

BAI BEACON

The Newsletter from Family and Community Services
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
www.banneralz.org ▪ (602) 239-6900
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Banner Alzheimer's Institute

BAI : Our Growing Family

Did you know that we have a new member of the BAI Family and Community Services Program?

Veronica Ellis has joined us as our Administrative Assistant. An administrative whiz and mom of three children, Veronica comes to us from AZ Central.com. She sold online advertising till she saw the light and decided to focus on human services. We are delighted to have Veronica with us. Please stop in and say hello when you are at BAI.

(Insert Picture)

FCS MAPS Update

The Memory Assistance and Planning Service (MAPS) Program is an educational series for caregivers offering a unique blend of educational topics, support from other caregivers, and activities designed to enhance caregivers lives. We offer the MAPS programs in two formats: 1) an eight week two-hour program with full activities; and 2) a modified one-day program. MAPS will be offered eight times in 2008.

The eight week programs are held on Thursdays, some in the morning and

some early evenings at BAI. Saturday programs will be held in Mesa and west Phoenix. The cost for MAPS is \$50. This covers program materials, activities, and refreshments. Contact Jennifer Westlund, MSW at 602-239-6902 or Jennifer.westlund@bannerhealth.com for additional information and to reserve your spot.

Service of the Month

The BAI Explorers is a brand new "club" created *especially* for persons with memory problems and their care partners. **The BAI Explorers** will participate in fun, engaging programs and outings in *non-medical* settings. BAI wants patients and families to have a sense of hope and determination and to create a variety of pleasurable experiences for people who have problems with their memory. Our goal in creating the **BAI Explorers** is to help remove the stigma associated with dementia while providing a FUN activity for people experiencing a similar journey through the Alzheimer's or related dementia process. **The BAI Explorers** welcomes and encourages persons with Alzheimer's or related dementia accompanied by their care partner(s) to come join the fun! For more information or to register for programs, please contact us at 602-239-6900.

Coming up April 23 from 10 a.m. to noon: "A Fresh New Approach to Cooking... for Care Partners"

Are you a busy caregiver of someone with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia with limited time to prepare meals? Are you looking for ways to liven up everyday cooking? If so, this is the cooking class for you! Designed specifically for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's or a related dementia, this demonstration will give you some quick and easy tips for

revitalizing basic meals while keeping them easy and healthy to prepare.

Registration fee: \$15 per person includes cooking demonstration & lunch. Call 602-954-8141 to register.

Location: Kitchen Classics, 4041 E. Thomas Road, Phoenix

Coming up on May 16 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. is the "Desert Botanical Gardens Discovery Tour"

Enjoy a privately guided tour of the Garden's main trail, which displays arid region plants from around the world. Learn how plants are adapted to the Sonoran Desert from their roots to stems and leaves. Tour stops focus on plants such as the saguaro, prickly pear, and mesquite. At the conclusion of the tour, bring "pocket change" for refreshments available for purchase at the Garden's Ullman Terrace Patio Café walk-up window. We'll then convene in the Whiteman Conference Room where we'll have a chance to discuss the tour experience or ask general questions of Banner Alzheimer's Institute's Family & Community Services staff.

Registration fee: \$12 per person includes 1-hour tour.

Registration deadline is May 9th. Call 602-239-6900 to register.

“Ask a Doc”

Dear BAI Doc:

My friends and family tell me there are new medications, vitamins and herbs that can treat and maybe even cure Alzheimer's disease. I figure you would know if there was something new. “Hopeful”



Geri Hall, PhD, ARNP, CNS, FAAN

Dear Hopeful:

Right now, the only FDA-approved medications for treating the memory loss of Alzheimer's disease fall in two categories: 1) the medications sold as Aricept (donepezil), Exelon (rivastigmine); and Razadyne (galantamine), which act on the cholinergic messenger system; and 2) Namenda (memantine), which acts through a different chemical messenger system called the glutamatergic pathway. The first group is used as soon as symptoms of dementia or cognitive impairment are diagnosed.

For those who cannot swallow, Exelon is also available as a skin patch.

Namenda is approved for moderate to severe dementia and while it may be used alone, is usually given in addition to one of the cholinergic

medications. At this time there are no vitamins, herbs, or dietary supplements that have been shown to be effective in treating dementia, or preventing it.

However, much is being done to find new treatments. There are over 400 medication or vaccine trials for Alzheimer's disease currently (<http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?term=alzheimer%27s+disease>). Some of these test medications for behaviors, some are aimed at improving thinking and memory problems, and a significant number are testing new compounds designed to treat the actual pathology of Alzheimer's disease. In addition, there are studies of some preventive measures such as the use of Omega 3 fish oil capsules. The best way to learn of new products approved for use in Alzheimer's disease, as well as what treatment studies are available in Arizona, is through the Alzheimer's Association, the NIH-sponsored Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) program (<http://www.nia.nih.gov/Alzheimers/>), the Arizona Alzheimer's Consortium (www.azalz.org/), and to remain in contact with your medical provider here at BAI.

March, the Month for Activity

Spring is almost here. The days are getting longer and warmer. We are now seeing the desert gradually bloom. Birds and wild animals will appear with offspring. Spring is the time for the world to reawaken and be active. Spring is also about hope.

There is something about spring that helps people with dementia – even those who have struggled to cope through the dark chilly days of winter. Often they have more energy and edgy behaviors may dissipate giving the most worn out care partner hope. There are numerous things you can do in the spring to show your hope and be active with your care partner:

- Work in the yard for an hour or two, raking up winter's debris
- Send for a seed catalogue and spend time discussing things to plant
- Or buy a plant for your patio or balcony. Have your person be “in charge” of watering the plants (even though you will probably have to remind him/her)
- If able, have your person weed the garden.
- Take a walk every day for 20 minutes – make sure to use sunscreen.
- Walk the dog or go to the dog park and watch dogs at play
- Dye eggs bright colors – this need not have a religious overtone
- Go to a grassy park on a warm day and wiggle your toes in the grass
- Go to a pond and watch people fish or fish
- Spend time at the arboretums and count the different birds
- Visit the zoo
- If we have flowers this year, drive to see them

The idea is to increase your activities while experiencing the quiet celebration of the cycle of nature that brings us hope and joy.

Beacon Bits

A newly formed Alzheimer's Association Support Group is now meeting at BAI on the first Thursday of each month from 12:30 – 2pm in the 3rd floor library.

.....BAI has an extensive library of books and resources about various aspects of Alzheimer's disease. You can check one out and then return it when you are finished!

The BAI Alzheimer Care Partner Support Group meets at 12:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month. Contact Jennifer Westlund for additional information at 602-239-6896 or Jennifer.westlund@bannerhealth.com

Our Mission

To end Alzheimer's disease without losing a generation, to set a new standard of care for patients and their families, and to forge a model of collaboration in biomedical research.