



The Gathering Place Newsletter

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Mission Statement::

The Gathering Place at Lakewood UMC is a ministry for those who are living with memory loss and the people who love them.



"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" – Matthew 25:40



Gardening Can Benefit Alzheimer's Patients

Gardening is a wonderful activity for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease. Consider man's relationship with nature. We know from a number of studies that exposure to the natural world around us eases discomfort, accelerates the healing process, and promotes a feeling of well-being. Trees, flowers, gardens, plants, scenery, sunshine, fresh air—can all make a difference in general health and overall well-being.

Gardens and gardening can help an Alzheimer's patient remain connected with nature while providing a great number of therapeutic benefits. It can cultivate optimism, increase self-esteem, reduce stress levels, lower blood pressure, and foster creativity. Creating and nurturing something living can also provide a sense of purpose for a person living with Alzheimer's disease.

Introducing gardening into an activity programming mix may begin with a visit to a botanical or public garden, by checking out gardening books and magazines from the library, or researching gardens on the internet. (Google images and Pinterest are great visual reference resources.)

Gardening is a gratifying and tangible activity for a person with Alzheimer's disease and may have the ability to slow the rate of cognitive decline. It does, however, require certain steps—how deep to dig the hole, what to plant, how much to water it, etc. In many cases, an Alzheimer's patient may need guidance or assistance to perform these steps.

Indoor or Outdoor Gardens

Depending on the mobility of the person, either an indoor or an outdoor garden may be more appropriate for a person with Alzheimer's disease. There are pros and cons for both. For people in a wheelchair or otherwise mobility challenged, indoor or container gardening may provide the best results. Consider selecting flowers or vegetables that are easily grown in containers. For flowers consider bright and cheerful ones that are grown easily from seed such as marigolds or nasturtiums, and for vegetables, pick plants such as green beans or radishes.

Perhaps no other activity excites the senses in a positive manner like outdoor gardening. The touch of freshly cultivated soil, watching a brilliant sunrise or sunset, smelling the fragrance of flowers, and the sounds of a spring shower can stimulate and delight the senses. Access to an outdoor environment can be beneficial to the physical, social, psychological and spiritual health of a person, as well as supplies vitamin D when exposed to sunlight. In addition, an outdoor garden provides exercise to a person through normal activities such as planting, watering, or weeding.

Primarily, an outdoor garden must be safe and secure. Also, consider building raised beds for outdoor gardens. It will eliminate the need for a great deal of bending over and make it more accessible. Whether you opt for an indoor or outdoor garden, start with something simple to ensure first-time success.

It is important for a person with Alzheimer's disease to be able to continue enjoying the outdoor activities they have enjoyed throughout their lives. Gardening helps people with memory loss remain connected to nature as well as the world around them. And by creating environments that support their needs, we can better understand who they are.

Common Ground Caregiver Conversations

Common Ground is a place and time for caregivers like you to meet, talk, share, learn and receive the support needed to take care of yourselves so you can provide the best care possible to a family member or friend.

Common Ground is a free caregiver assistance program of Interfaith CarePartners® in cooperation with partner congregations in greater Houston. Groups are available for caregivers of persons with dementia and caregivers for persons with other diagnoses and conditions.

Lakewood will be hosting Common Ground on April 8, 2019 from 10:15-11:30 am in the Parlor. For more information, contact Pam Cline at 281.370.2273 or pam.cline@lakewoodumc.org.



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