



President's Message

We wish everyone a Happy Sri Lankan New Year!

It has been a period of celebration for our clients at our activity centre in Colombo. The number of persons attending the activities have been growing slowly but steadily in the first quarter of 2023. We were also a part of celebrations in the elderly societies in Galle where we have conducted community awareness on dementia over the past year.

While we hope the new year will be a dawn of a better future for Sri Lanka, we also wish for more resources and better care for persons with dementia. We are excited about our social media campaign on dementia awareness, which is in full swing engaging many not reachable through conventional media publicity. We are thankful to Mr Nimal Gunawardena, a LAF director himself and the NGage team for making it possible with financial support from AIA Insurance. LAF thrives on partnerships and believes it is the most effective strategy to develop dementia friendly communities.

In the same spirit, LAF has forged a partnership with The Asia Foundation (TAF) to work with 30 elders clubs in Colombo, Gampaha and Galle Districts in the next six months, conducting awareness programmes, organizing memory screening events and enabling a culture of 'senior citizens' supporting other senior citizens with dementia.

Finally, I wish to thank everyone, and especially Mrs Shaila Amaleen and Mrs Yasmin Cader who made our Scrabble Bash event in February a great success with the participation of young and old alike.

Prof Shehan Williams
President



AN APPROVED GOVERNMENT CHARITY
(GAZETTE NOTIFICATION NO. 1225)

Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

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Free Memory Screening

2023

April - 21st

May - 12th 26th

June - 9th 23rd

Appointments are limited.

**Please call the Helpline 2667080
to register.**

Scrabble Bash 2023



The annual “Scrabble Bash” was successfully concluded on the 25th of February. The winners & runners-up walked away with some exciting prizes donated by Hilton Colombo, Shangri-La, Hilton Colombo Residences, Cinnamon Grand, Cinnamon Lakeside, Taj Samudra, Galadari, Leather Kingdom & Glory Opticians.

The Scrabble Bash brought together participants of all ages. The winner of category A was Priya Fernando and runner-up, Imeth De Silva. Sachiv Prasath emerged the winner in category B and Kavinaya Nagulesh, the runner-up.

Our sincere appreciation to our numerous sponsors, adjudicator Shaila Amalean, ably assisted by Praveeni, Rashid and Pradeepani, and the many sponsors for their continued support.

The Scrabble Bash is held on the last Saturday in February every year. We look forward to your participation in 2024.

Colombo Club - Fireside Chat

The fireside chat on ‘When is Memory Loss a concern’ was held for members of the Colombo Club and their spouses on 7th March at Taj Samudra.

The programme was limited to 45 participants to enable and encourage questions from the audience. The event was over- subscribed within hours and positive feedback was received from the Club and participants.

The panelists were Prof Shehan Williams, Lakmali Cabral and Beverley Miranda.

FIRESIDE CHAT
with
PROF. SHEHAN WILLIAMS
of the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation on
WHEN IS MEMORY LOSS A CONCERN?

PROF. SHEHAN WILLIAMS
President,
Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

LAKMALI CABRAL
Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

BEVERLEY MIRANDO
Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

CALL OUR HELP LINE

2667080 / 2667082 / 2667084

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

For information on dementia and dementia care management

Update From the Galle Project



It has now been over a year that Wasanthi - the project coordinator obtained the necessary approvals from the relevant government authorities, on behalf of LAF, to establish Dementia Friendly communities in the Galle District.

Co-ordinating with the local elders' societies, women's societies and community/religious leaders establishing dementia friendly communities has commenced.

Working with the elders' societies in the Gonapinuwala area, activity sessions are conducted with new elders joining from the different societies. Activities learnt are followed up in their homes with friends and neighbours, which is very positive. Families with members with memory problems and health, financial and security issues are visited. As a follow up, they join the activity sessions held with other elders in the village, enabling them and their families to understand the health issues affecting them, and helping raise the awareness of dementia in these communities.

The very first Caregivers' Society meeting organized by Wasanthi and conducted by Dr. Krishanthi Siriwardena was held on the 29th of March at the Arachchikanda Hospital. This was of tremendous assistance indeed, to caregivers of family members with dementia, providing them with advice on how to support them.

At the request of elders from 08 elder societies who attend the activity sessions, a small New Year festival is to be organised at the Arachchikanda Community Centre premises which they are all looking forward to.

We look forward to reporting the progress of our work in Galle.

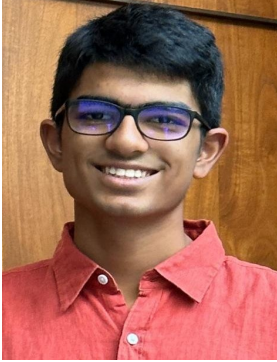
Donation from ICCB



Our sincere appreciation is extended to the Committee Members of the International Christmas Charity Bazaar (ICCB) for their donation in support of the Foundation's Activity Centre.

Sasha Tolstikova - Committee Member of the ICCB presented a cheque for Rs 135,000/- to Mrs Beverley Miranda, Director of Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation.

A Student Volunteer's Perspective – Krrish Khanth



My LAF Volunteering Experience

Volunteering at the Alzheimer's centre opened up a completely new part of me that I wouldn't have known existed unless I was given an opportunity to help people. Helping the clients and getting to know a few of them was a very heart-warming experience and an eye opener as to how people with disabilities live on a day to day basis, overcoming challenges to live a happy life.

I began volunteering at LAF hoping it would help me in my career to become a doctor and to understand how to assist the elderly and to be able to show empathy towards others. But once I started at the Activity center I learnt much more. At that time I didn't understand how interesting or knowledgeable the elderly could be, but after completing 50 hours of volunteering and aiding elders, I realized how much more I had learnt.

When I started volunteering at LAF, I didn't look at each client as a patient but more as a human being who has lived through experiences that I could never dream of. I began to realize early, that no two clients were the same. Each client excelled at different things; for example, some could finish any art project given to them in a matter of minutes, while some didn't have a lot of hand dexterity but could talk to you for hours and you wouldn't get bored. Another interesting client loved to share his travel experiences and he always lit up the room with his enthusiastic personality.

Throughout my LAF volunteering experience the clients weren't the only ones who impressed. The volunteers who take the time and effort to come to the center every week, no matter how difficult it may have been, to provide a stimulating and friendly environment for themselves and the clients, truly impressed me. The volunteers were the backbone of the LAF activity center who knew and treated each client like their own family.

Overall my time at the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation was truly magnificent and taught me more about how to take care of the elderly than any textbook could have. This was an incredible opportunity which has reinforced my dream to work in the healthcare industry.

Dementia Awareness Digital Campaign Launched

In its efforts to bring about wide public awareness about Dementia, the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation (LAF) has launched a trilingual campaign on social media which will run over 12 weeks. The campaign conceptualised and developed on a *pro bono* basis by NGage Strategic Alliance, and sponsored by AIA insurance commenced on 23rd March and will run as a 12-post weekly series, covering information about the condition and symptoms, as well as risk factors, prevention and caregiving.

A web video was also produced as part of the campaign. There has been high engagement with the campaign with unprecedented video views, likes, comments, questions and shares. High sharing including by celebrity influencers has ensured that the campaign gains from a multiplier effect. A LAF team has been engaged to formulate appropriate responses to audience questions. LAF has plans to widen the awareness campaign into a multi-pronged one with other events and activities in the months to come..

Photo captions: Initial trilingual campaign posts; screen-shot of web video



The use of a movie on dementia as an educational tool

Movies have been used for educational purposes in different settings. To explore whether a movie can be used for improving medical students' understanding of dementia, a study was conducted at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, using the critically acclaimed movie, *The Father*. The reason for choosing this movie was the observation that this movie provides a deeply emotional first-person perspective on the lived experience of dementia. One-hundred-and-eight medical students studying in their final year watched the movie and provided their feedback regarding the movie.

The students responded extremely positively on the impact of the movie on their understanding of dementia, with 96.3% reporting that the movie helped them understand the difficulties experienced by a patient with dementia and 98.1% agreeing that the movie helped them to understand the difficulties experienced by caregivers of patients with dementia. Among the students, 88.8% agreed they could "see things from the main character's point of view." Most students correctly identified the clinical features of dementia portrayed in the movie. This study provided evidence that the movie, *The Father*, can be a useful educational tool for medical students.

Source: Anuradha Baminiwatta, Roshan Fernando & Shehan Williams (2023): Improving medical students' understanding of dementia using a movie (*The Father*), Education for Primary Care, DOI: 10.1080/14739879.2023.2178333

Bruce Willis Celebrating his 68th Birthday

The legendary Hollywood actor, who was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia a few months ago, celebrated his 68th birthday with his current wife, Emma Heming-Willis, his ex-wife Demi Moore, and their children. Moore shared the heartwarming video on [Instagram](#).

In the video, the whole gang was singing Happy Birthday to Bruce, everyone was having fun, and you could just feel the enormous amount of love and respect gathered in that one room. Willis looks quite cheerful and happy, not to mention snazzy as heck. The actor stumbled a little when he tried to blow out the small candles on the cake, but his wife and pregnant daughter laughed it off and tried to high-five him.



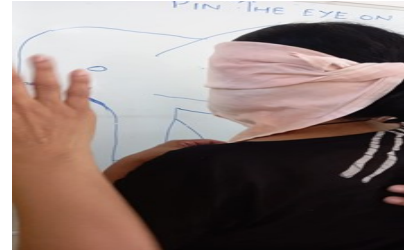
Thank you - Printcare PLC



for once again supporting LAF by printing our Senaka Senanayake greetings cards at no cost.

Avurudhu Celebrations at LAF

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



Awareness Programme - Elders Society (Gampaha District)



An Awareness campaign was conducted by LAF on the 15th of February at St Sebastian's National Shrine in Kandana, for a collection of Elders Societies in Ja-Ela Divisional Secretariat, with the participation of 85 elders.

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

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

https://youtu.be/Y9h_OhmU_AM

**Questions about
dementia ?**

2667080 / 2667082 / 2667084

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

For information on dementia and dementia care management

From a Volunteer's Perspective



My journey at the Alzheimers centre began when I brought my mother over for a screening at the end of 2021. I could never have imagined the beautiful and welcoming haven set up by founder Lorraine Yu and her team. The whole building and surrounding garden inspires feelings of serenity, comfort and well-being. The place is also safe and secure with rules and regulations to ensure its smooth functioning so that any caregiver can confidently send their loved ones alone for the day.

The idea behind the volunteer system is brilliant and two fold. One is to keep the place running in a cost effective manner so that donor contributions are not spent needlessly. Just as important is the idea that volunteers who make a commitment, do so in all earnestness, giving of themselves completely during the time they are at the centre. This makes for a dedicated and attentive team - one that is driven not by remuneration but by participation in a cause they believe in.

I am proud to be one of the Wednesday volunteers and have a great sense of belonging to the team that works at the centre. I have learnt so much from the seniors around me and have built some wonderful relationships with both volunteers and clients alike. What could have been a chore has become a great blessing, and spending time with clients reminds me of the care and patience my own mother needs from me. During my time at the centre, I try my best to disengage from, my day to day responsibilities and focus on the here and now. Spending time with a community of people who have come to mean a lot to me, brightens my day!

Each and every client has their own unique personality. Spending time with them and getting to know their stories remind us all that life can be a different journey for us, but that we all end up in a place needing care and attention. We will all enter a stage in our lives where age will slow us down. Despite this, everyone has a right to live a life of dignity and be treated with respect, and this is an aspect we keep in mind at the centre.

I bring a unique perspective as a volunteer. This is because I am also a caregiver at home for my mother. So I also see first-hand the benefits of my mother coming home to me after a day spent at the centre with the other wonderful teams. She is more cheerful and stimulated when she gets back. At the same time when she is out, I feel a sense of relief knowing that she is engaged, happy and well taken care of.

I am so grateful to be both a volunteer and a carer of a client of this wonderful organization. The fact that the place is run so well and that the activity centre functions 3 times a week, free of charge, for people of all walks of life, is an admirable achievement. I hope more people come to hear of this facility and use the services provided by the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

Euegine Mack



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 / 2667082/ 2667084

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)

Online meetings are conducted every 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month from 7.30pm - 8.30pm

- 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, Romany Parakrama, Nimal Gunewardena , 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