- Install child-safety devices or alarms in your home to keep doors and windows secured.



#### PRODUCTS THAT MAY HELP

**Project Lifesaver bracelets** emit a radio tracking signal. These may be available through ACA, your local Sheriff's Department or the State Trooper Association. Cost for the first year is \$300. [www.alzca.org](http://www.alzca.org)

**The Alzheimer's Store** offers a range of products including GPS watches, door alarms and visual deterrents, as well as a host of other products designed to make your life easier. GPS watches offer the added benefit of alerting the caregiver by text if the patient has left a pre-established boundary, like the house or yard. [www.alzstore.com](http://www.alzstore.com)

**GizmoGadget**, a GPS watch and locator, with lots of interesting features, \$149.99 with a \$5 per month fee. Available from Verizon



#### Alzheimer's of Central Alabama

#### In 2016, we provided Central Alabama families:

- 57,600 scholarship hours of respite care at adult day care centers
- 95,040 continence products, including gloves & wipes, delivered to homes
- 73 Project Lifesaver bracelets for patients at risk for wandering
- 2,763 hours of community education for families and professionals
- 727 hours of support group counseling
- 14,000 newsletters distributed
- Funding of our 24th research grant at an Alabama university

Your donations and our invaluable community partners make these programs possible. Thank you for believing in our mission and being a part of the good work we are doing!

#### ACA Development Campaign

Gifts & pledges, Oct. 2016-Feb. 2017

#### ENDOWMENT LEGACY CLUB (\$1,000+ TO ENDOWMENT)

Tommy and Cecile Brigham	Troy and Ann Haas
Hester Corinne S. Burns	Bill and Meg North
Brownell Travel	TCC General Contractors
Skip and Tanya Cooper	

#### LEADERSHIP GIFT CLUB (\$1,000+ TO ANNUAL FUND)

Hal Abroms	Engel Family
Pam, Tom, Ben, Gwen, and Sam Arenberg	Ann and Troy Haas
Susan Arenberg	Mike and Sarah Harfield
Steven Arenberg	Lindy Harrell
Christy and Allen Baynes	Carolyn and John Josey
Albert Bedran	Louis Knight
Claude Bennett Family Foundation	Heather Lowder
Herman and Emmie Bolden	Susan and Tom Lowder
Nan Broughton	Brother Leon Zalenski
Hester Corinne S. Burns	Miller and Phil Piggott
Suzanne and Robert Dickinson	Virginia G. Wesley
Doug and Kathryn Eckert	Susan and Greg Womack



[alzca.org](http://alzca.org)



205.871.7970 or 866.806.7255



[facebook.com/alzca](https://facebook.com/alzca)





# Alzheimer's of Central Alabama

**Picnic in the Garden**  
**Saturday, May 6, 2017**  
 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. • Iron City  
 513 22nd Street South 35233

**Garden Art Party**

Tickets  
 (205) 871-7970  
 or [www.alzca.org](http://www.alzca.org)

**Upcoming Events**

May 6 – Garden Art Party - Iron City

August 29 – Lunch and Learn at Danberry - Inverness

September 7 – Glow for a Cure, night golf tournament - Highland Park Golf Course

October 17 – Alzheimer's in Alabama, ACA's annual conference - Canterbury United Methodist Church

October 30 – Lunch and Learn - St. Martin's

November 3 – Lights out for Alzheimer's - Atrox Factory

November 4 – Walking to Remember inside the Riverchase Galleria

November 12 – Day of Prayer

## Our 2017 Corporate Sponsors



BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama

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Alzheimer's of Central Alabama

Post Office Box 2273  
Birmingham, Alabama 35201-2273  
(205) 871-7970  
[www.alzca.org](http://www.alzca.org)

Located at:  
300 Office Park Drive, Suite 225  
Birmingham, Alabama 35223

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## Ten Commandments of Alzheimer's Caregiving

**1. I am still me...** I may forget parts of my life but I will never forget that I am an adult deserving dignity. Neither should you. My memories may go but my personality stays.

**2. Treat me like an adult.** My behavior may be child-like, but NEVER treat me like child. No baby talk!

**3. Come into my world, I can't function in yours.** This means that I can't remember what happened 5 minutes ago but I can remember something from 50 years ago. Please don't argue with me, I don't understand why you are angry and I feel terrible for hours afterwards.

**4. Actions are better than words.** No big explanations, a gentle touch or hug and a warm smile go a long way.

**5. Give me a daily, consistent schedule.** Consistent schedules tap the memories that I

have and strengthen the parts of the brain that are still working. I feel better with schedules, even if I cannot remember them.

**6. Give me nature.** I need fresh air and sunshine. Please make sure I get out every day, even if it is on a porch or patio, or near a big bay window, where I can watch the birds.

**7. Give me pleasurable activities.** I may forget that you took me out to lunch, or we went fishing, but the pleasurable feelings and emotions that came from that experience will last for hours.

**8. Give me social interaction on my terms.** I can't handle large gatherings but I can visit with a couple of people, especially if they are following Commandment #3. Again, I may forget that the grandkids came to visit, but the pleasurable feelings and emotions from that visit will persist hours after the visit.

**9. Keep me safe.** That means giving me the freedom to move about my home as much as possible without falling or getting hurt. You may need to be creative, like hanging pictures of a bookshelf over a door to keep me from leaving.

**10. Keep me healthy.** Help me to eat good foods to stay as healthy as possible, and help me to avoid infections.

*Submitted by Dr. Rita Jablonski-Jaudon, an Associate Professor at the UAB School of Nursing. In addition to teaching and research responsibilities, Dr. Jablonski-Jaudon is a nurse practitioner at the Kirklin Clinic's Memory Disorder Clinic.*