

Candlelight Reflections
Thursday, November 6, 2008

*A statewide event to honor all the lives
 affected by Alzheimer's disease and related disorders
 and all family caregivers.*

*When you light your candle tonight, light it not only in memory and
 Support of your loved one, but light it in hope and commitment as well.*
 - Chris Adkins, in honor of his father

Candlelight Reflections is a beautiful and moving experience. It can serve many roles—heightening public awareness of Alzheimer's disease and caregiver issues, honoring and supporting family caregivers and individuals with dementia, and strengthening statewide advocacy efforts.

Several years ago, the Eastern North Carolina and Western Carolina Alzheimer's Association Chapters created *Candlelight Reflections* to bring together Alzheimer's families, friends, and supporters. This year, in an effort to further increase awareness about dementia and its effect on families, the NC Alzheimer's Support Network is joining the NC Family Caregiver Support Program to honor all families and friends taking on the role of caregiving and/or living with dementia. *Candlelight Reflections* is a momentous beginning to both National and NC Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and Family Caregiver Month.

Candlelight Reflections can:

- ◆ Build awareness in the community about the valuable contributions and unique needs of family caregivers;
- ◆ Help educate the public about Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, dementia care, and available support services;
- ◆ Elicit support for state and federal legislation to strengthen support for family caregivers;
- ◆ Encourage positive changes in the workplace to support caregiving families and individuals with dementia;
- ◆ Create opportunities for volunteer recruitment as well as "neighbor helping neighbor" efforts;
- ◆ Motivate people in the community to become more involved in local Alzheimer's Association Chapter activities and other ways to support family caregivers; and
- ◆ Provide public relations material and educational resources to local media, faith communities, and other entities who can share the message.

People are encouraged to participate as a means of demonstrating respect, concern and support for family caregivers and all the lives affected by Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

If your family or Church would like to host an awareness event anytime during the month of November, please contact Sondra Daniels, Family Caregiver Specialist at 828-485-4256

CULTURE CHANGE CAN BE GREAT!?!?!

When we hear the term "culture change" we think of changes to our traditions and customs. Culture change in a nursing home has nothing to do with changing your traditions or customs; however, it does have to do with changing a nursing home's traditions and customs. Culture change is a move from the "one-size-fits-all" traditional medical model of care. The move is to an atmosphere of community with an approach of resident-directed care. In this atmosphere, you have more control over your daily life.

CULTURE CHANGE IS MORE A CHANGE IN HOW ONE THINKS ABOUT CARE. For example, instead of you following the schedule and manner the facility sets for your meals, baths and sleep, etc., the facility would care for you in an environment where your choices would direct your daily routines. Staff would refocus on you as an individual and support you in living life to the fullest. Wow!! How exciting!!!

How wonderful to be treated as an individual, having your caregivers look at the world from your perspective, living in a positive social environment, and having staff adapt your routines. What a great feeling!

This is not to insinuate that the facility in which you live is inadequate. We all know that no matter how good a job one does, there is ALWAYS room for improvement. Other nursing homes across the United States are taking the step to improve through culture change. And as a resident and advocate, I find it especially exciting that North Carolina nursing homes are beginning to adopt this movement.

Here are some examples of culture change in bathing:

- ◆ Decorating with colorful shower curtains, plants, pictures, wall murals and dressers
- ◆ Heating the shower room at a comfortable temperature for YOU
- ◆ Installing towel warmers
- ◆ Adapting shower chairs for greater comfort
- ◆ Allowing you to undress in the shower room instead of your room
- ◆ Listening to soothing music
- ◆ Implementing anything that makes the shower more like a spa and less like a locker room

In future newsletters we will continue to explore how other facilities are implementing culture change. Please contact Roxanne Powell, Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman, if you would like for us to spotlight your facility in our newsletter.

