

# Enhancing Lives Through Compassionate Memory Care: A Comprehensive Approach at Columbine Health

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FORT COLLINS, CO, USA, August 23, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Memory care](#) services are essential for providing a nurturing and supportive environment for individuals navigating memory loss. At [Columbine Health Systems](#), memory care centers are designed to create a warm, welcoming space that feels like home for residents. Understanding the specific care and services needed to enhance the quality of life for those experiencing memory loss is crucial. Columbine Health takes pride in offering specialized care and activities tailored to meet the unique needs of each resident, fostering a sense of community and well-being.



Memory care involves specialized care and housing for older adults with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. These facilities are thoughtfully designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals with dementia, ensuring they receive the attention and care they need. Columbine Health offers several memory care centers, including New Mercer Commons, Lemay Avenue Health & Rehab Facility, and Columbine West Health & Rehab Facility. Each center features unique amenities and services to cater to the

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*Nicole Chase, Activity Director  
at New Mercer Commons*

specific needs of residents, providing a compassionate and comfortable setting where they can thrive.

Columbine Health is committed to enriching the lives of memory care residents by offering a wide range of activities that foster community connection and support. From daily meditation, exercise, and music programs to personalized care plans, memory cafes, and therapy sessions, residents are treated with the utmost respect and care. These activities are designed to not only enhance the well-being of the residents but also to support their care providers. Makayla Kraemer, the Admissions Director at New Mercer Commons, emphasizes the importance of these activities, noting that they create a strong sense of community among residents and caregivers alike. This sense of community is evident in every event organized by Columbine Health, reflecting their commitment to providing a nurturing environment for all.

In partnership with Dementia Together, Columbine Health will host a series of events from September 9-13 in honor of Dementia Awareness Week. This week is dedicated to raising awareness about dementia and breaking the stigma surrounding it. The events aim to engage the community, providing resources and support for those affected by memory loss. Dementia Together, a non-profit organization based in Fort Collins, Colorado, has been a valuable partner in these efforts. Their mission is to create communities where no one has to walk the dementia journey



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alone, offering education, enrichment, and support services to those living with dementia and their families.

Dementia Together began in 2014 as a volunteer initiative with one care partner support group and one memory cafe. As community needs grew, the organization officially became a non-profit in 2017, sharing the SPECAL® method as a framework to positively manage dementia. This method offers simple, counterintuitive strategies that help caregivers and families effectively communicate and support their loved ones with dementia. Claire Richardson, the Outreach and Resource Development Manager at Dementia Together, shares how impactful these strategies have been in her work and personal life, helping her care for her own mother with dementia.

The SPECAL® method, based on understanding dementia as a simple disability that can be positively managed, uses the analogy of a photograph album to explain how it feels to experience dementia. This approach has been transformative for many participants, offering a new perspective on dementia that emphasizes contentment and hope rather than tragedy and crisis. Richardson explains that Dementia Together is an "in the meantime" organization, focusing on making living well with dementia the expectation while research continues into cures and causes.

One of the highlights of Dementia Awareness Week at Columbine Health is the inclusion of pet therapy sessions, which offer a fun and meaningful experience for everyone involved. Research has shown that interacting with animals can significantly reduce anxiety and promote relaxation, making pet therapy a valuable component of memory care. At Columbine Health, pet therapy is prioritized as a diverse therapeutic option that supports the well-being of residents, staff, and their loved ones.

Rolly Medina, Activity Director at the Lemay Avenue Health and Rehab Community, shares how much residents and staff look forward to the weekly pet therapy visits. "It's amazing how a dog visit brings joy and sets a positive tone for the week," Medina says. Sylvia Stribling, Director of Caring Canines, finds their work deeply rewarding, emphasizing the kindness, compassion, and respect that their beloved dogs bring to every interaction. Caring Canines provides both Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) and casual Animal Assisted Activities (AAA), benefiting individuals in various settings, including assisted living facilities and hospitals.

Stribling notes that the most important aspect of their work is the unconditional love their dogs give, which brings smiles, relieves loneliness, and makes others happy. The benefits of Animal Assisted Activities are well-documented, particularly for those with Alzheimer's or dementia. These activities have been shown to improve mood, self-esteem, and social interaction, providing stress relief and joy for everyone involved.

Nicole Chase, Activity Director at New Mercer Commons Assisted Living Community's Memory Care Community, observes that pet therapy helps residents recall memories of their own furry friends. "The joy on their faces after pet therapy visits speaks volumes," Chase says. The emotional connections formed during these sessions are invaluable, offering comfort and

companionship to residents.

At Columbine Health, the well-being of residents is always the top priority. Their memory care services are designed to create a warm and supportive environment where residents can live comfortably and with dignity. By partnering with organizations like Dementia Together and offering activities such as pet therapy, Columbine Health ensures that residents receive the highest quality care.

Dementia Awareness Week at Columbine Health is an opportunity to raise awareness, provide education, and offer support to those affected by dementia. The five-day event will feature a variety of activities, including an educational class, a film screening, a mobile memory cafe, pet therapy sessions, and a local concert. Through these events, Columbine Health and Dementia Together aim to change the narrative around dementia, promoting contentment and hope for all.

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