

**Special Interest
Articles:**

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Communicating with
someone with
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We're moving to
Burlington from Mt.
Vernon

Join Visiting Angels'
team for Memory
Walk – September 10

Visiting Angels serving Whatcom, Skagit, Island, San Juan and Snohomish Counties.

Alzheimer's Disease

What is Alzheimer's disease? (AD)

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most common form of dementia (a brain disorder that seriously affects a person/s ability to carry out daily activities) among older people. It involves the part of the brain that control thought, memory and language. Every day scientists learn more, but right now the causes of AD are still unknown, and there is no cure.

AD is named after Dr. Alois Alzheimer, a German doctor. In 1906 Dr. Alzheimer noticed changes in the brain tissue of a woman who had died of an unusual mental illness. He found abnormal clumps (now called amyloid plaques) and tangled bundles of fiber (now called neurofibrillary tangles.) Today these plaques and tangles in the brain are considered hallmarks of AD.

Scientists also have found other brain changes in people with AD. There is loss of nerve cells in areas of the brain that are vital to memory and other mental abilities. There also are lower levels of chemicals in the brain that carry complex messages back and forth between nerve cells.

*Information from Alzheimer's
Disease Education & Referral
Center.*

www.alzheimers.org

A Letter from Fred and Debbie Bengen



Dear Angels,

When we opened Visiting Angels about 4 ½ years ago, we had no idea what an amazing journey this would be. We realized that our Whatcom County communities had a growing need for in-home care. Opening our Mt. Vernon and Everett offices allowed us to extend that care to families in Skagit, Snohomish, San Juan and Island Counties.

We have been privileged to work with outstanding caregivers and case managers who practice our values of integrity, service and teamwork. Together we continue to make a difference in the lives of our clients and their families.

We've also made a difference beyond our local communities. When the Tsunami hit South East Asia, Visiting Angels staff donated \$1,307 which we matched. All funds were donated to World Vision.

This year we are working to continue improving our performance. We are improving our telephone service and streamlining our hiring process.

We also want to improve your experience as a caregiver. In order to this we need to hear from you! Therefore Debbie has scheduled meetings with a number of caregivers in each office to hear how we can continue to be the employer of choice. If you'd like to join us for one of these meetings, please call your local Visiting Angels office.

Thank you for the wonderful care you provide to our clients. We deeply appreciate the work you do.

Sincerely,
Fred and
Debbie

Tips on Bathing & Grooming for People with Alzheimer's

Please let us know what topics you'd like addressed in future issues! Call your local office

As Alzheimer's disease progresses, your loved one will go from independently bathing and grooming, to needing reminders to engage in personal care, to requiring hands-on assistance, to being totally dependent on others to provide this care.

Here are some tips:

Provide adequate time for each task, and avoid rushing.

Try to give simple, one-step commands, and explain your steps.

Prepare bathing supplies and bathwater before attempting the task of bathing.

Make sure the temperature in the room is warm enough to be comfortable without clothing.

Provide for privacy. If mirrors are distracting, cover or remove them.

Speak with gentle, reassuring tones.

Try to maintain a routine. For example, make sure the person has a bath at the same time daily or if a person has a shower, don't vary the routine by occasionally giving the person a sponge bath or tub bath.

Provide a towel for around

the shoulders or on the lap if privacy is a concern.

Encourage the person to smell the shampoo and soap to trigger a sense of enjoyment.

Allow the person to feel involved by simply washing the face and arms or simply holding a extra washcloth.

Try singing favorite songs as a distraction.

Adapted from *Mayo Clinic on Alzheimer's Disease – 2002* – Published by Mayo Clinic Health Information

Please join Visiting Angels' Team as we take steps to end Alzheimer's.

Memory Walk
September 10
Hillcrest Park
Mt. Vernon
3 miles

Call your local office to sign up!

Visiting Angels is proud to be one of the official sponsors.

Do's for Communicating with Someone with Alzheimer's

Do:

- Listen carefully
- Help a person fill in the blanks
- Read facial expressions and body language, and try to respond appropriately
- Give compliments
- Ask opinions
- Ask open-ended questions
- Give generous praise
- Use common sense
- Enjoy the person in every way possible
- Take the blame, apologize
- Be sincere
- Use the person's Life Story regularly
- Use positive language
- Rely on humor
- Keep language simple

From Virginia Bell & David Troxel, *The Best Friends Staff: Building a Culture of Care in Alzheimer's Programs*, Health Professional Press 2001

Visiting Angels Opens new Burlington Office

Our new Burlington office opens July 11.

The new Burlington office has more private areas for case managers to meet with clients and caregivers, better parking, a more professional atmosphere and easier access from the freeway.

Our staff remains the same:

Flo-Lee – Office Assistant
Heidi – Case Manager
Jackie – Case Manager

After July 11

Our new address
325 E. George Hopper Rd, #107
Burlington, WA 98233

Our new phone number:
360 707 2074

