



Message from the President

Dementia Friendly Communities

LAF developed its strategic plan for 2022-2026 amidst looming uncertainties in the country. The health and wellbeing of those with dementia is as much a priority as the health of all the citizens of the country. Thankfully much of dementia care is not reliant on medicines or sophisticated expensive technology. Tender loving care (TLC) is at the core of caring for those with dementia.



The strategy in addition focusses on supporting the wellbeing of carers and risk reduction. LAF believes along with the global dementia community that developing dementia friendly societies is key to achieving these objectives.

We are happy that we have started a pilot project this year in Galle, working with active and enthusiastic 'Elders Societies', in increasing awareness on dementia, screening for dementia early and engaging in support for persons with dementia and their carers. This is a cost-effective model where ownership of dementia friendly communities is embraced by local elders. A 'win-win' initiative where elders find meaning and activity that delay the onset of dementia in themselves, while helping those identified with dementia among their own. This exciting initiative is gaining momentum and you will see more information about it in this newsletter.

We are thankful to all those who have supported us despite the difficult financial situation in the country. LAF is blessed to have a caring and dedicated group of volunteers and donors who support the cause.

We take this opportunity to wish all our friends and well-wishers a happy Sri Lankan New Year and blessed Easter.

Prof. Shehan Williams

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Free Memory Screening

2022

April - 8th 22nd
 May - 6th 20th
 June - 3rd 17th

Appointments are limited.
Please call the Helpline 2667080
to register

AN APPROVED GOVERNMENT CHARITY
(GAZETTE NOTIFICATION NO. 1225)

Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

Email: alzheimers@alzanka.org

Website: www.alzanka.org

SCRABBLE BASH TOURNAMENT 2022

After a lapse of a year, it was wonderful to have everyone back at Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation for the annual Scrabble Bash Tournament.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and guidelines, this year's tournament was a shade different to what it usually was. Nevertheless, we wish to extend our gratitude to all those who came and took part.

The winner of the A Division was Mrs. Priya Fernando and the runner-up, Mrs. Farida Akberally.

The winner of the B Division was Mr. Fauzan Farook and the runner-up, Mrs. Christine Seneviratne.

A big thank you to all who worked tirelessly behind the scenes in organizing the tournament, the food and other administrative activities.



CALL OUR HELP LINE

2667080

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

For information on dementia and dementia care management

Galle - Dementia Friendly Communities

In August 2021, Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation (LAF) undertook a strategic development exercise to review its external and internal processes to improve the quality of life for people with dementia and their caregivers. A strategic plan was formulated for the next five-years: 2022- 2026.

LAF believes that local **Dementia Friendly Communities** have the capacity to meet the needs of persons with Dementia, their carers & promote awareness about Dementia and its risk reduction.

With this in mind, we have started the Dementia Friendly Communities initiative as a Pilot project in Galle from January 2022. Mrs. Wasanthi Kumudini, is our new Project Co-ordinator who works in the Gonapinuwala Divisional Secretariat area engaging with Elders societies and helping them support their own elders with dementia. We are happy that we obtained the necessary permission for our work from the District Secretariat in Galle.

The project will envisage

1. Awareness programs on dementia
2. Memory clinics for elders
3. Home visits to support elders with dementia
4. Training of elders to care for people with dementia
5. Carer support groups

Visits were made by Professor Shehan Williams and Beverley Mirando to Galle to meet with the Elder Rights promotion officer and counseling officer, the MOH at Arachchikanda, Dr. Krishanthi Siriwardena who conducts the psychiatric clinics under the supervision of Dr Rumi Ruben, Consultant Psychiatrist and the NGO co-ordinating officer.

Meanwhile, awareness programs conducted by Ms. Wasanthi began in different areas within the Gonapinuwala district, at the request of the Elders Societies in the areas.

For the first time, on 16th March, Memory Screening clinics were held at two temples within the Gonapinuwala Divisional secretariat area, conducted by Professor Shehan Williams and two doctors, Drs Rishara and Parami who are both registrars in psychiatry. 26 elders participated in the two clinics from 12 elder societies in the area. People who attended the clinics got advice from doctors how to improve and retain their memory. Follow up work with a selected group of elders will be done to ensure that they visit the Psychiatric Clinic conducted by Dr. Krishanthi Siriwardena.

In the afternoon, a visit to the Foundation of Goodness, Seenigama, Galle, took place. A meeting was organized with the Elders in the area, and Prof Shehan Williams spoke to them on Dementia.

This is the beginning of an exciting journey by LAF to develop Dementia Friendly Communities all over Sri Lanka.



Training Program for volunteers

Volunteers are the bedrock of LAF. In fact, the organization came into being as a voluntary commitment of the Founders over 23 years ago. Volunteers perform a number of tasks for LAF with dedication, commitment and love. LAF values, encourages and appreciates volunteerism and firmly believes that the services and the service standards they provide can never be replicated by someone who is paid to do the same job. The volunteers of LAF come from diverse backgrounds bringing to LAF, a wealth of knowledge and a myriad set of skills.

As an organization that grew organically, training was initially informal and in the form of simple instructions followed by training 'on the job' so to speak. However, after the Activity Centre was set up, gradually the systems at LAF were formalized and we had our first formal training program for volunteers in 2014. Since then we have had regular training sessions for volunteers. As the majority of the programs were conducted away from LAF, and therefore termed as Volunteer Away Days, they provided an opportunity for the volunteers who support the Activity Centre on different days, to mingle and share information informally. To LAF, it was an opportunity to honour and recognize their commitment.

LAF had a training program for volunteers on 27th January, after a hiatus of 2 years due to COVID. The Program commenced with a quiz as an energizer and also as a reminder of key information on dementia and about LAF itself to ensure that volunteers, both new and old, are equipped to handle questions and information from the public. Lakmali Cabral conducted the quiz.

Next, an interactive discussion on dementia was conducted by Prof Shehan Williams, followed by training on first-aid conducted by Dr Chamara Wijesinghe. First-aid was identified as a necessity, as the volunteers work with the elderly population and it was important to know not only what interventions are essential, but also what should *not* be done until professional help arrives. The program was much needed as the Activity Centre became fully functional once again, only in November 2021, after being closed for the better part for the last 2 years. The final session was a group discussion on challenges in providing therapeutic care (for the more advanced clients).

This training program had a special significance, as LAF took the opportunity to unveil the portrait of Ms. Lorraine Yu, the co-founder of LAF on this day. Lorraine voluntarily stepped down from LAF after 20 years of dedicated service in September 2019. It was Lorraine who envisioned volunteerism as a core value of LAF and strived hard to enlist the support of volunteers to run the Activity Centre and many other tasks of LAF, even before the organization had premises of its own. She herself served in an honorary capacity full time, leading by example. Thus it was fitting that the portrait was unveiled by Prof Shehan Williams in the presence of volunteers.

Lakmali Cabral



LAF Strategic Framework - 2022 to 2026

In August 2021, LAF began a strategic planning exercise resulting in a plan for the next five years 2022—2026. LAF thanks Strategic Inspirations for providing the consultancy service to facilitate this process and the WHO Sri Lanka for financially supporting this initiative.

Dementia rages as a silent epidemic in Sri Lanka. With people living longer as the Sri Lankan life expectancy is 75 to 80 years, the probability of getting Dementia and Alzheimer’s disease is greater. The Covid pandemic has also had a devastating effect on persons with dementia and their carers. In this light, greater interventions are desired to create awareness for a better understanding of Dementia and Alzheimer’s disease and reducing the risk therefrom, while addressing the health and well-being of persons with dementia and their carers.

The End-Goal of our strategic journey is to establish: **‘A dementia-friendly country that will maximise the ability of people with dementia to live a meaningful and dignified life, through early detection, risk reduction, and community awareness, and ensure families and carers have the necessary support and resources for well-being’.**

LAF’s strategic goal will focus on 3 main themes:

1. **Health & well-being of persons with Dementia:** Where needs of people with Dementia are met from diagnosis to end of life with early access to suitable care, services and treatment.
2. **Well-being of carers:** Carers’ (family and paid) needs are met, creating a better quality of life for the carer.
3. **Dementia risk reduction & community awareness:** Create awareness in the community and prevent the onset of Dementia.

These themes are centered around LAF’s organizational end-goals, and will form the *cornerstones* of *Dementia Friendly Communities (DFC)*, a culture that LAF wishes to inculcate in local communities in which people living with dementia and their carers are empowered, supported and included in society to realise their full potential. Furthermore, LAF intends to initiate a DFC as a pilot project in Galle. The value drivers namely **quality, respect** and **dignity** ensure the various dimensions in implementing LAF’s programs.

a) **Quality** refers to the quality of care and access to LAF’s services to improve the quality of life for people with dementia and their carers.

b) **Respect and dignity** imply respecting the individuality of persons with dementia as an approach to dementia care, whilst providing the care and support persons with dementia need with dignity and respect

This is set out in the revised **Theory of Change** document given below.



Institute for Health and Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) study

ADI - The (IHME) has published a study on dementia prevalence forecasts in 204 countries in [The Lancet: Public Health](http://www.thelancet.com/publichealth) <http://www.thelancet.com/publichealth> Vol 7 February 2022.

" Estimation of the global prevalence of dementia in 2019 and forecasted prevalence in 2050: an analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019"

The study included Sri Lanka and showed that in 2019, Sri Lanka had 146,778 (127,955 to 168,267) cases and that by 2050 it will go up to 475,050 (374,248 to 599,464) cases.

The study by (IHME) published in The Lancet predicts that people living with Alzheimer's disease would triple by 2050, resulting in 153 million people.

Awareness Program - St Margaret's Home (Shanthi Nivasa) Col 3

On the 22nd March, the LAF conducted an awareness campaign under the theme ' Old age, mental illness, and Dementia' for the residents of Shanthi Nivasa 15 ladies participated in this program.

During the event, the residents were educated on the importance of understanding mental health as ageing progresses, as well as what dementia is and the different kinds of dementia, particularly Alzheimer's disease. Finally, the residents were told what they can do to reduce the risk of dementia.

After the initial talk, the residents were given time to ask as many questions as they wished. It truly was an educational and enlightening morning for everyone.



***Questions about
dementia ?***

2667080

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FDA clears 5 minute Test for Early Dementia

The US Food and Drug Administration has given marketing clearance to CognICA, an artificial intelligence–powered integrated cognitive assessment for the early detection of dementia.

Developed by Cognetivity Neurosciences Ltd, CognICA is a 5 minute, computerized cognitive assessment that is completed using an iPad. The test offers several advantages over traditional pen-and-paper-based cognitive tests, the company said in a news release

<https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/961277>

Sinhala & Tamil - Avurudu Celebrations at LAF

Clients & volunteers enjoyed the Avurudu celebrations on their Activity centre days, just before the April vacation. It was amazing to see how our clients participated in the activities that the volunteers organized.



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
- www.facebook.com/alzlanka

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), 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