OPENING DOORS

to Memory and Imagination

Creating a Museum Program for People with Memory Loss

Compiled by Jane Tygesson

the SPARK alliance

CULTURAL PROGRAMMING
for PEOPLE WITH MEMORY LOSS

Inspired by the Experiences of the SPARK Alliance of Museum and Cultural Institutions
Serving Wisconsin Residents with Memory Loss

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Creating a Museum Program for People with Memory Loss

Introduction

It has been my privilege to serve as a docent at the Minneapolis Institute of Art for the past 17 years and, in recent years, to work with the museum's staff to develop and grow an arts education program for people with memory loss. In 2009, our museum gave a presentation at an Alzheimer's Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota, on a new program we were offering for people living with memory loss called "Discover Your Story." Following the presentation, several staff members from memory care facilities in small towns in rural Minnesota approached us. They lamented the fact that many of the people in their care were too fragile to travel the 100 or so miles to attend one of our tours at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. What could they do to provide a similar experience to the one offered at the MIA? Sadly, at that time we did not have an answer.

Fast forward one year. Helen Ramon of the Helen Bader Foundation, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, contacted the MIA, asking if they could send staff from several museums in Wisconsin to follow our Discover Your Story tours. Inspired by New York City's Museum of Modern Art's program, Meet Me at MOMA, the Helen Bader Foundation had decided to give planning and implementation grants to five museums located throughout Wisconsin to originate similar programs for people with memory loss. The idea was to start with these five museums and then add more the following year. Helen Ramon's vision was to be able to offer this type of programming to a wide audience throughout the state, including rural areas. The Foundation sent staff members from the first five Wisconsin museums selected for new programs to New York for training at the MOMA. The Foundation then contacted the MIA to observe a MOMA-like program offered in the Midwest.

By looking to fund a variety of museums throughout Wisconsin, including museums located in smaller towns, the Helen Bader Foundation created a unique model for museum collaboration – the SPARK Alliance of museums and cultural institutions. Following visits to the programs at MOMA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum for Folk Art, all in New York, as well as the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the alliance worked together to help each other adapt the models of the larger, urban art museums to its own wide array of cultural institutions. The SPARK Alliance, now ten institutions strong, has answered the question, "What can we do to provide a museum experience for people living with memory loss outside of larger cities?" Each museum has developed a program tailored to its size, operational challenges, and particular collections, providing quality touring and hands-on art-making programs for this population wherever they live.

The purpose of this book is to share information from nine of the SPARK Alliance institutions so that others might learn from our experiences. The tenth program was not up and running at the time of this review. We have gathered information about the "nuts and bolts" of these individual programs – how they were created and how they are currently being implemented. The writing process, which I coordinated, included a site visit to each museum to observe its individualized program during the summer or fall of 2011. I also spent time with the staff of each museum to consider the following issues:

- Size and location of the museum/institution
- Contents of the museum/institution collection
- Crafting of individual programs
- Number of staff/volunteers utilized
- Training for staff/volunteers
- Accessibility issues for specific sites
- Dealing with different audiences (e.g., early- and mid-stage)
- Community outreach and marketing
- Evaluation tools
- Successes

As this survey of SPARK! programs unfolded, the possibility of developing a program for people living with memory loss at virtually any cultural institution became clear, with each museum utilizing the resources at hand and focusing on the local population. By describing and evaluating how each of these museums crafted its unique and individual program, our hope is that this information, together with the other materials included in this book, will provide a useful resource and inspire other museums to create similar programs.

Part 1 of this book provides a description of the programs at eight of the SPARK Alliance institutions and the MIA. A "snapshot" of each museum includes basic information, such as the institution's location, size, collection, and mission statement. The snapshot is followed by a description of the institution's program for memory loss based on the site visit and staff responses to the issues outlined above.

Part 2, "Building a Program – on a Shoestring," moves step by step through the initial process used to create the Discover Your Story tour program at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Part 3 includes a wide range of training materials for staff and volunteers, and other resources that can be used when crafting a new program.

Before delving in, I would like to take a moment to clarify some of the terminology used throughout this book. The SPARK Alliance includes a variety of different cultural institutions, including art museums, a children's museum, a historical society, and a natural history museum. Therefore, throughout this book I will refer to "museums" and "cultural institutions" interchangeably, recognizing that a number of the Alliance do not identify themselves as museums. Similarly, I may refer to "objects" rather than "artwork" because, given the range of cultural institutions, participants in some settings will be looking at art and in others at historical or scientific pieces or exhibits.

When mentioning "participants" in a museum's program, I am referring to a wide range of individuals living with memory loss resulting from some form of dementia, and to their caregivers as well. People living with memory loss come from a variety of different settings, including their homes and "adult day programs" where people with memory loss still living at home are cared for during the day. Some participants come from "memory care facilities," typically part of a nursing home, where individuals live full time. Each person with memory loss who participates in a museum's program is typically accompanied by a "caregiver," such as a family member, friend, or paid staff. The caregiver is sometimes referred to in this book as the "partner," and each pair is sometimes referred to as a "dyad."

Dementia is an umbrella term that is used to encompass several forms of neurological disease including, most commonly, Alzheimer's, but also including vascular dementia, Lewy Body dementia, and Pick's Disease. Within each of these different categories of neurological disease, individuals are likely to display behavioral responses that vary based on the progression of the disease. When referring to people in the "early stage" of the disease, the behavioral symptoms can include forgetfulness, personality changes, difficulty with dates and time, changes in appearance, functional changes, and a preference for familiar things. When referring to people in the "mid stage" symptoms, behaviors can include wandering, sleep disturbances, declining recognition of self and others, and more pronounced behavioral changes. It is important to note that these symptoms can be caused by both disease processes and conditions of care, and that it can be helpful to look at "behaviors" as forms of communication.

Each of the programs offered by the SPARK Alliance institutions offers some type of tour. Participants arrive at the site and are taken to see objects housed in the institution during a period of approximately one hour by a staff member or trained volunteer, sometimes referred to as a "docent" in this book. Time at the institution may also include a hands-on art-making project. These projects are designed by staff or volunteers to encourage each participant to create an object using paint, clay, or other materials. In some cases, the art project may relate to the content or theme of the tour.

Who should read this book? Staff members or volunteers at cultural institutions can use this book as a resource for modifying existing programming or developing and implementing a program for people with memory loss at their institution. Families of people living with memory loss can read this book to become familiar with what cultural institutions can offer their loved ones. Memory care and adult day program staff should read this book if they are looking for safe, stimulating programs for their residents.

By bringing together these materials in one place, I hope readers will be able to develop a clearer idea of what this type of programming looks like and how such a program can be developed and implemented at virtually any type of museum or cultural institution, regardless of its size, setting or collection. I hope the book will also inspire museums and cultural institutions to think creatively about ways to develop their own effective programming or to modify existing programming for people living with memory loss that fits their resources and the local population. The SPARK Alliance of museums and cultural institutions continues to work together and share ideas and information about how to best serve this growing population. If you decide to join in and start a new program, please let us hear about your experiences.

Part 1

Survey of Museum Programs

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Snapshot >

The Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) is a huge complex devoted to natural history and anthropology. It also houses an IMAX theater and Planetarium, along with a museum café, coffee kiosk and two museum shops. Underground and street parking are available. The museum, which originally opened in 1882, houses over six million specimens and spans three floors. Exhibits cover all seven continents, and many trace the origins of early civilizations. Special sections are devoted to everything from dinosaurs to Native American history to the Streets of Old Milwaukee. In the Puelicher Butterfly Garden, visitors can walk among live butterflies. The Milwaukee Public Museum has 16,000 square feet of contiguous special exhibition space in which to host temporary museum-produced and traveling exhibitions. The museum's mission is "to inspire curiosity, excite minds and increase the desire to preserve and protect our world's natural and cultural diversity through exhibitions, educational programs, collections and research."

Notes from a Site Visit: *Sunday, July 17, 2011*

Location and Logistics:

The Milwaukee Public Museum is in downtown Milwaukee, only a few miles from Interstate 94. Free street parking is available on weekends, and the large MacArthur Square parking garage is attached to the museum. Garage parking with museum validation is $6.00; SPARK! participants currently receive a parking voucher to cover this cost.

Milwaukee Public Museum's three large floors of exhibits, in addition to a ground floor with a café, gift shop, and Planetarium, make it important to host this program in a smaller meeting room away from the open public spaces. For this visit, the Garden Gallery room was preset by the staff with round tables, chairs and a refreshment table with coffee, tea, water and pastries. An easel sign saying, "Welcome – SPARK! Registration" stood outside the door. Staff members had also placed handouts, including more information on this MPM program and others in the SPARK Alliance, in the center of each table. This smaller meeting space encouraged participants to catch their breath and become more comfortable with being in a new place, as well as have time to talk with other SPARK! attendees.

Visitor assistants helped direct people to the Garden Gallery upon arrival. Each participant received a red lanyard with the SPARK! logo and his or her first name. Given the large size of the museum, SPARK! participants could easily get lost or separated from the group. The bright lanyards helped security guards and visitor assistants identify attendees easily, and were an effective security measure. All staff members, including security guards and visitor assistants, participated in a three-hour training session provided by the Alzheimer's Association; they also took part in training conducted by Dawn Koceja, the SPARK! program coordinator at the museum.

Participation in the SPARK! program requires a reservation through the museum's reservation center. This center has a 15-member staff; all are trained to complete a questionnaire about individuals attending a tour, including contact information, physical limitations, and the work history, skills and hobbies of each participant.

This helps the program facilitator prepare ways to engage the audience during the program. The museum offers the SPARK! program three times a month during the year, with two programs on the same Sunday and another on a Tuesday afternoon. The MPM program is limited to a total of 20 participants per tour, which includes people with memory loss and their families.

Milwaukee Public Museum has focused its SPARK! program on people with memory loss who are living at home with caregivers, not those in assisted or memory care facilities. Participants are required to have at least one caregiver or partner attend the program with them. Several people had multiple family members join them for the program – these families used this occasion as an outing for grandparents, parents and grandchildren. One woman remarked that this was a "new adventure – a lovely thing to do for her mom and the whole family." The families congregated in the Garden Gallery and were invited to have coffee or tea before the program began.

Pre-Program:

To encourage participant relaxation, MPM offers pre-program hand massages by students from Blue Sky School of Professional Massage. Approximately four students volunteer at each session and, by doing so, earn community service hours needed for certification. This unique approach began when a staff member's spouse, who is a massage therapist, volunteered to attend and do a hand massage for anyone who was interested. Many of the participants took him up on his offer. One gentleman who was missing an arm joked that "Tom will only have to charge half-price since [I have] only one hand." Tom's calm and caring presence and the one-on-one attention seemed to warm the group up – it gave people something to talk about and focus on beyond themselves.

Program:

Jocelyn, a museum staff member, led the program. She invited the 20 participants to follow her. Tom brought up the rear to gather the stragglers. During this visit, the museum staff used a freight elevator to move the SPARK! group, which allowed participants to stay together and cut down on the wait time. Although the museum is open to the public during the SPARK! programs, museum staff post signs alerting the public that a "SPARK! Program is in Session – Please Pass Quietly." The museum wants to create a secure and private environment for people living with Alzheimer's. Dawn Koceja, the SPARK! coordinator at the MPM, remarked that attendees should feel free to talk, learn, laugh, and even sing in a safe place.

Archaeology was the main theme of this tour – one of Jocelyn's passions. She talked about her time on a dig and began the tour with looking at pottery. The gallery had been preset with folding chairs. The low-light situation required some caution when moving individuals into their seats. Jocelyn started with general questions, such as "What do you see?" She encouraged people to turn and talk with each other. As most tour facilitators know, this happens regularly anyway, so it's good for leaders to expect and be comfortable with lots of side conversations. Jocelyn then talked about historical sites in Wisconsin. This seemed to interest the group, but the excitement really grew when the helpers handed out pieces of pottery. Volunteers took the time to kneel and help the participants look closely at the piece of pottery in their hands and tell them

about the object. People became more alert when they could touch the pottery and talk with someone on an individual basis.

The tour then moved on to look at the museum's current Native Games exhibit. People in the group related to the leather playing cards and lacrosse equipment. Participants broke into small groups and examined whatever interested them.

Jocelyn checked in with the group, asking if people wanted to go on or would prefer to return for snacks. Most participants felt they had seen enough for the day, so they returned to the meeting space. Nearly everyone stayed for coffee, tea, water and pastries. During this time, people had an opportunity to talk about what they had seen and what they were looking forward to doing for the remainder of the day.

Post-Program:

During the coffee time, one gentleman began reminiscing about his interest in archaeology as a boy and told Jocelyn that this program had rekindled his interest. He had been fairly quiet on the tour and hadn't offered up many comments, so it was difficult to get a read on his general interest level. If the participants had not had this time together, Jocelyn would never have gotten this kind of feedback. It is essential to allow this population time to gather their thoughts and reactions and to verbalize them. We sometimes move so quickly that the experience is over before participants have sufficient time to recognize how the tour and the art and artifacts they've seen affected them personally.

To remind participants of their time at the museum, everyone received a postcard from the museum to take home. The postcard was printed in color, was relatively inexpensive to produce, and had an image of an object from the program on one side, with future SPARK! program dates and topics on the other. MPM staff later wrote thank you notes to first-time attendees. This personal touch is very important to families and encourages them to return to the program.

After the tour, participants left the museum, then staff and volunteers gathered to discuss what went well and what might be tweaked. They discussed challenges, such as low light, hearing difficulties, trying to keep the public out of program space and long walks between objects. When the MPM program first began, the museum gave participants an evaluation form to fill out before leaving the museum. An independent researcher had prepared this form for all SPARK Alliance members. But MPM staff felt that this form was too invasive. They believed the written evaluation, which used a series of faces from smiling to frowning, would remind their visitors of time in a doctor's office and was too clinical to introduce into their creative museum program. For this reason, the staff now attempts to obtain a bit of immediate, fresh feedback by asking for comments after the program, and occasionally gives an abbreviated questionnaire to the caregivers following some tours. Staff and volunteers also decided to remove the term *dementia* from all museum generated materials and use the term *memory loss* instead.

Program History:

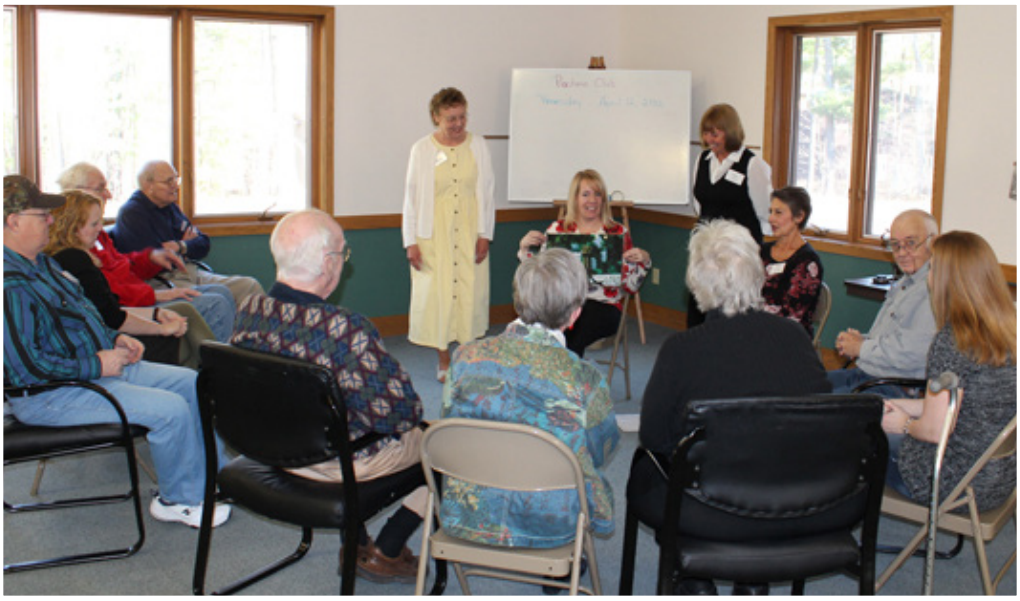
Dawn Koceja and Jocelyn, with help from an intern, developed the SPARK! program at the MPM. The tours and art-making sessions are currently staffed by Dawn and Jocelyn, with the assistance of a partner and one to five volunteers per session, depending on the size of the group. The museum has had regular volunteers from the Sigma Kappa Nu sorority at Marquette University. This sorority has an affiliation with the Alzheimer's Association and requires their members to contribute three to five community service hours per school semester. In order to grow the program, Dawn needs more volunteers. She hopes to involve the museum's docents with the SPARK! program to increase her volunteer pool.

Financial support has come from the Helen Bader Foundation. These funds helped offset staff time, the social hour, marketing, outside presenters and community partners. The community partners provide a unique opportunity for SPARK! participants. Programs have included music from the "golden days" performed by the Florentine Opera Company and actors from the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre. Several local artists have been invited to work with SPARK! visitors in creating hands-on art projects. By inviting Milwaukee area cultural groups to be involved in the SPARK! program, Dawn hopes to break the ice and motivate other institutions to think about ways they can connect with this population.

An article in the Milwaukee *Journal Sentinel* in September 2010 helped to spread the word about this new offering at the museum. Another article about the SPARK! program appeared in a publication for people 50+ called *Boomers*. In addition to the articles, Dawn Koceja spoke at numerous Alzheimer's support groups, interfaith programs for older adult support groups and caregivers conferences to promote the SPARK! program. The Southeastern Wisconsin Alzheimer's Association website publishes information about upcoming programs at all the SPARK Alliance institutions.

SPARK! programs in the museum have included a visit to the live Butterfly Garden and listening to the call of the geese in the Wisconsin Woodlands exhibit. SPARK! participants can walk through the Streets of Old Milwaukee or travel to the European Village to see early buildings and homes from 33 countries that represent the diverse European heritage and culture of the United States. Using hands-on teachable artifacts from the museum's collection, the staff can offer a multisensory experience at MPM. For example, a participant's imagination can be "sparked" just by touching the ice tools used in the Alaskan exhibit.

In 2012, SPARK! participants were invited to explore the traveling exhibit "Cleopatra: The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt." They also experienced a Native American powwow, traveled to the Pacific islands, celebrated life in Latin America and visited the tropical rain forests, all without having to buy an airline ticket. What a deal!



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Snapshot >

The Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau is housed in an updated 1931 English Tudor period Cotswold-style residence, to which a new main entrance and two-story gallery space have been added. The lower level includes an Art Park, an interactive family gallery, and several art-making rooms. The grounds cover four acres and include a sculpture garden and a formal English garden, as well as on-site parking. The permanent collection has more than 3,500 objects with a focus on art inspired by nature. The museum hosts eight to ten touring exhibitions each year, focusing on diverse subjects ranging from Victorian needlework to Russian icons and Egyptian objects to 17th-century Dutch and Flemish still-life paintings, as well as contemporary photographs, to name a few. The Woodson hosts an annual juried exhibition, Birds in Art, each fall. During its 31 years, the exhibition has showcased the work of more than 750 international artists. The mission of the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum is "to enhance lives through art by providing quality art experiences through its permanent collection, changing exhibitions and educational programs."

Notes from a Site Visit: *Wednesday, June 22, 2011*

Location and Logistics:

The Woodson Art Museum is located in a historic residential area on Wausau's east side. From Highway 39/51, take exit 193 (Bridge Street). A parking lot sits adjacent to the museum, and another is under construction across the street. Well-marked signs appear frequently throughout the city. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday noon to 5 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and holidays. The Woodson is free and open to the public. The museum's SPARK! program is also free.

A lovely residential area welcomes visitors to the Woodson. The 1931 English Tudor structure has been renovated with a two-story addition and new entrance. The parking lot is directly adjacent to the museum with many handicapped spots. The museum grounds also include a sculpture garden, formal gardens, terrace garden, woodland pond garden and secret garden. These gardens are paved with brick walkways and, except for the woodland pond garden, are wheelchair accessible. (As of the date of this site visit, the gardens had not been used in a SPARK! tour; however, the Woodson plans to use the sculpture garden.

The museum building is a blend of an older residential brick home and the addition of a new structure that includes, on the main floor, an entrance hall; storage space for coats, wheelchairs and strollers; the south galleries and new gallery space along with the north galleries; restrooms; and elevators. The lower level houses an area called The Art Park, which has gallery space as well as classrooms for art making, and a children's play area that includes games, costumes for dress-up, and a reading area complete with children's books. The south galleries house the museum's permanent collection, while the north galleries house the traveling exhibitions that change every 10 to 12 weeks. The north galleries also extend into the lower level. The spacious entrance hall is a great gathering place with plenty of room for numerous wheelchairs and helpers. The paved walkway from the parking lot is about a 75-foot walk. Depending on mobility issues, docents may

find it helpful to meet some facilities buses with wheelchairs rather than expecting clients using walkers to make their way from the bus to the museum.

Jayna Hintz, Curator of Education at the Woodson, currently runs the SPARK! program. Jayna has seven docents who tour this population. These docents have trained with Anne Basting, Ph.D., founder and director of TimeSlips™, a creative storytelling tool described in more detail in Part 3 of this book, during their tours. Also, a local representative from the Alzheimer's Association presented an overview to the docents on dementia and working with this population. The Woodson's docents traveled to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in the fall of 2011 for a training by MOMA staff. Before docents are assigned a SPARK! tour, they are expected to attend the previously mentioned training sessions. They must also shadow a tour, then act as a co-leader, and finally as a leader. Jayna is still actively involved with the SPARK! tours; she currently has three docents who feel comfortable leading these tours. Over the last year, the Woodson has hosted 52 SPARK! tours, averaging one per week. Residents from five long-term care facilities in the area fill most of the tours. The Woodson has found it challenging to locate and include local residents living with dementia and still living at home in their tours. This population is difficult to connect with in many communities.

Calls to book a SPARK! tour at the Woodson are fielded by an administrative assistant with a list of questions that will provide the SPARK! staff with an idea of who will be coming as well as each participant's ability level. When working with busy activity directors at long-term care facilities, the assistant will often fax the questions rather than trying to get the answers over the phone. The administrative assistant is in charge of booking the tour, assigning the docents and getting the background information to the docent for the upcoming tour. Tours at the Woodson generally begin at 2:00 or 2:30 p.m., after the school tours are finished, but the museum will change tour times to accommodate the facilities' schedules.

The Woodson Art Museum uses both its permanent collections and traveling exhibits during SPARK! tours. Jayna recalled how the staff crafted a tour around the temporary exhibit *Almost Alice: New illustrations of Wonderland by Maggie Taylor*, which provided a fresh perspective of Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice in Wonderland*. During this exhibit, the museum set up an area with a tea party as part of the exhibit. The SPARK! tours linked with this show encouraged participants to talk about tea parties and reminisce about parties they had given or attended in their individual pasts. They examined teapots from the exhibition and discussed books. After the gallery discussion, the group went downstairs to the art rooms, where Jayna had prepared cut-out paper teapots and metallic paint dabbers for a hands-on art project. Jayna stressed that art projects are all about the process and not the product. Her SPARK! team is very aware of crafting projects that are age appropriate – nothing that will make participants feel as though they're being treated like children. In this setting, the Woodson staff has seen a change in behavior among participants. Jayna recalled the "look of pride" from a woman who had never painted before: "You could just watch the glow come to her face." After the art project, the group enjoyed tea and cookies. This refreshment time provided a relaxing atmosphere for participants to talk further about the tour program and their individual as well as communal experiences at the museum.

Pre-Program:

A local memory care facility booked this tour at the Woodson. The participants were generally people with mid-stage symptoms and mobility issues. When the bus arrived, both Jayna and her co-leader went out to meet and greet the participants. It was raining, so the museum provided large umbrellas to keep the participants dry while moving from bus to museum. This can be a slow process, as many clients use walkers, and assistance was needed. (Note: If you have participants with mobility issues, it's easier to bring wheelchairs out to the bus. This minimizes the chance for falls and makes the transfer much quicker.)

When this tour was booked, the activity director from the memory care facility said about seven participants, with family members as partners, would attend. Since the facility was able to provide the one-on-one ratio, the museum did not call for additional helpers for this tour. However, when the group arrived, only three family partners were in attendance; other participants were accompanied by staff from the facility. (Note: Staff from memory care facilities typically need some form of responsibility training for this type of tour.)

After moving the group into the museum, Jayna, as the lead, quickly identified those who needed wheelchairs. She personally greeted each participant, asking for his or her first name to write on a name tag. She then moved everyone into a quieter space in the gallery for a communal meet and greet.

Program:

Jayna invited the group to sit in a semicircle in front of the first piece of art she planned to discuss. Those not in wheelchairs were offered chairs. Jayna attempted to make sure the partners in each dyad were close enough to communicate with each other. She took the time to introduce herself again to each individual – shaking hands and welcoming everyone to the museum. Jayna feels that this is VERY IMPORTANT. She also mentioned that anyone who could not hear her should let her know. She introduced the theme for this tour, which was Friendship. They would begin the tour by looking at a painting of an elephant and egret in the savanna. Jayna started with a general question, "Any artists in the group?" She then clearly instructed participants in the use of the "talk and turn," saying that they should first look at the painting, then talk with one another, and then there would be a sharing time. It's best to give simple, clear instructions. Participants were very responsive and talked with their partners, although many chose not to share with the large group when Jayna invited them to share. Jayna used questions like, "How does this make you feel?" and "Have you been to a zoo and seen an elephant?" The group talked about good friends and relationships and where the participants grew up.

When the discussion started to wane, Jayne moved everyone into the next room. Once again, this was a slow process. It's best not to hurry – participants may want to wander a bit with their partner and have an opportunity to look at other art that attracts their eye. Typically, the more freedom a tour can offer, the better the experience for the individual. When everyone regrouped around the sculpture of a dog with a small bird on its back, Jayna asked each person what part of the dog and bird he or she could see. The dog elicited many memories and emotional responses from several participants. In general, it seemed harder for this audience to talk about the sculpture than the painting.

At this sculpture, Jayna introduced the idea of TimeSlips – creative and improvisational storytelling. Jayna's co-leader Pam acted as scribe with a pad of paper, and Jayna asked general questions about the dog: "Where was he born? Who took care of him? What should we name him? What does he smell like?" Each response was recorded, and Pam recapped the story several times during its creation. One of the museum's administrative staff quickly typed up the story once the activity was complete, and each participant received a copy of the story to take home after the tour. (Note: A card with a reproduction of the object or artwork used in storytelling can be sent along with the story.)

It was clear from the start of the tour that one woman had challenges with hearing and needed assistance taking part in the discussion. Jayna's co-leader Pam sat with this participant, leaning close and repeating questions close to her ear. With this help, the woman was very responsive and provided great answers to the prompts. If her hearing challenges had not been noticed and addressed, it would have been very difficult for her to participate fully. As it turned out, she had some of the most interesting comments when she was drawn out by Pam. The Woodson did not have assisted listening devices at the time of this site visit, although funds have been placed in the museum's budget, and they are now checking into different devices.

This portion of the tour took about 40 minutes. When participants seemed to be slowing down, Jayna suggested the group move downstairs to an art-making project. The Woodson has only one elevator, so movement was slow. However, this gave individuals a chance to walk around and discover other artwork – a win-win situation.

Hands-On Art Project:

The art room was set up with circular tables covered with plastic cloths. The center of each table had a raised area covered with fabric and topped with several objects, including plastic grapes, seashells, flowers and a vase. These objects could be used in a still life painting. Each table also had watercolor paper, plastic cartons filled with water, several paint brushes and a set of watercolors. Jayna began the art-making session by saying, "You don't have to be an artist." She just wanted the participants to have the experience of working with watercolors. She also thought the people doing this project would like something to look at for inspiration, which is why she set objects in the center of the tables. One woman was too nervous to even touch the brush, so her daughter helped her to fill the brush with water, wet the paints and apply them to the paper. One participant tried several times to eat the seashell, and a staff member had to remove it from her hand. She was hungry, so Jayna offered to get crackers and asked if anyone would like coffee or tea. Several participants accepted. Once the activity was completed, everyone gathered his or her art project to take home.

Jayna has included an art project with each of the SPARK! tours. She mentioned that clay projects did not work very well. Participants found it too squishy and messy and didn't want to get their hands dirty. Program staff tried "Crayola Magic," which is cleaner and easier to mold, but Jayna felt it was too childlike. Staff members also attempted collage and found most of the participants just ended up leafing through the magazines. Only one person actually glued a cutout to a piece of paper. The staff recently succeeded with collage by using precut shapes and images. Their greatest success has been with paint dabbers, which fit easily into an elderly hand and can be used to great effect.

Post-Program:

The art making took about 20 minutes and included a chance to drink coffee. This downtime provided a quiet interlude for participants to talk to one another. One person became agitated, so her partner walked around the lower level with her for a while to help her calm down. The staff then moved all of the participants upstairs and out to the bus. It takes a village; everyone helped and waited patiently for all participants to be seated comfortably before returning to the museum.

Program History:

Most members of the Woodson staff help in the preparation and implementation of their SPARK! program. They develop a new program every 10 to 12 weeks. It takes approximately two hours to select the works of art that will be used for the tour. Staff members also identify in advance the hands-on objects that will be part of the program and whether they can be sourced from the museum, borrowed or purchased. An administrative assistant books tours, gets background information on individuals from memory care facilities or private residences, books docents and types up the story. Before each tour, the staff sets up chairs. Guards greet and help move people through the museum. Greeters welcome participants and provide umbrellas as needed. Two docents run the tour (one lead, one co-lead). Each tour takes a total of about three hours, including set-up and take-down in the gallery and art room. This amounts to one afternoon a week on average for Jayna. Just about everyone at the Woodson pitches in to make SPARK! happen.

Props used during the SPARK! tours typically relate to the current traveling exhibit. Hands-on objects are gathered in advance of each new show by staff members. These props have included oranges and cloves for scents, teapots, cameras, hats, currency, wooden blocks and sculptures of birds.

During the past year and a half, Jayna has noticed a trend in attendance for the SPARK! tours. In winter months – December, January and February – attendance from the long-term care facilities drops off due to concerns about traveling in bad weather with vulnerable adults. The roads, parking lot, and walkway from the parking lot to the museum can pose a hazard with any amount of snow or ice accumulation. To keep the spirit of SPARK! going, the Woodson has developed "education kits" that can be checked out at no cost and used by adult day care centers and long-term memory care facilities with this population during winter. For example, one education kit includes reproductions of images from the museum's sculpture garden. These images can hang on the walls in an adult day care center or nursing home during the winter, with the idea that participants will visit the actual pieces in the spring. The kits also include ideas for activities and art projects to complement the museum pieces. The museum hopes to expand this collection of materials.

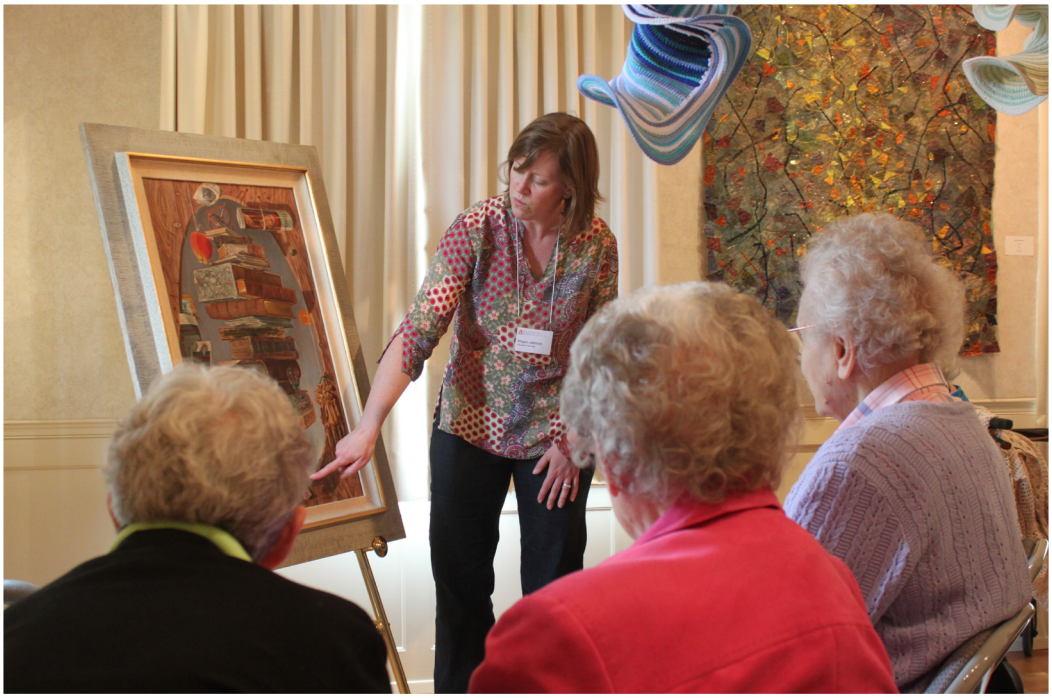
Community outreach at the Woodson began with identifying potentially interested parties through the yellow pages, followed by a letter and telephone call from the museum's staff. The staff wanted to assess community need, and they had a big response. They formed an advisory board and began meeting monthly. The minutes of these meetings were distributed via email to any interested party who was unable to attend the meeting. In the second year, these meetings were scheduled every other month and are now held three times a year. At the time of the site visit, Jayna and several other advisory board members were trying to assemble packets that would go out from doctor's offices, clinics and senior centers highlighting all opportunities for programming

for people with dementia, including the SPARK! program. The advisory board has a small grant to help fund this project.

The Woodson SPARK! staff has determined that written evaluations are ineffective in evaluating the impact of their program on participants. Only a few people respond. The staff now depends primarily on oral feedback—what they hear when they are loading the buses, working on art projects or just talking with participants. They also look for small changes in attitude, such as a smile or some verbal cue. On one tour, Jayna partnered with a woman she knew nothing about. She believed the woman was probably experiencing mid-stage symptoms, but this can be difficult to determine. While looking at a piece of art by Norman Rockwell, the woman responded to the image of a cow at the fair, and she started to talk about her experiences with 4H. During the art project, the same woman wouldn't pick up a paintbrush on her own, so Jayna gently handed it to her. By the end of the session, the woman was painting away and remarked that she liked the color blue; in fact, she insisted she needed more blue paint. While the bus was loading at the end of the tour, the staff from the memory care facility told Jayna they were very impressed that Jayna was able to get this woman talking and painting. According to the staff, she was considered non-verbal at the facility and usually refused to do anything. This is not uncommon with participants – it's often the moment that makes the difference.

According to other docents who have been involved in this program, there is no "typical" tour. Staff needs to meet the participants where they are at that moment. A good initial approach is to sit and take time to listen and ask general questions, such as "Have you been on a trip?" Docents try to enter into the type of conversation they would have with a friend, which helps to make the experience as everyday as possible for the participant. The docents at the Woodson believe their program has evolved, becoming more casual. They have found that it helps to be explicit in explaining the "talk and turn" aspect of the tour. They also noted that two-person teams develop a rhythm – first starting awkwardly but then becoming more comfortable during the tour.

The Woodson has an Artist-in-Residence program that has been integrated with the SPARK! presentations. As part of this program, resident artists are invited for differing periods of time to work on site at the Woodson with the museum's various populations. Whenever an artist is on site, he or she is woven into a SPARK! tour. Earlier in the year, the Woodson had a show on photography that included familiar works of art by Norman Rockwell. This exhibition resounded strongly with both the general Wisconsin population as well as the SPARK! participants and was a great launching point for conversations. During one SPARK! tour a museum staff member brought in a collection of hats, and participants enjoyed trying on the hats and talking about when and where they would have been worn. The artist in residence brought in cameras to pass around. This worked particularly well with the visually impaired, as they were able to touch the objects. The group was invited to look through a camera lens and sense what the photographer was trying to capture. They also sat and observed while he photographed local pets.



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Faith Rockenstein ➤ Curator of Education – Current SPARK! Coordinator
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Snapshot >

The Museum of Wisconsin Art (MWA) is located in downtown West Bend. The current site is a converted office building that has two floors of galleries, a comprehensive archive on Wisconsin artists, a library and research center and several conference rooms, classrooms and art-making areas. The Museum of Wisconsin Art is a regional art museum featuring the visual art of Wisconsin artists from the early 19th century to present day. The museum also houses the largest collection of works by Carl van Marr, a well-known artist born in Milwaukee in the mid-19th century. The museum hosts 15 to 16 exhibitions annually, which vary greatly in subject matter and include paintings, ceramics, basketry, photography, quilts, books and toys by local, regional and nationally-known artists. Founded in 1961, the MWA's new building, open to the public in spring 2013, provides larger exhibition and education spaces in a very contemporary setting to better serve its ever-growing patronage. The Museum of Wisconsin Art serves the public good by collecting, preserving, documenting and exhibiting visual art that represents the state's unique art history throughout the ages. The museum "promotes appreciation and creation of visual art through engaging programming and educational resources for all ages, thereby enriching the lives of everyone through the power of art."

Notes from a Site Visit: *Wednesday, June 29, 2011*

Location and Logistics:

The Museum of Wisconsin Art is housed in a stand-alone brick building adjacent to the County Courthouse, the Washington County Historical Society and the Community Library. This museum is directly off Highway 33 in a residential area next to the downtown area of West Bend. Parking is 15 steps from the museum and accessible via a sidewalk with steps, and a ramp that takes visitors to the front door. (Participants should be informed about uneven concrete slabs in the sidewalk before they arrive for the tour.)

This museum is housed in the former home of the West Bend Insurance Company. The main level has seven galleries, as well as several conference rooms, reception rooms and staff offices, and is equipped with two elevators. Archives and several galleries are housed on the lower level.

The entrance area is welcoming and wide open, with a reception desk and an administrative assistant to greet visitors. During this visit, Courtney Spousta, Curator of Education who managed the creation of the SPARK! program at the MWA, had set a small table close to the door with name tags and materials for the tour. The Frog Gallery, located to the left of the entry, was set up with coffee and snacks for the end of the tour.

Pre-Program:

The tour participants arrived sporadically, and Courtney greeted them at the door. She handed out name tags while commenting, "Good to see you," and/or "Glad you came back." Courtney obviously knew the visitors, and most are referred to as "Courtney's Groupies." This same group attends the program every month. Each person with memory loss arrived with a caregiver. On the whole, the participants with memory loss could still walk with relative ease (one used a walker). Courtney directed them to the gallery, which had chairs set up in

a semicircle in front of the first work of art. The chairs had backs but no arms, which can be difficult for some participants when it is time to stand up again. The group had only three dyads this day; a couple of people did not show up. Two of the participants travel more than an hour to attend the tour. Courtney is the tour leader and has one volunteer docent, Kathryn, who is part of the program and helps with setup.

Program:

Courtney introduced the theme of Figurative Art and explained that they would be looking at three pieces of art during the tour. She began with an invitation to look quietly at the first piece and see how many details the participants could find; they would discuss these details after a few moments. The painting by Carl Von Marr was a lone figure of a woman. (A loud dehumidifier in the room was distracting to everyone, so Courtney turned it off. It seemed important to have a quiet gallery for this group.)

Her first question was, "What details do you see that you would like to share?" The group talked about what the woman was wearing and the feel of the sun. One caregiver shared that it was making her warm. Courtney's approach was calm, inviting and comfortable. She stood very close to the artwork to point out details and was careful to use simple, clear language. She invited the group to give the painting a title, assuring them that there were no right or wrong answers. One of the participants with memory loss shared that this scene made her "remember" a family vacation by a lake and a "moment of peace." There was gentle laughter. The group decided to create a story about a vacation with a husband who had too much to drink and was walking on the beach with his wife . . . husband and wife were both writers . . . the wife might be pregnant. They decided since the painting was indistinct, the lack of details invited them as viewers to use their imaginations and to dream.

After the storytelling, Courtney provided information about the artist and his life, as well as the title of this painting. Courtney asked if the participants would like to take this piece home. One woman decided that, since the blue made her relax, she would take it home and put it in her bathroom.

The group spontaneously began talking about the painting next to the first piece and, although this wasn't part of Courtney's initial plan, she went along with the group and began to examine the adjacent painting. "She's got attitude!" was one of the first comments, "Just like my granddaughter, Miss Priss." People seemed to be naturally drawn to this painting and identified with the figure in the work. Courtney again directed the participants to look closely and tell the group what they were seeing. It was the small details that got the group talking. Noticing the pleats in a dress raised the question, "Who had to iron that dress?" The women in the group quickly began discussing the everyday chores they had done in their pasts. They took their analysis one step farther and decided that the two paintings were somehow connected through the two figures – perhaps mother and future daughter. Courtney went along with the discussion and helped the group feel comfortable with their analysis and subsequent storytelling. It didn't matter that the stories were not tied to the "true" history of the paintings; the expression and creativity that emerged from this group of women was most important in that moment.

The move into the next gallery was slow and relaxed. Chairs had been set up in front of the next piece, and the group was invited to sit and look. The visitors were becoming tired, and the caregivers began to talk

between the dyads. The people living with memory loss were getting quieter, while the younger caregivers were still responsive. Once again, Courtney instructed the participants to take time and look for details. At the end of the conversation that followed, she asked if the participants would like to take the piece home. The response could be a simple yes or no, or participants could elaborate if so inclined. At this point, Courtney thanked one dyad that had to leave – the caregiver stated that it wasn't a "good day" for her mom.

Post-Program:

The group moved into a small adjacent gallery where chairs had been preset along the outside walls. Participants were invited to have coffee and cookies and share some time together. Interesting conversations ensued about another SPARK! program that one of the dyads had traveled to in Milwaukee. The participants expressed surprise that each museum did its own program development, and two dyads talked about meeting at the exhibit at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan. They were very interested in reaching out to each other and exchanging experiences from other museums they had visited. The group stayed and talked for about a half hour and, as they were leaving, spoke about seeing each other at the next gathering in a month. These people had not known one another before meeting at the museum for this program but it was clear that the friendships they were forging were important to both the individuals with memory loss and to the caregivers.

Program History:

Courtney's first challenge was to convince the Museum of Wisconsin Art to launch a SPARK! program. At first, the museum was not interested in investing in this type of service. However, Courtney found solid support for the program from the museum's board president, whose husband was living with Alzheimer's. Courtney wrote and received a grant from the Helen Bader Foundation to help with start-up costs. She began by calling the local Alzheimer's support groups, such as the Lutheran Social Services in West Bend, local memory clubs and Luther Manor adult day services in Milwaukee. The phone calls were followed by site visits to talk about the new program offered by the museum. She also contacted doctors in the West Bend community who were working in the memory loss field. The Alzheimer's Association listed the SPARK! program on their website. Word of mouth was very important in getting the program started.

Initially, the MWA partnered with the John Michael Kohler Arts Center for training sessions. A group of docents from the MWA traveled to the Arts Center, where members of the Alzheimer's Association regional staff presented an overview of dementia to museum staff and docents. The docents and staff had two sessions with the representatives from the Alzheimer's Association during which the docents and staff had an opportunity to do some role-playing and discussed different scenarios that might arise during a tour with this population. At the time of the site visit, few docents at the MWA had become involved with the SPARK! program. Only Kathryn was a regular on the tours, working as the assistant with Courtney.

The program at the MWA was piloted with help from the Luther Manor community. This senior living residence is about a 40-minute bus ride from the museum. Facility staff brought individuals with early- to mid-stage memory loss to the museum three times. After each tour, Courtney phoned the Manor and asked for feedback. She also spent a day at Luther Manor to have more time with the population in their home.

The SPARK! program takes place once a month on the last Wednesday from 10 a.m. to noon. The museum initially opened its program to a local assisted living residence, but Courtney said the experience did not work well. The group was too large and the level of memory loss too advanced. She felt like she didn't have enough control over the tour group to make it comfortable for the participants. Also, the facility brought volunteers who did not have a comfort level with the residents. One participant with memory loss became agitated, and the volunteer didn't know how to deal with the situation. Although WMA had attempted to solicit information about the participants in advance from the assisted living residence, the contact was reluctant to share information, and the information provided was inaccurate.

Therefore, the museum decided to open the program to the public, inviting people with memory loss and their caregivers to call in and make reservations. Courtney fielded the calls and asked for information about the individuals with memory loss, including their age, where and with whom they lived, and how they had heard about the program. This gathering of basic information can be accomplished easily over the phone or via email. The MWA feels it has been successful in filling the monthly tours, which average between 6 to 12 individuals. At the time of the site visit, MWA was not turning anyone away from the program. However, Courtney stated that the museum was not looking to grow this program any larger at the time because of a lack of sufficient staff and volunteer docents to run the tours.

The philosophy behind touring this population, according to Courtney, is the standard approach used for other populations: find a theme, limit the amount of abstract thinking and accept that participants don't have to know everything about a work of art. She feels chairs are essential for the comfort and energy level with this group. Limiting the number of pieces of artwork during the tour and moving slowly between them (giving people some down time to wander between artworks and look at pieces that interest them personally) is also very important. The MWA attempts to incorporate objects from both its permanent collection as well as the traveling exhibits for its SPARK! tours. Props such as fabrics were used in the early tours, but Courtney felt that her groups lost focus when props were introduced, and she decided against them. The coffee time at the end of the tour gives the visitors a chance to talk, and the majority of participants tend to stay for this bonding time. All visitors receive a take-home item, usually a postcard, to bring the museum into their own homes after the tour. As an ongoing evaluation tool, Courtney uses follow-up calls or emails to check in with both the participants and their caregivers. The SPARK! staff initially did a written evaluation after each tour, but became uncomfortable with this procedure, feeling that it was too invasive, and therefore decided to touch base by phone and email.

Currently the WMA does not have assisted listening devices. Janitors do chair setup. Operations costs mainly include Courtney's time; a small financial amount is used to purchase coffee and cookies and to cover marketing materials.

Courtney Spousta is no longer with the Museum of Wisconsin Art. Faith Rockenstein is the new Curator of Education and is overseeing the SPARK! program.

Following are two stories the museum wanted to share:

"Story One" by Megan Johnson – Volunteer SPARK! Presenter

" I just see the excitement of our participants when they walk in the door. They are so happy to be at the museum; they're all dressed up and ready for a special morning. The participants are so engaged with each piece we discuss. It's not just the traditional portraits and landscapes they respond to; they'll dive right into discussion on some really dramatic contemporary, abstract or issue-oriented works too. They're NOT afraid to speak their minds about what they like or don't like. I love that they know their opinion will be respected on a SPARK! tour. The most dramatic examples that show how important this program is to our participants are these:

The increased attendance, leading to Kathy and I dividing the group into two 'tour groups,' shows a growing need for, or at least a growing awareness of and interest in, the program.

When Courtney left and Kathy and I took over, the participants were very clear about telling us how thankful they were that the museum chose to keep the program going even though Courtney was leaving. They also frequently check in to make sure that, through the staffing and building changes at the museum, we're still continuing SPARK! They really let us know that this is one of the only programs available in this area, and it means a lot to them.

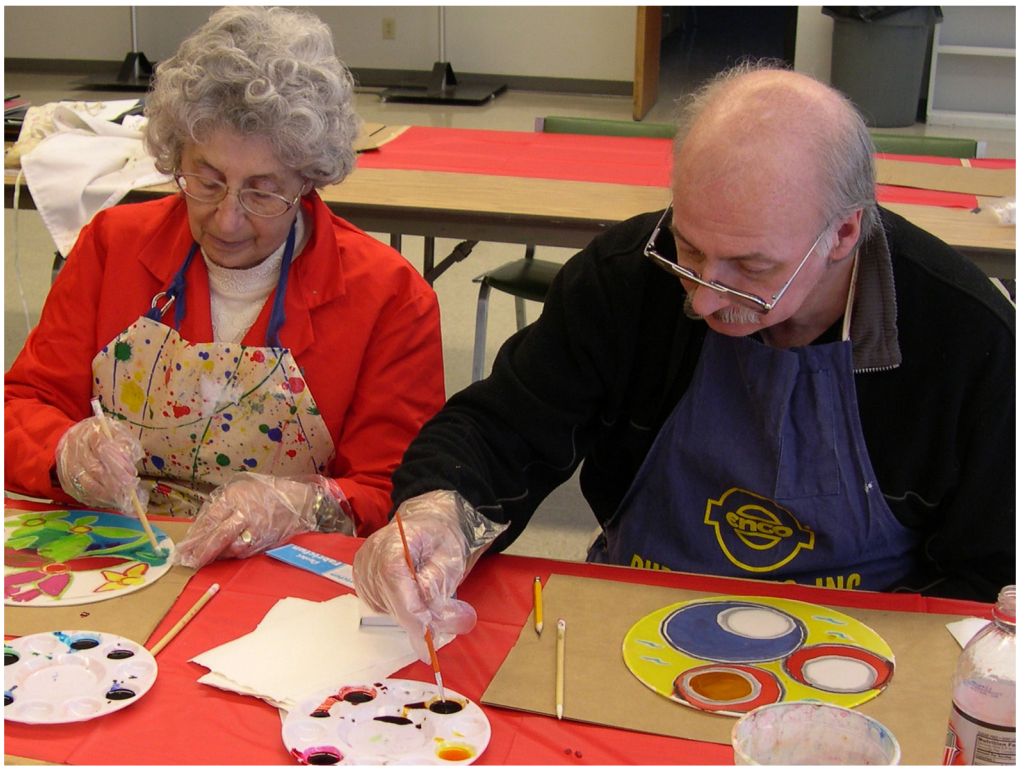
For the March SPARK! program, one of our most consistent 'regulars' is bringing the treats for everyone for our coffee hour, because she'll be celebrating her 82nd birthday and wants to celebrate with us and the other participants. How sweet is that?!"

"Story Two" by Kathy Conrow – Volunteer SPARK! Presenter

"I think the nicest part of our programs is our growth, based simply on word of mouth. Participants and their caregivers seem so pleased to have this program that they are willing to routinely travel from distant cities. Our regulars come from Kewaskum, Mequon and Hartford, and they are not daunted by distance or weather. Caregivers tell us that their family and friends look forward to coming and would be disappointed if the program was canceled, and that SPARK! has become an event on their social calendars. In the past, several of our guests have brought birthday treats to share with their MWA SPARK! family. This warm response tells me that our guests are comfortable during their visits and are happy to spend time with us.

We have also witnessed bonding among regular guests and their caregivers. As our SPARK! family grows, some of our regulars have asked that they not be separated if we have to split our guests into several tour groups. Spending time with new friends enriches their lives.

A photo of the February MWA SPARK! program appeared in the March 2012 issue of the "Cedar Citizen," Cedar Community's monthly news magazine. This is wonderful PR for our program."



Racine Art Museum
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and
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Snapshot >

The Racine Art Museum has two sites. The original site is the Charles A. Wustum Museum, which was founded in 1941 and is located on the outskirts of Racine. The Wustum Museum, originally a private home with extensive property, was donated to the City of Racine. The current gallery space features regional and local artists, as well as several hands-on art-making studios used to host the museum's arts education and community outreach programs. In addition to the museum's original collection of 300 pieces of 1930s art from the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project, the collection has expanded to include works on paper by both regional and national artists.

The second museum site, called the Racine Art Museum, or RAM, is located in downtown Racine. This 46,000-square foot space was created from an existing office building and houses most of the 5,000 objects in the permanent collection. The RAM focuses primarily on contemporary crafts and includes works in ceramics, fibers, glass, metals and wood. The RAM facility includes exhibition galleries, a sculpture courtyard, a museum store and an art library and research center. The museum hosts traveling exhibitions and workshops by contemporary artists. Its mission is "to elevate the stature of craft to fine art by presenting collections of ceramics, fibers, metals and wood alongside painting and sculpture based on similarities in artists' concepts. By focusing on education and community outreach, RAM works to present visitors with opportunities to understand, experience and learn about the value of contemporary craft as fine art."

Notes from a Site Visit: *November 11, 2011*

Location and Logistics:

The Racine Art Museum, or RAM, houses the majority of the museum's collection and is located in downtown Racine on the city's main street. The SPARK! Art Conversations series takes place at this main location once a month on a Tuesday afternoon from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. RAM's Wustum Museum is directly off Highway 34. The Wustum is a 10,000-square foot building with gallery space and six large art studios. Art Activities programs are offered at this location once a month on a Friday morning from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. A large parking lot lies adjacent to the museum's entrance; from there, the distance to the front entrance is about 25 feet.

Tricia Blasko, Curator of Education, oversees both SPARK! programs. Reservations are required and can be set by calling Tricia at the museum. The art-making sessions are jointly run by Tricia and Susan Silver, who works for the museum on a half-time basis. Both Tricia and Susan have backgrounds in studio arts as well as art education, and they believe that making art should be a joyous, quality experience. They support the idea of "process over product" and strive to make their hands-on projects feel like more than "kiddie crafts."

Pre-Program:

This site visit took place at the Wustum Museum, with the intention of observing the SPARK! Art Activities program. The Wustum's six large art studios provide lots of space for community outreach. Today's SPARK! art studio had tables set up in an open U-shape, with chairs available for each visitor as well as spaces for those in wheelchairs. The room was large and inviting with a bank of windows on one side. A portable coat stand and bathrooms were conveniently nearby. The staff and three docents who work with the program stood ready to welcome participants as they arrived. Name tags with each participant's first name were handed out to everyone. Tricia and Susan offered coffee to the attendees to help them warm up. Today's SPARK! participants came from both private homes and a local care facility. Five couples arrived with family members. They were joined by five residents and two staff members from the care facility.

The Art Activities sessions are independent programs that do not necessarily tie into the permanent art collections or current exhibitions at the RAM. However, today's art activity, planned by Tricia and Susan, involved working with polymer, a clay-like plastic material with rich, varied colors. This art project tied into a show currently running at the downtown RAM site titled *Terra Nova: Polymer at the Crossroads*, which highlighted polymer art. The RAM was fortunate to receive a large donation of polymer materials. There are several types of polymer, including some that are more suited to younger individuals, so the staff was careful to choose the types that would appeal to adults.

Program:

Both Tricia and Susan welcomed the visitors again and thanked them for coming. The program for this day began with images of polymer art on view at the RAM. Looking at one piece of art projected on the screen from an iPad, Tricia and Susan called attention to the vivid colors and many details. They asked questions about what the participants were seeing. Did they think the weather was cold or hot? Did the colors influence their answers? All agreed this wasn't a scene from Wisconsin. All of the images were fun and interesting, and the questions were general enough for all to offer answers. The participants obviously were not intimidated by the questions. Multiple conversations took place between participants. A happy buzz floated through the room. Participants were amazed when they learned that the pieces of art they were seeing on the screen were actually only 3 inches in size.

Hands-On Art Project:

Susan unwrapped a piece of polymer and talked about how it was made. She told participants that they would need to work with the polymer and warm it in their hands to make it more pliable. She shared that it felt good to work with the polymer but the color might come off; baby wipes were available to remove the color from their hands. Colors could be mixed together to create something totally unique. Susan had made a few small pieces with the polymer to use as examples.

Susan suggested that participants make a scene depicting their favorite place. It could be a warm beach in Florida or winter in Wisconsin or some other location. Susan and Tricia went around and asked people what polymer colors they would like to work with – over 20 colors were available. The care partners helped participants pick colors. The necessity of doing this activity with dyads was obvious – the caregiver can help

the partner when he or she is hesitant to begin. Given a few minutes and gentle encouragement, nearly all the individuals with memory loss began working with the polymer.

Several individuals seemed reluctant to try to create a scene – it was too complicated. Susan encouraged them to make whatever they wanted and brought out cookie cutters to make shapes more easily. She showed people how they could make pins using simple shapes. This loosened people up, and the dyads soon created a variety of objects, obviously enjoying themselves. One gentleman worked on a scene of a lighthouse, while his wife chose to do pins. Music played in the background, and Tricia and Susan moved around the room talking and encouraging.

One of the mother-daughter dyads was having a tough morning. A docent recognized what was happening and offered to work with the mom. The daughter readily accepted this offer. Being aware of the group dynamics is key to running a positive program. Having additional volunteers to partner or come alongside each individual with memory loss is a gift to both parties in the dyad. The majority of people at the session today had been part of the SPARK! program before. Tricia makes calls or sends out emails to remind people about each event. SPARK! can accommodate between 10 to 20 individuals at each session. Past activities have included wearable art, working with mosaics, Andy Warhol-style portraits and creating cards or keepsake boxes for the holidays. The program offered a Family Day in the month of December which included a Holiday Art Party.

Post-Program:

While Tricia, Susan and the volunteers began to pack up the art materials, the SPARK! participants continued to sit and talk at their tables. No one seemed in a hurry to leave and the participants took time to share and compliment each other on the art they had created during their time at the Wustum. Tricia and Susan took time to talk with each dyad as they were gathering their possessions and putting on their coats. They thanked them for coming and invited them to come back next month.

Program History:

Besides art making at the Wustum, RAM has recently launched a new project called RAM on the Road/ Wustum on Wheels. A colorful, fully equipped van staffed with an art facilitator brings the joy of creating art to assisted living residences, nursing homes, community and senior centers, schools and churches. The program is composed of either a one-hour hands-on art activity or a session that combines an art activity with an iPad presentation. The RAM has hired several part-time staff to work with this program, including a local artist. Visits are free to sites within 10 miles of the Wustum and are available Tuesday through Saturday from 9:30 to 6:00 p.m. RAM on the Road visits are scheduled by calling or emailing Tricia.

Several months after the site tour, the SPARK! Art Conversations program offered at RAM incorporated a few changes. After two years, the staff decided in 2012 to change the day, time, name and number of sessions offered each year in response to the low level of participation. The few couples that were coming had difficulty with the Tuesday time and thought it might work better on another day at a different time. The program is now called SPARK! Gallery Engagements and is being offered on a trial basis on Fridays from 10:00 to 11.30 a.m. As this day and time work well for the SPARK! Art Activity program at the Wustum, the staff thought this might also work better for the gallery programs at the downtown RAM site.

The staff reports that the SPARK! Art Activity at Wustum continues to be a fully attended program (and so much fun!). The program has lost a few people over the last year, which has been heartbreaking to the staff, but they hope to reach out to some new at-home dyads. RAM on the Road SPARK! programs are being offered upon request and many include TimeSlips creative storytelling.

Minnesota Marine Art Museum

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Snapshot >

The Minnesota Marine Art Museum, (MMAM) is located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Winona. The facility is surrounded by gardens and has an adjacent parking lot. The Minnesota Marine Art Museum seeks to be valued and supported by the region and recognized nationally as a unique visual art institution dedicated to community engagement and the exhibition, preservation and interpretation of great art inspired by water. The museum opened in 2006 featuring three major art collections. On loan to the museum, the Burrichter/ Kierlin Marine Art Collection features oil paintings, watercolors and three-dimensional objects from a variety of countries and periods, created by a variety of marine artists. The Leo Smith Folk Art Collection consists of carved wood and hand-painted sculpture that captures the spirit of small town river life from the upper Mississippi River region. Finally, the museum's permanent collection features historic marine art, artifacts and objects ranging from items such as personal letters from Lord Admiral Horatio Nelson to his wife to a large stained glass window displayed in the museum's atrium. In 2009 the museum opened a new expansion gallery and educational room. The new gallery features Impressionist and Hudson River School works from Renoir, Monet, Pissarro, Homer, Sisley, Cole, Bierstadt, Buttersworth, Silva and Van Gogh, "The Minnesota Marine Art Museum engages visitors in meaningful visual art experiences through education and exhibitions that explore the ongoing and historic human relationship with water."

Notes from a Site Visit: *August 3, 2011*

Location and Logistics:

The Minnesota Marine Art Museum is easy to find. It's located off Highway 61 on Riverview Drive directly on the Mississippi River. The museum includes the building as well as the surrounding gardens. The roads leading to the museum are well marked. The building is new and has a parking lot adjacent to the entrance. The drop-off spot is about 10 feet from the front door. Visitors do not have to worry about climbing stairs. The entrance to the museum is a large open area with a reception desk directly inside the front door. To the left is a reception area with tables and chairs where people can enjoy a snack and cup of coffee. A meet-and-greet area also provides close access to a coat closet and storage area for wheelchairs.

Heather Casper, with the help of several docents, runs the SPARK! program at the MMAM. Heather currently has six volunteers who help her with setup for the program. Tours take place on the first Wednesday of every month at 10:30 a.m. and last for approximately 1½ hours. People or caregivers who wish to participate in SPARK! programs can call Heather to register. If a participant is new to SPARK!, the caregiver will be asked to answer several questions about the attendee, including where he or she is in the journey with memory loss, if there are any physical or communication limitations the docents need to be aware of, and if there is any additional information they can share, such as favorite places, trips, hobbies, etc. This information is provided to the tour leaders to make the tours more interesting, familiar, and comfortable for all involved. Heather makes reminder calls the Monday before the tour. Each participant with memory loss must be accompanied by a caregiver. The program can accommodate a total of eight dyads each month and is free to the public, thanks to the support of the Helen Bader Foundation.

Pre-Program:

On this visit, a bus from a Winona health facility pulled up to the front door. Heather and several docents were there to greet the participants, help with coats and offer name tags with each participant's first name. The docents introduced themselves and told the group they would be all together today on the tour. The visitors were then invited to the café for coffee. Another participant from a local memory care facility arrived in a taxi. The museum pays for the transportation. Today's SPARK! group was a combination of people living in their own homes and residents from memory care facilities. The group numbered 17, which the docents thought was too large. Optimum size is 10 to 12 for a tour.

Heather and the docents invited the group to take a stroll, and one gentleman remarked, "Off to the races." This group was generally very mobile and didn't seem to have issues with hearing loss. The docents had preset folding chairs with padded seats and backs in front of the artwork that would be on this tour. Docents took the participants' arms to help them to the first stop. SPARK! tours at the MMAM generally look at three to four pieces of art that are tied together in a theme.

Program:

The theme today was "boats." Heather introduced the first piece, an engraving that was difficult to see because it was under glass. Realizing this, but feeling it was an important piece, Heather had made copies of the scene for each viewer. She went into a simple explanation about how a print was made. She asked the group, "What do you see?" and pointed out gestures and the smiling faces of the men on the boat to help the participants better understand the setting. Heather talked about friendship and the overall mood in the scene. She gave some historical background for the time period and included poems, songs and movie titles about life on the Mississippi in the 1840s. Heather brought in a laptop to play a piece of music from the era titled *Turkey in the Straw*. It was hard to hear for some participants, but a number of people joined in singing along. She asked people if they liked the print and blended in storytelling about the boatmen.

The next stop was an oil painting by William Bradford; a docent named Jeanne led the presentation. This area in the museum was quite dark, so she gave people time for their eyes to adjust to the low light. Jeanne asked general questions about the piece and took time to rephrase and repeat what was offered by the audience in order for all to be able to hear and follow the discussion. She had brought a globe into the gallery to show people where this painting was set, which was the Arctic. Jeanne offered to sell cruise tickets to the audience and asked them if they wanted to take a trip. Conversations about people's experiences on cruise trips ensued. Jeanne then handed out a poem from the time period by William Wordsworth, and the group read it together out loud. The participants seemed to enjoy the experience of reciting together.

The third piece of art was a contemporary painting of a fishing scene, presented by another docent named Pauline. The docent decided to do some TimeSlips storytelling with this painting. She had a large easel with paper and magic markers. The painting was by a Wisconsin artist named Dani Roach. Pauline began by asking how many of the group had ever been fishing. This was an effective and easy icebreaker. By posing this type of question, she invited people to loosen up and start talking. Pauline asked the group what they would title this piece. She then wrote down the group's responses. It was difficult for Pauline to both facilitate and write, so Heather stepped in to help record the responses.

During a storytelling, it is important for the docent to be able to listen for multiple responses and still connect with each person individually as he or she offers up a comment. Repeating what they've said lets participants know they have been heard correctly and helps to validate their willingness to participate. After several questions and answers, Pauline would recap what had been said by repeating the story up to that point. She did this three times during the presentation, until the storytelling was complete. The group storytelling was very effective and seemed to get the group thinking and working as a team.

Post-Program:

At the end of the presentation, Heather and the docents thanked the group for attending, handed each participant a relevant souvenir postcard and reminded everyone to come again next month. While the group was preparing to leave, three or four couples took time to greet one another and chat. All agreed they would see each other the following month at the museum. It was obvious that they were comfortable in the museum and felt they were part of a community for the hour and a half they were together. Isolation is one of the worst effects of aging and memory loss. This program helped to knit these strangers together for a brief time. Heather and the volunteers assisted the visitors with their coats and said their good-byes.

Program History:

If time allows, the presenters get together after each program to debrief. Heather is the sole educator at the MMAM and therefore juggles multiple programs on the same day. She remarked that this program could not succeed without her volunteers. Currently, three of the six docents involved with the SPARK! program are presenting tours. She remarked that the docents have self-selected when it comes to touring with SPARK! Those involved have attended a training hosted by the Alzheimer's Association as well as a session on TimeSlips creative storytelling.

Heather and the docents like to split the tour responsibilities and will get together for a "gallery crawl" several weeks before a program to choose their theme and decide on whatever props they might want to incorporate into the tour. They commented that when they choose pieces for the tours they look for objects that are colorful and easy to read, large enough to be easily viewed and that might interest their audience. The MMAM is currently not offering any art-making sessions.

To introduce the SPARK! program to the area, the museum hosts a lunch every April funded by the Helen Bader Foundation and invites individuals from the local public health department, parish and public nurses, recreational therapists, local support groups, the law enforcement department, the Alzheimer's Association and others in the community working with this population. The program at the MMAM serves people from both Minnesota and Wisconsin. According to Heather, only about 20% of the participants are from the local area, while many travel from Tomah, LaCrosse, Caledonia and Rochester to take part in the tours. About 70% of those attending the SPARK! program are new to the museum. Heather is hoping to encourage more memory care facilities to bring their residents. Public awareness has increased with the help of the Alzheimer's website, the museum's website, publications such as a SPARK! brochure that answers all the commonly asked questions about the program, and word of mouth.

John Michael Kohler Arts Center

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Snapshot >

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC) is a not-for-profit arts center located in downtown Sheboygan. It was established in 1967 and expanded to 100,000 square feet in 2000. The Arts Center has twelve galleries, a theater, performance and meeting spaces, a preschool, studio classrooms, an art activity space known as the ARTery, a gift shop and a café. Lot parking is available directly across the street from the museum. The Arts Center also has an adjunct site called ARTspace, an exhibition space and store at the Shops of Woodlake in the nearby village of Kohler. Approximately 200,000 people visit the Arts Center each year.

Programming at the Arts Center includes performing arts; exhibitions of works by contemporary, self-taught and vernacular artists; festivals; an arts-based preschool; and art, cooking and dance classes. It is nationally known for its Connecting Communities program, which brings superb artists from across the nation to collaborate with community members to create original works of art; and its Arts/Industry program, which provides access to industrial pottery, iron, and brass foundries for 8 to 12 artists from around the world each year through 2- to 6-month residencies.

The Arts Center holds major collections of works by self-taught artists and is renowned for the preservation of works by artist-environment builders. Each year, the staff curates 12-20 solo and thematic group exhibitions emphasizing installation works, new genres, craft-related forms, and the work of self-taught artists. The organization's mission states: "Through innovative explorations in the arts, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center generates a creative exchange between an international community of artists and a broad, diverse public that makes real the power of the arts to transform lives and strengthen communities."

Notes from a Site Visit: *July 11, 2011*

Location and Logistics:

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is located in downtown Sheboygan and is accessible by bus or car. The parking lot is directly across the street, approximately 50 feet from the entrance, with a gradual ramp that takes visitors to the front door. There is also a circular drive where participants can be dropped off, which cuts the walk to 15 feet. The challenges of winter snow and ice sometimes make transferring from cars to the front door tricky, so additional volunteers are helpful. The entrance opens into a light-filled, welcoming space. To the left is the ARTery, a brightly lit, drop-in art-making space with two glass walls that encourage people to look and wander in. This art-making area is the gathering space for the Kohler's SPARK! program. The walls are covered with art projects that tie into the current exhibits at the museum. Tables and chairs are positioned throughout the room as art-making stations.

The SPARK! program is staff driven and led by Marisa Underhill, education and community arts associate. Margaret Groff, education program manager, and Louise Berg, senior education specialist, are also involved in planning and implementing the programs. Several docents volunteer regularly to assist and are being

trained to take more of a leadership role, particularly in the gallery discussions. Staff and interested docents have taken part in training offered by the local Alzheimer's Association, TimeSlips training with Anne Basting, poetry training with Gary Glazner, Visual Thinking Strategies training, and training on leading discussions of art with Jane Tygesson.

Pre-Program:

The SPARK! participants were directed to meet in the ARTery, which is directly inside the front door and a perfect gathering spot. Today's group came from an adult day program with staff members, as well as from private homes with caregivers. The participants arrived sporadically, and Marisa and Margaret greeted them and handed out name tags with the participants' first names. Everyone, including staff, wore a name tag. Caregivers and staff helped to hang coats in a nearby closet and offered bathroom break time (bathrooms are located next to the ARTery).

As participants gathered, they were offered a seat at a table, as well as a drink and healthy snack provided by the Arts Center. The staff inquired in advance about food allergies and special diet restrictions and was mindful of swallowing problems with this population. The participants in this group seemed to know one another and greeted each other by first name. Marisa and Margaret set the tone with their smiling, calm welcome and spent time talking with each participant. This gathering time in a convenient location was a great way to transition everyone into the museum. If people arrived late, they were gracefully integrated into the group. Late arrivals are a frequent occurrence with this population, since it is often difficult to move quickly, and an extended meet and greet provides a warm welcome to the SPARK! program and a time for participants with memory loss to adjust to their new surroundings.

Program:

Wiliam Powhida, an artist in residence at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, and Yvonne Montoy, an Arts Center staff member, facilitated today's program. Mr. Powhida has done small pencil drawings of 1,500 people's faces that he's met throughout his life. He explains to the group how he uses these images to think about how we create community and a common memory through film, radio and books. He talked about how he uses these faces as a starting point for storytelling and posed the question, "What do you think these people are like?" The artist informed the group that they would be trying their hand at drawing following the time in the gallery. He encouraged the group by saying that, even though many people don't think they can draw, they can. The artist also assured the participants that they would be working on the art project as a team with others, and someone would be helping them.

Yvonne invited people to go out into the gallery and view the artist's work. The importance of moving slowly and allowing the group to look at what interested them was evident. Moving through the galleries took several minutes. It's important to be aware of stragglers, and a good idea to have staff, a volunteer or one of the caregivers follow along at the end to make sure all participants get where they need to be. The area in the gallery in front of the artwork had been preset with chairs in rows.

William talked to the group about what inspired him to create the piece of art. He used the drawing of his friend's face at the center of the piece as his starting point. He reminisced about this wild and crazy friend he

met the first day of college who was nicknamed "Rooster." The artist invited the group to look at the faces and say what jumped out at them from the artwork. People were hesitant to offer comments. The artist seemed a little nervous, and his audience picked up on that. It is a great idea to incorporate visiting artists into the SPARK! programming, but consider having a staff member or docent who works with the population help with the presentation.

Aware of the situation, Marisa suggested that the group move on to an area that had been set up like an old-time movie theater. Here she moved through the group, asking participants if they had gone to the movies as kids. They talked about the four theaters in Sheboyan. Marisa asked about their favorite movie stars and went on to talk about singers like Frank Sinatra, and big band leaders, such as Tommy Dorsey and Lawrence Welk. The group really opened up, as these questions got people reminiscing about experiences and people from their past. The men in the group began to talk about their favorite pin-ups girls and compared the merits of Betty Grable's legs to Betty Hutton's.

Hands-On Art Project:

The staff brought in an easel with a sketch pad, and the artist explained that he was going to give a quick lesson on how to draw a face. Participants would then have a chance to give it a try. After the lesson, the staff moved the group back to the ARTery to begin their projects. The ARTery had been preset with paper and pencils at the tables. Trying to establish what kind of face the participant with memory loss wanted to draw was a challenge. The staff and volunteers spent time talking and listening to them, helping them settle on a person who was important to each of them. One gentleman with memory loss talked about the captain on his PT boat during World War II, so his partner began to ask him more questions about what the man looked like. He began to describe him but didn't want to try drawing him himself, so his partner stepped in. This seemed to be common in the group, with the caregivers doing most of the drawing. The participants with memory loss seemed to enjoy working with a team member and offering their ideas, and there was a lot of talking among the dyads. The artist moved among the group, offering encouragement and comments. The group continued to work in the ARTery for about one-half hour.

Post-Program:

Margaret and Marisa made their way through the group and thanked people for coming. Individuals were invited to take their art home with them. Postcards with an image from the exhibit were handed out. Caregivers and staff helped the SPARK! participants into their coats and walked with them to the front door. After the visitors left, Margaret and Marisa returned to the ARTery to clean up and talk over how the program went. They both felt that more time would need to be spent working with artists in residence before involving them in the SPARK! program if they had never worked with people with memory loss.

Program History:

The SPARK! program was launched in the fall of 2010 to provide creative engagement in the arts for individuals with early- to mid-stage memory loss living at home with their caregivers. Programs are scheduled once a month and are free. One of the goals of the program is to provide access to all aspects of the Arts Center's programming, so offerings have included viewing art in the galleries and hands-on art making, as

well as attending performances, cooking classes, ballroom dancing, and working with resident artists. The hope is that through providing specifically designed programs and a safe environment for individuals with memory loss and their families, these families will be able to come to the Arts Center on their own, knowing that it is a comfortable place for them. SPARK! programs are also offered for groups from adult care facilities for a nominal fee.

The program is marketed through building and maintaining relationships with memory care facilities, adult day centers and senior centers, as well as a variety of print media. Rack cards inviting the public to join in and "Spark Me Up!" are produced on a quarterly basis. These list the four upcoming SPARK! programs with time, date and theme. The colorful cards include photographs of participants involved in the various types of programs and are mailed in packets to institutions to distribute to their clients. The Arts Center's bi-monthly newsletter, as well as its website, also highlight the program.

Although the program is free, registration is required. A staff member, who asks general questions about the individuals, takes initial calls. Are they ambulatory? Will they need a wheelchair? What is the participant's relationship to the caller? Are they familiar with the general layout of the Art Center? Marisa makes reminder calls to those who have made a reservation a few days before the program takes place. People seem to appreciate the personal touch. The maximum number that can be accommodated in a SPARK! session is 24, 12 pairs of individuals with memory loss and their care partners. Attendance has varied from 2 to 24, but generally is about 16 to 20. As the program grows, a second session will be offered each month.

Programs vary widely in content and provide access to all aspects of the Arts Center's programming. Participants have attended dance and music performances, celebrated spring in the Arts Center's garden, tried ballroom dancing around a holiday tree, worked with clay, made silk scarves, decorated shoes for an exhibition installation, cooked a meal, sung songs, looked at and discussed art, and created poetry and stories in response to works of art on exhibit. By introducing the SPARK! participants to this diverse and creative programming, the Arts Center staff has provided a model for other cultural institutions. As demonstrated through their successful programming, this population can and will benefit from a wide variety of artistic experiences.

A SPARK! program often combines looking at art with a related hands-on art-making activity; sometimes the focus is only on the art or the art making. All exhibitions at the Arts Center are temporary, so program themes vary depending on the current exhibition. For gallery visits, three works of art are chosen in advance. Chairs are set up in front of the art by maintenance staff before the tour.

Gallery visits are always interactive and involve three basic strategies to engage the participants: TimeSlips creative storytelling, conversation-based discussions, and modified Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS). Each work of art is selected with the following strategies and criteria in mind: Does it have potential to spark long-term memories? Will what is being depicted resonate with participants' experiences in some way and inspire them to share stories from their own lives? In these cases, staff uses a conversation-based discussion approach. Does it have potential for participants to create their own imaginative story together? Some sort of "stopped action"? In that case, staff uses the TimeSlips storytelling technique. Is there something narrative or puzzling

going on that participants might think about and work through together? In that case, staff uses a modified VTS approach, asking people to share their ideas without necessarily supporting them with evidence, although many naturally do.

On one occasion a visiting poet, Gary Glazner, worked with the group to create a poem about a piece of artwork – a giant whale. Gary began by asking sensory questions about the whale and listened to the group's responses. He then took the responses and wrote down short phrases that he put together into a poem. He used the call and response method, and the entire group recited the poem, which included rhythmic clapping and movement. Gary has worked with this population and knows the importance of getting the group involved in a non-threatening manner. Even those participants who were non-verbal could be part of the experience by clapping along with the reading. By using humor and repetition, he helped them to see this artwork in a whole new light and empowered them as a group to create art. A piece written by Gary Glazner is included in Part 3 of this book.

Hands-on art-making projects are always preceded by a short visit to the galleries for inspiration. The staff endeavors to utilize a variety of materials and techniques, continually experimenting and searching for projects that are not childlike and yet can be accomplished successfully by most participants. Art projects that work well generally are not too abstract and start out with samples or a partially completed project that the group can add to. An element of surprise also helps. One of the most successful projects was dyeing silk scarves – a magical process that one pair of participants began doing at home to create gifts for their entire family. Clay has also been a positive experience; one man who used to draw but hadn't in years began drawing intensely in clay with a stylus. Other successful projects have involved using leaves and feathers as stencils, creating bird sculptures with Crayola® Model Magic® air-dry clay and found materials. Staff finds that it is the process, not the product, that is important.

The Arts Center often has visiting artists-in-residence, and several have worked with SPARK! participants. Because artists vary in their teaching abilities as well as their comfort level in working with this particular population, the staff has learned it is critical to plan carefully with the artists in advance to help them translate their ideas and delivery into an engaging experience for individuals with memory loss. In many instances, staff essentially presents with the artist-in-residence.

One visiting artist whose mother had Alzheimer's was very comfortable with the population and needed no coaching to interact effectively. The project was playful, not intimidating: gluing odd objects onto shoes that would later be spray-painted gold. Everyone – staff, volunteers, caregivers, participants with memory loss and the artist – sat around one long table, decorating shoes that would be used in the artist's installation. Conversation was easy as people worked and created together, much like a quilting bee.

Attendance at music and dance performances is one of the most popular SPARK! activities. The Arts Center hosts daytime "informances" as part of its Footlights series. These informative, brief performances are followed by conversations with the performers. There was some initial concern that with so many school groups attending these events, SPARK! participants might feel they were being treated as children themselves.

However, staff reports that the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants enjoy watching the kids and being part of the general chaos; they also feel they are part of a community and not just living in isolation. On performance days, SPARK! participants gather in the ARTery following the program to share refreshments before going home.

The Arts Center offered a cooking class once and proved so successful that it will definitely be offered two or three times a year. The class met in a multipurpose room adjacent to the caterer's kitchen, and participants were seated at tables to work in pairs. Several different recipes were prepared so people with varying abilities could participate – on this occasion, soup and pizza. Participants really enjoyed the tactile, sensory experiences of chopping vegetables and kneading and rolling out homemade pizza dough. Cooking together inspired lots of natural conversation and memory sharing about favorite recipes, family meals and traditions. When the food was ready, everyone sat down to eat together and enjoy the meal they had prepared together. Participants with memory loss commented that they felt like they were going out to eat with friends, something many no longer do on their own. Others realized that the everyday activity of cooking could be an enjoyable activity to do together. One caregiver said: "I'm going to start including my father in food prep at home."

Each spring the SPARK! program includes a tour of the Arts Center's beautiful botanical gardens and outdoor sculptures. The Arts Center's gardener leads the tour, sharing information about the different types of plants and passing them around for people to touch and smell. Due to traffic noise, it is sometimes difficult for everyone to hear, so volunteers serve as "echoers," relaying information if needed. Because many participants are not accustomed to standing or walking for long, walking tours are limited to 30-45 minutes, and the tour itself limited to the gardens accessible by sidewalk.

At the end of the garden tour, participants sit at tables in the outdoor café terrace to prepare simple potted plants to adorn the café tables. Even though garden gloves are offered, participants usually prefer the tactile enjoyment of dirt and plants in their hands. The experience generates natural conversation about gardens and the planting people do around their own homes. Each participant also takes a plant home.

In two short years, a lovely holiday tradition has developed in the SPARK! program – ballroom dancing in the presence of a giant decorated tree. Each winter, the Arts Center's large multiuse space is transformed beautifully for the holidays, a perfect environment for ballroom dance. An instructor teaches basic waltz and swing steps, including movements that can be done from a sitting or standing position, or as a group, such as swaying or marching together. If someone misses a step, it doesn't matter. Staff, volunteers and caregivers all participate, mixing up partners. This allows caregivers and participants with memory loss some independence, developing trust within the whole group. Bodies often remember long after people can no longer speak, so participants who have danced in the past often come alive at these events.

One staff member, dancing with a man she had never heard speak, said to him, "Wow! You really are a great dancer!" He replied, "I like to sing, too." After that he talked the entire time, initiating most of the conversation. Later, his wife was also pleasantly surprised.

Formal written evaluations have not proven very successful as the caregiver usually ends up filling out the evaluation for the participant with minimal and hurried information. The process has also felt like an unwelcome intrusion on an otherwise pleasant experience.

Evaluations now take the form of short discussions led by volunteers around the table at the end of the program. The volunteers ask simple questions, such as: What did you enjoy most about today? What do you wish we had done differently? What would you tell a friend about SPARK!? And the answers are jotted down.

The staff also keeps a log of stories, capturing moments when someone who hasn't spoken in a long time speaks; when someone becomes particularly animated, engaged or responsive; when a participant creates something he or she is proud of; when caregivers express delight in learning something new, really enjoy the program or the company of other caregivers, and have an opportunity to experience their family member or friend in a new way. These experiences really matter and show the value of the program.

As the SPARK! program has evolved, the developing relationships and sense of community continue to bring value to the program. At times, one caregiver will step in for another in a frustrating situation. Participants with memory loss, caregivers, staff and volunteers all get to know each other more deeply through the shared experiences, learning to support, trust and enjoy each other. This is what makes the intensive work of running this program worthwhile and deeply satisfying for the staff.

The SPARK! program has also helped to make the staff more aware of accessibility issues for all visitors and has spurred some improvements in this area: ongoing discussions with exhibition staff regarding pedestal height and exhibition installations; the purchase of new wheelchairs and an assisted listening system for the theater; the consideration of an assisted listening system for the galleries as well as higher tables in the studios.

Madison Children's Museum
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Snapshot ›

Located at 100 N. Hamilton Street in Madison's Capitol Square, Madison Children's Museum (MCM) is housed in a converted five-story office building and offers three floors of exhibits designed for children up to age 12 and their families. A two-level parking lot has entrances on North Hamilton and East Dayton. The museum is also on the bus line. This facility houses a cafe on the first floor, an art studio for hands-on art making and the following exhibits: Community Concourse, Log Cabin, Wildernest, Possible-opolis and Rooftop Ramble. MCM places a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary programs that integrate the arts, sciences, history, culture, health and civic engagement. The Madison Children's Museum connects children with their families, their communities and the world beyond through discovery learning and creative play. The museum is "committed to being a sustainable organization, balancing economic, social and environmental factors by integrating principles of sustainability into all their major business decisions, seeking strategic collaborations, evaluating and reducing the environmental impact of their operation and designing and developing products, services and materials with the long-term health of the community in mind."

Notes from a Site Visit: *August 8, 2011*

Location and Logistics:

The Madison Children's Museum is in downtown Madison, directly across the street from the State Capitol. To someone not familiar with the downtown area, this location can be daunting due to a number of one-way streets. The SPARK! brochure and museum website contain a detailed map to help navigate the area. MCM has two entrances: the main front entrance, called the "Capitol entrance," and the back door entrance, referred to as the "Cow entrance." The Capitol entrance is on a steep and relatively busy street, while the Cow entrance offloads directly into the surface-level parking lot with easy access to the museum's large freight elevator. Groups traveling from nursing homes or assisted living centers are typically met at the Cow entrance and brought in together via the freight elevator. Parking for the SPARK! program is free with a code that is sent with a registration confirmation letter, either via email or regular mail.

Pre-Program:

This particular day the group arrived from St. Mary's Memory Care. Five members of the group were in wheelchairs. The museum staff used the freight elevator, which enabled group members to stay together and move efficiently to their gathering space. The SPARK! program typically takes place in the art classroom on the second floor of the museum, just off the open art studio. The program is offered during regular museum hours, when the museum is filled with little bodies moving, laughing and talking loudly. The art classroom can be closed off, which enables the group to come together in a comfortable and safe oasis in the midst of the museum's high energy, kid-filled environment.

The SPARK! program at MCM has both an art-viewing and art-making component. Time is broken down into three one-half hour increments: viewing and talking about art; an art project; and a social time. In addition to Arts Coordinator Angela Johnson, the museum has one or two interns dedicated to SPARK! each semester from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. These students earn university credit for their internships. Angela requires her interns to read the books *Forget Memory* and *Pathways of Hope* before they work with this population. The museum has provided two mandatory trainings conducted by Diane Baughn from the Alzheimer's Association and Susan McFadden, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, to help the staff become more familiar and comfortable with this population. Angela has also participated in a TimeSlips training facilitated by Anne Basting at an off-site senior center.

Program:

As they arrived at the museum, SPARK! visitors received large red dot name tags with their first names. Participants were then seated in chairs or in their wheelchairs at long tables covered with brown paper. Staff and volunteers took time to introduce themselves. On this visit, Angela Johnson worked with an intern, Carolyn, who led the discussion period. St. Mary's had five staff members along for the outing, which was especially important for the art-making activity. During these creative sessions, having a partner to help each participant makes the experience much more doable and effective. Angela has one additional volunteer – her

Aunt Jan – who helps with this program. Jan had set up the room and gathered materials for the art project earlier in the morning.

Carolyn used reproductions from the local university museum, The Chazen, to view and discuss during the first program segment. The first piece was Helen Frankenthaler's *Blue Atmosphere*, which is quite abstract, and Carolyn opened up the discussion by asking participants, "What do you see?" St. Mary's staff offered their own observations and helped to draw out the individuals with memory loss. Carolyn introduced the next piece of art which was a photograph and suggested that participants "jump into the scene." What did they hear and see? What did they think was happening? Would they like to hang it in their homes? St. Mary's staff were more verbally responsive than the individuals with memory loss, which is fairly common. The program provides a respite for caregivers too, which is one of the objectives of SPARK!. The facilitator helps to balance the two factions so that one doesn't totally take over the conversation. The last piece was *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* by Georges Seurat. This piece sparked more conversation among all the participants – it was easier for them to read, understand and discuss.

Hands-On Art-Making Project:

For the day's related art-making project, participants were invited to create a mosaic on a wooden frame with colored glass and beads. Beads and glass pieces were distributed around the table in coffee filters. Angela gave simple yet clear instructions and told the clients that glue and grout would be brought around later. She had examples of several completed frames for people to see.

As an aside, Angela noted the need to be aware of many factors when designing an art project for this population. For example, table height has to be taken into account. Can a wheelchair fit under the table? Will the table be too high for participants to see what they are working on? The MCM used recycled science lab tables that had been cut down by the museum to a particular height that works for people in wheelchairs as well as individuals in regular chairs.

The participants initially seemed reluctant to pick up the materials, so the staff paired off and worked one on one with the individuals with memory loss, offering suggestions to get the project launched. Conversation quickly picked up, and the participants began making choices for themselves, opening up to the experience. Everyone was encouraged to work at his or her own pace. Once the design was laid out, the frame was coated with glue using a paintbrush, and the design was carefully transferred on to the wood. Staff helped with the gluing to ensure that everything was secure. Following the program, the frames were grouted by museum staff to be claimed by SPARK! participants later in the month when they returned to the museum.

Participants enjoyed a lemonade treat after completing their project. The museum typically offers healthy snacks like fruits and vegetables at this time, but on this occasion the facility had requested no food because participants would be going home to have lunch directly after the outing.

Angela asked all participants with memory loss for permission to take their picture with their artwork. One woman commented that she didn't consider herself an artist, but that everyone has talent. She held up her frame and proudly stated, "This is Art!"

Post-Program:

Angela thanked everyone for coming, told the group that the next project would be tie-dying scarves and invited them to return. MCM asked participants to fill out a short written evaluation and helped them fill it out before they left.

St. Mary's Activity Director commented that, even though the memory care facility offers art projects, she sees a difference in the individuals with memory loss when they're brought to MCM. She commented that they seem more responsive at MCM, and that the museum environment has an engaging effect that draws more out of them. The participants seemed to respond very positively when exposed to the colorful and sometimes loud and chaotic environment of the museum; no one appeared to be flustered or upset. It was heartwarming to see the people with memory loss smiling and waving at the children as they were rolled out to their bus. This further reinforced the importance of not segregating this population, but inviting them to join in.

Program History:

The Madison Children's Museum piloted the SPARK! program in 2010 with funding provided by the Helen Bader Foundation. Angela Johnson is the Arts Coordinator at MCM and has been the guiding force behind the SPARK! program. Initially, Angela hoped SPARK! could reach a multigenerational family unit (grandparents/parents/grandchildren) who would visit the Children's Museum and experience this program together. However, after a pilot period, the museum became aware of a greater response from local memory care and assisted living facilities. The program is currently offered two days a month on the first Tuesday and last Saturday from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. The program is free to the public but requires a reservation.

In spring of 2010, Angela approached the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin and asked them to join a panel of individuals working with the memory loss population, including the director of the downtown senior center, a representative from the Alzheimer's Association, the director of the Meeting of the Minds program in Madison, a political activist with a history of Alzheimer's in her family and a doctor specializing in gerontology, who, along with Angela, would work together to provide feedback and insights on how to develop a participatory art-making program that would work for both children and adults. This panel continues to meet and act in an advisory capacity for the SPARK! program. By working with these individuals, Angela was able to raise awareness of this new program at the MCM.

In addition to working with individuals active with this population in the community, Angela and her SPARK! interns made numerous telephone calls to local senior centers and other organizations working with the population. They followed up by sending information on the program by email and regular mail. Angela has worked with the Madison Senior Center and has participated on several panels. She has worked with the Alzheimer's Association's Memory Walk and had a booth at some of their events. Angela has also spoken at local dementia conferences and workshops. She has been invited to appear on a local TV channel to talk about the program and several articles have appeared in the local news.

Once a month, Angela and her interns take SPARK! out of the museum to Capitol Lakes, a memory care facility in downtown Madison. Here they present the same program they lead at the museum, complete with the art project. Beginning in 2011 a support group for people with early-stage and early-onset Alzheimer's, called "Meeting of the Minds," began attending MCM's SPARK! program. This group meets in the spring and fall once a week for 12 weeks, and MCM offers this program in lieu of their usual Tuesday SPARK! program. Though the initial concept of multigenerational programming proved challenging to launch, Angela continues to pursue the idea of bringing youth together with this population. She has invited Girl Scout troops and other youth-oriented groups to the museum to work one on one with the SPARK! program participants.

Milwaukee County Historical Society

Trimborn Farm

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Melissa Wraalstad ➤ Historic Site Manager – SPARK! Program Initiator

Snapshot ›

The Milwaukee County Historical Society was founded in 1935 to collect, preserve and make available materials relating to the history of the Milwaukee community. The organization includes a historical center and research library – both in downtown Milwaukee – and four historic sites: the Kilbourntown House in Estabrook Park in Milwaukee; the Lowell Damon House in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin; and the Jeremiah Curtin House and Trimborn Farm in Greendale, Wisconsin. The Milwaukee County Historical Society staff includes two librarians, a curator of artifacts, and a Historic Site Manager. Trimborn Farm dates from the mid-1800s and is located on 10 acres of property. The complex includes a Cream City brick farmhouse, a threshing barn, (one of the last and largest stone barns in Wisconsin a worker's bunkhouse and a 75-foot kiln. The brick farmhouse is complete with furniture and everyday household objects from the mid-18th century. The Society also has a collection of 18th century farm equipment and implements. The Jeremiah Curtin House is on land adjacent to the farm. Through a broad range of activities, the Historical Society seeks to recognize and preserve the local history. In promoting a greater appreciation of Milwaukee County's heritage, the Historical Society "hopes to develop a better understanding of the issues and challenges facing Milwaukee County today."

Notes from a Site Visit: *June 14, 2011*

Location and Logistics:

The SPARK! program at the Milwaukee County Historical Society is run at Trimborn Farm, a historic farmstead in Greendale, a suburb of Milwaukee. The farmstead sits in the middle of a suburban area just two miles off Highway 894 and is easily accessible from the highway. The site manager is Melissa Wraalstad. Melissa also manages three other historic homes in the Milwaukee area. Melissa is the only Historical Society staff member involved in the planning and implementing of the SPARK! program. She has two summer interns and one volunteer to help develop and run tours. There are additional docents that work at the Historical Society's sites, but none have volunteered to work with this program. Prior to this site visit on June 14, the team had hosted one SPARK! program that included six participants—three people with memory loss and their caregivers.

Although the Milwaukee County Historical Society has several sites, Melissa decided to host the SPARK! programming at Trimborn Farm due to lack of parking and accessibility at the other sites. At the time of this site visit, the SPARK! program for individuals living with memory loss was being offered at this site from May 15 through October 15. The farm is closed during the winter months. Although all the buildings except the farmhouse are wheelchair accessible, Melissa's team chose to use the threshing barn, which has a large open space and permits relatively easy movement of participants from buses and other vehicles into the building. The farmyard is composed of packed gravel and grass and, although challenging, can be navigated by wheelchair or walker. The two bathrooms are handicapped accessible, although located 60 feet from the threshing barn across an open yard.

The program on June 14 included a group from the Elizabeth Residence near the farm. The home wanted to bring 12 or so individuals with varying degrees of memory loss to the tour. Melissa screened the caller who had phoned to register the group and collected background information on the participants. She also requested that the facility try to bring one caregiver for each person with memory loss. Elizabeth Residence agreed to provide two staff members and three volunteers to assist. The majority of the individuals with memory loss were in wheelchairs or had walkers and needed help to move about the site.

Pre-Program:

Melissa, with the help of Richard, a volunteer at Trimborn, ran the program while the two summer interns, Katrina and Rachel, mingled with the participants. The threshing barn was set up with long tables exhibiting farm implements and other objects relating to farm life, which would be part of the presentation. The SPARK! team had also set up two lines of folding metal chairs in the barn. The weather was 75 degrees and sunny, so picnic benches with backs had been placed in a centralized grassy area outside the threshing barn. The tour would begin by looking at the farm as a whole. After the bus was unloaded, the residence staff and members of Melissa's team moved participants from the bus and into the outside venue. The SPARK! team handed out name tags and greeted each person individually, introducing themselves by using first names. Richard threw out the question, "Was anyone born or raised on a farm?" This elicited some conversation, but it was difficult for the participants to hear outdoors unless the leader was speaking directly to them. Some individuals with

memory loss asked to be taken out of the sun because it was simply too bright for their eyes. Melissa and Richard decided to move the group into the threshing barn to continue the conversation.

Program:

Richard had set up a bread maker inside the barn with the idea that the smell of baking bread might act as a trigger for memories and create a welcoming atmosphere for the tour members. People commented immediately on the wonderful smell. Melissa and Richard began the program by giving a small amount of information regarding the farm's history. On their first tour, Melissa and Richard felt they had given far too much information about the farm's history and had lost their audience's attention right from the start. Melissa and Richard also made some changes to accommodate the size of this group. The optimum size for the SPARK! tour at Trimborn is 3 to 4 individuals with memory loss and a like number of caregivers, but this group numbered close to 20. Because of the size, Melissa and Richard took turns showing artifacts and talking with the group.

The theme of this tour was "farming and agriculture." Melissa and Richard presented a variety of objects: threshing implements, an oxen's yoke, a sausage stuffer, a mold for candle making, a hair crimper, a tin egg whip and a hair ball from a cow's stomach. Melissa brought each object out to the group and asked the question, "What do you think this is?" She invited all participants to hold the object and take their time guessing its purpose or function. Nearly everyone wanted to touch the objects and suggest a use when they were individually asked. At times, this process worked slowly, so Richard took his chair and sat and talked with other participants until their turn to hold the object arrived. These individual conversations were very important. The participants had many memories, such as making lemon pies and growing cabbage on their family farms. Many side conversations took place during the entire program, and the people with memory loss seemed to wake up. The staff from Elizabeth Residence knew their people well, and they assisted by asking the participants questions and prompting them with a fact about his or her own personal history. To tie in with the bread-making in the barn, the SPARK! staff offered bread and homemade butter to the participants. (Note: When offering food as part of the tour, check in advance to determine if there are any dietary restrictions among the individuals with memory loss.)

The tour/presentation lasted for about 40 minutes, until the participants began getting tired and hungry. The nursing home staff had brought crackers, and Trimborn offered bottled water, which was a big hit. This tour was scheduled from 2 to 3 p.m., which can be a concern as energy levels lag and medications start to wear off by mid-afternoon. According to Melissa, the optimal tour time at the farm would be from 1 to 2 p.m. In this instance, the nursing home had requested a slightly later tour because of their schedule.

Throughout the tour, one woman repeatedly asked where the bus was and when they were going home. Her anxiety level rose as the program progressed. Melissa assured the woman that the bus was right outside, and that they would be going home in a short while. As the tour leader, Melissa remarked that when she gets this kind of feedback, she has to remind herself that it's not a reflection on the quality of the tour but rather an indication of where the people with memory loss are emotionally. In general, this population can feel unsure about where they are at any given time, and their sense of vulnerability increases when they are removed from their everyday environment. Even though this woman was anxious and asked several times to go home, she turned to Melissa at the end of the tour and said that she had "fun." General comments from the tour

participants were very positive, and this attitude was reflected in smiling faces and lots of friendly chatter among the group members. When they first arrived at the farm, the group had been very quiet and did not interact with one another. Each person with memory loss just sat quietly in his or her own personal space. As they were leaving the farm, however, these same individuals were talking among themselves and interacting with staff from both the farm and the nursing home.

Post-Program:

Melissa and Richard offered each participant a small nosegay made from lemon balm and tarragon, two herbs from the farm's gardens. The nosegays were given as mementos to be taken home. These herbs are edible, which is important because some individuals may want to put things in their mouth. It's essential that mementos to be taken home are safe for this population. At the conclusion of the tour, the staffs from both the farm and the nursing home helped to move the participants back out into the farmyard and into their bus. The SPARK! staff stayed at the site until the bus left to wave good-bye.

Melissa and her volunteers take time after each tour for a "postmortem." This gives staff and volunteers an opportunity to talk with each other about what went well and what could be tweaked for a better experience with the next tour.

Program History:

Melissa remarked that, since she is the only staff member at the Milwaukee County Historical Society involved with the SPARK! project, she has had to move slowly in implementing this new program. She decided to utilize tour programming that had already been created for this site and adapt it to better serve this population. With this in mind, there are four different tours that Trimborn offers SPARK! visitors:

- History of Trimborn Farm – the site and buildings
- Agriculture and farming
- Toys and games from earlier times
- Building materials and construction techniques that are tied to the site

The SPARK! team intends to conduct a very hands-on tour approach, utilizing everyday objects and historical artifacts from the Trimborn collection and offering participants a multisensory experience. When selecting artifacts from the collection for use during SPARK! tours, the staff will use objects from their "teaching collection," which the farm typically has in multiples and which are not problematic for public handling. Melissa noted that since the artifacts tend to be small in scale, it can be difficult to present them as a single focus for a large group during a tour program. With this in mind, she intends to keep the tour size smaller or have two presenters on each tour to involve the participants more effectively, even if this means splitting the group in two at some point during the tour. Melissa also intends to use items that will stimulate multiple senses for the individuals with memory loss, such as fragrant herbs from the site's garden or the smell of baking bread. The SPARK! team can include other products from the farm as they are harvested throughout the summer.

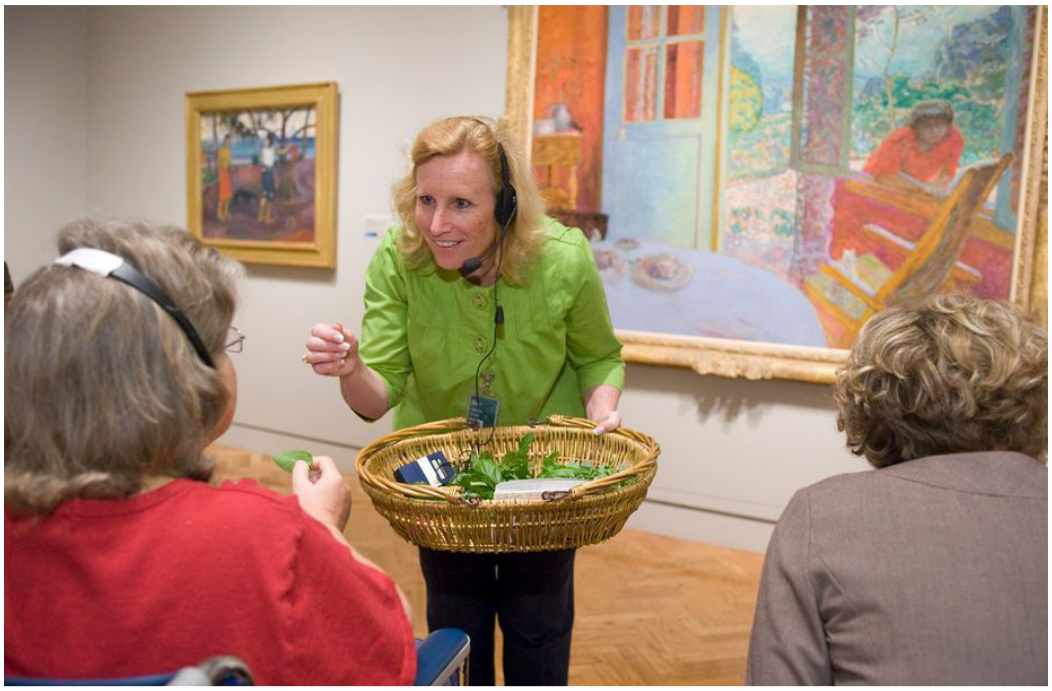
Diane Baugh from the Alzheimer's Association Southeastern Wisconsin chapter provided training for this program. The training was required for all staff from the Historical Society, as well as interns, volunteers and docents, even those who are not yet involved with the SPARK! program but who had expressed an interest in future involvement. Diane gave an overview of dementia and tips for communicating with this population. According to Melissa, her docents who work at Trimborn and the other sites had concerns and questions about dealing with people with memory loss, and it was helpful to have Diane as a sounding board to get these concerns out in the open. Many of Melissa's docents are in their 60s and 70s, which can be problematic if pushing wheelchairs or helping to physically move participants during the tours. Melissa said she is sensitive to the individual docent's strengths when it comes to staffing her tours, which is all part of being aware of those who would be more comfortable with this population.

In creating her program, Melissa has relied upon several sources for assistance. The Alzheimer's Association and Diane Baugh have been a great resource. Melissa has also been in touch with the local Greendale Health Department, which agreed to give her a list of local doctors and hospitals working with people with dementia, and the Health Department also agreed to communicate with residents of Greendale living at home with memory loss to let them know about the SPARK! program being offered at Trimborn. The Department will also help to publicize the program in the future. The nurse in charge at the Health Department has been Melissa's contact. Melissa has also reached out to the staff at the local Harbor Village Adult Day Program facility. Harbor Village has agreed to visit the farm and help evaluate the program in the near future. Melissa stated that it has been a bit challenging to get the word out about the SPARK! program and to fill the tours.

Since Trimborn Farms is open only during the summer months, and the remaining three sites are not accessible to this population, Melissa contacted the local Greendale Library with the idea of using their community room for SPARK! tours during the fall, winter and spring months. She believes that the local population is comfortable and familiar with the library, which would make participants more likely to continue attending presentations while Trimborn is closed. Melissa or a docent will take artifacts into the library for presentations.

Costs for this program have been minimal to date. The biggest cost is Melissa's time planning and implementing the program. She estimates that she spends two hours up front coordinating each session and approximately two to three hours per program. The team uses items from the site, such as herbs for giveaways and butter made on the farm. A local bakery is willing to donate bread. Costs for name tags and other items are minimal. Melissa said her two interns and one volunteer have been essential in helping to create and implement this new program. She hopes to involve docents in future tours.

*Melissa Wraalstad is no longer with the Milwaukee County Historical Society and the SPARK! program is currently on hiatus.



Minneapolis Institute of Arts

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Snapshot >

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) is located just off Highway 94 in downtown Minneapolis. Founded in 1883, the MIA is the upper Midwest's premier encyclopedic art museum, with more than 80,000 works of art reflective of 5,000 years of world history. The MIA's permanent collection has grown from 800 works of art to more than 83,000 objects. The collection includes works of art from eight curatorial areas: Arts of Africa and the Americas; Contemporary Art; Decorative Arts; Textiles and Sculpture; Asian Art; Paintings; Photography and New Media; and Prints and Drawings. The MIA's slate of public programs increases access to the collection and special exhibitions through public tours, lectures and symposia, and classes and workshops. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts is a free museum operated for the benefit of the general public and serves visitors from across the state of Minnesota, the Midwest, and increasingly, a national and international audience. The museum's mission is expressed as follows: "The Minneapolis Institute of Arts enriches the community by collecting, preserving, and making accessible outstanding works of art from the world's diverse cultures." Its vision is: "Inspiring wonder through the power of art."

Minneapolis Institute of Arts

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts is dedicated to providing equal access to its collections and programs. Inclusivity, accessibility, creativity, exchange, community, responsiveness and respect serve as the guiding principles of all its tour programs.

Program History:

The MIA became interested in creating a program for people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia in 2008. Inspired by the "Meet Me at MOMA" program that had recently been introduced at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the MIA sent Jane Tygesson, Volunteer Coordinator at the MIA, to a training session offered by MOMA to staff from other museums.

Realizing that the MOMA model would need to be adapted to work with its population, the MIA's first step was to establish a relationship with the local Alzheimer's Association. After several meetings to discuss how this program would take shape, the museum and the Alzheimer's Association agreed to collaborate to move the program forward. The two organizations decided to name the new MIA program "Discover Your Story." The process of developing the Discover Your Story (DYS) model is described in greater detail in Part 2 of this book, "Building a Program – on a Shoestring," and in materials in Part 3.

Discover Your Story tours engage individuals in the early and middle stages of dementia, as well as their family, friends or caregivers, in discussions focused on thematically related artworks in the museum's galleries. Individuals with memory loss are encouraged to discover themselves while reminiscing about, reflecting upon or comparing their own life stories to the stories in works of art. They also have an opportunity to engage in creative storytelling using the TimeSlips method developed by Anne Basting. The goal of the DYS program is to provide participants with a meaningful experience discussing art and socializing in the welcoming environment of the MIA galleries.

The conversation-based format of the DYS tours is similar to other tours at the MIA but tailored to the specific needs of individuals with memory loss. Tour groups are limited in size, allowing for a more personal, relaxed experience. Docents trained by the Alzheimer's Association and museum staff facilitate the tours. Additional volunteers from the Friends of the MIA and from the University of Minnesota Medical School act as partners for the participants if needed. All tour participants leave the museum with a creative storytelling booklet or a postcard of an artwork they discussed on the tour as a memento of their experience and a prompt for further discussions. During 2011, the museum toured over 600 people living with memory loss, primarily with mid-stage symptoms.

Based on careful consideration of time, gallery usage, seating and accessibility, Discover Your Story tours take place when the museum is open to the general public, providing truly equal access to everything the museum has to offer. In keeping with the museum's policy, these tours are offered free of charge. Discover Your Story tours are made available through the museum's tour office in two ways: groups of five or more can schedule a tour anytime during open museum hours according to their needs, or a person with memory loss and a caregiver can reserve a spot on a regularly scheduled DYS tour. The MIA currently offers regularly scheduled DYS tours at 10:30 a.m. on the second Friday and Saturday of each month.

Part 2

Building a Program – on a Shoestring

The experiences of the SPARK! Alliance institutions discussed in the previous section strongly suggest that almost any type of museum or cultural institution can develop a program tailored to its collection, physical space and local circumstances that will effectively engage those living with memory loss. This section is designed to walk the reader through the step-by-step process that was used to develop and implement the Discover Your Story program at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts described in Part 1. It is written from my perspective, Jane Tygesson, as a docent at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts who worked with museum staff to design, pilot and implement the Discover Your Story program.

The Gray Tsunami

The national Alzheimer's Association has predicted that by 2030 the number of individuals living with some form of dementia will double. A common belief held by health professionals working with this population is that with the swelling number of aging baby boomers who will be affected by dementia, the nursing home/memory care facilities will be overwhelmed. This group will not "go gently into that good night" with the grace and good manners of previous generations. What will we do with them? Will we warehouse them by putting them in a room with a TV or radio and hope for the best? A need for creative and effective programs for this coming "gray tsunami" is clear. While memory care facilities must offer their own engaging programs, part of the solution is also to form partnerships with existing cultural institutions to offer engaging programs to meet this need. But where do we start?

Institutional Buy-In

When approaching the staff of museums or other organizations and asking them to consider developing programs for people with memory loss, it helps to begin by asking, "How many of you have a family member or friend who is living with Alzheimer's or some form of dementia?" This disease has become so epidemic that the probability of someone in your audience being personally impacted by some form of memory loss is very high. The people on your own staff are most likely in the same boat. When this question is posed, you are almost certain to find someone who has or had a mother, father or other loved one with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia. By personalizing your pitch and finding someone on the staff with first-hand knowledge of this disease, you will find it becomes much easier to get institutional buy-in for this type of programming. Find a champion!

One of the first questions you will encounter is usually, "How will this programming positively impact the institution?" There are many ways of answering this question. After reviewing the people who have attended the Discover Your Story tours at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts over the past four years we have found that about 90% of them had never been to the MIA before this programming. In fact, many had never been to any museum. This is a new population that cultural institutions can attract and introduce to their institution. The museum world is working hard to attract a wider spectrum of visitors, and this programming is clearly in line with that goal. In addition, opening museum doors to this population creates a number of public relations opportunities as well as the potential for community outreach. The museum's presence in the community becomes more visible. This type of programming also provides an opportunity for grant writing; a number of foundations are interested in supporting programming for this growing population.

Another entry-level inquiry is typically, "What will it cost?" The answer to this question depends on how the museum decides to structure its program. With a willing volunteer base, this type of programming can be achieved with a minimal investment of staff time and funding on the part of the institution. Establishing a point person is vital for a successful program launch. If there is an individual, perhaps a docent or a volunteer, who is willing to take on coordinating this program, very little staff time will be needed. It might also be possible to underwrite some or all of the costs through special grant funding.

Some questions may arise concerning the impact of a museum experience on this population. Is such a program really beneficial when these individuals might forget their experience within minutes of leaving the museum? Every one of the SPARK Alliance members would respond with a strong "yes!" The following quotes from several well-known experts in this field regarding the efficacy of arts programming for people with memory loss might be helpful in convincing any naysayer:

> "Viewing art is a treatment for Alzheimer's because it employs and wakes up the parts of the brain that are still functioning, while putting no pressure on the parts of the brains that are not functioning. While they're (program participants) engaged in the experience, they feel respected as people. They have dignity. They get their personhood back."
>
> –John Zeisel, a founder of Artists for Alzheimer's

"There is evidence that art programs (for individuals with Alzheimer's) might improve behavioral symptoms like anxiety, aggressiveness, and mood. It may also have some short-term impact on verbal functioning and increased attention and alertness. Frequently the paintings evoke long-term memories – of being a child, being in love, being young – which are also still preserved."

–Margaret Sewell, Ph.D. Mount Sinai School of Medicine

"Research has shown that art therapy can positively impact Alzheimer's patients. Art gives them a language of pictures when words fail them. Images trigger memories that may have been buried under disease debris. Because the visual cortex remains active in the brain even after verbal communication is diminished, viewing familiar images assists those suffering from Alzheimer's to remember how to communicate."

–Stacey Hudson, "Memory Served," *Metro Spirit*, 9/26/2007

"Certainly it's not just a visual experience – it's an emotional one," said Oliver Sacks, neurologist and writer. "In an informal way I have often seen quite demented patients recognize and respond vividly to paintings and delight in painting at a time when they are scarcely responsive to words and disoriented and out of it. I think that recognition of visual art can be very deep."

–Randy Kennedy, *www.nytimes.com*

In addition, the article "Research on Creativity and Aging: The Positive Impact of the Arts on Health and Illness" in the *American Society on Aging* (Spring 2006) identifies the following factors as positive impacts from engagement with the arts and creative expression:

- sense of control
- influence of the mind on the body
- brain plasticity

Key Points in this Section

» Find a champion to support the program within the institution.

» Establish a point person to coordinate the development and implementation of the program.

» Be prepared to speak about the positive impact of the program to your museum/institution and about people with memory loss.

Community Alliances – Finding Your Audience

An effective and inexpensive starting point is to contact your local Alzheimer's Association. This organization can help in a number of ways. Local chapters have staff members who will visit your museum and facilitate trainings for your staff, providing general background information about memory loss and suggestions for coping mechanisms that are essential in working with this population. For example, just the word *dementia* is frightening and off-putting to many individuals. With basic information comes a greater comfort level in interacting with the population. The MIA has begun to use the term *memory loss* rather than dementia when referring to its Discover Your Story tours. It is important to focus first on potential participants as people, rather than a collection of symptoms. Removing the "scary label" can help this process. Approaching the program with the understanding that most of us live with a certain amount of natural "memory loss" every day is also helpful.

The Alzheimer's Association has a directory of memory care facilities and adult day programs in each region. You can also find this information online and in area yellow pages. Cultural institutions can use this information to identity potential visitors. Many Alzheimer's Association chapters have also started Early Memory Loss Councils. By becoming part of this Council, your museum can become aware of the variety of organizations currently working with this population and related activities in your city and state. This can be a great way to make connections throughout your community with a variety of groups.

Identifying and connecting with these organizations – creating community alliances – means reaching out to many different types of organizations that work with individuals living with memory loss. Many faith-based organizations, such as churches, synagogues and mosques, have ministry outreach for people living with memory loss. Contact their congregational care ministry department and ask if they have support groups. Another good resource is the local HMO. In Minneapolis, for example, Park Nicollet Health Services offers a memory club for its members/clients. Memory clubs and cafes are becoming more popular and are offered not only by HMOs but also by foundations like the Wilder Foundation in St. Paul. These clubs will be discussed in more detail later in this book.

Another potential resource is the diagnostic center at many area hospitals. Contact the doctors who are working in gerontology specialties. Local colleges and universities can also be great resources, especially those that work with the aging population. Nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy and general medicine programs are all keyed into this population. The local Veterans' Administration most likely offers a variety of services to veterans living with memory loss. You can also reach out to senior centers located in many cities and suburban areas. And last but not least, check to see if any local foundations are working with this population.

Gauging interest and potential audience size for this programming can be a challenge. Your museum or cultural institution may have doubts or questions about how this type of program will be accepted in your community. A letter explaining the concept of a memory loss program can be sent to the organizations mentioned above, with a follow-up phone call to see what kind of response this programming would elicit. The MIA had already moved through its pilot program phase before sending out this type of letter. We attempted to identify and target the activity director at each possible organization. A follow-up phone call to answer questions was essential.

When contacting local memory clubs and support groups, we asked if they would be willing to allot five minutes at a future meeting to listen to a brief overview of the program, and we offered to answer their questions. We found that these groups wanted assurance that our museum would be a safe place to bring their vulnerable loved ones. They needed someone to tell them what to expect before, during and after the tour, and how this would benefit their participants or residents. Taking vulnerable older adults on any type of field trip can be overwhelming for both the caregivers and their friend or family member with memory loss, so it is essential to identify a contact person – museum staff or volunteer – who will be available to answer questions and allay their fears.

Nursing home and memory care facility staff members may also question the benefits of this type of field trip. To answer their questions, you may find the following summaries beneficial. Caregivers who took part in a research project at the MIA during the summer of 2010 provided the feedback. A summary of the research project is included in Part 3 of this book.

Some of the main benefits consistently highlighted by caregivers regarding museum programs developed for people with memory loss included the following:

- Enhanced interactions: noted increased "interaction among themselves, fueling a sense of 'we're community'"
- Stimulation: observed "cognitive stimulation that our staff cannot provide at the facility (re: art, historical references)
- Enjoyment of art itself: the tour "reminded people with memory loss that they can appreciate art and culture"
- Effective engagement of staff: commented on "the kindness of the knowledgeable and courteous staff"

The surprises mentioned by caregivers in their post-tour survey comments included:

- Participant attitude and involvement: commented on the "level of participation, even from those who are generally withdrawn"
- Cognitive stimulation exhibited during the tours: noted "they remembered what they saw, sometimes;" the effect of "the sensory stimulation of things to smell, touch;" and the "depth of memories shared by one particular resident"
- Care and expertise of museum staff managing the tours: "pleasantly surprised how gentle volunteers were, unruffled, able to affirm any answer," and "how docent used multiple senses to draw the attention of the participants, i.e. gave them lilacs for the ride home, had them hold seashells"

General comments by caregivers following the tours included:

- "It was amazing to see how a few participants opened up when prompted by the sensory stimulation and the atmosphere in general. They just opened up, smiling the whole time."
- "I loved spending what I would call quality time with my folks. I am not always able to (do so). I loved to watch them open up and to be so willing to share things about themselves like they did."
- "Some of them can talk!!! I have a gentleman who is usually rather crabby and doesn't want to be social with anyone. To sit and listen to him tell his story really almost had me in tears. Since then my relationship has changed with him because I continue to feed off that one time of him telling me his story."
- "I saw a sense of humor I hadn't realized existed. I saw the desire to be helpful, aka polite, during the tour."

The survey also included an open-ended question on how these tours had changed the caregivers' attitude toward their job or the tour participants themselves. One participant responded,

> I am a firm believer in a place for the arts in dementia care. I absolutely love these tours and have great respect for the care that has gone into designing them. The docents are superb. The storytelling experience worked very well for our group, and will encourage me to try using real works of art when I do TimeSlips storytelling as an activity.... Anything that reminds people with dementia of their humanity, their normalcy, and their right to experience whatever they are experiencing is a wonderful thing and so necessary. Opportunities like this help me to do my job more effectively and make me love my work even more.

If your museum realizes the importance of programming for this population and is ready to move forward, it is important to identify one or two organizations that would be willing to take part in your pilot program. One of the easiest and most accessible forums is a local memory care facility or adult day program. Contact the activity director. Many of these facilities are eager to involve their clients in enriching activities. The MIA was fortunate to work with the Wilder Foundation's Adult Day Health program in St. Paul for its pilot. Wilder agreed to bring five clients and five caregivers to the museum twice a month for four months. We did a one-hour tour followed by lunch in our museum's cafe. The lunch portion gave us a chance to sit down with the participants and get their reactions to the tour. We tried out a number of themes and different types of art to see what would work well with this population and made adjustments after hearing the feedback from participants and caregivers.

Key Points in this Section

- Establish a relationship with your local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association – look to them for training and contacts in the community.
- Identify a wide variety of organizations that are currently working with the memory loss community. Persistently connect with them in written and verbal forms to keep them aware of the new programming at your institution/museum.
- Identify an organization or other group that would be willing to be involved in a pilot program.

Accessibility Issues in Your Museum

Before the first visitor crosses your threshold, carefully review the accessibility issues in your museum. Any space can be used for this type of touring, but you need to visualize navigation routes through the museum – starting at the entrance – before you begin touring this population. Bringing a group of individuals living with memory loss, especially those in mid-stage, into a new environment requires some preparation. Step-by-step instructions for crafting a tour by the volunteer guide or docent are included in Part 3.

If possible, a separate entrance that is away from loud groups and a lot of hustle and bustle is ideal. Wheelchair accessibility is a must. As few stairs as possible, even for those who are still ambulatory, is always preferable. If possible, parking nearby for vans or buses is helpful, especially when touring larger groups arriving from facilities. It is a good idea to have a few large umbrellas on hand to shelter people in rainy weather. This group moves slowly and will not be happy if participants are soaked while transferring from their bus into the museum.

It is important to have additional wheelchairs available near the entrance. Many individuals who have said they will not need a wheelchair reconsider once they are at the museum.

The pros and cons of assisted listening devices should be considered. These devices can sometimes inhibit group conversation, but if an individual cannot hear anything without the device, it only makes sense to offer one. The devices should be pre-checked to make sure they are on the correct setting and can be placed over hearing aids. The MIA has recently purchased new assisted listening devices that have been tested on people with the combination of memory loss and hearing aids, and they appear to be working well.

For groups that are comfortable with walking, we preset folding chairs at several points along the tour route. We have found that many participants tire easily and find they cannot appreciate the experience for even an hour on their feet. Chairs for the MIA were purchased at IKEA and are stored and moved on a dolly. The chairs are made of sturdy plastic material and have backs. We consulted with a registered nurse who oversees numerous adult day programs before deciding on these chairs. She was adamant that this population would be unsafe on a gallery stool. Chairs with arms are preferable, but are difficult to find and fairly expensive.

Once again, be aware of steps – elevators are preferable. Changes in the floor surface, say from carpet to hardwood, can also throw participants off and cause them to stop in mid-step. Safely moving people through the building will take much more time than is usually allotted on a typical tour. Grouping tour program artwork in one general area will allow for more time looking and less time moving, providing a more enjoyable tour for participants. Always be aware of the nearest bathroom – the need can arise quickly, and being able to locate one can avert an unpleasant situation.

Key Points in this Section

- Know your space and plan your tour route with minimal movement.
- Think and walk through the tour before the group arrives.
- Be prepared with necessary equipment, chairs with arms and backs, wheelchairs, umbrellas and assisted listening devices.

Assessing Your Collection

Besides grouping selected art or artifacts, several other considerations should be addressed while crafting your tour. Choosing pieces with greater overall size and bright colors make it easier for this population to read and interpret the object. Since many will be viewing the object from a seated position, take a moment to consider what the object looks like from that level. It is helpful to find quiet locations that enable the group to focus on the work of art or artifact. Low light situations can make this population uneasy and make viewing more difficult.

When working with artifacts, include objects that can be passed around for the participants to handle. This tactile element helps to make the experience more concrete and meaningful. If the artifact is too large or valuable to pass, place it on a low table that can be viewed from a seated position. This may mean you will have to move the participants in order to ensure that everyone can see the object. Always check in with your group to ascertain whether or not they can see what you are discussing.

We have explored many themes during our tours at the MIA, and examples are included in Part 3. Choosing artworks or objects that participants can "read and understand" is empowering and allows them to feel more confident when offering up comments during gallery discussions. Touring this population is not about imparting knowledge or teaching art history. It's about living in the moment and going on a journey, together. Finding a connection between the object and the life of the viewer will help to involve each participant in the process. For example, imagine you are in front of a painting depicting a dining room table set for a birthday party. After discussing what participants see in the scene, you can offer a question about birthdays or their favorite type of birthday cake. Make use of simple questions relating to the object that invite the group to talk among themselves. This helps them to get to know one another better and build a sense of community.

Key Points in this Section

- Choose larger-sized objects that can be easily seen and have enough space in front of each object to accommodate your group.
- Pick an object or theme that your audience can relate to.
- Be aware of how the object looks from a seated position.

Identifying a Volunteer Base

Over the past four years, the MIA Discover Your Story staff has found that, in order to have a successful tour with individuals living with mid-stage memory loss, a one-on-one partnership during the time participants are in the museum is ideal. For this population, entering the museum, whether for the first or fifth time, is like entering an unknown and foreign land; anxiety levels can soar just from passing through the doors. Each participant should be accompanied by a caregiver, staff, or family member on an outing like this, but is rarely the case. Many memory care facilities do not have sufficient available staff to attend these tours. The MIA requires one staff person to five participants when booking groups. Yet our experience is that participants respond best if they know they have someone who will be with them, a partner assigned to them for the entire tour. How, then, do you find people to partner with these visitors?

At the MIA, we began by looking for a volunteer pool. Initially, we hoped to enlist volunteers through the Alzheimer's Association but found that group was already committed to other projects. Many docents and guides agreed to come along as "pushers" on tours, but the need still outweighed the number of volunteers available. Next we tapped into the members of the Friends of the MIA and generated a list of volunteers. We also learned that several nearby college and high school programs require community volunteer hours, which gave us another possible resource pool.

The MIA is currently working with a number of medical students from the University of Minnesota Medical School. The Medical School requires a certain number of community volunteer hours as part of their first-year curriculum, and this project fits their requirements. An affiliation agreement between the MIA and the University was required to move this relationship forward. The partnership with the Medical School has been a win-win situation. The medical students have the opportunity to spend one-on-one time with an individual during a period in their schooling that is primarily classroom oriented with limited patient contact. They learn to talk, and more importantly listen, while interacting with these individuals. We currently have nine future doctors who are giving the museum 40 hours of volunteer time during the 2011/2012 school year. We will be meeting with a new class of first years in the fall of 2012 to invite them to participate in the program, which means an ever-expanding pool of volunteers. The MIA has heard that other schools at the University of Minnesota, including the nursing, occupational therapy and gerontology departments, are also interested in volunteering for this program. These options have not been pursued to date. An added benefit for the Institute is the opportunity to introduce these future doctors to the MIA, hoping their experiences with the tours will create an ongoing interest in and relationship with our museum.

Key Points in this Section

» Be aware that you will need a large number of volunteers to safely and successfully run this program.

» Look beyond the usual pool of volunteers at your institution/museum and build community alliances with different organizations to promote volunteerism.

Touring People with Early- and Mid-Stage Symptoms

At the MIA, we offer different tours that are especially designed to meet the needs of people with varying degrees of memory loss. Commonly, symptoms are grouped into stages. These stages are general guides, however, and symptoms can vary greatly.

People with "early-stage" symptoms, for example, have relatively few cognitive challenges. According to the Alzheimer's Association, early-stage symptoms include: forgetting recent events; writing reminders but losing them; showing up at the wrong time or day; trouble remembering names when introduced to new people; difficulty finding words; becoming moody or withdrawn, especially in socially or mentally challenging situations; and demonstrating a preference for familiar things. People with "mid-stage" symptoms might have more difficulty processing information and also might have more physical challenges. The Alzheimer's Association's list of mid-stage symptoms for people with memory loss includes: confusion about place or time, difficulty recalling address or phone number, wandering, decreasing recognition of self and others, behavioral changes and mobility issues.

With the feedback obtained through our pilot phase at the MIA, we learned that our touring styles had to change depending on the level of physical and cognitive abilities in each group. Determining this ability level can be a challenge. Initial contact with the MIA involves scheduling a tour with the museum's tour office. A representative in the office uses a specific form to help the DYS staff make an initial screening. This form is included in Part 3. The tour office then contacts the lead and assistant docents. The lead docent follows up with the memory care facility or individual caregiver to collect additional information to help determine the type of tour that will work best with the group. These additional follow-up questions used by the lead docent when assessing the group are also included in Part 3.

Many times, the information obtained from the memory care facility or the caregiver booking the tour is not totally accurate. For this reason, the docent designing the tour will attempt to craft a tour that can allow for change after meeting the group for the first time. We have found that it is difficult to delineate between early- and mid-stage memory loss with many individuals, so our touring style is based more on physical considerations such as ability to walk and hear. The tours are all themed and inquiry-based, but may differ in the number of objects viewed.

For participants with early-stage symptoms, we often do a regular tour, one that we would offer to the general public, but with a twist. A number of our early-stage groups want to have information regarding the artwork they will be viewing before they arrive for the tour. To meet this request, we have created an "itinerary" that can be mailed or emailed to the participants in advance. The itinerary states the tour's theme and includes images and information about the objects on the tour that are downloaded from our museum's website.

One of our early-stage groups was composed of four men, all of whom fit within the Alzheimer's Association's "early-onset" parameters. These men were in their 50s and 60s and had all been working full-time until

Alzheimer's forced them into early retirement. They were unusual in that they were willing to openly share their diagnosis with others and had decided to band together to share their journeys. They wanted tours that would challenge them! The men requested the printed itinerary for each tour before coming to the museum. The itinerary allowed them to relax and feel more comfortable when they forgot details about the artwork they had recently viewed or discussed. The individual itineraries provided helpful reference points the men could rely on during each tour.

MIA's Discover Your Story program has also hosted a number of memory clubs. These clubs are comprised of individuals with early-stage symptoms who are accompanied by a family member or friend to each meeting. Meetings are once a week, and each club generally meets for several months. Members discuss topics pertinent to people living with memory loss and act as a support group for both the individuals with memory loss and their caregiver. On their trips to the museum, it is often difficult to tell who is living with memory loss and who is not. Actually, it is not even necessary to identify those with memory loss unless someone in the group has a tendency to wander and may get lost if separated from the group. These tours are generally a full hour and include seven to eight objects from the collection. The group size is usually six dyads – any more than six dyads creates difficulty when trying to include everyone in gallery discussions. We have also learned that participants have a better chance of focusing and enjoying the tour if they have a chance to sit while viewing the art.

One of our most surprisingly successful discussions with an early-stage group was in front of an ornate, 16th century Venetian desk. This desk is nearly impossible to identify specifically, yet the group had a great time trying to figure it out and commented on the outrageous excess of gold ornamentation. They began talking about the type of desks they had in their homes and offices, which gave everyone an opportunity to offer something personal to the discussion. Nearly any object and theme can work if you give it time and are willing to go where the group takes you during the discussion. (Sample tour topics are included in Part 3). An important lesson we have learned is to **have a flexible plan**.

Building in time for socializing seems very important to our groups, especially for people with early-stage symptoms. Having a meeting room for participants to gather either before or after the tour is an essential component. During one of these post-tour conversations, the wife of one of the participants remarked that the museum was one of the last "safe places" she could take her husband. She said how important it was for them as a couple to have an experience they could share, and that they would be talking about this day for weeks to come.

Our tours for people with mid-stage symptoms differ from those for people with early-stage symptoms, primarily in the number of objects viewed and the number of participants in the group. When touring people with mid-stage symptoms, we try to slow the pace down and view approximately four objects during the hour-long tour. The tour size should not exceed five dyads. If a number of participants are in wheelchairs, the docent/guide needs to anticipate how to group everyone around the objects so that each person can see them, hear the docent/guide, and follow the group's responses. Similar to the tours for people with early-stage symptoms, we have a theme that ties together the four objects. Many times, however, the theme loses

importance when participants start to open up. You need to be able to "go with the flow" of the conversation and affirm even the most off-topic response and see where it leads.

Props and music are an essential part of tours for people with mid-stage symptoms and seem to have a meaningful effect on the tour participants. Information regarding sensory props and additional tips for touring for individuals with mid-stage symptoms are also included in Part 3.

With a mid-stage group, it is important to make participants feel comfortable even before they come through the museum's doors. Meeting a facility's van or bus at the drop-off spot and helping staff to unload the participants is a welcome relief and gives the volunteer a chance to say, "Hi, my name is ... and I'm going to be your partner today at the museum. I'll be with you the whole time you're here; let's have some fun!" This helps to set the tone for the tour, and you will see the anxiety level melt away.

Touring people with mid-stage symptoms can be challenging and takes a "village of volunteers" to organize and lead successfully, but the experience is ultimately very rewarding and well worth the effort. Our docents and volunteers regularly recount the "ah-ha" moments of their tours that touch their hearts and remain with them for days to come. The reality is that this could be your mom or dad, or any one of us, coming through the museum doors in the future for one of these tours. Let's make each one the best experience possible!

Key Points in this Section

» Be aware of the needs of your group when crafting a tour.

» Have a flexible plan.

Part 3

Training Materials for Docents/Volunteers

Part 3 includes a wide range of training materials for staff and volunteers, as well as other resources to use when crafting a SPARK! program at your museum. Some of these materials were developed as resources for the docents/volunteers working with the Discover Your Story tours at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Others were selected from various sources, with the intent that they might be helpful tools for program development and implementation. The box at the beginning of each piece provides a brief description of the potential use for each of these materials.

This is an educational piece for the docents and volunteers involved in the Discover Your Story Program at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. It was designed to define dementia and its different forms and to provide information on the purpose and objectives of the SPARK! Program.

Information on Memory Loss for Docents/Volunteers

"As one grows older, art & life become one and the same."

Picasso

Dementia Does Not Mean You're Going Crazy

Dementia is not a name for a particular disease. Rather, it is a term used to describe a group of symptoms that includes forgetfulness and the inability to reason and think clearly. While there are several different types of dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, which involves irreversible intellectual impairment, affects the largest percentage of those experiencing memory loss. A staggering 50 to 60 percent of those people diagnosed with dementia fall into this category,suffering from structural and chemical changes to the brain which in turn precipitate symptoms from forgetfulness in the early stages to total disability as the disease progresses.

Becoming Familiar with Dementia

Several different types of dementia have been identified:

Alzheimer's Disease: irreversible intellectual impairment that ranges from forgetfulness to complete disability as the result of structural and chemical changes in the brain. Fifty to 60% of persons categorized with dementia are in this category.

Vascular Dementia: repeated series of strokes that destroy small areas of the brain. Symptoms will differ and correspond to the damaged areas of the brain. These symptoms can plateau if strokes are stopped through medical intervention. Previously called hardening of the arteries, this form of dementia accounts for approximately 10% of those categorized with disability.

Lewy Body Dementia: microscopic abnormalities in the brain that present symptoms similar to Alzheimer's but with additional symptoms of Parkinson's Disease. Visual hallucinations, frequent falls, stiffness, slowness, poor balance, and depression are common. Five to 10% of those categorized with dementia are in this category.

Frontotemporal Dementia, including Pick Disease: a rare form of dementia stemming from loss of brain mass in the frontal and temporal lobes. This form runs in families and accounts for approximately 5% of dementia patients.

Precursors to Dementia

Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI): a phrase now used to describe mild memory impairment and memory difficulties in people who do not meet the criteria for dementia. Mild cognitive impairment probably includes early Alzheimer's Disease and the beginnings of other dementing illnesses that can occur as part of normal aging. Follow-up studies have found that 10 to 15% of individuals with MCI develop dementia each year after the diagnosis has been made. On the flip side, after five years, 40 to 50% remain in the MCI group, showing no progression of MCI or improving and returning to normal cognition. Researchers are closely watching this group with the hope that early detection might lead to strategies to prevent the development of dementia.

Aging in America in the year 2030

In 2030, approximately 70 million Americans will be over the age of 65. The number of people over 85 will triple.

In 2008, 5.1 million Americans had Alzheimer's. One new case is diagnosed every 33 seconds and will cost the U.S. $200 billion dollars a year.

Percentage of Alzheimer's in older Americans:

65 or older 5 – 8%
75 or older 15 – 20%
85 or older 25 – 50%

Familial Alzheimer's can start as early as the 30s.

Stages of Alzheimer's Disease

Early Stage (1 to 5 years): becomes forgetful; experiences difficulty finding words; suffers depressions; feels apathetic; has difficulty problem solving.

Middle Stage: experiences speaking difficulties; finds everyday activities challenging, including an inability to understand explanations; shows change in handwriting; becomes clumsy; walks with a shuffling gait; grows agitated; suffers delusion; wanders.

Late Stage: impairment increases; grows incontinent; becomes physically and mentally disabled.

The disease usually progresses over a period of 7 to 10 years, but can be as fast as 3 years or as long as 20. Alzheimer's can plateau for periods of time.

Physical Changes to the Brain

Brain Changes: Neuritic plaques and neurofibrillary tangles occur in a patient's brain but are difficult to diagnose until after death. Deficiencies in neurotransmitter and acetylcholine are also indicated. Early onset Alzheimer's is caused by a gene abnormality.

Behavioral Symptoms

Changes in memory and the confusion they bring can contribute to the following problems:

Depression	10 — 80%
Agitation	20 — 95%
Sleep Disturbance	13 — 50%
Delusions	12 — 100%
Hallucinations	4 — 43%
Apathy	40 — 70%

Old social skills and the ability to make customary remarks are retained longer than insight and judgment. Thus, in the early stages, disability is not obvious and individuals can get by without notice.

What does Alzheimer's look like? Some people experience personality changes, are unable to remember the right word or name for an object, become clumsy and will walk with a shuffling step. Some experience hallucinations — hearing and seeing imaginary things. Some become angry and use curse words that were never part of their vocabulary.

Individuals with Alzheimer's experience a severely limited ability to learn new things or to understand even simple explanations as the disease progresses.

People with Alzheimer's have difficulty retaining what was said; they may be able to repeat a sentence but cannot act on what they thought they heard. As the disease progresses, a person may not be able to retain thought for even one minute.

They may be able to read, but not comprehend. Reading and understanding are two different skills.

They can suffer a loss of coordination and apraxia, the inability for a message to travel from the brain to the hands and feet. Loss of balance and frequent falls may occur. Dizziness is common among the elderly and exacerbated by the Alzheimer's.

Agnosia ("to not know") refers to the inability to recognize people and things. The brain cannot put together information. The patient can remember but cannot put the information together in a meaningful way.

Individuals with memory loss lose their internal clock and the ability to judge the passage of time. They forget daily occurrences; they are not in denial; they simply do not remember something took place.

Paranoia, suspicion, anger, anxiety, and restlessness all can be common responses to a world that makes no sense and is totally new and unknown.

People with Alzheimer's may experience vision problems, including the following: difficulty distinguishing between similar color intensities; lack of depth perception; prints and patterns may become confusing. Low-light situations make vision problems even worse. Older eyes take longer to adjust to changes in light.

The past may seem like the present.

Abilities fluctuate on a day-to-day basis.

How can the Institute enrich the lives of individuals living with Alzheimer's and other forms of memory loss and their caregivers?

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts has many compelling reasons for addressing the needs of those living with memory loss. For example, research has shown that individuals with early- to middle-stage Alzheimer's symptoms retain their long-term memories, which are visually encoded. Looking at art triggers these memories, stimulates the imagination, and unlocks storytelling capabilities that individuals with memory loss have retained.

Visiting an art museum serves both the individuals living with memory loss and their caregivers. The museum provides a stimulating environment in which they can meaningfully interact with one another as both engage in the experience of conversing about and relating to works of art. This activity in and of itself often allows the caregiver to see his or her care partner in a positive light. Furthermore, the psychosocial support system of the group setting lessens feelings of isolation and depression for both caregiver and care partner. Taking part in such an activity may even delay the need to place the person with memory loss in a nursing home. From the standpoint of the individual experiencing memory loss, viewing art in this setting mitigates agitation, increases scores on cognitive tests, provides a source of well being and self-esteem, renews interest and ability to focus, and increases attention span.

What can we expect as docents/volunteers?

Docents and volunteers working with individuals with memory loss will find a mixed bag of behavioral symptoms including, but not limited to: memory loss, decline in the ability to make judgments, compromised word-finding abilities, poor language comprehension, inclination to go off on tangents, difficulty with social discourse, loss of inhibitions, possibility of a catastrophic reaction, disorientation combined with confusion, agitation, occasional bouts of incontinence, hearing problems and the need to go home.

When addressing this audience, use the KISS system: Keep It Simple, Stupid. Never dumb down your commentary, but be ready to **reorient, redirect, repeat, rephrase and reassure**. Use short sentences with short words. Allow time for response. Slow down and listen and then repeat and validate all responses and comments. Encourage narrative, expect off-topic responses and go with the flow. Allow for time to turn and talk. Identify the caregiver and the individual with memory loss as a team and call on them together for answers. Look for non-verbal cues and expect the unexpected! Anticipate partial thoughts, and be ready to read between the lines. Sometimes the participant with memory loss will use word substitutions, such as music for piano, finding words with similar meanings. The individual may string words or sentences together that are familiar to them but won't make sense in the situation. At times curse words just sneak out – a strange quirk of this disease – especially following a stroke. Occasionally, the individual will repeat and get stuck on a word or gesture. Be ready to redirect in a respectful manner. Also, when you are moving a group, one or more individuals may get stuck in one place and be unable to move. Help them by pointing to a place or object and ask them to move toward that space.

As docents/volunteers, how can we enhance the experience of our DYS tour participants?

Establish an environment that feels safe. Routine is very important to people with memory loss, as is giving them direction and information about what the tour will look like. Remind participants where they are and where you are going to take them. Keep the program schedule simple. Do not overload participants with a long list of activities; instead, explain the process one step at a time. Be enthusiastic. Use your face and body, but keep your voice calm and gentle. When words fail, use gestures. Use direct eye contact with all participants. Use simple sentences, realizing that what you say may not be what they hear, and be ready to repeat statements. Speak slowly and lower the pitch of your voice. If a participant uses an incorrect word, politely ask, "Oh, did you mean this?" then supply the right word and ask if you guessed correctly. If you don't understand the response, ask the person to describe it or point to it. If individuals get lost in the middle of a sentence, help them by repeating the beginning of the sentence again; this may prompt them to remember what they were saying. Wait for responses and look to the care partner for help if a participant is stuck. Be patient; never rush the process. Maintain a sense of humor and try to appear relaxed, even if you have to fake it. Go with the flow.

Sometimes, participants may experience a catastrophic reaction due to rapidly changing moods and a situation that seems overwhelming. To date, we have not experienced this on any of our Discover Your Story tours at the Institute. If one or more participants feel that they are being treated like a child, or finding it difficult to make themselves understood, or becoming overtired or over-stimulated – all these factors can contribute to a reaction. Distressed persons will experience increased loss of ability to reason and think and may become combative in this situation. It's best to have the individual caregivers gently remove the distressed participants from the immediate environment to a quieter place to collect and redirect themselves.

For people living with memory loss, daily life is like entering a theater in the middle of the movie. They need reassurances on a regular basis. Remember the Five Rs; repeat, reorient, rephrase, redirect and reassure.

How does a tour work?

Starting a tour at a separate entrance to the museum that is relatively quiet is helpful. At this entrance, wheelchairs and camp stools should be available. Go out to the bus or van to help the facility staff unload participants and move them into the museum. A docent/volunteer should greet the participants, welcome them to the museum and give them name tags. (In the winter months, it's a good idea to put a name tag on their coats as well.) In an unhurried fashion, gather your group of four to five individuals with memory loss and their partners, and tell them in a relaxed and abbreviated manner where they are and what they can expect from the tour.

A tour runs approximately one hour, and each tour should have a theme that will include four art objects. It is a good idea for the docent/volunteer to think in advance of several open-ended questions and ways to connect the art to this audience. Props work well with these tour groups and are highly recommended. Limit movement within the museum and use quiet rooms with little additional noise and as few distractions as

possible. Know where the closest bathroom is at all times.

Give participants time to observe each art object carefully before discussion. Ask participants for a description, naming what they see. Taking a visual inventory will help individuals with memory loss to focus and connect with the artwork. From here, move toward interpretation, asking participants what they think the work means. Asking them to give a personal opinion – an evaluation – is the next step. Finally, move toward connecting the artwork to other areas of their lives. Always direct your conversation to both the individuals with memory loss (even if one or more is non-verbal) and the caregivers; never create two planes of conversation. Acknowledge reactions such as nodding or shaking of heads to include those who are non-verbal. Initiate an activity that allows people to converse with one another and then return to the group. Encourage storytelling and "turn and talk" moments. Non-verbal participants may be able to write down answers with help from their partner. Have the necessary writing materials with you in the gallery.

When the tour is finished, take time to thank each person with memory loss for coming to the museum. Giving participants a card with an image from the tour for them to take home and share with family or caregivers helps to initiate further conversation about their museum experience. We have found that giving flowers to each individual as a take-home gift has been very meaningful. Help the facility staff to load the participants back on their bus or van and take the time to say good-bye.

Identifying Your Docents/Volunteers

This piece discusses the factors for selecting docents/volunteers who are comfortable touring people with memory loss for the Discover Your Story program at the MIA.

Providing tours for individuals with memory loss requires both a unique approach on the part of the docent/volunteer and a comfort level working with individuals in this population. Many of the docents/volunteers who have been involved with the Discover Your Story tours have either had family members with memory loss, and are therefore familiar with the behavioral traits of dementia, or have come in contact with this population through their jobs in health care. When training new docents/volunteers, we inquire about their familiarity and comfort level in working with these individuals. If a docent/volunteer has limited exposure, we suggest he or she spend half a day at an adult day program or memory loss facility to become familiar with communication styles and behaviors.

The first question a docent/volunteer may ask is how these tours differ from the usual museum tour. It's all in the approach. Touring this population is not about imparting knowledge or teaching art history. These are inquiry-based tours that help visitors "discover their own stories" through gentle coaxing on the part of the tour guide and each participant's partner. The docent and dyads work as a team. The role of the docent/volunteer is to be the facilitator for the team. It's about living in the moment and going on a journey, together. The docent/volunteer will tap into memories by stimulating the senses with props and music, and the imagination through creative storytelling. This type of touring takes more time and volunteers but is richly rewarding to all who participate.

For new docents/volunteers, we require a full-day training, which is outlined below. Following the training, a docent/volunteer is asked to act as a partner/pusher on two tours and then as an assistant docent on two additional tours before being assigned to lead a tour. We've found that several docents have asked to be assigned as assistant docents for more than the required two tours before they are comfortable enough to lead. The following training is offered once a year for all new and touring docents/volunteers with a mid-year check-in to exchange information and compare notes and experiences.

Sample Training Day For Docents/Volunteers

This is a sample training day offered at the MIA for docents/volunteers interested in taking part in the Discover Your Story tours. The scenarios, each of which describes a real event during a Discover Your Story program, are used as examples of what can occur during a tour. Docents/volunteers in training are asked to talk among themselves and figure out how they would handle each situation.

Morning Session:

A facilitator from the Alzheimer's Association gives an overview on dementia, focusing on behaviors and tips for working with the population. Following this, a panel composed of individuals living with early-onset Alzheimer's speaks on how this disease has affected their lives and that of their families. They give suggestions on how to better communicate with people living with memory loss.

*Please consider including your Security Staff and Tour Schedulers at this morning session.

Lunch Break:

Brown bag lunch with opportunity for docents/volunteers to talk among themselves about what they have learned in the morning session.

Afternoon Session:

Both new and currently touring docents/volunteers attend this session. A museum staff member reviews training materials and gives updates on what is happening with the program. This is followed by a sharing time when actively touring docents/volunteers can share their experiences, including tips for handling different situations and suggestions for tour topics and artwork that have worked well on past tours. Following the general discussion, the docents/volunteers are invited to break into small groups of approximately six to eight participants. It's best if the group includes a mix of new and more experienced docents/volunteers. The small groups can work through the scenarios provided in the next section. Docents/volunteers should keep in mind that they must be ready to deal with the unexpected while touring this population. Members of each group can suggest or describe possible disruptions or behaviors or problematic program elements, and discuss how they would handle these various situations.

Workshop Scenarios for Early- and Mid-Stage Touring

What would you do in these situations?

- A caregiver totally dominates the conversation.
- When the tour arrives at the museum, you can't tell the participants from their caregivers.
- A participant continually walks away from the group.
- One participant repeatedly asks where they are and what time it is.
- A participant begins to nod off.
- No one in the group is willing to talk.
- A participant needs a bathroom break.
- Multiple conversations are going on while the docent is talking.
- The docent cannot understand the answer from one of the participants.
- One of the participants breaks into song in the middle of the discussion.
- The participant's answer has nothing to do with the question posed by the docent or anything that the tour has been looking at or talking about.
- A participant who has been walking stops dead in his or her tracks and becomes anxious and begins to ask where he or she is.
- A participant in a wheelchair becomes agitated and attempts to get out of the wheelchair.
- During the winter months, you've hung the participants' coats in the coat room and they can't tell you which one is theirs.
- One of the dyads walks away during the tour.

Sample Registration Form for Tour Office

The Tour Office at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts requires this general information form when booking a Discover Your Story tour.

Group Tour from Memory Care Facility or Adult Day Programs

Tour Date:_____Time of Tour: _____

Name of Group/Facility: _____

Address: _____

Contact Person:_____

Contact's Work Number: ( ) - Contact's Cell Phone Number: ( ) -

Total Number in Group: _____

Will Facility Be Bringing Assistants? How Many? _____

First Names of Participants: _____

Physical Limitations: _____

_____

_____

❒ Yes ❒ No Participant is able to walk for one hour

❒ Yes ❒ No Will require a wheelchair

❒ Yes ❒ No Hearing loss requires use of assisted listening device

Verbal Abilities: _____

Tendency to Wander: _____

Any additional information that would be helpful for us to know: _____

_____

_____

Individual Tour with Participant and Caregiver

Same questions as above with the addition of information on individual's past work history/interests/hobbies/travel/family life/military history.

Sample Tour Topics

This list offers a sampling of themes that have been offered on Discover Your Story tours at the MIA. A wide variety of objects can work on these tours – just be creative, go with the flow and expect the unexpected. Try to find something in each piece of pre-selected artwork that can tie into the participant's world. This will give each person with memory loss a chance to connect with the art; it will also encourage each participant to share his or her personal experiences with the rest of the group.

Themes

The Doctor Is In
Food Glorious Food
Get Out the Picnic Basket, BooBoo
Tea Time
Just Trying to Stay Busy – Hobbies
The Importance of Family
On the Road Again
Wild Woman
Bird-watching
Nine to Five – Just Trying to Make a Living
Heroes and Heroines
Time Flies
Down on the Farm
I Feel Pretty
And the Bible Tells Me So
Play Me a Tune
Go Gophers
Around the House – Everyday Items
Through a Child's Eyes
Hairdos Through History
Love and Marriage
A Hunting We Will Go
We Give Thanks
Spring Is in the AIR
CELEBRATIONS

Communication Tips:

Working with People with Memory Loss

Following are communication tips for working with people with memory loss. Thank you to the following organizations for sharing their insights for this book: Docents from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, staff from the Wilder Foundation in St. Paul, Minnesota, the Alzheimer's Association and StoryCorps.

Advice Shared by Touring Docents
Discover Your Story Tours
Minneapolis Institute of Arts

- Remember the Five Rs: Repeat, Rephrase, Redirect, Reorient and Reassure.
- Be flexible; have a plan, not an agenda.
- When you meet a group, greet each person by name. Let them all know how glad you are that they are visiting the museum.
- Do not approach anyone from the rear. Come around in front of each person, kneeling if he or she is seated, so you can establish eye contact during the greeting.
- Make eye contact, and speak slowly and clearly.
- Offering your hand for a handshake is good, but remember, arthritis can make this a painful experience. If the participant seems reluctant, simply lay your hand on his or her arm while saying hello.
- Do not call participants "sweetie" or "dear." You are all equals in this process. These tours are non-hierarchical. Focus on relationship-building.
- If you are tense or nervous, the participants will sense this and become anxious themselves. Remember to take a deep breath, relax and smile.
- Ask concrete questions (e.g. "What do you see?" will often be more appropriate/doable than "What's going on in this picture?"). Ask direct questions.
- Engage the senses. Touchable props with textures and scents are very important. Music works well with these groups too.
- You do not have to impart great knowledge. These tours are a vehicle for interdependent discovery.
- Do not refer back to a piece of art participants viewed 10 minutes ago; they may not remember it. Keep the conversation in the moment.
- Slow down. Listen. Let people finish their thoughts. It is okay if you don't get to everything on your tour agenda.
- The value for the participants lies in being present at that moment. Do not worry about how much they may or may not remember.
- These tours are meant to be uplifting and joyful experiences.
- The experiences are about the people – the participants with memory loss, and their spouses, children and care providers. They are not about the art or art history.

Wilder Program Communication Tips

The Wilder program serves several levels of individuals with memory loss who are grouped in specific rooms: Day Room (mental health and mild memory loss) and Great Room (mid-stage dementia). These suggestions are directed primarily for the memory loss group and persons with cognitive deficits.

Wilder Adult Day Health Staff
St. Paul, Minnesota

- This group has significant short-term memory, processing and word finding difficulties.
- Processing delays are common. We recommend waiting 40 to 90 seconds for a response from some individuals.
- Fast and loud are not traits recommended with this group.
- We try to unlock the memories in long-term memory loss. This requires using all the senses, especially visual cueing. Bringing props to touch, along with the auditory and olfactory stimuli, helps to access these memories.
- Call each person by name to get everyone to participate.
- Repeat the statement for each person – people with memory loss cannot retain the information from one person to the next.
- Fill-in-the-blank phrases are helpful – "I like to walk _____."
- Typed information should be large type – at lease 14 to 16 pt, and black type on white paper is best.
- Many clients can read out loud. Select short pieces in large print formats. The Wilder staff can identify which clients enjoy reading and those who do not.
- When using repetition with this population, speak in phrases – no more than three to four words at a time. Use words that are familiar – at about a 6th grade level.
- Clients may perseverate (get stuck) repeating a word, idea or action given by another or themselves. Present a different stimulus to help them get them unstuck and find some original thoughts.
- Use open-ended questions or statements paired with the stimulus. Asking for specific facts or figures creates anxiety and distress for the individual with short-term memory loss.
- Large movements using arms and legs help organize the nervous system. This can improve access to words. We often use action movements at the start of group activities to give a language and concentration boost.
- Pretending or imagining something is an abstract concept that most people with mid-stage memory loss can no longer do. They need a multisensory cue to respond to, and sometimes a person to model the action. Example: Hand a participant a bright scarf. Assist the participant to raise his or her hand up and wave the scarf. Ask the participant if he or she can feel the breeze. Ask if the breeze is slow, warm, cool, etc.
- An environment free of outside noise and visual distraction is important for clients' concentration and participation.
- What Does Success Look Like? Smiling – responsive – attentive – lots of laughter – client-to-client interactions – enjoying the process – calm and alert.

StoryCorps Memory Loss Initiative Interview Tips

Here are some tips for interviewing someone affected by memory loss.

- Keep in mind that the goal of the interview is to share general stories and emotions, not to focus on exact facts, names, or details.
- Use short sentences. Try not to combine two ideas. For example, it is best to ask, "How did it feel growing up during the Depression?"-– then, later, follow up with "Did you feel poor?" rather than combining the two thoughts.
- Speak at a normal rate – not too slow, but not too fast.
- Keep in mind that it might take a while for someone to process a question or come up with an answer.
- Be patient. Do not follow up with another question right away.
- A little prompting may be necessary. It may be helpful to provide some information before asking a question. For example, a daughter might say to her mother, "I know you and Dad met at a school dance. I wonder how you felt when you first saw him?"
- You might have to phrase the same question a number of different ways before a person understands it. Here is an example:

  "Tell me about your brother John."

  "You and your brother John are so close now. Why do you think that's the case?"

  "It seems as if John has always been your favorite brother. Why do you think that is?
- Do not hesitate to share some of your own stories about the storyteller with him or her during the interview. Those stories often spark a memory or just delight the person.
- Be general when you ask a question. Instead of asking about the "happiest" or "hardest" times in a person's life, ask about "happy times" or "hard times."
- If someone goes off-topic, go with him or her. Sometimes the best conversations happen this way. You can always redirect the person to your original question later.
- Assure the storyteller that it's okay to ask for clarification. It's okay to say, "I don't remember." You can simply rephrase a question or ask a new question and return to the topic later.
- Be aware that the interview experience might evoke some of your own emotions – emotions you may not have realized were so close to the surface. This will probably bring you much joy but can sometimes evoke feelings of loss or sorrow.
- Enjoy the opportunity to share the stories, thoughts and emotional closeness that comes with this experience.

Using Props and Sensory Stimulators

The MIA Discover Your Story Staff has found that stimulating a variety of senses while touring this population improves participation, focus and enjoyment. The following props are part of our sensory arsenal; everything is easy to obtain and store.

Props work very well to help make a word or an idea more concrete for a viewer. For example, imagine doing a tour of Native American Art and looking at an animal hide that has been painted with images of bison. If you can hand participants with memory loss a piece of hide while the artwork is on view, and tell them that this was the material the artist painted on, the viewers will find it easier to understand what they are seeing.

Picture yourself in front of a painting filled with flowers. Invite the viewer to smell what the artist might have smelled by offering a bag filled with rose petals or lilac. Particular scents are clearly tied to long-term memories stored in the viewer's mind. Smells open up the mind and make the person with memory loss take a deep breath and relax. More oxygen to the brain is a great stimulant.

During our tours, we have also discovered that familiar poetry and verses memorized in childhood often pop up and out at unexpected times. Many individuals in their 70s, 80s and 90s were taught to memorize and recite a wide variety of verses, and this skill comes back even when everyday verbal abilities diminish. On one tour, the group sat in front of a painting with an image of Abraham Lincoln, and one of the individuals with memory loss began reciting the entire Gettysburg Address from start to finish. This individual could rarely put a short sentence together, and yet she was able to recite the entire speech. When she was done, the group gave her a spontaneous round of applause, and she was pleasantly surprised by the response.

Music, like scents, elicits emotional responses from our tour groups. Old familiar tunes like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" when you're sitting in front of a river scene seems natural and builds community within the group. When the ability to form words and sentences becomes too much, and the level of frustration is high, the ability to remember music remains intact and allows people with memory loss to participate in the tour experience and quite literally find their voice.

Fabrics and other Tactile Props

Satin
Velvet
Lace
Chiffon
Embroidered shawl
Bird's feather
Fur
Animal hide
Beads
Quill pen
Pearls
Sea shells
Leaves
Tree bark
Pine needles
Piece of polished wood
Baseball cap
Hunting cap
Duck call

Scents – Stored in Baggies

Lavender
Cinnamon
Cloves
Pumpkin spice
Pomanders (orange with cloves)
Coffee
Shoe polish
Lilac
Rose
Chocolate
Fresh bread

Poetry

Various poems that tie into a tour's theme

Music

iPOD – downloaded with music that ties in with a tour's theme
iPOD Player – inexpensive/compact/lightweight – purchased at Toys R Us
Kazoos

Sample Promotional Materials

The MIA staff created the first two pieces of promotional and marketing materials below to acquaint the public with the new program being offered for people with memory loss at the museum. The last article, "Art Sparks Memories," was written by Carmen Peota for Minnesota Medicine *and highlights the experiences of two University of Minnesota medical students with the Discover Your Story program at the MIA.*

Discover Your Story at the MIA

ARTS Magazine for MIA Members

by Sheila McGuire

It is also possible that on your next visit to the MIA, you will encounter a group of adults participating in a Discover Your Story tour, engrossed in conversation about artworks and their own lives. Museum Guide Programs staff, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-North Dakota, are developing interactive tours for individuals with memory loss and early- or mid-stage Alzheimer's disease, their friends, and care partners.

Groundbreaking tour programs at New York's Museum of Modern Art and Boston's Museum of Fine Arts have proven the power of original artworks to draw out individuals living with Alzheimer's disease – to spark observations, interpretations, and storytelling. Looking at art brings to life emotional memories. Discover Your Story engages people with Alzheimer's and their care partners in new and meaningful ways. "We are so excited to have this program in our community," said Michelle Barclay, vice president of programs at the Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-North Dakota.

Docents, specially trained by the Alzheimer's Association and museum staff, facilitate each Discover Your Story tour using an inquiry-based approach that honors the experiences and observations of participants. These theme-centered tours, tailored to the needs of each small group, encourage discussion and story-sharing around four works of art. Each tour participant leaves with a postcard of an artwork the group discussed as a memento of his or her experience, and a prompt for further discussions. "The tour at MIA was wonderful," said Mike, an individual living with early Alzheimer's disease who participated in a pilot of the tour program. "Our docent enhanced the experience of the Institute beyond any experience I have had there. I am not a stranger to the MIA. This tour was so much more informative than anything I have experienced there before."

Discover Your Story tours are available in two ways: groups can reserve a space in advance according to their needs, or persons living with memory loss and a friend or caregiver can sign up in advance for a regularly scheduled tour by calling (612) 870-3140. See pages 22 to 27 in the *Arts Magazine* for January and February tour dates. We hope museum members will help to spread the word about these valuable new programs.

Sheila McGuire is the former director of Museum Guide Programs at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and is currently the Manager of Learning Resources.

New Volunteer Opportunity

by the Friends of the MIA newsletter

The MIA's Department of Museum Guide Programs is looking for Friends volunteers to help out with a new tour program for people with memory loss, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease. Discover Your Story tours engage visitors with memory loss and their friends and care providers in conversations about artwork in the MIA galleries. Area day programs, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes bring seniors with dementia, including early- to mid-stage Alzheimer's disease, to the museum for docent-led tours. One docent is assigned to lead each group, with another docent to assist, but the tours are most successful when an additional assistant is partnered with each memory loss participant.

Volunteers who have led or accompanied these tours have found them inspiring – the goal is not to teach art, but to engage people with Alzheimer's in a meaningful experience that elicits good feelings and memories in a safe and welcoming environment.

Tours are scheduled at least two weeks in advance and last one hour. If you are interested in assisting with a tour, please contact the Friends Volunteer Coordinator.

Art Sparks Memories

Medical students tout the benefits of a program for people with memory loss.

by Carmen Peota

Medical student Jamie Starks has witnessed firsthand how quickly the scope of a person's life can shrink because of cognitive decline. She saw her grandmother, who was diagnosed with dementia with Lewy bodies several years ago, go from being active and independent to being withdrawn and depressed as she found herself able to do less and less. Starks had seen similar effects when she worked at an adult day-care center during her undergraduate years in Madison, Wisconsin. But there, Starks also saw something else: the benefits people with dementia experienced when they were exposed to art and music and took trips into the community.

Last year, at the beginning of her third year of medical school, Starks stumbled upon a description of the Discover Your Story tours at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA), a program in which specially trained docents lead discussions about selected pieces of art. The idea is to help people with memory loss reflect and reminisce as they compare their own stories with those told in the works of art. Starks signed on as a volunteer and has served as an escort for people on the tours.

During the tours, Starks has noticed how people who come in withdrawn and reserved open up, "You get them in front of art, and ask them questions about the art and experiences from their life and if it reminds them of anything," she says. "It's really quite remarkable to see them awaken and see how happy and engaged they become." Starks thinks that's in part because of the way the leaders engage our participants. "You can see them respond to being treated like there isn't anything wrong with them. They get to escape

from being someone with a disease for at least an hour, be normal adults, be intellectually stimulated, and interact with their peers."

Starks was so impressed with the program that she recruited classmate Kim Spronk to go on a tour in the fall of 2010. "I only had to go once to see that it was a great program and something that I definitely wanted to be involved in," Spronk says. Now both women are recruiting their peers at the medical school to volunteer with the program.

Spronk points out that volunteering in the program benefits the students in addition to the people they're trying to help. "There's really a lot to be learned about how to effectively engage with someone who has dementia," she says. It's a skill Starks thinks will be increasingly important for doctors in the future, as the population ages. And that's one reason she and Spronk are trying to get more medical students involved.

But both students say the best part of volunteering is watching the way people respond to the tours. "Sometimes it happens the moment they walk in the door," Spronk says, noting that they begin to look up and around immediately because the museum itself is beautiful. "We see them come alive."

Medical students Kim Spronk and Jamie Starks want the wider medical community to know that the Minneapolis Institute of Arts' Discover Your Story program is a resource that anyone can take advantage of. "We'd like to get the word out to providers that if they have patients who have memory loss or dementia and need an outing or intellectual stimulation, we encourage them to tell their patients about this program," Spronk says.

Sample Evaluation Tool

This evaluation form was created for the Discover Your Story tours at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. The form is either mailed or handed to caregivers with a postage paid envelope following the end of each tour. If caregivers do not return the form, follow-up phone interviews take place using these same questions to elicit feedback from participants.

Discover Your Story

To help us assess the effectiveness of the museum's "Discover Your Story" tour program, please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Name (if desired)

Tour date

	Low				High
Rate your overall tour experience.	1	2	3	4	5
How well did MIA staff tailor the tour to your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
How effectively did the docent(s) involve you in looking at and discussing the art?	1	2	3	4	5

Did the docent(s) use appropriate questions and language? ❒ Yes ❒ No
Please comment.

What aspects of your visit did your group most enjoy?

Did your museum experience meet your expectations? ❒ Yes ❒ No
What could we do next time to make your experience even better?

Thank you. We value your feedback.

Integrating Creative Storytelling in Tours

Anne Basting is the founder and director of TimeSlips™, an improvisational method of storytelling that invites people living with memory loss to create original stories inspired by works of art. Anne has been working with the MIA and SPARK Alliance cultural institutions for three years and has trained staff as well as docents/volunteers in using the TimeSlips method. Anne is the Director of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center on Age and Community and Associate Professor of Theatre at the Peck School of the Arts.

by Anne Basting, PhD, founder and director of TimeSlips™

TimeSlips is an improvisational storytelling method that replaces the pressure to remember existing stories with the freedom to imagine new stories. The method originally emerged out of the desire to support growth and learning with people with dementia and their caregivers. It was first used in a Milwaukee nursing home in 1996, and replicated in four adult day centers in 1998 (two in Milwaukee and two in New York City). It has grown exponentially since then, with an interactive website, online trainings, and individual and organizational certifications in the process. As museums and cultural institutions began to create educational programming for families with dementia, the TimeSlips method and trainings have been adapted for "talk and turns" in museum settings.

The TimeSlips method itself is built on ritual and improvisation techniques. Facilitators invite people to participate in a special event and welcome them individually. They provide a prompt to initiate the story, most commonly an image. In museum settings of course, this can be almost any work of art or historical object. Facilitators practice active, full-body listening – watching for and echoing-back contributions to the story in words, sounds, gestures, and facial expressions. Like improvisation's motto of "yes – and," TimeSlips facilitators invite and accept all responses to the prompt – and emphasize this fact repeatedly throughout the storytelling session – to encourage people to step into the world of imagination. "There are no wrong answers – we're making up a story together," is a common, reassuring phrase among facilitators. "You can say anything you want, we're just making it up!" is another.

As a way to prove to the storytellers that they mean what they say, facilitators write down every word on an oversized piece of paper. This is usually done on a flipchart to enable all the participants to see their words being captured on paper. Facilitators also refer to the flipchart when they retell the story. Throughout the storytelling session, which can range from thirty minutes to an hour in duration, facilitators repeat the story several times to bring storytellers to the moment of creation. When a facilitator feels the group starting to lose the thread of a story, she simply tells what they've built thus far and the group is ready to offer more responses.

The writing down of the story can provide challenges in museum settings where markers and pens make guards (and curators) very nervous. In the museums that have implemented TimeSlips in their tours,

coordinators get special permission to use water-based markers (or pencils) in the galleries. It's important that participants SEE you writing down the story in order to confirm that you are indeed capturing everything they are saying, which is why we recommend a larger sketch-pad and fat-tipped, water-based markers for museum settings where flip charts can be a challenge.

A crucial element of the story facilitation process is to let go of preconceived notions of story structure and follow the lead of the storytellers. Asking open ended questions that put the power of creativity into the hands of the storytellers can take practice. "What do you want to call this person?" or "Where do you want to say they are?" are examples of open questions. "Do you think his name is Bob?" and "Which of the Great Lakes do you think that is?" are both examples of closed questions that give the power of creativity to the facilitator, not the storyteller. In this way, TimeSlips is more akin to improvisation than some story-generating programs that rely on traditional story structure. If 4 storytellers provide 4 different names for a character, then the story has a character with 4 names. If two storytellers disagree on a course of action, the facilitator will retell the story with two possible courses of action. TimeSlips stories are full of possibilities. In addition, storytellers often respond with sounds or gestures and even words that facilitators don't understand. When this happens, facilitators echo the response (with full body echoing) and write it down as best they can. TimeSlips training suggests they draw or spell it in a way that enables them to read it back to the satisfaction of the storyteller who said it.

In effect, facilitators are creating a safe space in which people with cognitive challenges can practice communication without fear of reprisal or shame. Facilitators provide people with dementia access to meaning making, a sense of belonging, and feelings of pride and purpose. Facilitators learn how to open the storytelling process, freeing themselves from rigid structures, even spelling rules. It is an open, supportive space for experimentation for both storytellers and facilitators.

This creative, improvisational approach can be useful for groups that are further along in symptoms of dementia, and for whom conversation can be challenging. Several museums in the SPARK Alliance integrate TimeSlips into their tours, offering some traditional discussions at one work of art, and a TimeSlips session at another. Others separate the approaches, offering TimeSlips tours and traditional tours.

If museums and cultural institutions can provide images of the objects they are using for storytelling, TimeSlips can upload them to *www.timeslips.org* for use in their interactive storytelling software. The software enables families across the world to read the stories that emerge in the sessions and to feel the pride of the creative efforts of loved ones with dementia.

Since 1998, TimeSlips has been researched in multiple settings. In nursing home settings, TimeSlips has shown the potential for improving communication and mood among people with dementia and for improving relationships between staff and residents.

Integrating Poetry in Tours

Gary Glazner is the Founder and Executive Director of the Alzheimer's Poetry Project (APP). The APP uses artwork to inspire the performance and creation of poetry by people living with dementia and their families. Gary wrote the following piece after working with a group at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, a member of the SPARK Alliance.

by Gary Glazner

I was doubled over with laughter in front of a life-sized sculpture of a whale leading 30 people living with dementia and their care partners in a group performance of our newly created poem inspired by Tristin Lowe's "Mocha Dick." One of the participants had just improvised the line, "Drinking pale, whale ale from a pail."

Margaret Groff, Education Program Manager at the John Michael Kolher Arts Center, knew of my work with the Alzheimer's Poetry Project (APP) and had invited me to lead one of their SPARK! programs.

This awe inducing fifty-two-feet-long sculpture was made of felt. Lowe based his artwork on a real-life albino sperm whale that terrorized early 19th-century whaling vessels near Mocha Island in the South Pacific. Newspaper accounts of "Mocha Dick" described its appearance as "white as wool." The stories talked of how the whale engaged in battle with numerous whaling expeditions and inspired Herman Melville to write the classic *Moby-Dick* in 1851.

Performing Poems

We started the SPARK! session with a poem that celebrates museums, Alberto Rios's "Museum Heart." We used a "call and response" technique where the session leader said a line of poetry and had the group respond in unison to perform these opening lines of the poem:

> We, each of us, keep what we remember in our hearts.
>
> We, all of us, keep what we remember in museums.
>
> In this way, museums beat inside us.

We find elements of the "call and response" technique in many religious ceremonies and in music, notably in gospel, blues and jazz. Tapping into this form of "echoic memory" is a powerful way to engage people with memory loss. The 2004 study "Oscillations of Heart Rate and Respiration Synchronize during Poetry Recitation, " by Dirk Cysarz, et al, demonstrates that the "call and response" performance technique also has an aerobic benefit.

Here are a few questions to ask and paths to explore in preparing to pair poetry with art:

- Has the artist written poetry?
- Are there poems written in tribute to the artists?
- Are there poems that were written in the same time period as the art was created?
- Is there a thematic tie to the art?
- Has the artist written about poetry?

In preparing for the session, I identified a number of poems with ocean and whale images. We started the session by performing: "Catch a Little Rhyme," by Eve Merriam; "Whopper!" by Jack Prelutsky; "The Whale," by Hilaire Belloc; and used quotes from *Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville. Here is a section from "The World below the Brine" by Walt Whitman that we performed using the "call and response technique."

The world below the brine,
Forests at the bottom of the sea, the branches and leaves,
Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds,
the thick tangle openings, and pink turf,
Different colors, pale gray and green, purple, white,
and gold, the play of light through the water,
The whale at the surface blowing air and spray, or disporting with his flukes,
The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy sea-leopard, and the sting-ray,
Passions there, wars, pursuits, tribes, sight in those ocean-depths, breathing that thick-breathing air, as so many do,
The change thence to the sight here, and to the subtle air breathed by beings like us who walk this sphere,
The change onward from ours to that of beings who walk other spheres.

Example of Thematic Ties

- Pair an abstract painting with a predominate red color scheme and "Red Wheelbarrow," by William Carlos Williams.
- Pair a classic landscape such as Frederic Edwin Church's "Tropical Scenery," which features a path leading the eye of the viewer into the painting with "The Road Not Taken," by Robert Frost.
- Georgia O'Keeffe, "Brooklyn Bridge," with "Bridge" by Hart Crane and "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry: by Walt Whitman. With both of these, we recited short sections of the poems.

Creating a Poem Inspired by Art

To create the poem we asked open ended questions around what the ocean would smell, taste, look, sound, and feel like. We imagined encounters with whales and improvised during the poem.

Sample Poem

Created with The Gathering Place, which is located in Sheboygan Falls, at the St. Paul Lutheran Church and is directed by Cindy Musial. This unique adult day care center uses a model of a one-to-one ratio of people living with dementia to community care partners.

The lake is fresh.
The ocean is salt.
It's so cold when you're ice fishing,
that the fish don't smell
and that's why we ice fish!
Ice fish.
Ice fish.
Nice fish.
Nice fish.
The ocean has quite a sound-
splashing waves and wind.
It can roar.
ROAR!
(Make crashing wave and water sounds.)
And that's when the birds come.
The ocean feels like foam- all the bubbles.
If a whale came along, I'd be scared
If I could swim fast enough, I'd get myself out of the water.
A whale is something- BIG!
I wouldn't talk to a whale, unless I was formally introduced.
I would say, "Whale, do you have a problem?"
You know what I would say?
What would you say?
Schultz is my name!
What do you have to say to that you big old whale?
I'm not afraid of you.
With your blubber and your tail and your eating…of kale.
And drinking of ale.
Whale Ale!
Pale Whale Ale!
From a PAIL!

SEE A PERFORMANCE OF THE POEM

youtube.com/user/alzpoetry

Online Resources for Finding Poems:

Poetry Foundation: Poetry Tool
www.poetryfoundation.org/

Academy of American Poets: Find a Poet, Find a Poem
www.poets.org/

Google: Example search for tree poems
www.google.com/

Creative Connections: Art Making And Alzheimer's

A number of the SPARK! programs include hands-on art projects as part of their programming for individuals with memory loss. This piece includes tips for creating a comfortable art-making environment for the participant, and is followed with descriptions of hands-on art projects that have been successful at the Racine Art Museum and the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum.

For people with memory loss, activities not only help to structure their time but also enhance a sense of dignity and self-esteem by giving purpose and meaning to their lives.

When planning an activity, focus on the person, activity, approach and place.

Focus on the person by choosing activities that are appropriate and reflect his or her interests. Keep the participant's skills and abilities in mind. Pay attention to what the individual enjoys doing. Be aware if the individual begins activities without direction or waits for guidance. Always be aware of physical obstacles that might limit a person's ability to participate.

Choosing a well-planned activity can improve the quality of life for those living with memory loss. Focus on the enjoyment aspect, not the achievement. Encourage involvement in daily life. Find ways to connect the activity to the past work life of the participant. Change activities as needed and be aware of participant "favorites" – the activities that helped them feel joyful and part of a community. Notice how the time of day you offer the activity affects the energy level of the participants. Make adjustments to the project as the level of memory loss increases.

Your approach to the activity can bring meaning, purpose, joy and hope to a person's life. Offer support and supervision. Concentrate on the process and not the end result. Be flexible and patient. Have realistic expectations and relax. Help by getting the activity started and breaking the project into simple, easy-to-follow steps. Assist an individual as needed but don't criticize or correct his or her endeavors. Encourage self-expression however it manifests itself.

Create a safe, comfortable and supportive environment for the activity. Minimize distractions that can frighten or confuse participants. Be aware of safety issues surrounding the activity. Go with the flow!

How to Put Together a Field Trip for an Adult Day Program

An intern from St. Catherine's University, in the process of completing her degree in occupational therapy, recorded the steps taken by the staff at the Wilder Adult Day Program in St. Paul, Minnesota, for a field trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Time needed: 2½ hours

Therapeutic benefits:

- Objects and discussion prompt intellectual stimulation.
- Shared experience boosts social interaction.
- Accepting environment raises participants' sense of safety and regard from others.
- Emotional carryover yields positive effects on mood lasting beyond the direct experience.

What you need...supplies and setup:

- Current MIA contact information
- Five volunteers (may include staff and non-staff persons)
- First aid kit and participating client information cards
- Accessible transportation
- Five wheelchairs
- Scheduled docent-led tour

What to do...steps start to finish:

- One to two months in advance, schedule a "Discover Your Story" tour at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.
- Within 5 to 7 days of a "Discover Your Story" tour, select 5 clients cognitively and physically suited to participate, and schedule to attend on the tour day. Contact selected clients' caregivers to: 1) get their permission for the clients to participate, 2) ask that clients dress appropriately on tour day for outdoors travel, and 3) invite caregivers to participate as tour volunteers (even more advance notice if possible).
- Within 3 to 5 days of tour, schedule accessible transportation for 10 persons, 10:00 am to 12:15 pm.
- On the tour day, prepare the orange travel bag with a first aid kit and information cards for each client confirmed to go on the tour. Include a copy of the route map and client roster. Keep this bag with the tour group at all times.
- Confirm clients scheduled to attend tour and make last-minute roster adjustments as needed.
- Fifteen minutes prior to departure, assist participating clients to use the bathroom. Five minutes prior to departure, assist participating clients to don appropriate outerwear.

- At departure time, assist participating clients onto the bus. Bring assistive walking devices and/or use wheelchairs as needed. Give bus driver the route map and updated client roster.
- Ensure seatbelt use and rider safety on trip to and from the MIA. Encourage conversation. Take time to explain the tour process to new volunteers.
- Assist clients as they exit the bus and enter the MIA. Greet docents leading the tour. Assist clients to doff outerwear; hang it in the coat check room.
- Assist ALL clients to sit in wheelchairs. (MIA has free loaner chairs available.) Explain that riding vs. walking allows clients to enjoy and focus on the experience even more.
- Assist ALL clients in donning assisted listening devices and turn them on to a comfortable level.
- All volunteers acquire a lightweight folding chair to use at various stops along the tour.
- Docent begins the tour. Volunteers push each wheelchair-client from one exhibit to another, as led by the docent. Help to facilitate clients' balanced participation and sustained interest throughout the tour.
- As the tour concludes, thank the docent leaders and return the borrowed MIA headphones, folding chairs and wheelchairs. Assist clients to don outerwear and return to the bus.
- As clients are seated safely back on the bus, solicit verbal feedback from them about the tour. Encourage conversation on the return trip. Record memorable client comments.
- Assist clients in doffing outerwear upon return to Wilder. Tuck museum memorabilia with their labeled items, such as their outerwear, to bring home.
- Seat participating clients together for lunch, with at least one volunteer present to guide additional conversation related to the day's tour.
- As opportunities allow, connect with participating client caregivers at pick-up to share a special detail about the day's tour.

Alternatives and tips:

- Vary clients selected for each trip so that all who are able to participate can do so on a regular basis.
- With advance notice, MIA docents adapt featured tour exhibits/themes to group interests. When setting tour dates, relay clients' expressed interests in certain art themes or mediums.

What worked well...changes recommended:

- Limiting group size to 5 clients, using wheelchair tour transport for all clients, including caregiver volunteers as available, and lunching together afterward all work well for this group.
- Consider arranging "Discover Your Story" participation for up to one Day Room client per tour nearing or in transition to the Great Room; monitor overall group and client benefits. (The Day Room and Great Room have different levels of care to meet the needs of the client and clients move between the two rooms according to these needs.)

Opening Doors to Memory and Imagination

Creating a Museum Program for People with Memory Loss