



ALS Support Group of NWWI

A Gathering of Individuals Touched by ALS
Share Joy, Sorrow, Laughter, Tears, and Hope.

Receiving a diagnosis of ALS is challenging and can be very overwhelming. The ALS support group provides a safe place where patients, families, & friends Gather to share information, support, and resources with others who understand.

Our Next Support Group Meeting will be THURSDAY, 12/08/16.

(Second Thursday of each month, 1:00pm – 3:00pm at Chippewa Valley Bible Church,
531 E. South Ave. Chippewa Falls, WI 54729)

Starting January 2017 the newsletter will be provided seasonally (4x's year). The support group will continue to meet the second Thursday of each month, starting at 1:pm and ending at 2:30.

We so look forward to supporting and walking alongside each and everyone one of you in 2017! Your presence alone changes and makes a difference in those around you more than you'll ever know. We truly wish each of you and your loved one's a holiday blessed with much peace, love, and joy!

Take good care of each-other!

Deb Erickson, LPN
ALS Outreach Assistant
www.alsnwwi.org

ALSNWWI Support Group is a non-profit organization that has been operating in the Chippewa Valley since 1992, serving over 9 counties. Services include: Monthly support group meetings; Outreach support service for home visits; local resources & referrals, Educational materials; financial assistance for items not covered under Medicare or private insurance; Community advocacy. Annual Walk & Wheel-A-Thon is held the second Sunday in June (6.11.2017) at the Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds in Chippewa Falls.

Questions, concerns, or input please contact:
Julie Chamberlain, LPN, 715.271.7257 or alsnwwi@gmail.com

Reflections from one of our local group members

10/6/2016 3:19 PM, Theresa Bade

Hi,

It has been a while since I have seen everyone and the death of my husband is approaching the two year anniversary (October 19). I would like to share a personal regret and I know I could not do it without crying so maybe sometime if it is the right time you could share the following with the support group.

I don't have many regrets but one thing I DO regret is not audio taping my husband before he lost the ability to speak. Oh how I would love to hear him tell me he loves me or to hear his nickname for me. With all the technology available, it could have been done. He did do a "record a book" for his grandson while he was still able. He used a white board after he wasn't able to speak but I didn't even think to have him write something on the board that I could have saved.

Small things but maybe someone else can avoid my regrets. My best to you all.

Theresa Bade
Black River Falls

Theresa, Thank you so much for sharing this insight with all of us! Great suggestion for all of us!

If anyone desires to share ideas or helpful suggestions in our newsletter, please feel free to email Julie @ alsnwwi@gmail.com Thank you.

Local Happenings

The Healing Place offers ongoing meditation groups this fall

Ever wish you had the time to begin a meditation and prayer practice for yourself? Join with others to take care of yourself in a unique way. The Healing Place is offering two ongoing meditation sessions this fall:

- **Mindfulness Meditation:** Tuesdays, October 11 to December 27, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Each session will focus on meditation anchor practices such as breath work, progressive relaxation/body scan, lovingkindness meditation, guided imagery and visualization exercises.
- **Heart and Soul Meditation:** Wednesdays, October 12 to December 28, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Each session will begin with a facilitator-led lovingkindness meditation followed by a reflective reading utilizing poetry, essays, prayers and other materials that encourage and inspire us to live a heart-filled life. A time of silence and optional sharing concludes the meditation session.

There is no cost to attend, and registration is not necessary. All sessions will take place at The Healing Place, 1010 Oakridge Drive, Eau Claire. For more information, call (715) 717-6028.

Christmas Village in Irvine Park

The Chippewa Falls Christmas Village is an impressive display of life-size Christmas scenes reminiscent of the Victorian era and local historical replicas, along with a dazzling display of over 60,000 lights. Open daily 7am.- 9:30 p.m with the lights turned on at 3:30/4pm until New Years Day. Open until midnight on Christmas Eve. Established in 1987, the Christmas Village has grown into an independent project of great size involving individuals, businesses, volunteer organizations, and city government. Irvine Park is located, near Leinenkugel Brewing Co., on Bridgewater Ave, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. It's a fun and festive drive or walk through!

Check out your local hometown Chamber of Commerce events calendars for various opportunities during the holiday and beyond.

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Informative Articles

Holiday Advice for ALS Caregivers

November is [National Family Caregivers Month](#), which is appropriate because this month can feel especially overwhelming for caregivers, as it also marks the beginning of the holiday season.

It can be difficult for some caregivers to get into the festive spirit of the holidays when their loved one is seriously ill because taking constant care of a loved one with a chronic illness, such as ALS, can be stressful at any time.

As we all put tremendous pressure on ourselves to find the perfect gifts, cook the most delicious meals, entertain friends and family, and decorate every nook and cranny in our house. Add to that list, the endless energy it takes to be a full-time caregiver to a loved one with ALS, and it can be tempting to skip the holidays altogether and just hibernate until spring! Many people find it especially challenging to manage care-giving duties during the holidays because it is the busiest, most stressful time of the year.

This month, throughout the holidays and beyond, consider these tips:

- **Get help.** When friends or family members offer to help, accept! Enlist their support to help with the pALS's care, as well as the time-consuming shopping, cooking, decorating, wrapping, etc. that comes during the holidays.
- **Get festive.** Put on holiday music, or whatever type of music you find cheery and relaxing. Light the fireplace. Have a cup of tea. Invite a friend over to trim the tree or light the menorah with your family. Sometimes, we have to "fake" the festivity a bit at first, but once the cookies are baking, a special heirloom is displayed or a beloved friend comes over, we feel much more jolly!
- **Exercise.** Often, during the busy holiday season, we simply can't seem to squeeze in exercise. Even if you don't have time for a long sweat session, take a walk, pop in a workout DVD, or dance around the house. Studies show that exercising boosts endorphins, reduces stress, and just makes you feel better
- **Eat healthy.** This is the time of year that we're surrounded by yummy cookies, homemade pies, endless buffets and the sweet potato casserole that only appears at the holidays. While it's fine to eat these treats in moderation, you'll feel much better if you stick to (mostly) healthy eating, with plenty of fruits, veggies, whole grains and lean protein at meals and snacks. Skip the fatty, sugary foods that will make you feel bloated and sluggish.

- **Know when to say “no”.** Don't feel obligated to accept every invitation that comes your way. It's OK to turn down your second cousin's neighbor's son's holiday Open House, or to opt not to participate in seven different gift swaps. Determine which holiday parties and events are most meaningful to you, and respectfully decline the rest.

- **Get some sleep.** Exercise, healthy eating and sleeping well are all factors in the healthy well-being equation. There's a lot to do - presents need to be wrapped, cards need to be written and that turkey isn't going to stuff itself - but tackle tasks in small, manageable chunks, making sure to get enough shut-eye every night (or at least most nights).

- **Look for alternative solutions.** If shopping for gifts is stressful because your time and/or budget is stressed too thin, consider asking family or friends to forgo the gift exchange this year. Propose something that makes you happier, such as spending time together instead of exchanging gifts, or consider swapping family-sized portions of nutritious meals instead of participating in cookie swaps.

- **Carve out some time for yourself.** We all tend to get caught up in the crazy schedules around the holidays, with non-stop activities and endless "to do" lists. Take some time for yourself, do what you enjoy and don't feel guilty about it. You'll be a much better caregiver if you also take good care of yourself!