

Transforming the care of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias

seeds



WHAT WE DO

Abe's Garden seeks to establish a model of residential and day-care programs for those suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The goal is to transform the care for those affected by Alzheimer's and other related dementias throughout the United States by providing an unprecedented level of care for individuals currently suffering from these diseases. Equally important, it will be a site of research and teaching, setting a new standard for other programs and residential communities devoted to caring for our nation's rapidly expanding senior population.



Amy Grant Shares Her Family's Experience and Commits Her Voice to Abe's Garden

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GRAMMY-winning entertainer Amy Grant's large, close-knit family has a history of longevity — not Alzheimer's. When both of her parents were diagnosed with dementia, Amy and her siblings found themselves in uncharted territory with no clear roadmap.

"With a loved one, you want to love and respect them and find a lifestyle that fits their needs," Amy said.

Unfortunately, finding an appropriate environment was easier said than done. Amy's parents developed different types of dementia that required individualized care plans, and Amy's family was unable to locate a residential community for individuals who were physically active but suffering from cognitive impairment.

DID YOU KNOW? Another American develops Alzheimer's disease every 68 seconds.
In 2050, an American will develop the disease every 33 seconds.

Amy Grant, continued

"There are a lot of great communities in Nashville for older people, but once somebody's mind starts going, especially if they still have an energetic body, they don't fit any program," Amy said. "Either you create a program that fits the person living with dementia — or you drug the person to fit a program."

In 2011, Amy's mother passed away, and currently her father has customized living arrangements. During her journey as a family caregiver and her search for a forum to connect with other families and experts on the subjects of Alzheimer's and dementia, she learned about the innovative model being pioneered by Abe's Garden. After meeting with Abe's Garden Founder Mike Shmerling, she shared her appraisal of the organization and its future, "I love the potential of everything that Abe's Garden could be."

One of the elements that drew Amy to the Abe's Garden model was the variety of programs that allows individuals with energetic

personalities like her father's to thrive, in spite of their limited communication skills. Amy recognizes the potential benefit of her father participating in the adult day program and his caregivers receiving advanced training.

“ With a loved one, you want to love and respect them and find a lifestyle that fits their needs. ”

— AMY GRANT

Mike explained the impact of receiving the endorsement of a selfless leader of Amy's stature, who also has firsthand experience with the impact of Alzheimer's and dementia. "The Grant family has been supportive in numerous ways, particularly in connecting

with Amy's innumerable fans as we raise awareness regarding the need for elevating dementia care."

Mike continued, "Amy is a tireless, unselfish supporter of many nonprofit organizations, and we greatly value her commitment to Abe's Garden. It is our hope that Abe's Garden will rapidly become an engaged gathering place that will benefit her family and many others throughout the nation." 🌸

Thank You for Your Contributions

Created in honor of Abram "Abe" C. Shmerling, M.D., a physician who invested himself in the people and community he loved, Abe's Garden was established to transform the care of those affected by Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Community support is central to realization of the Abe's Garden vision, and we thank you for your support. Every attempt was made to ensure the accuracy of the following information. We apologize for any omissions or errors.

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Alzheimer's disease is the **sixth-leading cause of death** in the United States and the **only cause of death among the top 10** in the United States that **cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed.**

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An estimated 800,000 individuals with Alzheimer's (or one in seven) live alone. Of those who have Alzheimer's and live alone, up to half of them do not have an identifiable caregiver.

Abe's Garden Supports Alzheimer's Lighting Research



Mariana G. Figueiro, Ph.D., of the Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, recently published her findings on lighting for older adults and individuals living with Alzheimer's in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*.

Abe's Garden board members Christopher Brown and Michael D. Shmerling, along with the National Institute on Aging and the National Institute of Nursing Research, provided funding for Dr. Figueiro's studies.



"Though I've worked with Dr. Figueiro on numerous initiatives, it has been most gratifying to witness her commitment to understanding the profound impact that lighting has on older adults, particularly individuals with Alzheimer's," Brown said. "Her commitment resulted in publishing groundbreaking research, and Abe's Garden is honored to support these efforts."

Dr. Figueiro's research is based on the following principles:

Sleep Issues

Typical institutional light levels are not high enough or tuned to the correct color to activate the circadian system of older persons, often resulting in sleep disruption. This disruption causes changes in sleep patterns, confusion in daily routines, decreased alertness, and mood alteration resulting in feelings of depression. Abnormal sleep patterns tend to increase with the progression of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) and are associated with aggressive behavior and caregiver stress.

Safety Concerns

Seniors' injuries resulting from falls have long been a public health concern. Lighting modifications can reduce the risk of falls, especially throughout the night, when light levels are low. Fall risks are even greater in people with ADRD, which disrupts higher cognitive processes, resulting in significantly lower balance and coordination.

24-Hour Lighting Scheme

To improve the health and quality of life of individuals with ADRD, Dr. Figueiro recommends a 24-hour lighting scheme. This should be designed to provide high circadian stimulation during the day, low circadian stimulation at night, good visual conditions during waking hours, and nightlights that are safe and minimize sleep disruption.

Such a lighting system should include nightlights that accentuate pathways to resident suite restrooms, motion sensors on nightlights, and amber or low-level white light to allow residents to safely navigate at night without sleep disruption.

Dr. Figueiro notes the importance of additional testing of this novel lighting system, and Abe's Garden is proud to be a leading partner in this initiative.

Dr. Figueiro's research findings were subsequently published in *LD+A The Magazine of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America*. 🌍

THE SCIENCE OF LIGHTING

- Light reaching the retina allows us to see, synchronizes our circadian rhythms to the 24-hour day, and affects the body's perceptual system, enabling us to orient ourselves to the spatial environment and maintain postural control and stability.
- As we grow older, less light reaches the retina at the back of the eye, where light signals are processed. Older adults need more light to maintain good visual, perceptual and biological responses.
- It is estimated that for the same amount of available light a 60-year-old receives only 30 to 40 percent as much light at the retina as a 20-year-old.



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Volunteer Spotlight: Raeanne Rubenstein

From Andy Warhol and Dolly Parton to Abe's Garden



Even if you have not met Abe's Garden volunteer Raeanne Rubenstein, you are likely familiar with her work. Raeanne is the photographer behind the iconic Abe's Garden image of the grandfather and grandson walking hand in hand in the garden. A nationally revered artist, she is well known for her celebrity portraits featuring such subjects as Andy Warhol, Dolly Parton and Bob Dylan.

was inhibiting the photo shoot then suddenly, all the elements synched. "The Lord cooperated in creating that art," she said. "It's a picture I'd seen in my imagination, and then there it was in front of me."

The noted photographer says she looks forward to continued engagement with Abe's Garden, as the organization moves forward to realize its inspired goals. "You can't help but be impressed by successful people who don't keep all their success to themselves," she said. "The leaders of Abe's Garden are doing something very meaningful, so who wouldn't want to be a part of that?"

Raeanne was introduced to Abe's Garden through her friendship with Beth Zeitlin, and previously had the pleasure of photographing the Shmerling family. Reminiscing about taking the iconic Abe's Garden photograph, Raeanne explains that it was a beautiful experience. Initially, foul weather

To view more of Raeanne's photography, visit her website at www.raeannerubensteinphotography.com. Raeanne is also the creative mind behind the entertainment, fashion and style magazine for "young women of all ages," *Dish Magazine* (www.dishmag.com). 