A Dementia Friendly

LIFE

Linking Individuals & Families Through Education and Engagement

2025

Annual Report

Prepared by

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Jennifer Tucker, Financial Administrator

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2025 Recap:

As we reflect on the past year, I am deeply grateful for the people. partnerships, and shared commitment that continues to make LIFE a trusted and compassionate resource for individuals living with dementia and those who care for them.

This year marked another important chapter in our journey. Across seven community locations, LIFE provided consistent, meaningful engagement and support through our Memory Cafe` programs - offering structure, connection, and dignity to participants, while giving care partners much-needed respite. Week after week, our programs demonstrated that people living with dementia can remain active, valued, and socially connected when communities intentionally create welcoming spaces.

None of this work happens in isolation. We are fortunate to collaborate with churches that provide space, home care agencies and senior living partners that donate meals, and professionals who generously share their expertise in elder law, healthcare, and dementia education. These partnerships allow us to steward our resources wisely while expanding our reach and impact.

I am especially proud of our staff, volunteers and facilitators whose skill, patience and compassion shape every interaction. Their understanding of dementia care - grounded in evidence-based approaches and respect for the individual - ensures that each participant is met where they are, every day.

As LIFE moves forward, we do so with a renewed sense of purpose. The need for dementia-friendly communities continues to grow, and we remain committed to education, inclusion and practical support for families navigating this journey.

Thank you to our board of directors for your leadership and guidance, to our donors for your trust, and to our community partners for standing with us. Your belief in this mission sustains our work and strengthens the lives of those we serve.

Warm Regards,

Connie Klingler

Meet Our Team

CAROLE KLINGLER

BSN, RN, CDP, CEO & CO-FOUNDER

Carole spent years as an ICU nurse and was the Director of Nursing for Kendal at Oberlin. She also worked as an adjunct faculty member for Lorain County Community College Allied Health and Nursing Program and in Hospice and Palliative Care in the role of Team Leader and Community Facility Coordinator for the Lorain County team. Carole earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Indiana Wesleyan University. She is a Certified Dementia Practitioner and a Master Trainer for Dementia Friends Ohio.

MARYANNE DUNCAN

SERVICE MANAGER, CDP - WELLINGTON, ELYRIA, & AVON LAKE

KARINA FUERY

SERVICE MANAGER, CDV - AMHERST & NORTH RIDGEVILLE

DENISE TAYLOR

FLOAT SERVICE MANAGER - LORAIN COUNTY

CHRISTEN UHL

SERVICE MANAGER, CDV - WOOSTER & ORRVILLE

JENNIFER TUCKER

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR, CDV

EVELYN REYES

BILINGUAL SERVICES DIRECTOR

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Vision and Mission

LIFE completed work on a 3-year strategic plan through a generous gift by Jill Fowler of Songbird Leadership. This process allowed LIFE to update its vision, mission and goals toward sustainability, education, and long-term growth.

Mission

LIFE's mission of faith is to create a supportive community for individuals and care partners faced with dementia or memory loss through education, social connections, and interactive experiences at our Memory Cafe`s and beyond.

Vision

A world where memory loss is embraced and those affected by it are no longer alone.

Values

Supportive - Compassionate - Purposeful - Accepting

About our Memory Cafés

- **2 counties**
- **7 locations**
- **45 dedicated volunteers**
- **over 50 community partners**
- **over 300 individuals served**

LIFE is proud to serve our veterans. Approximately 25% of our participants have served in the Armed Forces.

LIFE - A Dementia Friendly Foundation has the following locations:

Lorain County

- Monday at Bethany Lutheran Church in Wellington
- Tuesday at Center Church (Church of the Nazarene) in Elyria
- Wednesday at Faith Baptist Church in Amherst
- Wednesday at Avon Lake United Church of Christ in Avon Lake
- Thursday at Fields United Methodist Church in North Ridgeville

Wayne County

- Monday at Christ Church, United Church of Christ in Orrville
- Wednesday at First Presbyterian Church in Wooster

Memory Cafés typically host an average of 24 attendees at each location, supported by a dedicated Service Manager and at least 3 volunteers per site. These gatherings are made possible through the generosity of churches and community sponsors. Our supporters contribute more than just space - they provide lunches, lead exercises, coordinate engaging activities, and invite educational speakers to enhance the weekly experience. Many of our sponsors go above and beyond by advocating for LIFE, and organizing fundraising events.

Financial Summary

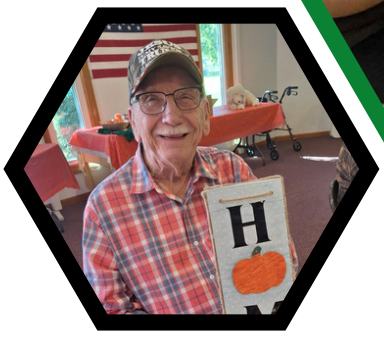
	2025	2024	2023
INCOME	234,728.82	**165,128.85**	192,011.51
EXPENSES	180,080.21	169,418.65	95,573.32
TOTAL	54,648.61**	**(4,289.80)**	96,438.19*

LIFE is graciously supported, not only by our valued community partners, but by donations from individuals within the local community, grant support and various fundraising activities.

**At year end 2025, grant received from the Good Neighbor Thrift Shop ($20000) and sponsorship award received from Achieve Credit Union ($5000) to support 2026 operations and music engagement.

*At year end 2023, grants were received by the Good Neighbor Thrift Shop ($17500) and the Wayne County Community Foundation ($15000) to support the opening of 2 locations in early 2024. In addition, a grant cycle change at the Lorain County Community Foundation resulted in a 1 time adjustment to our annual award ($20833).

note: Lorain County Community Foundation Endowment fund balance is $32523.20 as of 12/31/25.



Highlights & Awards

- National Recognition - Memory Cafe` Alliance, Dementia Friends USA, and AARP. LIFE was recognized as “Most Impact” for a Memory Cafe`, highlighting leadership and measurable impact at the national level.

- LIFE was fortified by grants from the Lorain County Community Foundation from 2021 through the 2025 grant cycle.

- LIFE received support from the Good Neighbor Grant to support operations of the Avon Lake Memory Cafe` location.

- LIFE received support from the Wayne County Community Foundation to support music and art activities at the Wooster Memory Cafe` location.

- LIFE was recognized by Home Instead with a Community Impact gift, providing support for critical programming and caregiver support services.

- LIFE received additional awards from ACC Adult Home Care and Avon VFW recognizing our commitment to dementia-friendly care and inclusive community-based programming.

Testimonials

I had reached such a low point in this journey with my husband who has Aphasia and Dementia. I was grasping at straws and insisted we attend. My husband resisted and I knew this was going to be a battle. Much to my surprise the staff and volunteers knew exactly how to approach my husband and make him feel safe and welcomed. He now looks forward to attending the cafe` weekly.

The programs that are implemented have a positive impact on him. Music relaxes while the crafts awaken his creativity and a sense of accomplishment, the exercise energizes him and of course the lunches not only nourish but provide time to socialize. What a wonderful place to flourish and make friends.

Now, I must admit that my husband is not the only one to benefit from this program. The caregiver support is amazing. Caregivers sharing their experiences with me has made me realize, I am not alone. Not only are the staff and volunteers supportive but the guest speakers supply a wealth of resources that I have been able to tap into.

This LIFE Memory Cafe` is more than just a place to visit.  It is a community of compassion and support.  Thanks to the Cafe` we have HOPE, ENCOURAGEMENT and precious moments of HAPPINESS together.

I highly recommend it to anyone who is caring for someone with dementia. It is a wonderful place to nurture, share and grow.

I am incredibly grateful for the LIFE Memory Cafe`.

Jennie Upchurch
Elyria, OH

Testimonials

I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to this organization - A Dementia Friendly LIFE, Memory Cafe`. It opened doors where there seemed to be none.

I have Aphasia and Dementia and require full-time support. Life for me has become so restrictive.

Since I have been attending the Cafe`, I have found enjoyment in new friends. We share laughter, music, crafts and best of all our exercise time together. There, I feel I can contribute by supporting my friends as we move about.

I always feel welcome and happy there. I always look forward to attending the Cafe`.

Thank you - LIFE Memory Cafe`.

Jim Upchurch
Elyria, OH

Contact Us

440.935.3506

info@dflife.org

www.dflife.org

Donate

When you donate to LIFE, your dollars go directly toward operating costs to manage and staff our Memory Café locations.

There is never a cost to participants or care partners to attend our Memory Cafe` activities and events.

LIFE - A Dementia Friendly Foundation is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization.

send checks to:
PO Box 117 Oberlin, OH 44074

www.dflife.org/donate.html