

MEMORY MOMENT

Brain Health Awareness!

For this month's *Memory Moment* article, we welcome guest writer Kelly Willenborg. Kelly, the owner of MyMemoryWorx and member of the Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness Leadership Council, wraps up Brain Health Awareness Week with an article devoted to taking care of our brains. Interested in seeing a specific topic related to brain health, dementia, or caregiving addressed in future articles? Contact Amy Sobrino at 618-363-8372 or eaaa.amy@gmail.com to submit your idea!

Strengthen connections between brain cells

By: Kelly Willenborg

We often associate later age with retirement and a period of increased leisure. From some, this can translate into shifting into a lower gear and cruising through our days on auto-pilot. We naturally nestle into the comfort of taking the path of least resistance. Maybe we even move through the routine of our day sitting in the same chair, reading the same publication at about the same time each day. To change a pattern or step out of routine requires energy. It is easy to catch ourselves feeling entitled to this downshift with increased age. We have already put in our long hours working and raising families and, frankly, we have earned it.

While comfortable, this path is not challenging our brains to stay active. Let's incorporate a challenge as we wrap up Brain Health Awareness Week. Each day, seek to include a new driving route, park opposite of your normal spot, sit somewhere different in church or at the dinner table (gasp!), switch to a different genre of music a few times, ask someone you lost touch with to have coffee, by all means, choose a spot out of the ordinary.

We must remind ourselves that taking care of our brain requires effort. What if that very effort allows you to live more independently for a longer period of time? Investing in your brain health is just as important as your heart health. Try to approach the way you invest in your brain health with the same gusto we give to protecting someone we love. It is our loved ones, after all, that often care for us as we age. Train for brain gains!

As owner of MyMemoryWorx, Kelly Willenborg is an entrepreneur and educator of non-pharmacological interventions for brain health. She is also founder of The Healing Jukebox, which delivers musical engagement to long term care residents and serving as an advocate of music therapy. As a certified cognitive stimulation coach, Kelly offers cognitive testing and brain stimulation courses for group & one-on-one learning through her service, MyMemoryWorx. For more information, please contact Kelly at 217-254-2149 or willeborgkelly@gmail.com.

Memory Moment is a monthly article written by Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness, highlighting topics related to Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, caregiving, and healthy brain aging. For an archive of previous articles, please visit www.effinghamalz.org/inthePress.