

I can still hear my Grandma Anderson call for her dog, shouting, "Here, Tony! Here, Tony!" The only problem was that the dog's name was Taffy.

My cousins, brothers and I would laugh and tease Grandma about getting the dog's name wrong. We were too young to understand that she had early-onset memory loss. As a matter of fact, our parents weren't really aware of her condition in a medical sense.

"Your grandma is forgetful. You'll find out someday," they would say.

Even when I started at ABHOW in the early 1990s, Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia were not yet

well understood. It wasn't until the late 1990s that memory loss became recognized as a substantial issue that requires specialized attention and care. Memory support buildings and programming began to emerge as those of us in the senior living field made efforts to help those dealing with the challenges of memory loss. All types of memory loss, including Alzheimer's, became news even

At Seniority communities, we will celebrate our residents and toast their abilities...

though the condition has been around for centuries — it was just dismissed as Grandma's forgetfulness.

November is National Alzheimer's Disease and Awareness Month.



*Joe Anderson
President, Seniority, Inc.*

However, our team members and residents' families think about the issue of memory loss every month, as is also the case for

residents who navigate memory challenges every day.

At Seniority communities, we will celebrate our residents and toast their abilities, and encourage their family

members to do the same. As a friend of mine, an expert in the field, often says, "Reality is highly overrated." I couldn't have said it better myself.

Joe Anderson

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RESIDENT THRIVES WITH NIKKEI'S MEMORY CARE

Before Hisaye Sasaki moved into her memory support apartment at Nikkei Senior Gardens in 2011, her living room's centerpiece was a Japanese shrine.

So when team members encouraged her to bring familiar items to provide comfort and reminders of home, her family knew just the right thing.

"When she saw the shrine and photos of her family, she was sort of calm," says Bob Borgen, Sasaki's son-in-law. "She had enough awareness to understand that this was her new home — and she wasn't afraid."

Michael Motoyasu, executive director of the Arleta, Cali-

fornia, assisted living community, says shadow boxes outside each apartment make a big difference, as residents' families fill them with photos and other things that can trigger memories.

boxes help residents identify their own front door.

And like the shrine in Sasaki's living room, team members at Nikkei work hard to help trigger similar memories by reminding residents of their cultures.



Hisaye Sasaki visits with her daughter, Minako Borgen.

"When it comes to long-time memory, they tend to hang on to that longer," he says, so anything that may connect residents back to happy memories is encouraged. Plus, the

"Since we're more of a Japanese-American community, culture is very important," Motoyasu says.

Regular visits from a Buddhist priest also help Sasaki stay connected to her heritage. "It's a nice little touch that really helps," Borgen says.

The number of older adults in need of memory support is growing rapidly. Every 67 seconds someone in the U.S. develops Alzheimer's disease, according to the Alzheimer's Association. And in the late stages of the disease and other types of dementia, round-the-clock care can often be necessary.



RESIDENT THRIVES WITH NIKKEI'S MEMORY CARE (CONTINUED)

That's why Nikkei and other communities managed by Seniority, Inc. are dedicated to providing 24-hour support by well-trained, compassionate caregivers.

"I can't say enough about the caregivers. They are just spectacular," says Sasaki's daughter, Minako Borgen. "And not just because of the training, but they hire personalities that really care."

Sasaki, too, recognized that she was in good hands from the start. "She said, 'these people can take care of me,'" Bob Borgen says, easing any worries the family may have had.

Not only is a caregiver always around to be Sasaki's friend, or "tomodachi," Bob Borgen says, the caregivers anticipate her needs.

"We make sure that the residents in memory care have their specific needs met," says Motoyasu. "We want to help them address those needs and provide a way to maintain their dignity."

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— Michael Motoyasu
Executive Director, Nikkei Senior Gardens



Part of that care involves keeping residents involved in meaningful activities. In April Nikkei completed an expansion of its memory support activities area, Motoyasu says, allowing more space for residents to engage.

Things like art and music can enrich the lives of older adults dealing

with memory-related challenges, says the Alzheimer's Association. These types of activities allow for self-expression when communication might otherwise be difficult.

At Nikkei, one sing-a-long in particular is popular. The retired minister who leads the class doesn't just sing with the residents, but he explains to them the meaning of each song. "About 90 percent of the songs are in Japanese," says Motoyasu, helping further connect residents to their cultures and memories.

It's activities like these that have helped Sasaki thrive at her home at Nikkei, says Bob Borgen.

"She draws, she sings, she does all these activities," he says. "These last four years have probably been the best four years she's had in her life."

THE LATEST IN ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH

Approximately 5 million people age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease — the majority of whom are women — according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Past research indicates that Alzheimer's results from abnormal protein structures that begin to form in the brain more than a decade before Alzheimer's symptoms appear. Therefore, much of

today's research focuses on developing early detection methods and preventative treatments.

The National Institute on Aging recently developed imaging technology that will allow medical professionals to track production of these abnormalities, shaping a hopeful future. Using this innovative technology, researchers hope to find a combination of medicines that can actively fight early symptoms of Alzheimer's, much like how cancers are commonly treated.

More than 150 Alzheimer's-related clinical trials are in progress in the U.S. today, bringing researchers closer to effective treatment methods.

Preventing Diabetes By Making Lifestyle Changes



One in four Americans is unknowingly living with diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For those with a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, steps for prevention can be taken. Studies show the disease can be prevented or delayed with moderate weight loss and exercise. The CDC suggests losing between 5 and 7 percent of one's body weight through regular exercise — 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

In addition to physical activity, maintaining a healthy diet is essential for everyone, says the CDC. Smart choices include eating more fiber and a variety of fruits and vegetables, as well as fewer high-fat foods.