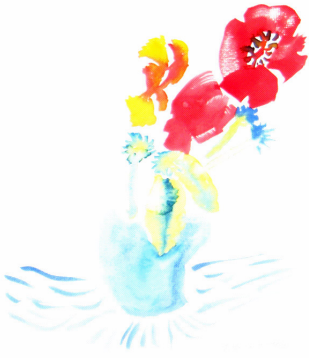


# Elderwise Summer Newsletter



Watercolor by Bette Markley

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## Adult day...a win, win for caregivers and individuals with early memory loss by Lisa Mayfield

As a consultant to families coping with memory loss issues and as a support group facilitator, I am often asked questions about issues impacting families. I thought I would address one of the most frequently asked questions here.

### My husband just sits around all day, what should I do?

An early symptom of memory loss is lack of motivation or lack of initiative. A person with this symptom is no longer

able to start an activity or chore and often can't see that something needs to be done. However, if asked directly, he will often be able to complete a task. An example of this is that your husband may not be able to understand that the garbage needs to be emptied but if you ask him directly—"will you please take out the garbage," in the early stages of memory loss, he should still be able to complete this task.

Your husband is likely show-

ing this lack of motivation and it can be beneficial to add structured activities to his day. An adult day program, such as Elderwise, provides this needed structure and activities to keep his mind engaged.

Elderwise can be beneficial to you as well. Family members typically burn themselves out providing care to their loved ones with memory loss. As the primary caregiver, if you do not take care of yourself,

*(continued on page 3)*

## Poet Holly Hughes to Hold Writing Workshop at Elderwise

Because I work daily with elders, many of whom have dementia, it is rare that I take the time during a blessed weekend day to attend a program about Alzheimer's disease... But something drew me to a discussion of poetry and aging at the Frye Museum. Pacific Northwest poet Holly Hughes explained that people from across the country and from all walks of life sent her poems and short prose – deep, heart writings – about their personal experiences with a loved one that had dementia. She compiled these works in the anthology *Beyond Forgetting: Poetry and Prose about Alzheimer's Disease*. This anthology has many wavelengths shown with all kinds of lighting. Because each contributor also provides a note of context for the poem, it is a real honest sharing that adds up to be more

than the sum of each poem. Just like in people with dementia, there is more there and so much they have to teach us if we are open to the experience.

I was so moved by the presentation that I contacted Holly to discuss Elderwise and our mission. Holly's mother had Alzheimer's disease before she passed away in 2001. During that experience Holly found that as more and more of the mother she knew drifted away, she wanted a way to stay by her during this journey. She found that writing gave her a way into her mother's world, that even though words may have failed her mother, she could still use them to mark her path. Writing as therapy for caregivers of those with dementia has been shown to relieve stress by helping examine and express this

individual experience.

The outcome of our meeting was that Holly agreed to collaborate with Elderwise and facilitate a writing workshop. The workshop will be geared toward family members and caregivers of those with dementia and will be held on November 16<sup>th</sup> from 12:30 to 3 pm at Elderwise. If you have a relationship with a person with dementia and are interested in attending this free workshop, please call Elderwise at 206-325-0471 or email [info@elderwise.org](mailto:info@elderwise.org).

For more information about Holly and this remarkable book, go to [www.beyondforgettingbook.com](http://www.beyondforgettingbook.com).

Sandy



Watercolor by Richard Corlett

## Elderwise Impressions by Inge Wood



Watercolor by Rena Braden

As you enter the space, the ambience is such that it invites you immediately. We are met by staff... participants, family member and caregiver alike are welcomed.

The center of most of the activities is the large oval table on one side of the room, where everyone gathers to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee. I often linger after dropping my husband off, because the hospitality is so genuine and open. There is a spirit of embracing each participant or person with sincerity toward a day of

activity, joy and conversation. Each day offers an opportunity to explore one's artistic expressions with paintbrush, water and paint. This activity offers participation in a creative process allowing each individual to play and enjoy, and to discover a way to see things never practiced previously.

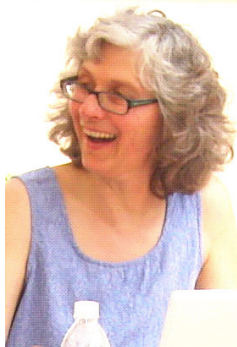
I often marvel at a participant's ability to artistically render what he or she has seen in the object or inspiration. I have seen in an hour's time amazing strokes expressing an individual's growing sense of

freedom. There is also a great sense of satisfaction, joy and pride.

There is a kind of freedom in finding something new and precious within. This is encouraged and nurtured in Elderwise's most accepting and caring community, enriching not only the artist, but staff and family members as well.

*Inge's husband Ken attends the Elderwise Adult Day Center and she attended our Watercolor Monday series.*

## Thank you, Gabi McCarthy



Gabi, joyfully working at our auction check-in table

We at Elderwise would like to acknowledge the time and efforts of volunteer Gabi McCarthy. Over the years, she has put in time to help us organize our website materials and educate us on new technologies in that arena.

Last year, Gabi was a student in the University of Washington Fundraising Management Certificate Program and this

past spring, she completed her fieldwork requirement at Elderwise. She gave above and beyond the hourly obligations for her schooling. During her time here, she reviewed and revamped our databases, attended board meetings and meetings with our staff grant writer, and gave extremely helpful feedback to all. She worked many hours in prepa-

ration for our art auction and throughout the event. Gabi truly understands the essence of Elderwise and the importance of our efforts within the community. Just looking at the emotion in her face while describing our work is enough to know that she feels what we do is unique and important for our elders.

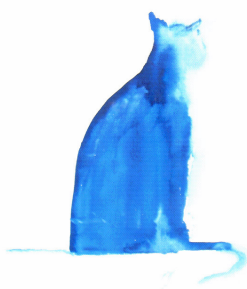
Thank you, Gabi.

## Elderwise Art Auction

We would like to thank everyone in our community who demonstrated their support of Elderwise by attending, volunteering and donating towards the Elderwise Annual Art Auction held on May 30<sup>th</sup>. This is always a favored event of the Elderwise year where all participants and staff have framed artwork entered in a silent auction. The art auction is a joyous and entertaining occa-

sion along with a successful fundraiser as well. It is our one event where the community is invited to help celebrate with staff, participants, and their families and to appreciate the gorgeous work created during our day program. It is a time for the participants to feel the well-earned pride for paintings so beautifully and patiently made.

I recently ran into the daughter of a past participant who told me that she and her sister each have a wonderfully-framed piece by their mother in their home and how much it means to them. They are reminders of the amazing things still to be offered by our elders if nurtured in the right environment.



This watercolor by Johanne Noll was sold at the Elderwise Annual Art Auction

## Watercolor Mondays a Success at Elderwise

### The Elderwise Watercolor Class open to all.

*“This class taught me to free up my expression of art.”*

Our newest program at Elderwise is Watercolor Mondays when we offer our therapeutic wet on wet watercolor session for all adults interested. It was a great success this past spring and due to the encouraging comments of the attendees, Elderwise will offer it again in the fall. Nine attendees came for a series of six Mondays and all had a very positive experi-

ence. The instructor inspired the students to experiment with color blending to create beautiful landscapes, still-life and abstract paintings. This class is appropriate for anyone interested in exploring their creative side – no matter how buried it might be - in a very encouraging and nonrestrictive environment.

The next series of six Mondays will be: October 5, 12, 19, 26 and November 2 and 9.

The sessions run from 10 am until noon, the cost for the series is \$120 and they are held at Elderwise. For more information or to register, call 206-325-0471 or email [info@elderwise.org](mailto:info@elderwise.org).

## Adult day...a win, win for caregivers and individuals

*(continued from page 1)*



Watercolor by Bob Runkel

*(continued from page 1)*

you will likely experience increased health problems and depression. If you aren't taking care of yourself, who is going to take care of your husband if you end up in the hospital?

Utilizing a program such as Elderwise can provide you with a much needed break during the day. The Elderwise program runs from 10 AM to 2 PM, giving you four hours to run errands, attend your own appointments, clean the house or maybe even have lunch with a friend.

Meanwhile, your husband will be around other people which will provide him with needed social and cognitive stimulation. Research has shown that exercise, social stimulation, and cognitive stimulation can slow the progression of memory loss and improve mood. Elderwise's day program pro-

vides all of these aspects as well as a morning snack, lunch and a creative activity such as watercolor painting.

Utilizing an adult day program can also be less expensive than care at home for the same number of hours. Families often find that utilizing a day program can extend the time their loved one can remain at home before moving to a higher level of care.

A program like Elderwise can also provide additional structure and engagement during the day for individuals living in an adult family home.

Why do I highly recommend Elderwise? In addition to the above reasons, I love the Elderwise program (and many of the families I have worked with as well) because it has a very high staff/volunteer to attendee ratio, is in a small setting (a large environment

can be very overwhelming to individuals with memory loss), has a limited number of individuals at one time (also making it less overwhelming), they have very creative programming, the staff is highly qualified, and they are very dedicated to their clients, families, seniors, and the community. Elderwise is also very committed to helping elders live more engaged and meaningful lives.

I highly recommend that you check out Elderwise today.

*Lisa Mayfield, MA, LMHC, GMHS, CMC is the owner of Aging Wisdom Inc. ([www.agingwisdom.com](http://www.agingwisdom.com)), a geriatric care management company serving seniors and their families in King County. She can be reached at [lisa@agingwisdom.com](mailto:lisa@agingwisdom.com) or 206-660-3276.*

*“Research has shown that exercise, social stimulation and cognitive stimulation can slow the progression of memory loss. Elderwise's day program provides all of these aspects.”*

# ELDERWISE

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Seattle, WA 98122  
Phone: 206-325-0471  
Email: [info@elderwise.org](mailto:info@elderwise.org)

Where we respect the  
wisdom of elders

## Conscious Aging Meetings

We meet regularly to deeply explore our experiences with aging. Using the Sage-ing Guild® model and the visionary “eldering” work of Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, we will share our insights, engage in experiential exercises and seek to grow.

Future conversation group dates and topics are:

**Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>**  
Facing one’s own mortality

**Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup>**  
Becoming an Elder

These meetings are held at Elderwise and are from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. They are free but please register at 206-325-0471.

## Special Events

### What is Spirit-centered Care?

Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>  
6 to 8:30 pm

This workshop will explore the philosophy of spirit-centered care and its application in our daily work. It will be held at Elderwise.

### Creative Writing Workshop for Caregivers

Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>  
12:30 to 3 pm  
Facilitated by Holly J. Hughes  
Free of charge

Contact Elderwise to register for any of these events at 206-325-0471 or [info@elderwise.org](mailto:info@elderwise.org)

## Elderwise Art Exhibit Elderwise Adult Day Program

We invite you to view Elderwise artwork created in the Adult Day Program displayed at Café Allegro during the month of September.

**The Café Allegro**  
4214 University Way NE  
Seattle, 98105  
(206) 633-3030

## Elderwise Watercolor Mondays

A series of six watercolor classes open to all who want to explore artistic expression.

October 5, 12, 19 and 26.  
November 2 and 9.

Time: 10 am to noon  
Cost \$120 for the series

Elderwise is known for its unique approach to aging through cultural enrichment and deep respect for all people.

Please call Tamara Keefe at 206-325-0471 to learn more or to schedule a visit.

Family members and friends are our best sources of referrals. Please share what you know!

*If you would like to receive reminders of these and other Elderwise news by email, please send your email address to [info@elderwise.org](mailto:info@elderwise.org)*