

## HEALTH

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Ralph Lehman, a Westlake Village resident, takes part in the TimeSlips creative storytelling project. "Both pictures brought back a lot of memories for me," says Lehman. "Those were good days."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GUS CHAN | THE PLAIN DEALER

# MINDS OVER MEMORY

*One family uses creativity to help others cushion the effects of dementia*



Charlie Farrell, standing, leads a TimeSlips storytelling class as part of the ArtCare program he and daughter Katie Norris, far right, run at Westlake Village retirement community. Farrell's wife and Norris' mother, Carol, is battling dementia.

CASEY CAPACHI  
Plain Dealer Reporter

Charlie Farrell and his daughter, Katie Norris, want to make life better for those living with memory loss and brain illnesses, just as they have been doing for their own family.

Today, they are doing so by creating a story with a few seniors gathered around a table inside the arts and crafts studio at the senior living community Westlake Village.

"You are going to build the story, and we're just going to be the props," explains Farrell, 75, a retired vascular surgeon who worked at Lakewood Hospital, to the group now huddled over their black-and-white photocopies of historical photos.

"There are no wrong answers," Farrell continues, as his daughter smiles warmly across the table.

Norris, 33 and a minister at West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church in Rocky River, types the group's responses, and will later read them back as a story.

Those participating in today's TimeSlips storytelling exercise represent just a few of the estimated 35.6 million people worldwide living with dementia. The World Health Organization says that number will double by 2030 and more than triple by 2050.

In Ohio alone, there are 230,000 people living with Alzheimer's, the most common type of dementia. There are 5.4 million in the United States, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

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*"There are a whole lot of people out there who are being driven further and further into a closet. If you spend a little time and create the right environment, these people are still people, they can still respond."*

— Charlie Farrell, who co-leads a storytelling class for those with memory loss and their caretakers

## Reproductive Wellness

ANGELA TOWNSEND



## Parma center, UH offer more services

Parma Community General Hospital has introduced water birthing as a delivery option for moms-to-be.

On July 11 — just two days after installing the necessary equipment — the hospital's first water birth baby was born. Another arrived within a few days, and a few more pregnant women have been medically cleared for the delivery method. Hospital officials expect five to seven water births per month, a small percentage of the 480 births projected for 2012 at its Small Wonders Maternity Center.

Water birth and hydrotherapy — offered to women during labor — are touted for helping women relax, manage their pain and shorten labor. For both, the woman sits up to her chest in a labor birth pool or tub filled with warm water.

When water births take place in a hospital, babies are born under water and under the watchful eye of a certified nurse midwife. A few seconds pass before babies are placed on the mother's chest.

The Parma hospital saw an opportunity to expand its client base by offering water births.

"Everyone wants to boost maternity services," said Mary Jo Alverson, one of the two certified nurse midwives at the Parma hospital who assist in as many as 15 births each month. By offering water births, she said, "You're really bringing in a whole different clientele. In a busier facility, you just can't get that."

Money from a charity event, and clearance from the staff physicians, paved the way for Alverson and maternity center manager Lori Felton to move forward and purchase the birthing tub, about the size of two regular bathtubs.

Water birthing is not for everyone. Women must be considered to have a low-risk pregnancy. Carrying twins or triplets, going into premature labor or having any condition that requires continuous monitoring will rule women out. And even a low-risk woman is monitored before even getting into tub to make sure she and her baby are stable.

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## YOUR HEALTH: SAVING MONEY



COURTESY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE &amp; CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

A drawing by a child who was helped by Cleveland's Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center.

## Center offers free help for abused adults, kids

A safe place to stay, advocates who will go to court with you, art therapy for children and support groups for women and teens are among the many services Cleveland's Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center offers at no cost.

The nonprofit organization works to prevent and reduce domestic violence and child abuse and to provide safety, and other services, to its victims.

The nonprofit organization also offers individual and group counseling for adults, teens and children on a sliding fee scale. Medicaid is accepted.

A supervised visitation center also is available on a sliding fee scale.

To reach the organization's help line, call 216-391-HELP (216-391-4357). More details are available at [dvcac.org](http://dvcac.org).

— Diane Suchetka

We welcome your ideas. If you know of free or low-cost care, send an email to [savingmoney@plaindealer.com](mailto:savingmoney@plaindealer.com) or mail a note to Saving Money, The Plain Dealer, 1801 Superior Ave., Cleveland, OH 44114.

## FOLLOW US

**Radio:** Plain Dealer medical reporter Evelyn Theiss discusses her story "Group helps people plan for end-of-life decisions" at 7:35 this morning with WCPN FM/90.3's Anne Glusser on Tuesday Checkup. Or go to [health.wcpn.org](http://health.wcpn.org).

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## INSIDE

### Merging dance, music

GroundWorks DanceTheater fuses bluesy sounds with complex rhythms of jazz. **Details, E2**

**Off to the Alps:** "The Sound of Music" gets quirky makeover. **Details, E2**

**'Expendables' cast of characters:** A who's who of "The Expendables 2" cast. **Details, E2**

## Group helps people plan for end-of-life decisions

EVELYN THEISS  
Plain Dealer Reporter

It's never too early to think about the end of your life.

That's the philosophy of Compassion & Choices, a national organization that was created in 2003, after the merger of what was once known as the Hemlock Society and a group called Compassion in Dying.

The question isn't one of suicide, says Barbara Coombs Lee, president of the national group, which splits its headquarters between Portland, Ore.,



Coombs Lee

and Denver.

"It might just be about discontinuing extraordinary measures," says Coombs Lee, who is based in Portland. "Having the conversation about what people want is what we help them with."

Cleveland used to have its own chapter of Compassion & Choices, but its former volunteer leader recently retired.

The national chapter, however, of-

fers extensive information on its website ([compassionandchoices.org](http://compassionandchoices.org)), including state-by-state versions of living wills. It also offers one-on-one counseling with trained volunteers, most of whom have professional experience in medicine or social work, by phone.

Dr. Stuart Youngner, chairman of Case Western Reserve University's Department of Bioethics, says that while Compassion & Choices "might be sympathetic to physician-assisted suicide . . . their main thing is that people should have control."

Physician-assisted suicide and

outright euthanasia remain controversial issues for some in our country today, says Youngner. Yet the majority of people believe that a person has the right to refuse life-sustaining treatment and the right to insist that it stop if it's been started already.

Youngner, an expert on end-of-life issues, says that people who want more control over how they die don't usually want it because of pain. "It's because they don't want to exist as they are existing, even if their pain is controlled," he says.

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