



# Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

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## REDUCING RISK FOR DEMENTIA

How can we reduce the risk of developing dementia? This is a question often posed to me. The Lancet commission report brings us the latest update on this. Less education, hearing loss, hypertension, smoking, obesity, depression, physical inactivity, poorly managed diabetes, excessive alcohol consumption, traumatic brain injury, air pollution, social isolation, untreated vision loss and high LDL cholesterol are the 14 risk factors identified by the leading scientists. It is indeed food for thought. Each of us needs to be aware of them and take steps to minimize the risks.



The campaign by the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation focused on addressing some of these challenges in its campaign during the World Alzheimer month in September. The many events you see in this newsletter highlight the activities we engaged in the past two months to bring greater awareness on Alzheimer's and Dementia in Sri Lanka.

The lighting up of the Lotus Tower in red to commemorate World Alzheimer month on 1st September was definitely a highlight. This was followed by the 'Run to Remember' and the 'Memory Walk' on the 7th and 14th September respectively. Both these events had excellent participation. We received exceptional media coverage with articles in the print and electronic media in English, Sinhala and Tamil and prime time news features in some leading TV channels. The social media reach too was extensive.

We are grateful to all of you who participated in the events, provided sponsorships and contributed to the activities in numerous ways. Our volunteers rallied around us as always doing their part beyond expectation. Without your support and untiring dedication we could not have achieved our objectives. Thank you one and all once again for being a part of our mission and vision!

**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 carer's.**

#TimeToActOnDementia; #TimeToActOnAlzheimers. #WorldAlzMonth

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### Free Memory Screening

**2024**

Oct - 4th & 18th

Nov - 1st & 22nd

Dec - 6th & 20th

**Appointments are limited.**

**Please call the Helpline 2667080 /**

**Mobile 076 082 7080**

**To register.**

# World Alzheimer's Month September – Events

## Media Conference held on 27th August 2024

A media conference was held to announce the activities planned for World Alzheimer Month, raise awareness about dementia and the work of the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation.

Three key events organized by the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation to mark World Alzheimer Month were heavily promoted through personal, social, and earned media channels, resulting in high levels of participation throughout September.

## Lighting of Lotus Tower, 1st September 2024: Press Conference held on 27th August 2024

The Colombo Lotus Tower partnered with us to light up in red on September 1st, marking the commencement of World Alzheimer Month. This event raised awareness and supported the fight against Alzheimer's.



## Run to Remember held on 7th September



The 5 Km run kicked off at the Taj Samudra Hotel on Saturday at 4 pm. The individual runners and teams from Hashers, Colombo City runners and Ceylon Night Runners joined the run, and were flagged off by LAF Brand Ambassador Johann Peiris and the General Manager of Taj Hotels - the sponsor of the post run refreshments. Heshan Rajapakse was the first among the men and Asha de Vos the first women to complete the run.





Memory Walk

The 5 km walk took place on the morning of 14th September at 8 a.m. with excellent response and participation. The Cinnamon Grand Hotel hosted the event, offering a delectable breakfast spread and treats for attendees both before and after the walk. The walk was successfully completed and included an Ebert Silva double-decker bus and a DJ leading keeping everyone in rhythm. A raffle was held after the walk, with exciting prizes adding an extra layer of excitement to the event.



Press Release - 1st September Sunday Observer

# ‘Walk and Run’ for World Alzheimer’s Month

Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia become increasingly prevalent with age. In Sri Lanka, which is experiencing one of the fastest-growing aging populations in the region, it is projected that by 2050 nearly half a million people will live with dementia.

In recognition of World Alzheimer’s Month in September and World Alzheimer’s Day on September 21, the Lanka Alzheimer’s Foundation (LAF), a member of Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI), will hold a series of events.

Colombo’s iconic Lotus Tower will be illuminated in red on September 1, to draw public attention regarding Alzheimer’s disease which is a specific type of dementia characterised by progressive memory loss and cognitive decline. Promoting both physical and mental exercise which are crucial for delaying or preventing dementia, LAF’s will hold “Run to Remember”- a 5 km run on September 7 at 4.30 p.m. from the Taj Samudra Hotel and “Memory Walk 2024” on September 14 at 7.30 a.m. from the Cinnamon Grand Hotel. LAF’s vital services, largely powered by volunteers and supported by donations, include raising awareness,



providing education on risk reduction, memory screening and assessment, running an activity centre, supporting caregiver groups, operating a helpline, offering identification bracelets, befriending, and counselling. These initiatives aim to assist persons living with dementia and their caregivers.

The College of Community Physicians Sri Lanka (CCPSL) joins LAF in its activities, recognising the importance of this major non-communicable disease (NCD). Often neglected and under-recognised, dementia threatens

the health of older adults and will contribute to the public health burden in Sri Lanka.

The time to act on dementia and Alzheimer’s is now. By harnessing the power of knowledge, we can collectively work to recognise the warning signs of dementia, ensure early diagnosis, and offer essential support post-diagnosis. Alzheimer’s disease is not a normal part of aging; it is a condition with no current cure but with measures to reduce the risk and slow its progression.



## Meetings with the British High Commissioner

H.E. Andrew Patrick, the British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka visited LAF's activity and resource centre on the 16<sup>th</sup> August. It provided a great opportunity to highlight the role of LAF as the only dedicated organisation for dementia in Sri Lanka. We discussed the ageing population of Sri Lanka and the challenges that will be faced in the near future as a result of dementia.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, H.E Mr. Andrew Patrick hosted a tea at his official residence for representatives from organisations, including LAF, that offer experience in Sri Lanka for clinical psychologists in universities in the UK. He expressed his pleasure regarding these exchanges between UK and Sri Lankan institutions and extended his support for more such collaborations. The University of Kelaniya, Ayati and Family Rehabilitation Centre were the other organisations represented.



## Reflections from a Trainee Clinical Psychologist - Roseanna Bridge

Roseanna Bridge (Trainee Clinical Psychologist), from the University of East Anglia in the UK completed a placement at LAF.

Roseanne observed memory assessments at LAF, joined Carer support group sessions and attended the Memory walk. She also attended community outreach programmes conducted by LAF Programme Officer Dilan Sandanuwan in Wattala and Kelaniya.

She commented that LAF is a well trusted and transparent organization that is functioning extremely well and provides an exceptional service. Speaking about the outreach projects she went on to say, "I was able to witness the passion that Dilan has for sharing this information. He was a fantastic public speaker, and the audience was listening attentively and laughing with him at times. After the presentation, there was a long queue of people wanting to speak with Dilan".



## 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 Mobil : 076 0827080**





## Awareness Programmes

### Colombo & Gampaha Division

#### August

- 02 - Members of Senior Citizen Society Kattuwa,
- 09 - Members of Senior Citizen Society, Kinigama
- 12 - Members of Paramitha Senior Citizen Society, Udugampala
- 13 - Members of Senior Citizen Society Dompe - DS Office Dompe
- 14 - Elders of Wattala & Keleniya DS Office Divisions
- 16 - Elders of Paththaduwa village - Paththaduwa Temple
- 21 - Elders of Biyagama DS Office division -Biyagama
- 22 - Public Health Nursing Officers -LAF Auditorium
- 23 - Elders of Veevala Village, Kalaeliya Church, Ja-ela
- 26 - Members of Elders Societies ,Bandaragama Divisional Secretariat Office
- 28 - Retired staff members of People's Bank Maharagama - Paramadhamma Temple Pannipitiya
- 30 - Elders of Palagathure Church ,Palagathure Community Hall, Kochchikade



#### September

- 03 - Superintendents and Carer givers of elders homes in Western Province, National Institute of Language Education & Training Center, Agalawatta
- 11 - Elders & retired staff members of government sector -Valukarama Temple, Divulapitiya
- 13 - Elders of Kotadeniyawa, Divulapitiya
- 25 - Elders of Peralanda , Minuwangoda Community Hall
- 27 - Elders of Udugoda ,Udugoda Temple, Nittabuwa
- 30 - Elders of Dunagala village, Dunagala Temple, Divulapitiya



### Galle Divisional Secretariat

- July 25 - Manmpita village elder society members
- August 08 - Retired Members of Ambalangoda Co-operative Society
- August 20 - Members of Berathuduwa elder society
- August 22 - Public health nursing officers
- September 11 - Staff of Gonapinuwala Divisional Secretary office

### CALL OUR HELP LINE

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**Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm**

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

## Classical concert for dementia



A big thank you to Dushyanthi Perera and Ramya de Livera Perera for a delightful evening of music in aid of the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation on the 22nd of August 2024 at the Lionel Wendt. We are deeply appreciative of their support and generous donation, as well as the support of the Earle de Fonseka Trust, for the cause of dementia.



**TWO** renowned classical artists, Dushyanthi Perera (Cello) and Ramya de Livera Perera (Piano) will join hands on 22 August at the Lionel Wendt theatre to lend their helping hands to the cause of dementia.

The Charity concert organised in aid of the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation is also a tribute to the famed classical musician and conductor Dr. Earle de Fonseka. The concert promises to be a treat for classical music enthusiasts with the duo performing many lively classics from the baroque, romantic and modern periods.

Dementia is a silent disease wreaking despair in the lives of those affected by the condition and their caregivers. The 7th leading cause of death today in the world, its

# Classical concert in aid of dementia on 22 August

impact on the lives of those with the condition and their families is devastating. A person with dementia may live many years progressing through the various stages of the illness, eventually losing their mind completely, hence the word 'de- mens (mind in latin)'. Dementia is no respecter of persons, and we may all get the disease at some stage of our lives if we live long enough! With no cure for the condition yet we have no choice but to prevent or delay the onset of the condition. And support those with the condition live



*Dushyanthi Perera with the cello and Ramya de Livera Perera with the piano*

meaningful lives as long as they can.

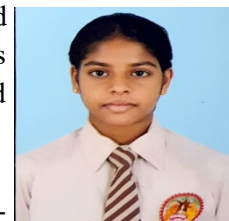
Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation (LAF) pro-

vides therapeutic support and day care for persons with dementia at their model activ-

ity centre in Maradana. Furthermore, they offer counselling support, carer support, memory screening to identify dementia early and information material on supporting a person with dementia. They also work with the community, promoting active lifestyles to prevent dementia and encouraging elders' groups to identify persons with dementia and care for them appropriately. LAF provides all these services free of charge due to generous donations from caring individuals mainly in Sri Lanka.

## A student volunteer's perspective - Anoukshi De Alwis

Walking into the Lanka Alzheimer's Center for the first time, I felt a mix of uncertainty and curiosity about the challenges faced by clients with dementia, including my grandfather. His signs of dementia had become apparent five years earlier, and it was this experience that inspired my decision to volunteer at the center.



The LAF is a welcoming space with well-equipped facilities that provide a supportive environment for both clients and volunteers. During my time there, I discovered that each client's experience with Alzheimer's is unique. Some clients needed gentle encouragement to attend, while others eagerly shared their life stories, bringing their past to life, during engaging conversations.

Activities like arts and crafts, and musical sessions revealed hidden talents among the clients, who sang and danced with enthusiasm. Lunchtime was filled with laughter and camaraderie, although my grandfather often required coaxing to stay and enjoy the meal. Playing games such as puzzles and card games fostered connections between clients and volunteers, creating a lively atmosphere filled with joy and shared experiences.

The relationships I formed during my volunteering experience not only brightened the clients' days but also provided families with reassurance, knowing their loved ones were in a safe and nurturing environment. My time at the LAF profoundly changed my understanding of dementia and highlighted the importance of community support to enhance the quality of life for both clients and caregivers.



## Global changes in attitudes to dementia

The World Alzheimer Report 2024 offers a unique, global perspective on changing attitudes toward dementia, featuring a blend of insightful essays, real-life case studies, and impactful research findings. The report also sheds light on how knowledge, perceptions and behaviours towards dementia have changed over the past five years.

For more details please log in to the link below.

<https://www.alzint.org/resource/world-alzheimer-report-2024/>

#TimeToActOnDementia #TimeToActOnAlzheimers #WorldAlzMonth

## Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2024 report of the *Lancet* Commission

The 2024 update of the *Lancet* Commission on dementia provides new evidence about dementia prevention, intervention, and care. As people live longer, the number of people who live with dementia continues to rise, even as the age-specific incidence decreases in high-income countries, emphasizing the need to identify and implement prevention measures.

The new research since the 2020 report of the *Lancet* Commission on dementia indicates that evidence is increasing and is even stronger than before that tackling the many risk factors for dementia that were modelled previously (ie, less education, hearing loss, hypertension, smoking, obesity, depression, physical inactivity, diabetes, excessive alcohol consumption, traumatic brain injury [TBI], air pollution, and social isolation) reduces the risk of developing dementia (**12 Risk Factors**).

In this report, **there is new compelling evidence that untreated vision loss and high LDL cholesterol are also risk factors for dementia (14 risk factors).**

Link - [https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736\(24\)01296-0/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736(24)01296-0/abstract)

## DATES TO REMEMBER



**Grand SALE**

Export quality clothing and yummy food

A wide range of children's, ladies' and men's wear at bargain prices.

Bring your friends and family and help support a worthy cause!

Saturday  
09th November 2024  
10 am to 04 pm

076 082 7080 or 011 2 667 080 / 82

**Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation**  
110, Ketawalamulla Lane, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka



**SEASONAL CELEBRATION**

06 DEC- 2024 | FRIDAY | 4PM 6PM

**Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation**

## *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
- Identification bracelet
- Website : [www.alzlanka.org](http://www.alzlanka.org)
- [www.facebook.com/alzlanka](http://www.facebook.com/alzlanka)

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

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

- Support caregivers through discussion and sharing
- Listen and learn from care experiences
- Share common concerns
- Work towards caregivers' wellness
- Help to dispel misconceptions and stigma

### **Collaboration :**

- Sensitize medical students of the Kelaniya University & the Kotelawala Defense University on non-pharmacological approaches to Dementia.
- Practical training for students of the speech therapy unit of the Kelaniya University.
- College of Community Physicians of Sri Lanka (CCPSL) in furthering the cause of Dementia Island wide.

## *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 NDBSLK LX ,**

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

**117, Havelock Road, Colombo, Sri Lanka.**

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