

Alzheimer's | SAN DIEGO

SUMMER 2017

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alzsd.org
858.492.4400

Helping all of San Diego County

6632 Convoy Court, San Diego, CA 92111

We're BBB Certified!

Alzheimer's San Diego is officially recognized as a **Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance Charity!**



100%
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FREE Memory Screenings



Aug. 15, 9AM-1PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

If you're worried about memory loss, or interested in establishing a baseline to detect future changes, sign up for a free memory screening! Space is limited, so please register by calling 858-492-4400.

New Workshop Coming Soon!

Coping with Caregiving

You can't become an Alzheimer's and dementia expert overnight. **Coping with Caregiving** is a new five-week crash course that provides education – and much-needed support – to anyone who cares for or about someone with dementia. Participants will go on this journey together, creating a safe space to ask questions and talk through the emotional issues that come up along the way. We'll cover the following topics:

WEEK 1, AUG.3 The changing brain

WEEK 2, AUG.10 Skill building

WEEK 3, AUG.17 Facing the road ahead

WEEK 4, AUG.24 Building a support team

WEEK 5, AUG.31 Identifying the missing pieces

Classes will be held Thursdays in August at Alzheimer's San Diego, 6632 Convoy Court. If you're interested in participating, please contact Rebecca De Campos at rdecampos@alzsd.org or call 858-966-3303.

The Good, the Bad, and the Hopeful

An honest look into young-onset Alzheimer's



Robin Harris Images

Lynn & Thomas share their journey with the hope of inspiring others.

This is a love story. The ending is already written, thanks to a cruel twist of neurology. But after 28 years and several lifetimes' worth of adventure together, Thomas and Lynn Shaw are still crafting their middle.

The beginning of their new beginning started the Wednesday before Thanksgiving 2016, when Lynn was diagnosed with young-onset Alzheimer's. The diagnosis, though shocking, made sense to both of them.

"I was afraid...my God, I couldn't function," Lynn says.

“ Sometimes I'd look at myself in the mirror and ask: *What happened to you?* ”

On the surface, Lynn looks as vibrant and healthy as ever – a far cry from what you picture when you think: *Alzheimer's*. As Thomas describes their first meeting – him unable to keep his eyes off her as she saunters through a Navy club, her confronting him to ask why he won't stop staring – it's easy to picture, even a few decades later.

Thomas, now a retired Navy captain, talks about the difficult road ahead in a calm and measured tone.

"I know where this disease goes. It's not going to have a happy ending, but we have to try and make between now and then as happy as we can," he says. "It might be a little different than we're used to, but there are things we can hold on to."

From shock, to action

Lynn and Thomas sprang into action after the diagnosis. They were referred to Alzheimer's San Diego by a hospital social worker, who recommended the young-onset support group. They joined that group in January, and after speaking with an Alzheimer's San Diego social worker, immediately enrolled in Take Charge. Thomas says the 5-week Take Charge program was a game changer, educating them on what to expect as the disease progresses, and helping prioritize immediate next steps.

"It was great since the diagnosis was so fresh," Thomas explains. "I don't know how anyone would navigate this on their own."

Since January, the Shaws have become regulars at Alzheimer's San Diego, taking a legal planning workshop, several communications classes and coming in almost every Friday for social activities. They especially enjoy the Memories in the Makings® painting classes, during

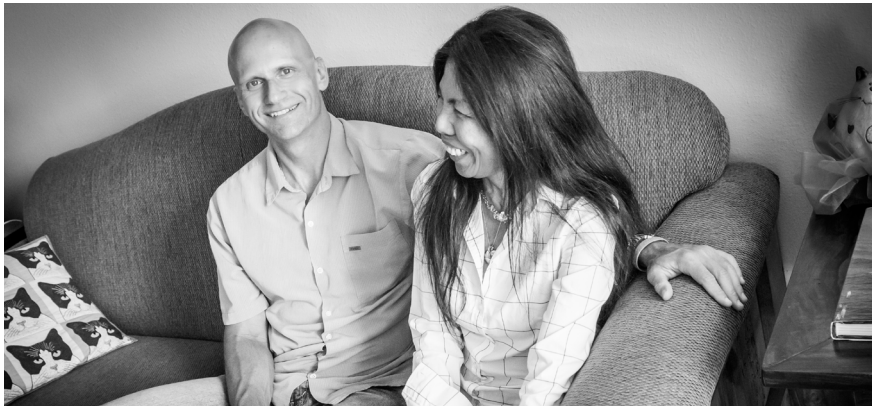
which Thomas exclusively paints cats. (The juxtaposition between his tough military exterior and fluffy muses is nothing short of charming.) They're also currently going through the process to find an ALZ Companion, a program that matches families with free in-home respite volunteers.

"That's another thing we appreciate from Alzheimer's San Diego... there's the education piece, and the knowledge piece, but there's also the social piece," Thomas says.

“ We come to social events here, and we're in a group of people who understand us and we understand them, and there's nothing to be embarrassed about. ”

Thomas and Lynn don't have family in San Diego, so they've strategically built a support system through friends, neighbors and Alzheimer's San Diego resources. While that's made things easier, that doesn't mean it's easy.

They've struggled to find the right balance between accepting Lynn's limitations, and respecting what she's still able to do. They openly talk about a recent fight they had over an open refrigerator door. Lynn says she wasn't done getting what she needed; Thomas kept closing it,



Thomas and Lynn in their Point Loma home. Photo by Robin Harris Images.

worried she'd forget.

They've found a positive compromise with tasks like the laundry. Lynn can get confused by the process of running the actual machine, so Thomas takes care of that. But she'll still fold everything, and put away her own clothes.

"We're trying to find the right balance of me trying to help Lynn, her accepting the help – but (figuring out) what's the right level of help," he explains.

“That balance is constantly going to be a struggle, and it's always going to be a moving target. The disease changes almost every day.”

Those constant shifts aren't limited to everyday tasks. Lynn says she's noticed a major change in her personality since her diagnosis.

"I don't know what it is...ever since I

got sick, I'm very easy to get hurt. What is that? I'm not like that, I'm strong-willed," she says, shaking her head. "When he's home, I'm a nervous wreck because I don't want him to get upset."

Thomas nods as she says this, acknowledging their journey is far from perfect – which is tough for a perfectionist like himself.

"I feel, like most caregivers I'm sure, like I'm really messing this up all the time," he admits. "I'm very sensitive that I get this wrong probably as much as I get it right, of how much my behavior directly impacts Lynn's behavior."

"I'm human...there are times I get really upset," he adds. "I don't like that, because then that snowballs...and it's on me to stop that process, it's not on Lynn."

In an emotional moment, Lynn

talks about the guilt she feels, even though she knows this disease isn't her fault.

"I feel sorry for my husband...he's the one taking care of the finances, of the house," she says. "He's very kind, very strong-willed, very smart. He's a good man. That's why I do not want to leave him. It's up to him to leave me – it's okay, because I'm not selfish."

"I want him to be happy," Lynn adds, before Thomas interjects.

"Yeah, I'm not going anywhere," he says firmly. And with that, there's no room for doubt.

We'll continue to follow Thomas and Lynn's journey over the next year. We are so grateful to them both for allowing us to share their story and get an honest look into this life-changing disease.

For more information about the FREE classes and support mentioned in this article, or to donate to help support our programs, go to alzsd.org.

We can't provide our free services without your support. Donate to help families like the Shaws.

Ways to Give

100% of all donations stay in San Diego!



Set up a **monthly donation**



Name ALZSD in your **estate plan**



More info: alzsd.org/donate

July-September Calendar



FREE classes, workshops and conferences throughout San Diego County.

For more info and to register: alzsd.org or 858.492.4400

Getting Started

Classes in this category are suitable for all attendees.

Memory Loss 101

A comprehensive overview for anyone who wants to know about memory loss, Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia. Learn about risk factors, signs and symptoms, how to get a diagnosis and what to expect if you do.

July 21, 10AM-12PM: Scripps Miramar Ranch Library

Aug. 11, 1PM-2:30PM: Grossmont Healthcare District Conference Center

Aug. 26, 10AM-12PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Sept. 20, 12PM-1:30PM: Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church

Healthy Aging: Tips for Maximizing Brain Health

Learn about the latest research on healthy lifestyle, how it affects brain health and how to incorporate healthy habits into your daily routine to potentially reduce your risk for dementia.

July 20, 12PM-1:30PM: Cameron Family YMCA (Santee)

Aug. 22, 10AM-11:30AM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Sept. 29, 10AM-11:30AM: South Bay Family YMCA (Chula Vista)

Caregiving

Classes in this category are not recommended for persons with dementia.

Communication Skills

A class to help you understand how to communicate with a person experiencing memory loss and how to recognize what types of behaviors may actually be their way of communicating.

July 18, 1PM-3PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Aug. 24, 10AM-12PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Sept. 28, 4PM-6PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Coping with Personality and Behavior Changes

Learn why people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias experience behavior and personality changes, what those changes mean and how to cope with them.

July 6, 4PM-6PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Aug. 2, 10AM-12PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Sept. 12, 1PM-3PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Skills Clinic

Learn practical caregiving skills and techniques. This is a hands-on way to learn more about: bathing, grooming, meal time, fall prevention, medication management, activity planning and more.

July 27, 1PM-2:30PM: Alzheimer's San Diego – Preventing Falls

Aug. 29, 1PM-2:30PM: Alzheimer's San Diego – Planning Activities

Sept. 27, 1PM-2:30PM: Alzheimer's San Diego – Taking Medications

For more info and to register: alzsd.org or 858.492.4400

Planning

Classes in this category are suitable for all attendees.

Home Care, Day Care & Memory Care: What You Need to Know

Is it time for more help? Learn about the range of available care options, what they cost and how to access them.

July 25, 1PM-3PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Aug. 22, 4PM-6PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Sept. 6, 10AM-12PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Legal & Financial Basics

Learn from local estate planning and elder law experts about getting key legal documents in place and planning for the costs of future care needs.

Aug. 16, 2PM-4PM: Rancho Santa Fe Senior Center

Special Workshops

*FREE on-site respite available at select locations. Please request when registering.

Safety at Home

Review of important home safety tips to reduce the risk of wandering, injuries and medication errors.

July 12, 2PM-3:30PM: Rancho Santa Fe Senior Center

Is Alzheimer's in my Genes? Separating Fact from Fiction

With DNA tests like 23andMe claiming to identify genetic risk factors for Alzheimer's disease, those with a family history may be feeling unnecessary fear. Dr. William Mobley, Chair of the Department of Neurosciences at UCSD, will demystify the link between genetics and Alzheimer's disease in this groundbreaking workshop.

July 13, 10:30AM-12PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Preparing for the Late Stage

Learn what to expect as Alzheimer's disease progresses, new ways to connect and communicate and options for late-stage care. NOT recommended for persons with dementia.

Aug. 8, 1PM-3PM: Alzheimer's San Diego

Adjusting to Life with Dementia

A class for individuals with early-stage memory loss and their care partners to learn strategies for coping with daily challenges, enhancing safety and well-being and planning for the future.

Aug. 9, 2PM-4PM: San Marcos Senior Activity Center

Driving and Memory Loss

Dementia causes memory and visual changes that impact the ability to drive safely. Learn about methods for evaluating driver safety, transportation resources and tips for having difficult conversations about driving and keeping everyone safe.

July 13, 2PM-3:30PM: San Marcos Senior Activity Center*

Sept. 13, 10AM-11:30AM: Tri-City Wellness Center

How to Talk About Memory Loss

Learn how to have a successful, low-stress discussion about topics like changes in memory, driving and living alone. NOT recommended for persons with dementia.

Sept. 14, 2PM-3:30PM: San Marcos Senior Activity Center*

Thank you to our generous local sponsors!

Alpine View Lodge

**Grossmont
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Home Instead

**San Diego Elder
Law Center**

Scripps Health

SDG&E

Sharp HealthCare

Silverado Senior Living

Stellar Care

Tri-City Medical Center

Save the date!

EVENTS

Get Dancing with Mary Murphy!

July 13: 10AM-11AM

*Champion Ballroom Academy
4255 Ruffin Rd, Suite 200*

Studies show that frequent dancing can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia by as much as 76%. Mary Murphy, champion ballroom dancer and judge on FOX's Emmy-Award winning show *So You Think You Can Dance*, will teach a free dance class at her studio, designed with those with Alzheimer's and dementia in mind. **Register at alzsd.org, or by calling us at 858.492.4400.**



Legal, Financial and Long-Term Care Planning

July 22: 9:30AM-12:30PM

San Rafael Catholic Church, Parish Hall, 17252 Bernardo Center Drive

Join experts from Alzheimer's San Diego and the San Diego Elder Law Center for a free workshop to learn the essentials of legal and financial planning, understand what key documents you should have and what options are available to help pay for long-term care.

If you're unable to attend the conference on July 22, the San Diego Elder Law Center is hosting its own free workshop, **Legal and Long Term Care Benefits Planning: When the Diagnosis is Dementia**. The workshop will be held at La Vida Real at 11588 Via Rancho San Diego in El Cajon on September 23 from 9AM-12PM. Sign-in begins at 8:30AM. **Register for the conferences at alzsd.org, or by calling us at 858.492.4400.**



Join San Diego's largest Alzheimer's Walk

SIGN UP FREE: ALZSD.ORG/WALK4ALZ | 858.966.3319

Join more than 4,000 friends, families and fellow Alzheimer's Champions as we put on our walking shoes for the **ONLY Alzheimer's walk where 100% of dollars raised stay in San Diego to support local research and families!** Together we will raise critical dollars, drive awareness and ultimately walk side-by-side to fight San Diego's third-leading cause of death.

Oceanside Pier: October 7, 4PM | Balboa Park: October 21, 8AM

Last year we raised more than \$600,000...help us reach \$700,000 in 2017!

Social Worker Spotlight

Meet Sarina!

Everyone at Alzheimer's San Diego has been affected by dementia in some way. For social worker Sarina Barker, that impact is especially profound; four of her grandparents had Alzheimer's disease. When she works with families trying to navigate through a dementia diagnosis, it's not a job – it's a passion.

Sarina, originally from the Bay Area, has eight years of experience as a social worker. She graduated from San Diego State University with her Master of Social Work degree. She was inspired to work at Alzheimer's San Diego after her grandparents were diagnosed.

"Looking back, had I known then what I know now, things would've been so different," she explains. "I feel like part of my compassion in working with families here is because I'm rewarded by giving them something my family didn't have."

Sarina says that too often, families only reach out for help after a crisis. She'd love to see more families come in during the early stages, so they can take advantage of the free resources and programs available at Alzheimer's San Diego. She stresses that all of the social workers on staff care deeply about everyone they work with.

"If we're in a meeting and a family walks in, we stop that meeting and go help that family. If we don't know something, we'll find someone who does," she says. "No one should have to go through this disease alone."



*Don't wait until it's too late – talk with one of our local social workers by calling **858-492-4400**, or make an appointment at the Alzheimer's San Diego office.*

Support Local Research

A worldwide quest is underway to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease. San Diego is home to some of the top researchers in the nation – but they need your help! Please consider signing up for a local clinical trial to help in their search.

Local clinical trials looking for volunteers:

Pacific Research Network

619-294-4302
www.prnsc.com

Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital Clinical Research

858-836-8350
www.sharp.com/clinicaltrials

Excell Research

760-758-2222
www.excellresearch.com

Synergy Research Centers

888-619-7272
www.synergyresearchcenters.com

The Neurology Center

Estela Soto at 760-732-0557
www.neurocenter.com

UCSD Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

858-822-4800
www.adrc.ucsd.edu

UCSD Department of Psychiatry

858-534-9479
www.psychiatry.ucsd.edu

For more info: alzsd.org or call 858.492.4400