

June 2, 2024



London
Bridge Centre

Newsletter

SPECIAL EDITION - ALZHEIMER'S AND BRAIN HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Does Playing Bridge Help Ward Off Alzheimer's Disease?

After each losing a grandparent to Alzheimer's disease, neurologists Ayesha and Dean Sherzai decided to become experts in preventing cognitive decline.

Through their research involving data from 3,000 people and a review of others' research, they determined that diet and lifestyle can prevent the development of Alzheimer's disease and reverse mild cognitive impairment. They coined an acronym that summarizes their research on preventing dementia: NEURO.

Most relevant to bridge players is 'O' but here is the whole acronym.

- N - Nutrition (think greens, whole grains and berries)
- E - Exercise (both aerobic and strength-building)
- U - Unwind (find ways to reduce stress in your life)
- R - Restore (get 7-8 hours of sleep every night)
- O - Optimize

Optimize refers to developing cognitive reserve. Cognitive reserve is increased by how much we challenge our brain. They suggest that this isn't as easy as doing sudoku or crossword puzzles, but rather by engaging multiple areas of the brain at once, specifically around things you are passionate about or that give you a sense of purpose. Examples they suggest are knitting a complex pattern, learning a language, or learning to play an instrument. Additionally, social interaction is very important since it engages the brain through facial recognition, memory, focus, and language skills as well as emotional engagement.

Duplicate bridge is not specifically mentioned but it meets their criteria, especially in-person play. When we play bridge at the club, we interact with people, we use our memory, we engage our emotions (hopefully with fun, laughter, and a sense of accomplishment), we use our hands to sort cards and bid, we use analysis and strategic thinking and we use flexibility when unexpected things happen during card play. Taking lessons in bridge would also be an 'Optimize' activity. Isn't it great to know that something we enjoy is also helping our brains?

During June, Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, copies of the Sherzais' book, The 30-Day Alzheimer's Solution will be left at the club for anyone who wants to borrow it to learn more. (Good activity during a sit-out.)

Alzheimer Fundraiser Day – Wednesday, June 19 Bridge and Lunch

In past years, our club and members have generously donated to the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

This year, instead of a silent auction or similar event, we are holding a luncheon and two special open games on Wednesday, June 19; one at 9:15 a.m. and the other at 1:00 p.m. Regular game fees apply.

The directors are donating their time, the club is donating our share of the game fees to the Alzheimer society in our area and the ACBL is donating its share of game fees to the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

In between the two games, there will be a complimentary Brain-Healthy Lunch, sponsored by Janine Higgins. Morning players are invited to stay for lunch and afternoon players are invited to arrive at 12:15 p.m. for lunch. It will be a buffet style ‘build your own power bowl’ so please bring a bowl big enough to hold a meal, as well as cutlery. So that quantities can be estimated, please sign up at the club to say you are coming for lunch. Information from dementia researchers Drs. Dean and Ayesha Sherzai about brain-healthy foods will be available.

Our request is that you consider making a donation to the Alzheimer Society Southwest Partners, whose work is described below. Here is a link to make a contribution:

https://on.alz.to/site/Donation2?df_id=7246&mfc_pref=T&7246.donation=form1

The Alzheimer Society Southwest Partners (AlzSWP) provides social work counseling, support groups, system navigation, client and public education, and therapeutic recreation programs. Across Elgin, Middlesex, and Oxford counties there are more than 14,000 people living with a diagnosis of dementia and by 2050 that number is expected to increase by 200%. AlzSWP supports people living with dementia, care partners and family members, healthcare professionals, and the general public. Annually, AlzSWP must fundraise over \$2 million to deliver current programs and services; events like the Day of Bridge fundraiser help ensure no one living with dementia in our community goes unsupported.

