

MARCH 2022

I'M STILL HERE

Newsletter

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A Message From The Leadership

Dear Friends,

I'm Still Here is launching this first newsletter to connect with all those who are committed to improving the lives of persons living with dementia and their care partners. The I'm Still Here approach helps people to stay engaged with family and community through our support for arts and culture programs.

The I'm Still Here Board of Directors is renewing and strengthening our organization with an eye toward expanding our reach. There is no cure for Alzheimer's and many other dementias, but our nonpharmacological approach helps reduce agitation, aggression and other symptoms of dementia so that people can live more meaningful lives.

We want to thank all those who have supported our efforts to help people remain engaged in their communities in a meaningful way. Our 2022 Innovation Programs grants competition is underway. You can help us expand our reach in bringing hope and joy to those living with dementia and their families. Please join us with your continued support.

Jerry Pucillo, MA
Chairman, Board of Directors

Our Mission: To promote the positive I'm Still Here approach through programs that enable persons living with dementia to flourish.



Our Programs

I'm Still Here is providing seed funding for four new community programs to engage persons living with dementia and their care partners. These programs are reaching hundreds of people living with dementia and helping them to remain connected to their communities and families.

2021 Innovation Programs

The Poydras Home in New Orleans, LA, created the **Man's Best Friend program** by partnering with a local animal rescue organization. Persons living with dementia groom rescued dogs for adoption into their "forever homes." The program touches each person's hard-wired need to help others as well as being touched by animal companionship and enduring social, emotional, and tactile experiences.

The Town of Arlington, (MA) offers **Virtual Yoga Classes** which engage persons living with dementia at home and their care partners in weekly online yoga classes led by instructors with specialized dementia training. The program helps to reach shut-ins during these COVID years and makes the classes available to neighboring towns and cities.

The Art Is...In program, created by the **University of Chicago Medicine Memory Center and GoldMind Arts** has mailed over 400 curated art kits to couples with a member living with dementia. The kits include art materials and instructions to help couples engage in meaningful art projects in their own homes.

The Martha's Vineyard Center for Living developed the **Community Social Connections Program** which offers social events throughout the community for persons living with dementia—mostly living at home and getting out infrequently—and their care partners. Monthly outdoor events have offered live music in a local park, riding stable and museum. The program reduces stigma through community awareness while promoting dignity, supporting independence, and fostering community engagement.



Windrush Farm

We are pleased to highlight the **Equine Therapy Program** at **Windrush Farm**, in Andover, MA, launched in 2020. Small groups of persons living with dementia make weekly visits to this friendly therapeutic horse farm to participate in a carefully designed equine engagement program. Over a series of weeks, participants are guided by a trained horseperson to get to know "their" horse by name and for the horse to get to know them. Under careful guidance, they groom, saddle, bridle and walk their horse until they turn over the horse to a person who is living with autism to ride around the indoor ring. This program creates relationships not only with the horses and the companions, but also with accompanying family members, adds to procedural memories, and draws on each person's hard-wired need to help others.

Founder's Spotlight

John Zeisel's passion for helping people living with dementia knows no bounds. As he wrote in his groundbreaking book: *I'm Still Here: A New Philosophy of Alzheimer's Care*, "...no one welcomes living with Alzheimer's, . . . Nevertheless, *I'm Still Here* looks at the positive side of this illness: the half-full rather than the half-empty glass. I advocate treating people living with Alzheimer's as "people" first and then as those with an illness." He goes on to advocate for inclusion, engagement, respect, caring, and much more to improve the lives of those diagnosed with dementia and their care partners.



John Zeisel

John has devoted his career to making a difference for thousands of people affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias. Designs for the living environment and utilization of arts and culture that engage people in relationships, family and community have been his life's work. Learn more about John at www.imstillhere.org



Deke Cateau

In The News

Brush Fire: COVID-19 and Our Nursing Homes

I'm Still Here Board member Deke Cateau has published a new book on the challenges nursing homes have experienced during COVID-19. *Brush Fire: COVID-19 and Our Nursing Homes* chronicles the experience of one of Atlanta's oldest and most respected senior living facilities. Most importantly, *Brush Fire* shows how the industry can emerge out of the pandemic and be stronger than ever.

More From The Leadership

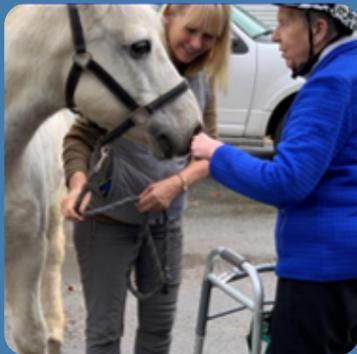
It has been my honor to work with the *I'm Still Here* organization for the last 10 months as Executive Director. The ideals, goals and principles of *I'm Still Here* have captivated my attention and drawn me into a wonderful group of individuals who, like me, have cared for loved ones living with dementia.

Dementia touches everyone, whether in direct caregiving, in family, or in community. The innovative programs that have been supported by *I'm Still Here* in 2021 show how one can remain engaged rather than relegated to a life of isolation without hope. We seek to bring dignity, meaning and hope in embracing those living with dementia as well as their care partners.

Please join our community of hope and giving. Our passion for *I'm Still Here* is boundless.

Mary Anne Grant
Executive Director

Windrush Farm



*We would
like to thank
our friends at
Windrush
Farm!*



Thank you to all of our supporters...I'm Still Here depends on the support of individual donors and foundations in making a difference in the quality of life of people living with dementia.

Please visit the I'm Still Here website to learn more about our life-enhancing programs and to make your contribution to help us continue our grassroots programs: www.imstillhere.org



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