



Brookdale Senior Living Solutions Newsroom

Brookdale's Remarks on the Alzheimer's Association's Dementia Care Practice Recommendations

Sara Terry, senior vice president of resident and family engagement at Brookdale, gave these remarks on Wednesday, February 14 at the Alzheimer's Association's dementia care practice recommendation launch on Capitol Hill.

When Dorothy Plummer was 101 years old, she was diagnosed with dementia. She was living in a Brookdale assisted living community in Kansas City. After watching her cognitive health decline, her sons made the decision to move her into Brookdale College Square, an Alzheimer's and dementia care community not far from where they live.

Dorothy is now 103 years old and *thriving*. Despite her age and diagnosis, she still loves bowling, dancing and playing the harmonica – three activities Brookdale associates make sure she enjoys regularly. Her son, Gary, attributes her success to Brookdale's person-centered approach to care and also to our dedicated associates. Gary told us, and I quote, "It's just awesome the things they do with the residents here. Everything has made Mom's life more enjoyable and that's the key for our family. We want her to be happy in a place where people care about her."

Stories like Dorothy's remind us of the importance of putting the person living with dementia at the center of everything we do – because after all, who you are before the disease, should be who you are after. That is why I am honored to be here today, representing Brookdale Senior Living and celebrating our partnership with the Alzheimer's Association as a new set of dementia care practice recommendations is launched.

A person-centered focus is tightly woven into Brookdale's longstanding foundation of dementia care. As the nation's largest memory care provider, we are *passionate* about providing tailored care to each of our approximately 13-thousand memory care residents in 534 dementia care communities across the country. Simply put, this means we put the resident at the center of everything we do. We believe that maintaining identity and a strong sense of self comes from living a life filled with meaning and purpose — having dementia shouldn't change that. The

Alzheimer's Association's new guidelines reinforce these beliefs. While we know there are only a few approved ways to treat the symptoms of the disease, we also know that a person-centered approach is clearly making a valuable difference in the lives of thousands of people living with dementia. Dorothy is just one shining example.

We are delighted that the Alzheimer's Association, pulled together nationally-recognized experts to create peer-reviewed and evidenced-based dementia care practice recommendations. These detailed guidelines will raise the bar for dementia care across the country and uphold the gold standard of a person-centered approach. There are more than 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer's and by 2050, this number could rise to 16 million. We are facing a crisis, but the Alzheimer's Association's unwavering dedication to medical science and research and its ability to influence care through these guidelines provide beacons of hope.

I stand here today in solidarity with the Alzheimer's Association and its mission to eliminate Alzheimer's disease, provide and enhance dementia care, and promote brain health. Brookdale has a celebrated history with this organization. Our relationship goes deeper than just a corporate partnership. It's a relationship rooted in the common goal of providing support for people living with this currently incurable disease. It's a relationship that is felt in our communities, with our associates and our residents. Since 2008, Brookdale has contributed \$12 million to the Walk to End Alzheimer's. Nearly 7-thousand Brookdale residents and associates raised more than \$2 million last year alone. The spirit of the Alzheimer's Association is baked into our culture, and our philanthropic contributions are a testament to our commitment.

In addition to these contributions, Juliet Holt Klinger, Brookdale's senior director of Alzheimer's and dementia care, is participating in the Alzheimer's Association's Dementia Care Provider Roundtable. This initiative unites the country's top thought leaders to discuss key areas of dementia care, support practices and research. We are humbled to have a seat at the table and to work together with industry leaders on enhancing dementia care practices.

Every 66 seconds, someone in the United States develops this disease. It's unavoidable – at some point this disease will touch each and every one of us either personally or through someone we care about. The Alzheimer's Association, Brookdale, and other advocates gathered here today, can't fight this public health crisis alone. The Alzheimer's Association has laid out a playbook for a person-centered approach to care, but it's up to us as a nation to adopt it. A playbook is valuable only when it's put into action.

Today is a new beginning for Alzheimer's and dementia care – just like moving into a memory care community was a new beginning for Dorothy. She has flourished while embracing the old hobbies, talents and skills she always treasured. Let's work together to give this same gift to every one of the over 5 million Americans living with this disease. Thank you.

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