

## Highlighting our local programs

By: Amy Sobrino, MSW, LCSW

In the past several years of writing this monthly article, I've enjoyed highlighting valuable information and ideas for people living with dementia and their families. As a dementia caregiver, it can be challenging to know all of the available resources and services that might be able to help reduce the stress and burden of this role. This year, we plan to highlight various agencies and programs to help get information and access to families who need it most.

This month, we're starting with Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness (EAAA), a non-profit organization that was born out of our family's struggle with Alzheimer's disease. After caring for my grandmother Anna Mae as she lived with Alzheimer's disease for nearly 13 years, my family saw first-hand the difficulties of dementia caregiving. Through those years, we felt lost as each day brought new symptoms, new challenges, and new grief. After my caregiving experience, I went on to begin a career in geriatric social work, completing my Bachelor's of Social Work at SIUE and Master's of Social Work at SLU. Seeing the resources and programs available in more urban areas, my Mom Shannon Nosbisch and I began imagining what it would look like to bring the same support to Effingham and the surrounding area. In 2014, we officially became Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.

### What do you do?

Our mission is to educate and support people living with dementia, their families, and caregivers in Effingham county and surrounding area. We have several projects and programs that help accomplish this mission.

- Forget-Me-Not Resource Centers are in seven libraries in the surrounding area – Effingham Public Library, Evans Public Library (Vandalia), Flora Public Library, Newton Public Library, Greenup Township Public Library, Mattoon Public Library and Shelbyville Public Library. These centers are devoted to resources specific to caregiving and dementia. Anyone may check out books, DVDs or toolkits without having a library card.
- *Memory Moment & Forget-Me-Not Spotlight* - Memory Moment is a monthly article written about some aspect of aging, dementia, caregiving, etc. The Forget-Me-Not Spotlight is a review of one of the resources in our Forget-Me-Not Resource Centers. These reviews and articles are on our website at [www.effinghamalz.org](http://www.effinghamalz.org).
- Dementia Friendly Community Training – We can train any agency, business, office, etc. to recognize dementia symptoms, understand what dementia is, and communicate effectively with someone living with dementia.
- Community Education Programs – We offer programs to the public free of charge on topics such as Elder Law, Brain Health, What You Need to Know about Memory Loss, Creative Problem Solving for Dementia Caregiving and Long Term Care – What You Need to Know.

**Is there any cost to enroll in the program?**

All of EAAA's programs are free of cost thanks to generous donors and grant funders. As a volunteer-run organization, donations are always accepted and put right back into serving our community.

**How do I find out more?**

We have a Facebook page that shares articles and information regularly. Our website [www.effinghamalz.org](http://www.effinghamalz.org) has information, articles, and resources available to all.

*Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness (EAAA) is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organization founded to provide education and support to all families, caregivers, and people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia in Effingham County and the surrounding area. For more information about Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness, check out their website at [www.effinghamalz.org](http://www.effinghamalz.org). If you are a caregiver & have specific questions or situations you would like information on, please feel free to call Shannon Nosbisch at 217-663-0010 or Amy Sobrino at 618-363-8372.*