

# ENGAGE

The quarterly caregiver newsletter from AGE of Central Texas

*"Tackling the challenges of aging with expert solutions"*

Spring 2015

| [www.AGEofCentralTX.org](http://www.AGEofCentralTX.org)



## Portrait of a Struggle: *Still Alice* and Early Memory Loss

By K.C. Lawrence

The feature motion picture film *Still Alice* is based on a book about a Harvard linguistics professor diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer's disease and chronicles the rapid progression of the disease from her point of view. During the course of two years, the disease takes her from working full-time to not recognizing her children.

The story explores her struggles at work, changes in her relationships, and how she grapples with losing her independence. Most of all, the story shines light on the changes in how a person with cognitive impairment views herself, those close to her, and her world.

The movie mirrors the experiences of our participants in AGE of Central Texas' Early Memory Loss Support Program. This program provides early intervention for people with memory loss, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease. On a weekly basis, our participants meet to share strategies, activities, and support each other through the changes they are experiencing.

In the book, Alice notices that those closest to her can't understand exactly what she is going through, so she launches a support group. She finds comfort in sharing her struggles with others, as well as finding a safe place where it's okay to forget words or lose your train of thought when speaking.

AGE's Early Memory Loss Support Program provides similar benefits for our participants. While participating in a brain booster game, they laugh together as they work to remember the name of a famous actress. As they



discuss current events, participants wait patiently if someone needs a moment to find a word. After a painting activity, participants share what they have made and openly admire each other's artwork. In a support group, participants share their frustrations, challenges they are facing, and strategies they use to cope.

Some participants say that they have accepted their diagnosis and share how they are able to come to terms with slowly losing their independence. Others have been diagnosed recently, and say that they grapple with how to make sense of the changes they are experiencing. Participants joke together about their memory loss, finding humor in even the most heartbreaking of situations.

Participants are adamant about remaining positive and say that they focus each day on how to make the most of the time they have left. They, like Alice, learn to redefine themselves as the disease progresses. It is truly inspirational to witness.



The impact of the disease on caregivers cannot be underestimated. AGE's Early Memory Loss Support Program offers a monthly support group for caregivers, who face not only the challenges of taking care of someone 24/7, but also grieve the relationship they used to have with that individual. Wives, sisters, husbands, sons, and daughters lament that they can no longer share their thoughts with their loved ones, because their loved ones can no longer understand complex concepts. These strong caregivers bond through their shared struggles, including feeling lonely and overwhelmed.

We hope that through our program, participants and caregivers find their load a bit lighter. Like Alice, they find camaraderie with others facing similar challenges. We are grateful that *Still Alice* is helping illuminate a population that is often overlooked in our youth-focused culture. As Julianne Moore, the star of the movie, recently said in an interview, it is through facing our own mortality that we learn to truly treasure life: "You learn how much you love to live in the face of loss."

*Writer K.C. Lawrence is the Program Director for the Early Memory Loss Support Program at AGE of Central Texas.*



## Honorees Announced for the 2015 AGE Awards Dinner

The 21st Annual AGE Awards Dinner will be held on Thursday, April 23rd, at the beautiful new Brodie Homestead. The annual Awards Dinner recognizes outstanding achievements by individuals and local organizations whose leadership and contributions have made a significant impact on the quality of life for aging adults and their caregivers in Central Texas.

We are excited to announce the 2015 Honorees:

- **Terrell Blodgett - Willie Kocurek Vital Aging Award:** Honors an older community member who exemplifies the concept of vital aging and who is accomplished in the area of self-determination, self-sufficiency, civic engagement, and quality of life
- **Theresa Bond-Zelazny, founder Mobile Art Program - Bert Kruger Smith Vision Award:** Honors a person or organization whose vision has enhanced the older adult community and who has shown foresight and energy in implementing programs, services, or legislation that serves older adults
- **Topfer Family Foundation - Philanthropy Award:** Honors a person or organization whose extraordinary generosity has supported work benefiting older adults
- **Robin Friar - Rose Professional Spirit Award:** Honors a person whose professional commitment goes above and beyond his or her job description to impact the lives of older adults
- **Richard Bolton - Community Service Award:** Honors a person or organization who has volunteered in support of the older adult community

To learn more about the 2015 AGE Award Honorees, and for information about purchasing tickets to the 2015 Awards Dinner, visit [www.AGEofCentralTX.org](http://www.AGEofCentralTX.org).

## AGE Computer Lab Offering Health Technology Classes in April

The AGE Computer Lab will celebrate Health Month this April with low-cost seminars designed to help seniors and their caregivers in using technology to improve their health. The classes will be offered in the state-of-the-art AGE Computer Lab, located in the AGE Building at 3710 Cedar Street in Austin.

### Medical Information on Your iPhone

Tuesday, April 21st,  
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm (\$25):

Be prepared for a medical emergency or the next routine doctor's visit by learning how to keep medical information available on your iPhone or smart device. Be prepared in advance to share critical health information—such as allergies, medications, and advance directives—with emergency responders.



### Internet Brain Fitness Resources

Thursday, April 16th, 10:00 am to Noon (\$25):

Use it or lose it — computer-based brain training programs are a popular way to stimulate your brain. Review and compare common resources available on-line, and applications for both smart phones and tablets, designed to help keep your brain active and healthy.

For more information and to register for classes, visit [www.AGEComputer.org](http://www.AGEComputer.org)

## Get More Caregiver Resources, Delivered to Your In-Box!

Sign up for the AGE of Central Texas  
*Caregiver Communicque*

Register with your  
Smart Device



Or sign-up online at  
[www.AGEofCentralTX.org](http://www.AGEofCentralTX.org)





## Does Licensing Make a Difference in Adult Day Health Care?

By Cindy Fisher

How does someone go about deciding if an Adult Day Health Center is a good fit for a loved one? There are many personal and financial factors to weigh, but one important consideration is the question of licensing.

For many people, entrusting a loved one's well-being to strangers is a difficult decision. Is the facility safe and fully prepared to care for its members physical and emotional needs? Can the center respond quickly and effectively to any medical emergency? Are the employees properly screened, trained and held to the highest standards?

The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) licenses and surveys Adult Day Health Center facilities to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations and laws to protect individuals who are receiving these long-term care services.

A few of the many requirements that licensed Adult Day Health Centers must follow include:

- Timely reporting measures for concerns of abuse and neglect
- Criminal background checks of all employees
- Staffed positions with required skills — including a program director, a full-time nurse, and an activity director
- A staff to client ratio of at least one-to-eight

And DADS conducts annual inspections to guarantee these and other policies and procedures are followed to ensure client safety and well being.



AGE of Central Texas has provided licensed, vibrant adult day health services in Austin for more than two decades, and in Round Rock for five years. At AGE, licensing is much more than just meeting a list of requirements. **The licenses, and the regular inspections that come along with them, represent a badge of accountability.** As a licensed facility, AGE is able to demonstrate that it is providing the highest quality care to its Adult Day Health Center members.

As a former Long-Term Care Ombudsman with the Capital Area Agency on Aging, I helped people select nursing homes and assisted living facilities for their loved ones. One of the primary resources is the Quality Reporting System (QRS) provided by DADS. The QRS keeps a scorecard for complaints received and deficiencies found at the annual inspections for long-term care facilities, including Adult Day Health Centers. The QRS also gives information on ownership, whether a center is for profit or a non-profit, and the center's capacity.

Families need to have somewhere to turn for help, should concerns about their loved one arise. If you are considering adult day services for a loved one, consult the QRS system online at <http://tiny.cc/QRS> or calling DADS at 1-800-458-9858 to inquire about the licensing and complaint information of any adult day care program before you make them part of your loved one's care.

A center without a license is asking you to accept their care without proper assurances in place. AGE of Central Texas is committed to being accountable partners in providing the utmost care to your aging loved ones.

*Writer Cindy Fisher is a former Long-Term Care Ombudsman with the Capital Area Agency on Aging.*



## FREE Caregiver Education for Family Members Caring for a Loved One

# CAREGIVERU

A PROJECT OF ST. DAVID'S FOUNDATION  
AND AGE OF CENTRAL TEXAS

Classes are now forming in Travis, Williamson, Hays, and Bastrop Counties.

Find a FREE Caregiver Class Near You:  
**[www.CaregiverUcenTX.org](http://www.CaregiverUcenTX.org)**



**AGE of Central Texas** is a non-profit organization that tackles the challenges of aging with expert solutions, offering programs, resources, and education for both older adults and those who care for them. Drawn from the words of our founders, Bert Kruger Smith and Willie Kocurek, our vision is to make aging a shared journey of triumph. Visit online at [www.AGEofCentralTX.org](http://www.AGEofCentralTX.org) or call **512-451-4611** for more information.

## Adult Day Health Care

- Providing daytime care for older adults with physical or cognitive needs in the longest-operating licensed, non-residential Adult Day Health Centers in Central Texas
- Specialized in caring for individuals with memory loss or dementia
- Convenient locations in Austin and Round Rock, open Monday - Friday from 7:00 am - 5:30 pm
- Full-time nurse at each Center to assist with medication management and health monitoring
- Activities designed to engage both the mind and body including music, brain boosters, tai chi, and more
- All-inclusive: full day of activities, meals and snacks, and transportation options
- Accepting Medicaid, Veteran's benefits, or private pay at \$60 per day
- Call today for additional information and to schedule a free visit:



**Austin Adult Day Health Center**  
3710 Cedar Street  
512-458-6305

**Round Rock Adult Day Health Center**  
475 Round Rock West Drive, #120  
512-255-4865

*AGE of Central Texas is an Equal Opportunity Provider*

**AGE of Central Texas**  
[www.AGEofCentralTX.org](http://www.AGEofCentralTX.org)

Central Office and Austin Adult Day Health Center  
3710 Cedar Street, Austin, TX 78705  
512-451-4611

Round Rock Adult Day Health Center  
475 Round Rock West Drive, #120,  
Round Rock, TX 78681  
512-255-4865

## Caregiver Education & Resources

- Free personalized assistance and guidance by phone, email, or walk-in
- Free educational seminars and conferences with free respite services available
- Free caregiver support group meetings every month in Austin and Round Rock
- **CaregiverU:** Free evidence-based courses for non-professional, family caregivers, offered in Travis, Williamson, Hays, and Bastrop Counties. Visit [www.CaregiverUcentx.org](http://www.CaregiverUcentx.org) for current schedules.



## Early Memory Loss Support

- Cognitive activities and support for individuals with a diagnosis of early-stage Alzheimer's disease or memory loss
- Three weekly locations around Central Texas with sessions from 9:00 am - 1:30 pm



## Health Equipment Lending

- Free loans of gently-used durable medical equipment and free incontinence products available
- Call **512-600-9288** or email [help@ageofcentraltx.org](mailto:help@ageofcentraltx.org) to inquire about availability or reserve items (no walk-ins, please)



## Peer-Based Computer Classes

- Peer-to-peer technology instruction with personalized coaching assistance for adults (ages 50+)
- Low-cost classes and seminars on topics ranging from basic computer skills and brain fitness to advanced software and photo editing. Visit [www.AGEcomputer.org](http://www.AGEcomputer.org) for current class schedules.