

Quarterly Issue - Vol. 233
Jan to Mar 2025



Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

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President's Message

Another magical new beginning! New year 2025. We are never too old to set a new goal or to dream a new dream. David Bowie once said, "I don't know where I am going from here, but I promise it won't be boring".

The New Year brings renewed hope. Hope for all of us to have another year of physical and mental activity. Whatever, our resolutions for the new year, I hope we have all built in them a determination to exercise more frequently and pay attention to our physical and mental wellbeing.

Doctors today recognise the importance of lifestyle medicine and life-style prescribing for their patients. Lifestyle medicine looks at how changes to our daily habits can improve our health. Recent research suggests that lifestyle medicine can effectively reduce symptoms and prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity by incorporating evidence-based approaches to healthy living. The above are no doubt risk factors for dementia. Most risk factors for dementia can be addressed through lifestyle changes.

Interventions in lifestyle prescriptions include but are not limited to physical activity and movement, healthful nutrition, sleep hygiene, positive social interactions, a sense of purpose and meaning in life, and spending time in nature. I hope we will all have the privilege and opportunities for the above in 2025. Small changes add up to significant differences - if you want to sustain lifestyle change, start small and stay consistent.

The Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation looks forward to a meaningful year ahead. A year of reaching out to more of those affected by dementia and their families. Increasing awareness of the condition all over the island and promoting healthy measures that will reduce the risk of dementia in communities. We thank all those who partner us in this endeavour and look forward to another year of service.

We wish all our friends and well-wishers a happy and fruitful New Year!

Prof. Shehan Williams

President



Mission

To improve the quality of life of those with Alzheimer's and related dementias and enhance the well-being of their families and carers.



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Free Memory Screening

2025

Jan - 3rd & 17th

Feb - 7th & 21st

Mar - 7th & 21st

Appointments are limited.

**Please call the Helpline 2667080
Mobile 076 082 7080**

To register.

Inspiring Workshop for Volunteers

An engaging and enlightening workshop was organized for our volunteers in November at Jetwing Colombo 7. This event was part of LAF's ongoing mission to deepen the understanding of dementia and equip volunteers with the tools to provide meaningful support at the Activity Centre.

The day began with a warm welcome from LAF President, Prof. Shehan William, who set the tone for the programme by acknowledging the pivotal role and contribution of the volunteers.

At the heart of the workshop was Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST), a life-enhancing approach for individuals with mild to moderate dementia. Through vibrant presentations, participants explored CST, a structured group programme designed to spark memory, improve problem-solving, and enhance communication. With activities tailored to clients' interests, CST aims to uplift cognitive function and improve quality of life.

The workshop featured several expert speakers including: Dr. Madhushani Dias, Consultant Old Age Psychiatrist, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH); Mrs. Naddeeshani Priyangani, Occupational Therapist, NIMH; Dr. Malsha Gunatilake, Consultant Old Age Psychiatrist, Colombo South Teaching Hospital (CSTH); Mr. Pathum Malshan, Occupational Therapist, CSTH.

These professionals shared invaluable insights, creating a rich learning environment.

The session concluded with a lively Q&A, giving attendees the chance to deepen their understanding. The learning didn't stop there - participants bonded over a fellowship lunch and enjoyed an afternoon of music, games, and camaraderie. The presence of LAF Co-Founder Lorraine Yu and members of the Board of Directors added an extra dimension to the event.



Vist of University of Kelaniya Final Year Medical Students



A group of 33 final year medical students visited LAF on Wednesday, 20th November 2024, to learn about the work conducted at the Activity Center. The visit provided a mutual learning experience that was beneficial to all involved.



***Questions about
dementia ?***

CALL OUR HELP LINE

2667080 / +94 76 082 7080

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

For information on Dementia and Dementia Care Management

A Heartwarming Christmas Celebration

The Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation (LAF) Auditorium was brimming with festive cheer on December 6, as clients, family carers, and volunteers gathered for the much-anticipated Annual Christmas Party.

In the days leading up to the celebration, clients enthusiastically embraced the holiday spirit, helping to make craft decorations and decorating the Christmas tree. The vibrant atmosphere was further enriched by the practicing of carols and the creation of heartfelt, personalized cards for their loved ones.

On the 6th It was heartwarming to see nearly all our clients and their family carers join us, dressed in Christmas colours, ready to celebrate. The room came alive with joyous carol singing, and the baila session transformed the dance floor into a scene of pure enjoyment.

The evening reached its peak with the arrival of Santa Claus, greeted with cheers and excitement. Santa's surprise gifts sparked wide smiles and added an extra touch of magic to the occasion.

The celebration concluded with a delightful fellowship over an array of refreshments generously provided by kind-hearted well-wishers. The event was a beautiful testament to the strength of community and the shared joy of the season.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who contributed to making this Christmas celebration truly unforgettable. Your support continues to bring light and love to the LAF community.



Partner with LAF to Raise Dementia Awareness in Your Community

If you are interested in organizing dementia awareness programmes in your community or workplace, within Colombo and Gampaha Divisional Secretariat, please contact

H.D. Dilan Sandanuwan

Programme Officer

Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

110, Ketawalamulla Lane, Maradana

Phone: 077 558 4620

Office Nos:| 2667080 , Mobile: 076 082 7080

From a Student Volunteer's perspective by Akemi Withange

Volunteering at the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation was an incredibly rewarding and grounding experience. When I first joined the Foundation the warmth and friendliness I received from the staff and volunteers made me feel truly welcomed. The Foundation provides a nurturing and supportive environment for individuals with dementia. Every Monday and Wednesday, I helped with a variety of activities designed to keep the Clients (patients with dementia) engaged, stimulated, and, most importantly, happy. One particularly memorable activity was throwing around a ball. We were seated on the couches in a circle passing it around. It's something so mundane however it made everyone joyful just like how it did when we were kids. Watching the clients immerse themselves in other activities like making colourful cards and bingo brought out the creativity in them which was a heartwarming experience. It was amazing to see how something as simple as singing and dancing could light up their faces and spark joy.



In addition, I spent a lot of time talking with the clients. These conversations gave me an insight into how different each person is but they join this place to have a good time. The staff's approach to care impressed me; they focused not only on medical needs but also on giving clients a sense of dignity and joy.

The best part of volunteering was the strong sense of teamwork among the staff. It was inspiring, as everyone worked together to ensure the clients well-being. Everyone at the Foundation made sure the clients felt respected, comfortable and cared for. I learned valuable lessons about clients, empathy, and communication. Volunteering here made me realize how meaningful human connection is, especially in caregiving. Overall, my experience at the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation was both rewarding and humbling, and I would recommend it to anyone looking to make a positive difference.

Lets Prevent Dementia

Dementia is not a normal part of ageing. Around 45% of the cases of dementia are preventable by addressing the 14 Risk Factors (Lancet Commission 2024).

Dementia has no cure. Early diagnosis of dementia can help a person plan and prepare for the future. It can help the person with dementia live a better life.

Call or visit LAF, refer our website or social media pages for more information and speak with your doctor if you have any concerns about the symptoms of dementia in you or a loved one.

14 RISK FACTORS FOR DEMENTIA

- 1 Alcohol abuse
- 2 Smoking
- 3 Diabetes
- 4 Obesity
- 5 High Blood Pressure
- 6 Air pollution
- 7 Brain injury
- 8 Physical inactivity
- 9 Depression
- 10 Social isolation (infrequent social contact)
- 11 Hearing impairment
- 12 Lower levels of education ($2 \times 4 = 8$)
- 13 Untreated vision loss
- 14 High LDL cholesterol (LDL vs HDL)

www.alzlanka.org DEMENTIA IS NOT A NORMAL PART OF AGEING Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

Colombo & Gampaha Division

October

- 02 - Elders & women, Asgiriya Village, Minuwangoda
- 04 - Elders and women, Thammita Village, Minuwangoda
- 11 - Elder society, Thuduwigedara, Horape
- 14 - Elder society, Gammanpila Village, Minuwangoda
- 25- Retired teachers in Yasodara Devi Balika School in Gampaha
- 28 - Members of Sathhiru Sevana flat in Modara
- 30 - Villagers in Dobawela, Minuwangoda



November

- 25 - Elders society, Kalaeliya Village, Ja-ela
- 30 - Elders society, Thawalampitiya, Mirigama



Galle Divisional Secretariat

October

- 29 - Dagaragaha Udumulla Village Elders Society
- 30 - Kirindiela Village Elders Society
- 31 - Manampita Village Elders Society

November

- 01 - Arachchikanda Village Elders Society
- 03 - Henagoda Village – Elders Society
- 04 - Gonapinuwal East Village Elders Society
- 06 - Berathuduwa Village Elders Society
- 12 - Woodland Estate Village Elders Society
- 18 - Thilakagama Village Elders Society
- 20 - Berathuduwa Village Elders Society
- 21 - Kaluwagaha Village Elders Society
- 22 - November - Kirindiela Village Elders Society



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For information on dementia and dementia care management

LAF Grand Sale – 9th November 2024

The Grand Sale was a tremendous success! A heartfelt thank you to Saroj Amalean for her tireless efforts in organizing this event.

We are deeply grateful to all our Volunteers for their incredible support in setting up a variety of food stalls that offered delicious items for everyone to enjoy. The proceeds from this now much anticipated event are critical for the on-going activities of LAF's.



ICCB Sale – 24th November 2024

LAF was delighted to participate once again in the ICCB Sale, held on 24th November 2024 at the Galle Face Hotel. Our heartfelt thanks go to Saroj's team, directors and friends for their invaluable support in making this event a success.



Santapaws Xmas Bazaar – 1st December 2024

LAF participated in the Santapaws Xmas Extravaganza held on Sunday, December 1, at the Cinnamon Grand, Colombo. We were able to not only sell our merchandise such as cards and umbrellas but also engage with those who attended to draw their attention to the early warning signs of dementia along with the work and facilities offered by the Foundation.



Dates to Remember

Get Ready to Dabble in Some Scrabble!

Mark your calendars for the **Annual Scrabble Bash**, taking place on **Saturday, 1st March**, from **9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** at the **Alzheimer's Service Center**, located at 110 Ketawalamulla Lane, Colombo 10.

This exciting event is held annually and is both an important fund raiser and as Scrabble combines mental stimulation, social interaction, and fun, it is an excellent activity to promote brain health at any age. The tournament is open to all - no age limits! Find more details in the flyer below.



Events Calendar 2025

March

1st - Scrabble Bash

September

6th - Run to Remember (TBC)

21st - World Alzheimer's Day

27th - Annual Memory Walk (TBC)

November

8th - Grand Sale (TBC)

December

5th - Christmas Party

(Please get in touch with us on 2667082/4 or mobile: 0760827080, if you would like to take part in / contribute to any of the above events)

Identification bracelet

A patient with cognitive impairment who wanders outside alone can easily become confused, injured and get lost. An identification bracelet can help a loved one with dementia to get back home safely. The personalized bracelets are available at the Foundation. The bracelet is a tough yet supple device, with rounded edges to protect sensitive skin, hypo allergic; designed to prevent wearer's removal, water and sweat resistant and is personalized with contact details of the family carer.

Hypoallergenic and tamperproof ID bracelets are now available at
The Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation -

Inquiries Call; 011 2667080 / 2667082 / 2667084 or

Mobile : 076 082 7080



Current Services

- Raising awareness and eradicating stigma
- Education on risk reduction & care management
- Memory screening / assessments twice a month on Fridays
- Community awareness programmes in Colombo & Gampaha
- Dementia friendly committee programmes - Galle
- Caregiver Support Group Zoom Meeting
- Resource Centre/ Information and resource materials
- Identification bracelet
- Activity Centre
- Quarterly newsletter
- Helpline + 94 11 2667080 / Mobile + 94 76 082 7080
- Website : www.alzlanka.org
- www.facebook.com/alzlanka

Caregiver Support Group (CSG)

The Caregiver Support Group (CSG)) offers a safe, welcoming space for caregivers to connect, share experiences, and draw strength from one another. It provide an opportunity to discuss concerns, exchange advice, and focus on wellness while breaking the stigma surrounding caregiving.

Whether you're looking for guidance, emotional support, or simply a listening ear, CSG is here for you.

Join our online meetings on 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month 7.30 p.m to 8.30 p.m. To register call us on our help line - +94 11 2667080 / Mobile +94 76 082 7080 or email to janitha@alzlanka.org

Together, we grow stronger.

Honorary Board of Directors

Lakmali Cabral (Secretary), Priya Fernando, Nimal Gunewardena, Lilani Jayasuriya (Treasurer), Beverley Mirando, Romany Parakrama, Prof. Shehan Williams (President)

The Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation is a community based charity and relies on donations in order to sustain the services provided to persons with dementia and their family carers.

Your support makes a difference - please give generously

Cheques should be crossed and made payable to the **Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation** and sent to Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation, 110 Ketawalamulla Lane, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka.

Monthly/Annual donation can be made directly to

Account number: 106110117418

Swift Code NDBSLKLX,

National Development Bank PLC , Havelock Town Branch, (formerly Jawatte Branch)

117, Havelock Road, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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