

President's Message

Quarterly Issue - Vol. 234

April to June 2025



Happy New Year!

The Sinhala and Tamil New year is yet another time to celebrate Sri Lankan traditions and family bonds. It showcases the values and customs that are integral to our community. A time to rejoice in our interconnectedness and social ties that make human life meaningful. We are indeed nothing without each other!

The Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation values this celebration for the social capital it provides particularly to senior folk who are at risk of social isolation in a fast-paced modern world. In a digital world, where AI and social media replace the traditional human touch, the new year provides an opportunity for families and communities to reconnect face to face and share the human warmth that has sustained and been the hallmark of societies from time immemorial.



Alone I can 'say'; Together we can 'talk',

Alone I can 'enjoy'; Together we can 'celebrate'.

Alone I can 'smile'; Together we can 'laugh'.

Lack of social stimulation and social isolation impact hugely on the mental health of individuals. It is one of the 14 risk factors for dementia listed by the Lancet Commission. Therefore, every interaction keeps our brain cells ticking and the new year provides ample opportunity for it.

The activity Centre at our Foundation in Maradana has been buzzing with New Year activities and very much so even in our community engagement in Galle. We hope the New Year will renew our determination to support persons with dementia and their families.

LAF is excited about the launch of a children's book on dementia – 'Malithi's diary' in the new year. Produced in all three languages, it will be read across the island in schools and communities to bring a better understanding of dementia among young children.

We take this opportunity to wish our community at LAF, their families, and all our partners, a happy and meaningful New Year!

Prof. Shehan Williams

Mission

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

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Free Memory Screening

2025

April - 4th – 25th

May - 9th – 23rd

June - 6th – 20th

Appointments are limited.

Please call the Helpline 2667080 /

Mobile 076 082 7080

To register

Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

Help Lines: 011 2667080 / 011 2667082; / 011 2667084 Mobile: 076 082 7080

Email: alzheimers@alzanka.org / Website: www.alzanka.org / Facebook: Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

Scrabble Bash 2025: A Celebration of Words and Wit

The much-anticipated Annual *Scrabble Bash* concluded with great success on Saturday, 5th April 2025, bringing together nearly 40 enthusiastic participants from across the island. The competition was divided into two categories - Category A for seniors and Category B for youth - showcasing talent across a broad age range.

This year, we were once again delighted to welcome students from Lyceum International School (Wattala), Musaeus College, Ilma International, and Stafford International School, who brought energy and spirited competition to the event.

The winners were rewarded with exciting prizes, generously sponsored by Hilton Colombo, Hilton Colombo Residence, Cinnamon Grand, and Cinnamon Lakeside. We extend our heartfelt thanks to these valued partners for their continued support.

In Category A, the top spot was claimed by **Kavindu Mallawaarachchi**, with **Udher Prasath** of Lyceum International School, Wattala, winning Category B winner was Mrs. Fatima Hyfa and Runner-up was Mrs. Zhurifa Saleem. 10 spot prizes were sponsored by LAF was given to the highest scoring word with LAF, Highest scoring word – clothing, highest scoring words with same 2 letters together, highest scoring Animal, health related word.

Scrabble Bash is more than just a competition - it's a celebration of learning, community, and fun. The event high-lights the cognitive benefits of Scrabble, a game known to sharpen vocabulary, memory, and strategic thinking.

A special note of gratitude goes to **Shaila Amalean** and her dedicated team, whose passion and commitment have made this event a recurring success year after year.



Sinhala & Tamil – Avurudu Celebrations at LAF

Clients and volunteer's had a wonderful time celebrating Avurudu at the Activity Centre, just before the April vacation. It was truly heartwarming to witness the enthusiasm with which our clients engaged in the activities organized by the volunteers.



Ninewells Hospital Nursing School

The Ninewells Hospital Nursing Training School, dedicated to preparing students for careers in healthcare, recently visited the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation (LAF). A group of 31 third year nursing students, attending in groups of six per visit, participated in this observation programme.

This experience provided students with valuable insights into the practices and services LAF offers to its clients, enhancing their understanding of dementia care and support. By observing firsthand how LAF operates, the students gained practical knowledge that will be beneficial in their future careers in healthcare.



Visit of A/L students of Elizabeth Moir School

Final year A/L students of Elizabeth Moir School visited LAF on February 7th, spending the morning learning about Alzheimer's disease and engaging with clients.

LAF organized an informative session led by Dr. Amodha Udulanavani Medagedara, Senior Registrar in Old Age Psychiatry and Lecturer in Pharmacology at the National Hospital, who provided valuable insights on the subject.

In addition to attending the session, the students assisted volunteers with simple tasks, interacted with clients, and participated in an entertainment session, singing and playing musical instruments. They also contributed towards the day's meal. Inspired by their experience, the students expressed a strong interest in continuing this initiative as a long-term project for A/L final-year students.



Visit of Final -Year Medical Students of the University of Kelaniya

Over the years, LAF has supported the final-year teaching programme in psychiatry for students from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

On February 5th, 2025 another batch of 32 final-year medical students visited to participate in a programme designed to provide valuable experiences in dementia care. The session proved to be beneficial to all involved, offering students a deeper understanding of the complexities of Alzheimer's disease and the importance of specialized care.



A Student Volunteer's Perspective by Minaya Kulasinghe

Volunteering at the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. As a medical student, it offered a unique opportunity to observe the reality of conditions such as dementia and its effects on individuals and their families. This hands-on experience allowed me to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application.

I greatly enjoyed engaging in creative activities with the clients, such as artwork and music sessions. These joyful moments taught me the therapeutic value of creativity, helping clients to express themselves and to foster a sense of accomplishment. A particularly memorable part of my time there was interacting with a client who was a former French teacher. Her stories and the French phrases she taught me, added a personal and meaningful aspect to my experience.

Working alongside other volunteers was equally inspiring. Their dedication and teamwork created a supportive environment for the clients. Observing their caregiving approach taught me valuable lessons in patience, adaptability, and the importance of fostering a comfortable and positive atmosphere.

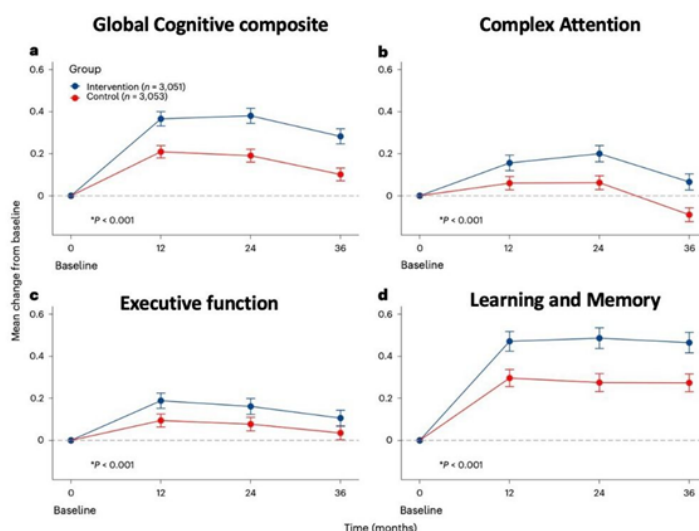
From a medical perspective, this experience allowed me to witness the multifaceted impact of dementia on individuals. It highlighted the importance of adopting a holistic approach that addresses not only medical symptoms but also the emotional and social well-being of patients.

Overall, this experience brought me immense joy and a profound sense of fulfillment. It enhanced my understanding of dementia care and strengthened my commitment to providing empathetic, person-centered care in my future medical career. The lessons I learned and the meaningful connections I made will continue to inspire and guide me as I progress in my medical journey



Important Study on Managing Cognitive Decline - The Brainwell Institute

The data is increasingly clear, it is possible to prevent cognitive decline through lifestyle interventions. Below are the results from a large randomized trial over 3 years out of Australia conducted online targeting the big 4: physical activity, nutrition, cognitive engagement, depression/anxiety in mean age 65 who are at risk. <https://lnkd.in/g8Ukg6eW>



Often, cognitive engagement must 1st overcome social isolation. Helping people with dementia find something THEY want to talk about, with tools like the personalized Memory Lane Games app, can help both the caregivers and people living with dementia, to enjoy more of their time together. Encouraging positive social interactions with frustration free activities is key.

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/dr-saskia-sivananthan_the-data-is-increasingly-clear-it-is-possible-activity-7292515326817157120-9OGR?utm_medium=ios_app&rcm=ACoAAAFUqtKBUR3sHek-ttNBaND4uOwNKBQRcxE&utm_source=social_share_send&utm_campaign=gmail

Colombo & Gampaha Division

December 2024

- 13 - Kamburugoda West, Bandaragama - Elder's Society
- 13 - Veedagama Temple, Bandaragama - Elder's Society
- 16 - Dunagaha Community Hall, Divulapitiya - Women's Society
- 17 - Aththanagalla DS Office—Elder's Societies i
- 23 - Samagi Mw, Minuwangoda

January 2025

- 08 - Madawala Temple, Awarariyawatta - Elder's Society
- 10 - Kamburugoda East, Bandaragama - Elder's Society
- 17 - Sri Jayawardhanapura DS Office - Elder's Societies
- 22 - Loluwigoda Temple, Meerigama
- 23 - Gaveshi Welfare Society
- 24 - Welikadamulla, Wattala
- 27 - Retired Teachers of Police School, Narahenpita
- 31 - Adiambalama , Katana - Elder's Society

Galle Divisional Secretariat

December 2024

- 01 - Henagoda Village, Elder's Society
- 04 - Berathuduwa Village, Elder's Society
- 05 - Thilakagama Village, Elder's Society
- 06 - Arachchikanda Village, Elder's Society
- 09 - Kaluwagaha Village, Elder's Society
- 10 - Gonapinuwala East Village, Elder's Society
- 10 - Woodland Estate - Elder's Society
- 13 - Dodamkahawila Village, Elder's Society
- 20 - Kirindi Ela Village, Elder's Society
- 26 - Karuwalabedda Village, Elder's Society

January 2025

- 02 - Gonapinuwala East, - Elder's Society
- 03 - Arachchikanda Village - Elder's Society
- 03 - Madampagama Divisional Secretariat office - Elder's Society Leaders
- 05 - Henagoda Village – Elder's Society
- 06 - Dodamkahawila Village - Elder's Society
- 09 - Thilakagama Village - Elder's Society
- 15 - Berathuduwa Village - Elder's Society
- 20 - Woodland Estate - Elder's Society
- 21 - Hikkaduwa Village - Elder's Society
- 30 - Kaluwalabedda Village - Elder's Society
- 30 - Manampita Village - Elder's Society



CALL OUR HELP LINE

2667080 / 2667082 / 2667084 or Mobile No: 076 082 7080

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

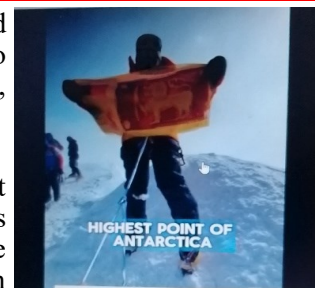
For information on dementia and dementia care management

LAF Brand Ambassador Summit Antarctica's Tallest Mountain



Johann Peries, the LAF's Brand Ambassador has achieved another historic milestone by becoming the first Sri Lankan to summit Mount Vinson, the tallest mountain in Antarctica, standing at 4,892 meters

In 2018, Peries made history as the second Sri Lankan to summit Mount Everest, a feat that cemented his place in the country's mountaineering legacy. His extraordinary journey has since continued, with successful summits of Mount Elbrus in Europe, Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, and Mount Kosciuszko in Australia.



No Sri Lankan has yet completed the 'Seven Summits' challenge - climbing the highest peaks on each continent - an accomplishment that only around 350 people worldwide have achieved. With this latest triumph, Peries moves one step closer to joining this elite group of mountaineers.

A New Volunteer's Journey with LAF - Shanali Perera

I was introduced to LAF by a friend and joined as a Monday volunteer in June 2024. From the very beginning, I was welcomed by a team of dedicated and compassionate individuals, all working toward a shared goal - bringing joy and support to those in need. The warmth and camaraderie among the volunteers create an uplifting environment where even the smallest effort makes a meaningful impact.

Before joining, I had no prior experience or knowledge about Alzheimer's. A progressive brain disorder, Alzheimer's affects memory, thinking, and behavior, gradually impacting a person's ability to carry out daily activities. However, the workshops and lectures conducted by LAF have been invaluable, equipping me with the confidence and understanding needed to engage meaningfully with the clients. Many of them are retired professionals, and interacting with them has been both insightful and fulfilling. Whether we are crafting, singing, dancing, or simply sharing stories over a delicious vegetarian lunch, every moment is a learning experience that fosters patience, empathy, and connection.

Beyond enriching the lives of the clients, volunteering also provides respite to their caregivers, giving them a well-deserved break, even if just for a day. These caregivers dedicate themselves to looking after loved ones who once nurtured them and are now in their second childhood.

One of the most inspiring aspects of my journey has been getting to know Lorraine Yu, the founder of LAF. Her selfless dedication and unwavering commitment to this cause are truly remarkable, and her journey continues to inspire everyone involved.

Volunteering with LAF is more than just giving time - it is an opportunity for growth, self-development, and making a real difference. I look forward to continuing this rewarding journey.



Volunteers Needed for the LAF Activity Centre

With the increasing demand for our community services, we are expanding our Activity Centre to accommodate more individuals living with dementia. To support this initiative, we are looking for dedicated volunteers to join us in making a meaningful difference.

If you have the time and passion to help, we would love to hear from you! Volunteering with LAF provides an opportunity to contribute to the well-being of those affected by dementia while gaining invaluable experience in community service. Join us in making a lasting impact.

Contact LAF

Phone: 2667080 / 2667082 / 2667084

Mobil: 076 0827080

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

In-depth Study on Life Expectancy After a Dementia Diagnosis

A recent study has provided new insights into how long people with dementia might live after being diagnosed. The research shows that life expectancy can vary depending on age and gender. On average, women diagnosed with dementia at age 60 can live for about 9 more years, while those diagnosed at age 85 may live for only about 4.5 years. For men, the life expectancy ranges from 6.5 years at age 60 to just over 2 years at age 85.

The study also found that about one-third of people with dementia move into a nursing home within 3 years of their diagnosis.

This information comes from a review of 261 studies published between 1984 and 2024, which included over 5 million people with dementia. These studies focused on survival rates and nursing home admissions, with participants mostly from Europe and North America. The average age of participants was 79, and 63% were women. On average, the studies followed participants for 7 years.

Dr. Frank J. Wolters and his team at Erasmus MC University Medical Centre in Rotterdam, Netherlands, conducted the analysis. They found that survival after a dementia diagnosis depends largely on age. For women diagnosed at age 60, the average survival was 8.9 years, while men diagnosed at age 85 had an average survival of just 2.2 years.

Overall, dementia reduces life expectancy by about 2 years for people diagnosed at age 85, 3 to 4 years for those diagnosed at age 80, and up to 13 years for those diagnosed at age 65.

The study also found that people from Asian populations and those with Alzheimer's disease tended to live about 1.4 years longer than those with other types of dementia.

These results come from observational research, so the authors noted that differences in study methods and factors like socioeconomic status, race, disease severity, and pre-existing health conditions could have influenced the findings. However, they highlighted that this review included a large number of studies and long follow-up periods, which can provide valuable information for planning individual care and prognosis.

Reference: <https://www.bmj.com/content/388/bmj-2024-080636>

SOURCE: BMJ Group

EVENTS CALENDER 2025

September

- 6th - Run to Remember
- 21st - World Alzheimer's Day
- 27th - Annual Memory Walk

November

- 8th - Grand Sale (tbc)

December

- 5th - Christmas Party

Sponsor a Lunch

LAF provides lunch for clients attending activities on
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Cost per meal: Rs. 10,000/- (Vegetarian)

If you would like to sponsor a lunch in memory of a loved one - for a birthday, death anniversary, or any special occasion - do contact 2667080

or

0760827080 to reserve a date.

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.



Now available at **LAF** - For Inquiries Call; 011 2667080 / 2667082 / 2667084 or Mobil : 076 0827080

Current Services

- Raising awareness and eradicating stigma
- Education on risk reduction & care management
- Memory screening / assessments twice a month on Fridays
- Community Awareness programmes 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
- Website : www.alzlanka.org
- www.facebook.com/alzlanka

Caregiver Support Group (CSG) - Online 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month from 7.30pm - 8.30pm

The Caregiver Support Group (CSG) offers a safe, welcoming space for caregivers to connect, share experiences, and draw strength from one another.

Our online meetings, held twice a month, provide an opportunity to discuss concerns, exchange advice, and focus on personal wellness while working to break the stigma surrounding caregiving. Whether you're looking for guidance, emotional support, or simply someone who understands, CSG is here for you.

★ 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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2667080 / 2667082 / 2667084 or Mobile No: 076 082 7080

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

For information on dementia and dementia care management