



For Immediate Release

Community Partnerships Improve Dementia Education at The Center at Belvedere

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA (September 2025) – In support of the many Virginians living with dementia and their caregivers, The Center at Belvedere is expanding its educational programming in collaboration with several community partners. This fall, The Center will host social gatherings and educational events—all free and open to the public—designed to foster connections and elevate awareness of cognitive health.

New offerings include:

- **Community Conversations: Alzheimer's in the Community** – *Monday, September 15*
This discussion-based program in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association invites participants to share experiences and explore how Alzheimer's Disease and dementia affect our community. Attendees will also learn about resources available locally.
- **Memory Café** – *3rd Friday each month, beginning September 19*
This new monthly series aims to provide a safe and welcoming social environment for individuals with memory loss or dementia and their caregivers. Each gathering will feature refreshments, live music, and interactive "table topics" that make conversation accessible and fun. Memory Cafés are offered in partnership with Home Instead Senior Care and Visiting Angels. Research shows that programs like these not only reduce isolation but also improve quality of life for both participants and caregivers.
- **The Empowered Caregiver** – *Thursdays, September 25–October 23*
This educational series is being presented in partnership with Sentara Martha Jefferson's Caregiver and Wellness Center and the Alzheimer's Association. Caregivers will learn strategies for building strong foundations, supporting independence, communicating effectively, and responding to dementia-related

behaviors. Participants may attend at The Center or virtually in a secure online space.

- **From Fear to Hope and Action: A Dementia Film Screening and Discussion Panel** – *Thursday, October 16*

In partnership with the UVA Department of Neurology and the WellAware Program of UVA Population Health, The Center will screen the acclaimed film *Keys Bags Names Words*, which shines a light on the lived experiences of people with dementia and their families. A discussion following the film will include panelists Carol Manning, PhD, director of the Memory & Aging Care Clinic; Samantha Fields, a Dementia Clinical Care Coordinator; and Virginia Gallagher, PhD, Assistant Professor of Neurology.

“These new educational and social events reflect our belief that dementia should not isolate people from their communities,” says Melanie Benjamin, Executive Director of The Center at Belvedere. “By bringing people together in supportive environments and equipping caregivers with knowledge and resources, we can help families affected by dementia live with greater connection, dignity, and resilience.”

All programs are free and open to the public. More information is available at thecentercville.org.

About The Center at Belvedere

The Center at Belvedere is a nationally accredited, award-winning nonprofit organization that creates opportunities for healthy aging through social engagement, physical well-being, civic involvement, creativity, and lifelong learning.