

The Alzheimer's Podcast: Navigating Rough Terrain with The Dementia Sherpa  
[Episode 96](#): Alzheimer's Association Program Director Heidi Rowell

Heidi Rowell: It's just a beautiful way for them it's just a beautiful way for them to connect with each other, to connect with their memories. And it's really a time that they spend living. The time that they spend in the Memories in the Making program really gives them the focus on living and enjoying. People are smiling, people are laughing, they're telling stories about why they painted, what they're, what they're painting. It's just a phenomenal program and you really see people come alive.

*Christy Turner: You're listening to The Alzheimer's Podcast with Christy Turner of Dementia Sherpa, where we're all about bringing the Good Stuff --that's respect, kindness, love, empathy, and compassion--for people living with dementia, their families, and the professionals who support them.*

*I'm Christy Turner, AKA The Dementia Sherpa. I've enjoyed the privilege of working with over 1,500 people living with dementia and their families so far, including multiple experiences in my own family. In the course of my career, I've transformed from total train wreck on my first day as a professional to local go-to expert, speaker, trainer, and consultant. And if I can go from scared spitless to confident care partner, I promise you can, too.*

*Hello and thank you for joining us. When you've been immersed in something, a subject, a community, for a very long time, it can become easy to forget that new people are learning about that subject or joining that community every day. And so things that you take for granted can be a big OH EM GEE moment for the newbies.*

*I think that's often how it is in Dementia World when it comes to the Alzheimer's Association. When I was on the dementia cruise and conference in April, I met a person who wasn't part of our group, who was on the cruise with their spouse and the spouse's professional care partner. And this person, the family care partner, asked why the people in our group were wearing purple wristbands. Phil's husband, Tim, said, "They're from the Alzheimer's Association," and the person said, "Alzheimer's Association? What's that?" If Tim hadn't been there too, I would've thought I hadn't heard right. But this family care partner had*

*been caring for their spouse with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease for 18 years. 18.*

*So that experience is a great reminder that no matter how obvious or ubiquitous something is, everyone starts out as a newbie at some point. And in that spirit, I'm happy to have Heidi Rowell as our guest today, to talk about programs and events the Alzheimer's Association offers...for anyone who may not know, and for those who could use a refresher.*

*Heidi Rowell is the program director for the Alzheimer's Association Oregon Chapter. Welcome, Heidi.*

Heidi Rowell: Thank you for having me. I'm delighted to be here.

Christy: *So I guess the first question is, what does a program director do?*

Heidi: Well, that's a good question. So I oversee all of the programs and services that we offer here in Oregon and southwest Washington. So our chapter actually serves all 36 counties in Oregon as well as Clark and Skamania counties in southwest Washington. And that includes our educational offerings. Our support groups are early stage programs, our care consultations and our healthcare professional outreach.

Christy: *That's a lot.*

Heidi: It is a lot. Luckily I have an amazing team who helps me with all of that. So each of my team members has a piece of that and we have amazing regional coordinators across the state and of course our purple army of volunteers who make everything possible.

Christy: *One of the big things that just happened here in our area--and every Alzheimer's Association chapter has a program director, correct?*

Heidi: Correct, yes.

*Christy: So no matter where somebody is listening, you have a program director at your local office. But one of the things that we do here in Oregon is the Memories in the Making Art Auction. And that just happened a couple of weeks ago.*

Heidi: Absolutely.

*Christy: I think it's one of the most amazing, moving events that you do all year long. You want to talk about that a little bit, why you do it, and what it supports?*

Heidi: Absolutely. So Memories in the Making, the art auction gala, supports our Memories in the Making program. So Memories in the Making is a really unique fine arts program for people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. So it's designed for people that are really in the early stages of the disease. And when I say early stage, that means regardless of age, that someone is early on in their diagnosis process. Um, rather than, sometimes that gets confused with younger onset, meaning somebody that's had onset before the age of 65. So these are folks who really benefit from getting together with other people who are in the same state, the same--they're going through the same things. And they get together for this program and they paint watercolor paintings with the help of a facilitator. And the really cool thing about it is there's no art experience required.

So it's not as if this is only a program for people who were artists their whole life and who really loved art. Um, we have people who've never even picked up a paintbrush before they come to Memories in the Making. And it's just a beautiful way for them to connect with each other, to connect with their memories. And it's really a time that they spend living. So we focus a lot on how terrible Alzheimer's disease and dementia is, and it is a terrible disease, but the time that they spend in the Memories in the Making program really gives them the focus on living and enjoying. It's probably our staff's favorite program. Every time we walk back into the

classroom where we have Memories in the Making going on, people are smiling, people are laughing, they're telling stories about why they painted, what they're, what they're painting. It's just a phenomenal program and you really see people come alive during the program.

Christy: *I agree. That is such a huge piece that often does seem to be missing, and it's one of the reasons I was so ecstatic after I came back from the dementia cruise and conference that I was a part of in April, because the vibe was so different. It, I was among a group of people who had all made the conscious decision to, you know, Today's a good day to have a good day! and everybody was there to have a great week. And, yeah, I think a lot of times people who maybe don't have very much experience in dementia world, maybe families who are looking at a brand new diagnosis and don't have any other family experience are unaware that fun, joy can still very much be a part of somebody's life even though they have this diagnosis.*

Heidi: Yeah, absolutely. It's so amazing when you see people who have made the conscious choice that, you know, *We are living with this disease. We are still living, we are still here.* And their families can kind of see that when they get involved in something like the dementia cruise or something like Memories in the Making. It gives their families a chance to see what they can do. I think we have this tendency to focus on what can't we do, what's been taken away from us by Alzheimer's and other dementia's instead of focusing on what we still have. And that's one of the great things about Memories in the Making, is it's focusing on what we still have.

Christy: *Yes. And the art that comes out of this program is amazing. I have a picture in my office that I, it's so soothing to me. I love it. That I got from that a few years ago and it's, it speaks to me, kind of in where I grew up, the area I grew up, it reminds me of that. But it's, it's a home.*

Heidi: Yeah.

Christy *And so much of the art that really speaks to me in a--it seems to me, I don't know, so I'm not going to give a percentage 'cause I'd just be making it up, but it seems to me a lot of the art, at least at the art auction, does have some theme of home.*

Heidi: I would agree with that. I wouldn't, I wouldn't venture to give a percentage either. But I can think of one particular artist and he grew up in Indiana on farms and so we see a lot of farm themed paintings that come from him. And it's that feeling of home. We have another artist who grew up and, um, she paints a lot of things that come from the area where she grew up. So she grew up more of that farming lifestyle too. Just recently painted this chicken. And the title was *Chicken in a Rage* because she talked about when her mom would have to kill the chickens, which may not be a very pleasant memory for some, but that was reality of life growing up on a farm. And so she had painted this chicken with its feathers all kind of poking out everywhere and had that memory that went along with it.

So there is a lot of home associated with it, or happy times. People will think about experiences that they've had or favorite places. You know, we see a lot of water and a lot of coastal themes because we're in the Pacific Northwest and a lot of people that are coming to our program have very fond memories of going to the ocean and going to be in that, you know, soothing environment. And I think that just kind of brings them back, and that's what they feel in those moments. So it's, it's beautiful artwork. I have three pieces hanging on my office wall that I'm looking at right now. And they're all just really cool and very soothing and they always kind of bring me back to why I'm here and why I do what I do.

Christy: *Right, right. What do you think really makes the program so successful?*

Heidi: I think one of the things that makes it so successful is that it goes beyond just regular arts and crafts. It's not a program where you come in, you've got some construction paper and some ordinary colored pencils and you know, some crayons or you know, whatever the case may be. This is high quality art materials. So any of our programs that are Alzheimer's Association-endorsed use high quality art paper, high quality watercolor paper, high quality watercolor paints. So any community that is running

this program, and we have about 170 across the state that are running the program right now, and they have all been trained and given this list. So when you pick up these materials, they feel special. It feels like, *Wow, I'm really an artist.* And I think it just gives people a sense of, *This is a really neat program. I'm not just sitting here, you know, being entertained. I'm not just sitting here--somebody hasn't just given me something to do for the sake of giving me something to do.*

It just makes it feel really special. And all of the facilitators that are volunteers that have been trained to facilitate this program, they all have such a connection and they all truly love the program and love being part of it. And I think that's another thing that makes it so special, is they do such a great job of engaging the participants and drawing things out of them that maybe they didn't even know were there.

*Christy:* *It's really art in its truest form, right? In allowing the artist to really express herself, who she is. I love that. What a great program.*

*Heidi:* Absolutely. People completely--and the things that they come up with, it's just amazing to me sometimes. And when you read the story that goes along with the art on the back--I'll see something and it catches my eye and I think, *Oh, that's beautiful!* And then I read the story along with that and you know, half the time I'm crying. I can't wear mascara to work most days. *That's a beautiful story.*

*Christy:* *That's another thing that I really love about the art that comes out of this program, are the stories that go with it. And I am a huge fan of stories. That's one of the big reasons I love doing the work that I do, is because I get to hear people's stories and it's just so, it's always so amazing to me. People, I think, you know, you walk outside your house and through a neighborhood or a mall or wherever, some public place, and you see people around and you don't really think that much of it. And when you get to do the type of work that you do or that I do, and actually get to connect with people and hear some of their story, it's, it's kind of amazing. There are all these rich life stories walking around, amongst us. And usually, I think, just as humans, we don't stop to pay attention to it. We're busy, we're doing other things. It's such a privilege to get to hear those stories.*

Heidi: I absolutely agree. It's a tremendous honor to get to hear those stories. And the other really cool thing is we're preserving those stories for their family. So as they create these pieces of art the stories that go along with it, that's preserved for the family and as the person loses more of their memory to Alzheimer's and dementia, it preserves their legacy and gives that family a tangible piece that they can hold onto and have that story written down. I can tell you just from personal experience, my grandmother she had a stroke and had dementia related to her stroke, and she used to tell me stories all the time when I was a kid. And I never--I didn't think I would forget them, but they're not written down and I have forgotten them. And so it's amazing for families to be able to have this tangible piece of art with a story that goes along with it from their loved one.

Christy: *Absolutely. So how can people get involved or help their person get signed up to be a participant in this program?*

Heidi: The best way to get a hold of the Alzheimer's Association always is to call our 24/7 Helpline, which is (800) 272-3900. And here in Oregon and southwest Washington, we can direct you to the best Memories in the Making location. People can reach out in other states. Not every single state does Memories in the Making; a lot of them do. So if you're not in the Oregon/Southwest Washington area, just still call that number and find out if your local chapter is operating a Memories in the Making program. Um, several of them are. And then here in our area, a great way to get involved, I know we started talking about the art auction and of course you and I both got very involved in talking about the actual program, 'cause that's what we love.

Christy: *Mm hmm!*

Heidi: So, the art auction is the event that we throw that supports the program. So it's every year; it happens in May. It's generally the Friday before Mother's Day weekend. And we've selected 50 pieces from all of our programs

across the state. So we do this huge call for art. All of the facilitators send their art to us. It goes through a jurying process that's comprised of a volunteer committee, our staff. And we go through and select the top 50 pieces that get to go to the auction. And those are sold in our silent auction at the art auction. 25 of those are paired with professional artists' pieces. So we actually have professional artists who come in and they select a piece that inspires them and they create something that is inspired by the participants' piece. And that actually goes to the auction as well. So this year we had 23 of those go to the silent auction. And then two of them actually were auctioned off at the live auction at the event, at the Sentinel this year. So it was pretty amazing to see those and they were beautiful pieces.

The auction is a beautiful event and it's a great time for people to come and hear about the program, to see the beautiful pieces of art, to read the stories, and of course bid on these. And the money raised at the auction goes to support the program throughout the year. So because of that we've been able to devote more of our staff time to training facilitators across the state and really growing and expanding this beautiful program. So it's amazing, amazing event, and it is volunteer-run, staff supported. So we have an amazing volunteer chair who mans the auction and makes sure that it is everything that it's supposed to be. Crosses all the t's and dots all the I's. And we as staff really spend a, we support the volunteers and the effort of running the auction.

*Christy:* *Fantastic. So for anybody listening who's in a state that doesn't have Memories in the Making, or isn't taking it to the next level and doing an art auction, get in touch with the Oregon Chapter Association office and they can get you in touch with people who have already sort of invented the wheel.*

*Heidi:* *Yep!*

*Christy:* *And probably help you get up and running in your state too.*

Heidi: Absolutely. Being, you know--that's the nice thing about it being a volunteer led event. Actually here in Oregon, that's kind of what happened, is we had a very dedicated, passionate volunteer who said, "I love this program. I want to see it grow." And she was able to really grow the art auction and help us to grow that program. So, the power of volunteers is real.

Christy: *It is. And it's huge. So, okay, so you've come out of that and now we're heading into The Longest Day. You want to explain what that is for people who may not know what it is?*

Heidi: Absolutely. So The Longest Day is one of our signature fundraising events, and it happens every year on June 21st, which is the longest day of the year; It's the Summer Solstice. And it's become kind of a DIY fundraising event. And people do what they love. So, some people turn it into an event, maybe their grandmother passed away from Alzheimer's and she taught them how to bake. So maybe they bake all day and then they have a bake sale with the goods that they've made. Some people do something like they have a barbecue and they invite people over and maybe everybody that comes to the barbecue donates \$20 and it goes toward their Longest Day fundraising events. We have teams that--dragon boats are very popular here in the Portland area. So we have dragon boat teams that do dragon boat races. We have global teams like the American Contact, American Contract, Bridge League. Sorry, that's a hard one to say.

And they, obviously, they play bridge; that's what they do. So they're a huge global team for us and they've turned their bridge tournaments into fundraisers for the Longest Day. So the coolest thing about the Longest Day is that you can really do whatever it is that you want to do. Whatever it is that shows your love, that reminds you of somebody that you maybe have lost to the disease or somebody that's currently living with the disease. Whatever it is that you want to do, it all works and we've seen this super creative ideas.

Christy: *Yeah. One year, I live posted on social media from dawn to dusk. Every hour on the hour. And that, that doesn't sound like any big deal. And in the*

*grand scheme of things, it's not. But I was working throughout the day also. I'll tell you, I mean, that? Just that something as simple as that really can help people who are not currently care partners get an appreciation for what it's like to be pulled in a few different directions after you have made a commitment to do this thing. And how quickly time can go by, too. Really? Oh my gosh, it's time to post again? Holy shneikes! And then the other thing that I love about the Longest Day is the piece where it really creates the awareness not only of what's happening for a care partner, but you know, for people living with any type of dementia, it's a 24/7 enterprise. The attack on their brain never stops. Whether it's the Longest Day, the Shortest Day, it doesn't matter. They're living with it every minute. And so I always hope that one of the things that the Longest Day also does is create awareness about the need for all of us in the support universe--which can be anybody--to really have empathy and compassion for people who are, uh, doing everything they can in every minute of the day to hang in there with us.*

Heidi: Absolutely. I completely agree. So that's, that's one of the amazing things about the event is just the awareness that it creates, let alone the funds that it raises. But just to make you really think about the journey of people living with this disease and the journey of care partners as they're fighting this.

Christy: *Another thing I did on the Longest Day a couple of years ago was I canned all day long.*

Heidi: Oh, okay.

Christy: *Um, yeah, holy cow. That made, you know, social media posts every hour on the hour look like the easy-peasy thing to do. But I got a lot accomplished. So however you choose to really celebrate the Longest Day, you can have a lot of fun with your friends. There are certainly a ton of things going on in the Portland Metro area. And those of us involved with the Alzheimer's Association Oregon Chapter or with Metropolitan Senior Network always recommend Krista's Crew as a way to get involved with the Longest Day. And I'll put links for that in the show notes, as well as with the information for the Alzheimer's Association Helpline, the 24/7 Helpline. So we do the Longest Day on June 21st and then it's time for...*

Heidi: It's time for the Walk to End Alzheimer's!

*Christy: Ta-da!*

Heidi: Ta-da! It is an amazing event.

*Christy: Yeah. And that's another great way to have some fun with your friends, to get people in your workplace involved, create teams. It is a lot of fun. Um, there's, there's food, there's socializing, there's teams, there's music. And you know, what the heck, a little exercise too.*

Heidi: And one of the best things about the walk for me is that people really realize that they are not alone.

*Christy: Mm hmm!*

Heidi: Sometimes the Walk to End Alzheimer's is their first experience with the Alzheimer's Association. So they've heard of us, but they've never come to an education program. They have not seen Memories in the Making. They don't know about support groups. They just see, you know, the Alzheimer's Association. And then they see the walk and they come and they see all these people with their promise garden flowers and their t-shirts talking about who they're walking for and who they're caring for. And they feel this tremendous sense of comradery. And they know that there is a whole big team of people out there to support you and it's--people say it's such a moving experience the first time they come. Christy, I know you've seen the promise garden ceremony that we do.

So we have these really cool promise garden flowers and each color represents something different. And we have everyone raise their flowers and you look out and you just see the sea of beautiful flowers and people being there for each other, for their loved ones or you know, people that they work with. And it's truly a beautiful, moving experience. So if you haven't experienced a Walk to End Alzheimer's, I highly encourage you. There's one near you no matter where you live.

So if you go to alz.org and look for Walk to End Alzheimer's, you can find the walk closest to you and it's truly a beautiful experience. And there's no registration fee, so it is free to walk. We just always encourage everyone to fundraise. So everybody that fundraises at least a hundred dollars gets a t-shirt. And then we have really cool incentive prizes up from there to really encourage people to bring that fundraising piece in.

*Christy: And it's a great family event. You can bring the kids--*

Heidi: Oh, definitely!

*Christy: --the strollers, the dogs, the whole enchilada. It's a lot of fun and a great community experience. Okay, so we talked about all the fundraising stuff. Another thing that I do want to talk about some more: the early stage programs. Can you speak to what you all offer and how that works, what that looks like?*

Heidi: Absolutely. So, we have early stage programming and as I mentioned earlier, that programming is for people that are in the early stages of the disease. So, maybe people who are recently diagnosed, people who are still able to carry on those conversations, able to have that insight about what's going on with them. So, we offer several different varieties. So one of them is obviously the Memories in the Making program, which we talked about. The next one that I love is our early stage support group. So, this is a group where the person living with the disease and their family member--care partner, whoever it is that's caring for them, doesn't have to be family--they come in and the people living with the disease meet in one

room together with the facilitator and the care partners meet in another room and they talk about the different issues that they're facing, and it's an amazing group. People really develop these relationships. They come to support group, they get to know each other as families. They actually sometimes meet outside of support group and really, you know, form that support team for each other. But it gives people a chance to talk about what they're experiencing and there's a ton of humor that goes along with it. I was sitting in on support group with the people living with the disease one day because that's the group that I like to be in because they're more fun than the care partners. Sorry, care partners.

*Christy: Right? But it's true.*

Heidi: But they were in there, and it was very serious. You know, they were talking about how hard this is, and how they feel like they're losing a piece of themselves, and they're not the same person they used to be. It was a lot of heavy stuff that people were talking about. And then somebody told a story about how they went to the grocery store and they made some type of a mistake and they said, "But you know what? I just have a get out of jail free card. I just look at the person and say, 'I'm sorry, I have Alzheimer's.'" And they all laughed and they were able to have this moment of, you know, it's funny, the things that happen. And they were able to kind of walk through that together and really lighten the moment. So, some tremendously great interactions occur in the support group for people in the early stages.

*Christy: Laughter is so important, no matter what stage somebody's in.*

Heidi: Absolutely.

*Christy: And for care partners too, it's okay to laugh. We can lighten a lot of the load on our shoulders just by being able to laugh. But also that sense of community, which you've talked about in pretty much everything that the Alzheimer's Association does. And I think that's one of the really big deals,*

*is when people can look in a room with other people and see for themselves. It's not some intellectual concept, but really feel in their bones: I'm not alone. And that's whether it's the person living with the disease or the care partner, to form that sense of community, to be a part of a community, is such a big deal.*

Heidi: It's so huge, to know that there's somebody who's going through what you're going through. I mean everybody experiences things differently, of course, but to know there's someone else out there that's feeling this...This is a very isolating disease. There's still a lot of stigma that comes with having Alzheimer's or another type of dementia. People don't know how to talk to you anymore. People don't know what to say to you anymore. People talk around you.

Christy: *Why do you think there's so much stigma? You have a theory on that?*

Heidi: Most people are afraid. They're afraid of this disease because right now it is the only disease in the top 10 causes of death that can't be prevented, treated, cured, or even slowed down. So, there's a great deal of fear surrounding it. And you know, when we can't fix something, as humans, we're very uncomfortable with something that we can't fix. And so because they can't say to somebody--you know, when your friend is sick and they have a disease that has a treatment or a cure, you can say to them, "You're going to get through this, you're going to get better." We don't get to say that with Alzheimer's and other types of progressive dementias and it's uncomfortable for people.

Christy: *Right. Well, you know Phil Gutis--*

Heidi: Mm hmm. Well, I don't know him personally; I've seen him speak and think he's amazing. I'd love to know him personally.

Christy: *I hope that that happens for you, Heidi, because it is such a, such a treat. Phil's a regular here on The Alzheimer's Podcast now. In fact, I said, "Would you prefer the title Special Correspondent, or Featured (Unwilling) Expert, or--? And he said, "Assistant Sherpa will do, thank you."*

Heidi: I like it. I like it.

Christy: *I know, right? But he was telling me--and I don't think this story has aired in an episode yet--but he and his husband, Tim, had gone to a Passover celebration and saw a friend that he hadn't seen, I don't think he'd seen, since he got his diagnosis three years ago. So it had been awhile. And the friend was hugging him as they were leaving and said, "I hope you get well soon!" Phil said, "Ummm, that's not going to happen. But, thanks?" And his point was, What am I supposed to do with that? And we were having a larger conversation in the context of people make it weird, not because they mean to, but because they just literally don't know what to say.*

Heidi: Right, right. And that's one of the big reasons I feel like there's stigma around this disease, is people don't know what to say. It's one of the reasons we as the Alzheimer's Association do a lot of community education, um, to teach people. What is Alzheimer's disease? What's the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia? How do we communicate with somebody that has Alzheimer's or dementia? How's that different, you know, based on, you're early, middle, or late stages. We work hard to educate people around this disease, but you know, we're getting there but it's still very difficult.

Christy: *Right? And there are always people, you know--unfortunately, somebody's getting a diagnosis, like, all the time. We've been talking for looks like 32 minutes now. So there are 32 new people that have this diagnosis now, in the time that we've talked. And so it's always, I'm always feeling like you're on a hamster wheel. I'm feeling like you're on the hamster wheel trying to get ahead of the curve and getting that education out there. So*

*this is what I'd like to end on today, Heidi. I've kept you over, and I appreciate that. Speaking of education, this goes to one of my favorite programs that happens during the year. And this is specific to the Alzheimer's Association Oregon Chapter, but I'm sure chapters in other states have some version of, of it themselves. This is the McGinty Conference.*

Heidi: Absolutely. So the McGinty conference is on November 12th. Notice I have that date right off the top of my head.

Christy: *Yup.*

Heidi: Yes, you're correct, Christy, that is a specific event for our chapter, but a lot of other chapters have annual education conferences, very similar. So I encourage folks, you know, call the 800 number or go on alz.org, connect with your local chapter and find out what they're doing because likely they have a similar one. Our conference here is named after Dr. Dean McGinty, who was a physician who unfortunately passed away much too early. He was in his mid thirties when he passed away, but he was a huge advocate for educating caregivers and particularly family caregivers. And so that's what the McGinty Conference is designed for, in his honor, to make his legacy go on, is to provide that education and that support for family caregivers. So we bring in expert presenters. Christy has honored us by coming and being one of our expert presenters for several years now. And we just put together a full day of education for family caregivers. We also invite professional caregivers 'cause there's, you know, a lot of great information for them, as well. And really bring everyone together and help them to get the tools they need to manage this disease and to continue this.

Christy: *It is such a joy to be a part of the McGinty Conference. And again, it's one of those situations where, like last year I think we had, what was it, 400, 500 people, something like that?*

Heidi: Almost 500 people, yes.

Christy: *Almost 500 people in the Oregon Convention Center and everybody had a common cause, a common purpose. And this was at least two-thirds family care partners.*

Heidi: Absolutely.

Christy: *It's a joy to be in a room with family care partners and watch light bulbs start popping up over their head like, Oh, this is making sense! Oh, I get it! Oh, that's why that happens! Oh, now I see! And that is such a terrific experience. So there's that sense of community. The lunch with the keynote speaker. Also the reception afterwards, I think, is one of those great times where participants can find a speaker that maybe really resonated with them, ask more questions, connect with other family care partners, again, who are having that common experience, who understand. And there's so much compassion in that building! I love it. I think it's just one of the best experiences. And I think one of the great things that you all do--I love this--is all the presenters turn in their slide show.*

Heidi: Yup.

Christy: *And it goes onto a thumb drive and all the participants get the thumb drives. So you don't have to, I mean, certainly take notes during the actual event, but you can always go back and look at it. And if there was some session that you didn't get to go to because it was a tough choice between a few of them, you can still review the material. I think that's something that is just one of those nice touches that, surprisingly, a lot of conferences don't do.*

Heidi: Absolutely. And people have given us a lot of feedback that they love being able to have those presentations so they can refer back to it later. Last year our luncheon speaker actually gave us a guided audio breathing

exercise that people could use and take away with them. So she talked about it during her presentation and then we were able to load that on the thumb drive for people to use later. So it's a great resource that people are walking away with after the conference.

*Christy: For sure. And then, this is another great thing about the McGinty conference, in my opinion--and I think participants' opinion, too: for the last several years, the first 250 family care partners to register in the state of Oregon, residents in the state of Oregon, are able to attend for free.*

Heidi: That's my favorite thing, because we're able to offer this education for free for them through a grant from Oregon Care Partners. So they really make that possible, and people are able to come and not have to spend money on the conference, because it can be expensive caring for someone with Alzheimer's.

*Christy: Sure.*

Heidi: So being able to not have to spend that money to come to the conference is amazing.

*Christy: Yeah. Thank you so much, Heidi, for spending time with us today. I do want to have you back and want to talk more about some of the younger onset or early stage programs that you have, and some feedback that I've gotten from Phil. And maybe we can figure out a three-way call where we can get Phil on, too, because he's on the National Early Advisory Board. That would be fun. Right?*

Heidi: That would be so fun!

*Christy: It would be fun. We'd have to like hit the pause button on laughing and actually get down to brass tacks, but we would love to have you back to talk more about that. And have you back really anytime that you have time in your busy calendar to spend with us. Thank you so much for appearing on The Alzheimer's Podcast today.*

*Heidi: Thank you so much for having me, Christy. We really appreciate you, and we really appreciate your support of the Alzheimer's Association. It means a lot.*

*Christy: And that's our show. Thank you so very much for being with us today. Links to programs and events mentioned in this episode are in the show notes at [DementiaSherpa.com/Episode96](http://DementiaSherpa.com/Episode96).*

*You've been listening to The Alzheimer's Podcast with Christy Turner, wishing you a blessed and easy week ahead. Be sure to check out the show notes and subscribe by going to [DementiaSherpa.com/podcast](http://DementiaSherpa.com/podcast).*