

TEAM



INDIVIDUAL

AN APPROVED GOVERNMENT CHARITY  
(GAZETTE NOTIFICATION NO. 1225)

# Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

Email: [alzheimers@alzlanka.org](mailto:alzheimers@alzlanka.org)

Website: [www.alzlanka.org](http://www.alzlanka.org)

## Message from the President

### Walk your way out of Dementia

LAF has successfully completed another virtual walk amidst the COVID 19 pandemic – ‘Memorable Steps 2021’ to mark World Alzheimer’s Month (WAM). Scientific evidence increasingly supports an active lifestyle to prevent dementia and stem the cognitive decline when someone has signs of dementia.

Our walk challenge of 100,000 steps in 21 days was completed by a majority of the participants. Our campaign raised awareness on the silent pandemic of Alzheimer’s that will perhaps be a bigger challenge than any infection and outbreak COVID 19. We are happy that we have consistently promoted a physically and mentally healthy lifestyle. We hope our initiative will encourage more and more people to take up walking and be part of a healthier Sri Lanka.

We congratulate all the participants. For those of you who did not complete it, don’t be discouraged: “It’s the journey that matters, not the end”! For those of you who had the intention but could not join for one reason or the other: “There is always a second chance”! We hope to see you join the walk next year. In the meantime, stay safe and active.

Prof Shehan Williams

## 10th Anniversary of the Information and Service Centre



The Information and Service Centre of the Lanka Alzheimer’s Foundation(LAF) in Maradana, celebrates its 10th Anniversary today!

Opened on 21st September 2011, the centre has been a hive of activity and a haven for those with dementia for the past 10 years.

We thank all those who contributed generously to make this venture by LAF’S co-founder Lorraine Yu, a reality.

Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation, 110 Ketawalamulla Ln, Colombo 10

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## Free Memory Screening

2021

Oct - 22nd , 29th

Nov - 5th , 19th

Dec - 3rd , 17th

**Appointments are limited.**

**Please call the Helpline 2667080**

**to register**

# WORLD ALZHEIMER'S MONTH - SEPTEMBER 2021

September marks World Alzheimer's Month, and 21st September is World Alzheimer's Day.

Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation (LAF), a Member of Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), is calling on everyone to recognise the warning signs of dementia, which will result in early diagnosis. Many are diagnosed in the later stages of dementia due to challenges in receiving a diagnosis of and/or the stigma surrounding dementia.

**Know Dementia, Know Alzheimers** - Knowing and spotting the warning signs are more important now than ever. Timely diagnosis will enable people to seek out information, advice and support.

Further we need to **be aware of the possible link between long-COVID and dementia**, that could further add to the dementia pandemic. Awareness would enable people to self-monitor for symptoms & stop it in its tracks. Globally millions could face increased or accelerated risk of dementia as a consequence of long-COVID.

LAF is calling on the World Health Organisation (WHO) and governments to **globally prioritise and fund vital research** on links between COVID-19 and dementia.

**We urge everyone to follow preventative measures such as a balanced diet, physical activity and challenging brain activity .**

All of this would reduce the risk of dementia.

World Alzheimer's Month  
September 2021

## Know Dementia

The importance of an early diagnosis

Estimated growth in number of people with dementia 2019 - 2050\*

Year	Number of people with dementia
2019	85 million
2030	139 million
2050	259 million

The total estimated annual worldwide cost of dementia is over US\$ 1.3 trillion. The figure is forecast to rise to US\$ 2.8 trillion by 2030\*

WHO Global status report 2021

### 10 warning signs of dementia

- 1 Memory loss
- 2 Difficulty performing familiar tasks
- 3 Problems with language
- 4 Disorientation to time and place
- 5 Poor or decreased judgement
- 6 Problems keeping track of things
- 7 Misplacing things
- 8 Changes in mood and behaviour
- 9 Challenges understanding visual and spatial information
- 10 Withdrawal from work or social activities

If these signs are new, they may be a sign of dementia. Dementia is not a normal part of ageing. Speak to your Doctor or contact Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation (LAF) Helpline: 2667080. [www.alzlanke.org](http://www.alzlanke.org)

Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

The warning signs of "Dementia" vary according to the type of disease. Yet there are 10 warning signs that we need to look out for.

**'Know Dementia, Know Alzheimers', so that we recognize the warning signs**

**CALL OUR HELP LINE**

**2667080**

**Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm**

**For information on dementia and dementia care management**

# Memorable Steps 2021 - A Virtual Walk for Alzheimer's

To mark World Alzheimer's Month, LAF once again organized a virtual walk in September. "Memorable Steps 2021" was held from the 10th to the 30th September. The challenge required participants to walk 100,000 steps 'virtually', beginning in Kalutara and ending in the Galle Fort. A separate 'Team challenge' was also introduced this year to enable teams of 5 members to take up the challenge of completing 500,000 steps each. Many teams from corporate organisations joined in the team challenge.

The importance of exercise to improve our physical and mental health amidst the COVID-19 pandemic was the emphasis of the Virtual Walk. Our social media campaign commenced prior to the walk, and an oversubscribed webinar on "Covid, Exercise and Dementia" by the eminent Virologist Prof Neelika Malavige and Prof Shehan Williams was hosted by Daily Mirror online on the evening of 8<sup>th</sup> September. The video was live streamed and as of now has more than 11000 views on facebook.

Videos of a volunteer and members of her family, our ambassador Johann Pieris and a social media influencer were carried along with important messaging on dementia, its prevention and early warning signs. Radio messaging about the walk was carried out by Legends and short clips were aired on MTV.

On September 21st, the World Alzheimer's Day, we celebrated the virtual walkers from both the individual and corporate challenge, who had together walked 27,010,085 steps towards raising awareness for Alzheimer's.

The leader board of the Ayubo.app carried updates on the number of steps completed by individual and team walkers. By midnight on 30th September when the challenge ended, 339 individuals & 28 corporate teams had walked 32,996,467 steps; an outstanding feat indeed.

"Memorable Steps 2021" would not have been possible without the partnership of Ayubo.life led by Chandima Cooray, Prashanth Rajaratnam and the team at Digital Healthcare Solutions Pvt Ltd. Rishini Weeraratne and her team from Daily Mirror online and Hi online coordinated the media efforts including interviews and posts on social and the print media. We are grateful to Mr Sujan Wijewardena for the generous media sponsorship from Wijeya Group, a firm supporter of LAF initiatives for many years now. Our thanks are extended also to Ms. Neela Marikkar of Dentsu Grants for their amazing services ,gratis. Mr Russell Miranda and his team from Dentsu Grants once again came up with wonderful visuals and advertising that exceeded our expectations. We are also thankful to Ms.Nedra Weerasinghe of the Capital Maharaja group and her team for being our Radio and TV sponsor and helping us reach an even larger audience.

Our sponsors Janashakthi life, First Capital, Just Kiddin and Commercial Bank made generous donations during these economically challenging times. The following gave us attractive prizes to be awarded to the winners: Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, Jetwing Hotels, Hilton Colombo, Hilton Residences, Cinnamon Grand Colombo, Taj Samudra Hotel, Movenpick Hotel, Waters Edge, Galadari Hotel, Shangri La hotel, Cutting Station, Bolt Gear, and Celsius. We thank them all.

**Beverley Mirando**

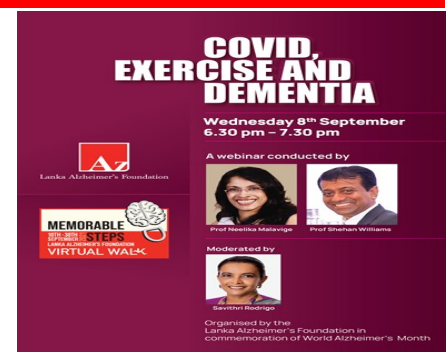
## 8th September Webinar - COVID , Exercise and Dementia

This webinar organized by the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation to commemorate World Alzheimer's Month was conducted by Professor Neelika Malavige and Professor Shehan Williams, Ms Savithri Rodrigo moderated this discussion.

Thank you to everyone who logged in to the webinar.

The recording of the webinar can be viewed here.

<https://www.facebook.com/123504424922433/posts/912509672688567>





## MEMORABLE STEPS -VIRTUAL WALK WINNERS



Thank you to those 339 individuals who took part in the Individual Challenge and 28 teams that took part in the Team Challenge .

32 + million steps were completed to raise awareness for Alzheimers and Dementia during the World Alzheimer's month.

### Congratulations to our lucky Winners

#### INDIVIDUALS

- Nelaka De Silva
- Nadun Kodikara
- Kavinayan Thayaparan
- Mohamed Rilwan
- Charles Sundarasingh
- Tharinda Jayawickrama
- Dilsha Erandhi
- Ren Lan Mather
- Saviru Ravinath Peramunage
- Nalaka De Silva
- Nilukshi Gopallawa
- Tharanga Weerasinghe
- Arun Divahar
- Don Wickramasinghe
- Meliza Jones
- Kavindu Prabath
- Sandaru Wickramarat
- Yohan Silva
- Ajani Potuhera
- Dinesha Ekanayake
- Asanka Wijayadasa
- Sanjeewa Karunaratne
- Karen Jayaratne
- Dhanuka Gunathilaka

#### TEAM CHALLENGE

##### Winner

**Fit Guys - Synopsys Lanka (Pvt) Ltd**

##### Runner Up

**Bulls - Morison Limited**



Congratulations to Anya Fernando ,  
the youngest participant to complete 100,000 Steps!

## "Journey through the diagnosis of dementia" - World Alzheimer Report 2021

The above report has found that an estimated 41 million cases of dementia go undiagnosed across the globe. This, combined with new breakthroughs in treatment for diagnosis, could overwhelm unprepared healthcare systems say Lanka Alzheimers Foundation and Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI).

According to the new [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) statistics](#), Dementia is the seventh leading cause of death among all diseases worldwide. Stigma is still a major barrier to diagnosis, and combined with lack of awareness is hampering efforts to support people living with dementia.-

Furthermore, the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic has been identified for causing additional delays and wait times for providing diagnosis.

ADI continues to call on Governments worldwide to implement their country National Dementia Action Plan, that will enable people with dementia to receive their diagnosis and know what to do next, as dementia is a progressive disease and figures are growing every year.



Globally, ADI estimates **75%** of people with dementia are not diagnosed, that equates to **41 million people undiagnosed.**



**47%** of people living with dementia and carers identified a **lack of trained clinicians** as a barrier to diagnosis. **46%** of people living with dementia and carers identified **fear of diagnosis** and stigma as barriers to diagnosis.

World Alzheimer Report 2021



**55%** of people said they were given inadequate information at diagnosis, a major gap in sign posting from clinicians.

Conversely, **98%** of Alzheimers and dementia associations stated that they provide updated diagnosis information on their websites.

**90%** of clinicians identified additional delays/wait times due to COVID-19

Only **35%** of people living with dementia said they had in-person access to a clinician during the pandemic.



World Alzheimer Report 2021

## THE POWER OF MUSIC - A Final Performance

Tony Bennett's final performance with Lady Gaga, 5 years after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

Tony Bennett who has a recording career spanning over 70 years, released his latest and possibly final album in collaboration with Gaga. This album is titled 'Love for Sale'.

Even though he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's back in 2016, Tony still sings with a pianist a couple of times a week. And whatever fog exists around his everyday life, it seems to dispel when the music starts.

Anderson Cooper who witnessed Tony's final performance relates Tony's story.

"Prior to singing on stage, although he would not necessarily know where he was if he sang or not, the moment the music starts, all his mannerisms and everything just comes right back."

<https://www.npr.org/2021/10/01/1041913702/tony-bennett-and-lady-gagas-latest-and-likely-last-ring-a-ding>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fxn9yKqz66k>

## Can Older Adults Walk Their Way Out of Dementia?

EXCERPT

Medscape Medical News - August 23, 2021.

Megan Brooks

August 05, 2021

Low to moderate levels of physical activity in later life significantly mitigate the increased risk for age-related dementia, new research suggests.

New data from the English Longitudinal Study of Aging (ELSA) show that adults aged 80 years and older who engaged in moderate to high levels of physical activity were at lower risk for all-cause dementia than inactive adults who were in their 50s and 60s.

"These findings have important public health implications, because we know that age is the strongest risk factor for dementia and sedentary behaviors are increasing, both in younger people and older people who may have difficulties in achieving the recommended levels of physical activity," said lead investigator Natan Feter, PhD.

The study's main finding is that although aging is the strongest risk factor for dementia, "we showed that moderate-intensity physical activity once per week can attenuate, or even eliminate, the risk of dementia associated with aging," Feter noted. "In fact, older adults engaging in regular physical activity have a lower risk of dementia than adults aged up to 30 years younger."

Weighing in on the research for *Medscape Medical News*, Claire Sexton, DPhil, Director of Scientific Programs and Outreach for the Alzheimer's Association, said the results are "very consistent with other findings" that have shown a link between physical activity and reduced risk for dementia.

Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) 2021: Session 1-HO-10. Presented July 26, 2021.

## From a Volunteer's Perspective - by Vijayarani

### MY LIFE AT LAF

In 2018, taking a short career break, I wanted to make good use of my time and looked around for various voluntary programs. I came across the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation. I have heard about Alzheimer's disease but had never encountered a patient. I sent an email request to the foundation. Then co-founder / Chairman Lorraine Yu was looking for a volunteer. I was lucky enough to be a part of this great cause.

At the centre I noticed they are well organized, and volunteers are dedicated to the cause they support. We have tea and lunch time sharing food and happy chats. Many clients look forward to this time and connect with the group. We have activity time where we do handwork like card making, coloring, word games, memory games etc. Another happy time is when we have music hour, we sing, and few volunteers and clients dance too. My favorite the games we play like jigsaw puzzle, bingo, dominos, ludo, snakes, and ladders etc. The client's response and participation in each activity amazes me. From the time the clients come to the centre, till they leave they have company and are kept engaged. I am always amazed how these simple activities bring peace and joy to our clients and their families.

Personally, volunteering at LAF helped me to be patient, made me appreciate and be satisfied with the small things in my life, helped me accept people for what they are at this moment. As a HR professional, I now take more initiatives to safeguard the emotional and psychological well-being of my colleagues. I always enjoy meeting new people, and at LAF I got the opportunity to meet different people.

Sadly the Covid -19 pandemic and the lockdown has greatly affected the functioning of the center. We continue to be in touch with the clients and carers at regular intervals.



*Questions about  
dementia ?*

CALL OUR HELP LINE

**2667080**

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

For information on dementia and dementia care management



# Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday



Congratulations to Mary Edwards who reached that magical milestone! A happy 100<sup>th</sup> birthday that she was fortunate to celebrate with three of the four children she brought forth into this world.

Mary was in the first batch of clients that joined the Activity Centre of the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation. Ten years after LAF was incorporated, we opened our own Information and Service Centre (own premises) on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2011. By January the next year, the Activity Centre (AC) was up and running on a Wednesday and was functional once a week, before it expanded to Monday and Friday too, as the demand for placements grew.

Mary was a retired primary school teacher who was under the loving care of her daughter, the only child residing in Sri Lanka. She often spoke of her four children with pride and would repeat their names with great delight when we asked. She attended the AC regularly and would always walk in with a cheerful smile. Mary was warm hearted and would often kiss our hand when we did something for her that she enjoyed, even something as small as holding her hand and saying good morning. She readily showed appreciation, was gentle, caring and kind. She hardly initiated a conversation, but was always willing to engage in one.

Despite her years, Mary was agile and always eager to start the day. She smiled often, a dazzling smile that lit up her whole being. She would sing and dance readily even though they were clearly not pursuits that she had engaged in before. At other times, it was a treat to watch her, watching others having a good time dancing and having fun. Sometimes when we give her the mike to sing, she would say my throat is bad today, but with a bit of encouragement, would break into song within seconds.

She would unfailingly do the arts and crafts, baking or other activity when we suggest it as an activity. But if on an occasion, we ask her to look outside and draw what she sees, or a sunny day or a picnic, year in and year out she would produce the identical artwork of a landscape in great detail. She participated in word games with gusto after lunch, surprising us with answers that we sometimes wracked our brains to find. Occasionally, we would have laughing competitions to wind up a light stretching session and not everyone bought into the idea of laughing out loud just for the fun of it. But Mary was game; it was her loud cackle that sent other clients into fits of real laughter. Mary always turned up at the Centre immaculately dressed and fond memories of her are far too numerous to mention. Wednesday Volunteers wish her the very best and it was truly a pleasure to have met a sunny person such as you.

Laki Cabral



Mary and her Children



Opening of the memory shop by our oldest client



Enjoying Avurudu Games



With the late MB Imran

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.



Hypoallergenic and Tamperproof ID bracelets are now available at

**The Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation**

**Inquiries Call 0112667080 /82**

## *Current Services*

- Raising awareness and eradicating stigma
- Education on risk reduction
- Education on care management
- Helpline +94 11 2667080
- Memory screening / assessments done twice a month on Fridays
- Activity Centre
- Quarterly newsletter
- Resource Centre/ Information and resource materials
- Caregiver support group (CSG) meeting
- Memory Garden Cafe
- Identification bracelet
- Website : [www.alzlanka.org](http://www.alzlanka.org)
- [www.facebook.com/LankaAlzheimers](http://www.facebook.com/LankaAlzheimers)

### **Caregiver Support Group (CSG)**

The CSG meetings are conducted as needed .

- support caregivers through discussion and sharing
- listen and learn from care experiences
- share common concerns

### **Collaboration :**

- Sensitise medical students of the Kelaniya University & the Kotelawala Defence University on non-pharmacological approaches to Dementia.
- Practical training for students of the speech therapy unit of the Kelaniya University.

## *The Board*

Lakmali Cabral (Secretary), Murtaza Esufally, Priya Fernando ,  
Lilani Jayasuriya (Treasurer) Beverley Mirando, Prof. Shehan Williams (President)

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE FOUNDATION  
BY MAKING A DONATION OR LEAVING A LEGACY**

**The Foundation is a Government Approved Charity (Gazette Notification no. 1225)**

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.**

**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**