

delaware region NEWS:

Family, Friends and Faith Help Caregiver

Joan Wagner, Delaware Valley Chapter Volunteer

Carl Nolting had been an active, physically fit person who rode his bicycle 22 miles every day for 15 years to his job as a librarian at the duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington. Prior to earning his Master's degree in Library Science, he had been a registered nurse for seven years. When he and his wife Louise returned to Delaware from St. Louis, they registered to become foster parents and subsequently adopted five special needs children who now range in age from 6 to 15 years.

When Carl was 49 years old, he began having difficulty performing ordinary tasks. He would go shopping and make multiple purchases, pay bills twice, and misplace various items around the house. Because his abilities were slipping, he had to leave work at the age of 54. Extensive testing determined that Carl was then in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. He attended an Alzheimer's day care facility for 5 months until he was placed in a nursing home.

Louise is doing a great job assuming the role of mother and father to five special needs children. She says the task would be impossible without the support of her church, her friends, lots of prayers and the help of God. Louise and I have become good friends because we share so much in common. We both have a strong faith in God and we have experienced "losing" our husbands to Alzheimer's at a young age. We are determined to keep a positive attitude even when those around us are negative and lack understanding. Most people find it difficult to relate to a person who has been robbed of their capacity to communicate.

I wanted to share this story for several reasons:

- *We need to increase funding for research into the cause, treatment and cure for his devastating disease.*
- *Caregivers need compassion and understanding, not only while they are caregiving at home, but especially when they have found it necessary to place their loved one in a facility.*
- *Our message to caregivers is to take one day at a time and allow others to help you on your journey.*



Carl's children enjoying a picnic.

Save the Date! November 15th

Speak Their Language...Communicating with the Alzheimer's Patient Annual Education Conference 2005

Siobhan Gannon, Program Coordinator, DE

Plans are underway for the 2005 Annual Education Conference in Delaware. The event will be held on **November 15th at Dover Downs Hotel and Conference Center.**

One of the Chapter's special guests, coming all the way from Cleveland, Ohio is Ms. Naomi Feil. Ms. Feil will be providing two sessions for conference participants on Validation Therapy. Naomi is the creator of Validation Therapy, which is currently recognized as the "State of the Art" intervention for disorientated older people. Validation Therapy is a tested model of practice for both professionals and caregivers working with confused older adults. The Validation worker tunes into the person's inner world by helping them to restore the past by reliving good times and resolving past conflicts. It also helps reduce stress, enhance dignity and increase happiness.

Ms. Feil has her Masters Degree in Social Work from Columbia University and has produced award-winning documentary films on the disorientated elderly and is widely acclaimed for training health professionals.

The Chapter's other special guest will be Teepa Snow. Ms. Snow is the Director of Educational Programs in the Alzheimer's Association Eastern North Carolina Chapter. Her DVD *Accepting the Challenge* was designed to help professional caregivers better understand the behaviors and symptoms of people with dementia, and improve their caregiver skills.

Be sure to check our newsletter later this year for further details and information.... CEU credits will be given for this conference!

For more information call Siobhan Gannon, Program Coordinator, DE at (302) 633-4420 or email Siobhan.Gannon@alz.org