

THE MIND THIEF

A KID'S GUIDE TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

WRITTEN BY
LOUISE S.
FRAMST,
B.ED,
TAHLTAN ELDER

DRAWN BY
K. HARVEY



Sing an Honour Song for these people...

I was excited when I received the invitation to write *The Mind Thief*. The topic was of great interest to me. I also saw writing this graphic novel as an opportunity for personal learning and growth—and that has certainly been the case.

Shortly after I received the invitation, the story was gifted to me as a complete story, almost ready to be written. Almost, because there were gaps that needed researching.

My research took me to the usual places: library, bookstore, internet, etc. But I also revisited conversations that I had with my family and Elders from many nations and all walks of life. There were so many people who gave information and support that it would take a whole book to name them. (Hmm. Another book idea?) Thank you to all those who are not named here, but whose insights helped me to fill the gaps in the story.

I offer a heartfelt Thank You to the following in recognition of the special gifts that they shared.

- I would like to acknowledge and give thanks for the work of the University of British Columbia's National Core for Neuroethics and the UBC Clinic for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders. They were responsible for initiating this book. The expertise of the Team in editing this graphic novel was most welcomed.
- Medue (Thank you) to Tahltans who shared their ancient wisdom about the Native view of life: Elders, family, and friends.
- Medue to my late brother, Johnny B. Edzerza, (who is Uncle Joseph in the story).

Johnny B. Edzerza often shared his own story of recovering from 30 years as an alcoholic to becoming a medicine man and an MLA for the Yukon. He is remembered with gratitude for his support in the creation of the land-based treatment centre, Kwanlin Dun First Nation's Jackson Lake Healing Camp. <http://youtu.be/LWRv4V7jwWQ>

- Medue, David Rattray, M.Ed., Counselor at the First Nations Center, SD #60, gave his usual sage advice on stages of grief, and other spiritual matters.
- Medue to the Medicine Men and Shamans who entered my life 'at just the right time' to guide me through 'rough spots' in my life journey. They made this story richer.
- Thank you, Sandra Wrightman, RCC, Wellness Counselor at the Sunshine Coast Wellness Centre, shared holistic insights into the psychology of disease are in line with Native views of illness.
- Medue to my daughter, Cynthia Framst, who helped me to 'find' the title.
- Last, but not least: A Great Thank You and Hugs to the illustrator, Karlene Harvey. She had the onerous task of changing the 'movie in my head' to manageable illustrations in *The Mind Thief*.

In gratitude,

Louise S. Framst, B.Ed., and Tahltan Elder

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WRITTEN BY LOUISE S. FRAMST, B.ED., AND TAHITAN ELDER
ILLUSTRATED BY K. HARVEY

WHAT'S WRONG WITH AUNTY JESS?

SHE'S MY FAVOURITE AUNTY!

AUNTY JESS WAS... WAS YELLING!

SHE SHOOK HER CANE AT US!
SHE CALLED ME...

SHE CALLED ME HANNAH! THAT'S NOT MY NAME!





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**DEDICATED TO
AIDEN FRANK**



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WHAT'S WRONG WITH AUNTY JESS!

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!!!





WE WERE ALL FRIGHTENED AND UPSET WHEN THE DOCTOR TOLD US THAT YOUR AUNTY JESS HAD ALZHEIMER'S.



LOOK, I'M WORKING ON THE PLAN RIGHT NOW. WILL YOU HELP ME?



WE'LL NEED THE HELP OF YOU AND THE OTHER CHILDREN HERE...

WE DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S. SO, WE STUDIED IT. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A GATHERING IN THE SHELTER AT THE CAMPGROUND, SOON, TO SHARE WHAT WE LEARNED.



WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A GATHERING IN THE SHELTER AT THE CAMPGROUND, SOON, TO SHARE WHAT WE LEARNED.

I'M WORKING ON THE PLAN NOW. WILL YOU HELP ME PREPARE FOR THE GATHERING?



BEA GOES TO UNCLE JOEY'S TO TRADE BERRIES FOR HIS GARDEN GREENS

I HEARD SOMETHING HAPPENED WITH JESS AND THE CHILDREN!



THE UPSET STARTED WHEN BETTS AND THE OTHERS SHOWED UP THIS MORNING...BETTS LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE JESS' SISTER HANNAH. JESS BECAME CONFUSED.

JESS KNOWS THAT HANNAH IS OLDER, BUT SHE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW HANNAH WAS LITTLE AGAIN.

THE KIDS STARTED JOKING AROUND...THEN BETTS SAID, "NO WAY, WHO-SAY!" REMEMBER HOW HANNAH SAID THIS WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG?



WELL, JESS IS USUALLY CALM, AND CHEERFUL.



BUT SHE WAS SO CONFUSED ABOUT BETTS LOOKING AND SOUNDING LIKE HANNAH THAT SHE JUST LOST IT.

HERE ARE JESS' BROTHERS HERE TO TAKE HER FISHING! SHE LOVES FISHING, SO THAT'LL CALM HER DOWN.



YOU'RE SURE THAT YOU WANT TO TALK AT THE GATHERING?

I THINK IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT, BUT WE WORKED HARD ON THIS. I'M READY!



THE SHELTER, EARLY AFTERNOON



ON...

A DRY COW...

WORSE...AT ZIPPER LIP CREEK

LET'S START THE GATHERING!

SOMETHING ABOUT ALL-TIMERS...

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN, LATELY?



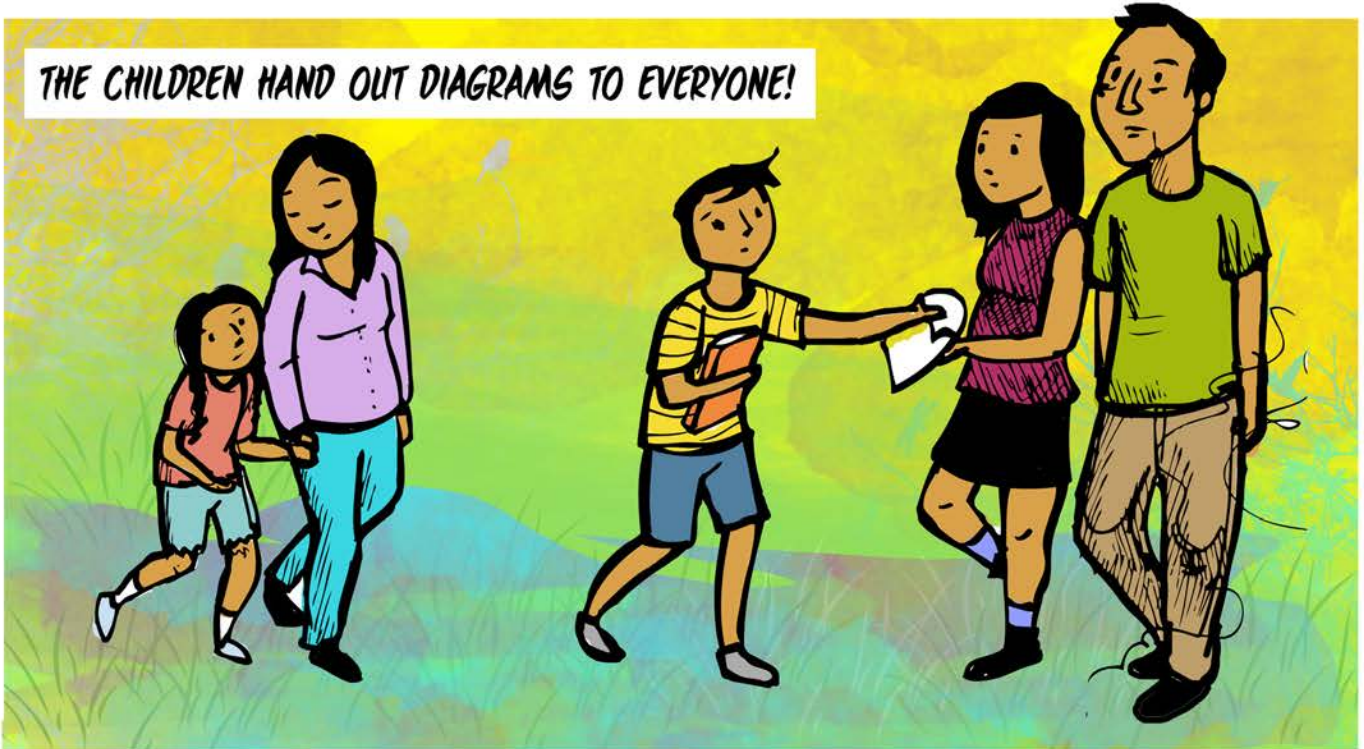
GREAT SPIRIT, BLESS THIS GATHERING AS WE MEET
TO LEARN ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.

PLEASE OPEN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS TO RECEIVE
THE TEACHINGS AND YOUR BLESSING.



ALL MY RELATIONS.

THE CHILDREN HAND OUT DIAGRAMMS TO EVERYONE!



WE KNOW THAT JESS AND MANY OF HER FAMILY HAVE HAD THE BRAIN DISEASE CALLED ALZHEIMER'S...OR HAVE IT
NOW. NONE OF US KNEW MUCH ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S WHEN JESS GOT SICK. ALL WE KNEW WAS THAT IT IS A
SERIOUS DISEASE.





SO, HER FAMILY AND A GROUP OF US FRIENDS LOOKED INTO THE FACE OF ALZHEIMER'S...

...AND FOUND THAT WE CAN DO SOMETHING TO HELP JESS—AND EACH OTHER.



BUT IT CAN'T BE CURED!

THAT'S TRUE—NOT AT THIS TIME!

SO, CAN YOU DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING WITH IT. AND HELPING EVERYONE AROUND US.



TAKE A LOOK AT THE DIAGRAM ON THE HANDOUTS!

TO READ THIS MIND MAP, START IN THE CENTRE OF THE DIAGRAM!

WE BEGAN STUDYING THE DISEASE BECAUSE WE LOVE AUNTY JESS AND WANTED TO SUPPORT HER...

... AND LEARNED ENOUGH TO WRITE A BOOK. TODAY, WE'LL START AT PURPOSE.

THIS PART SHOWS WHY WE WANTED TO LEARN ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP OURSELVES WHEN WE FACE A PROBLEM?

WE LEARNED THAT THIS IS A DISEASE OF THE BRAIN. WE ASKED OURSELVES THE HARD QUESTIONS: DO WE BELIEVE IN GOD? OR ALLAH? OR THE CREATOR?

WE FOUND THAT SCIENTISTS HAVE MADE DISCOVERIES ABOUT OUR BRAIN. AND, THESE DISCOVERIES ARE IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US.





into

PURPOSES

Alzheimer's
Brain
Cells

Brain cells

'talking'

organized

die

Regular

early onset

TYPES OF ALZHEIMER'S

what happens when cells die?



TRUE HEALING

AIN
NEW CELLS

IS THERE A GOD?

Emotions

Love

ANGER

GRIEF

FEAR

LOVE

SPiRiT

OUR ELDERS HAVE SUGGESTED THE USE OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL TO EXPLAIN OUR JOURNEY TO FACE ALZHEIMER'S.

IT MIGHT NOT BE FROM OUR HERITAGE, BUT WE LIKE IT. THE MEDICINE WHEEL HAS FOUR PARTS: EAST, WEST, NORTH, AND SOUTH.

RED IS SOUTH, BLACK IS WEST, WHITE IS NORTH, AND YELLOW IS EAST.



WHEN WE TALK OF HEALING, SOUTH REPRESENTS EMOTION.

TISSUES.... BECAUSE WE CRY WITH LAUGHTER, ANGER, SADNESS, AND SO ON.

WEST IS SPIRIT.
SMUDGE BOWL FOR SPIRIT.

WEST



SOUTH

NORTH STANDS FOR THE PHYSICAL.
DOLLS, FOR OUR PHYSICAL SELVES.

NORTH



EAST IS FOR MENTAL, FOR
LEARNING.
AN ALARM CLOCK WAS CHOSEN
FOR THIS.

EACH OF US MOVES AROUND THE
MEDICINE WHEEL IN OUR OWN WAY.

TODAY WE WILL MOVE AROUND THE
RIM OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL IN THIS
HEALING JOURNEY.



EAST

LET'S BEGIN WITH THE EAST PART OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL - THE MENTAL.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE BRAIN OF SOMEONE WHO HAS ALZHEIMER'S?
SCIENTISTS ARE LEARNING MORE
AND MORE ABOUT THE BRAIN.

OUR BRAIN IS MADE UP
OF BILLIONS OF CELLS.



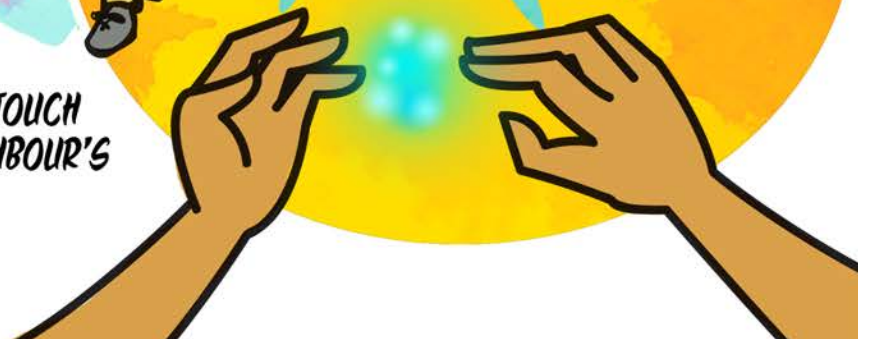
SO, LITTLE BRAIN CELLS, MOVE
APART AND HOLD OUT YOUR
ARMS.

LET'S TAKE A LOOK
AT OUR BRAIN WITH
THE HELP OF THE
CHILDREN.



THEY WILL BE THE BRAIN CELLS.
A BRAIN CELL HAS PARTS THAT ARE
LIKE OUR BODY, WITH ARMS,
HANDS, AND FINGERS.

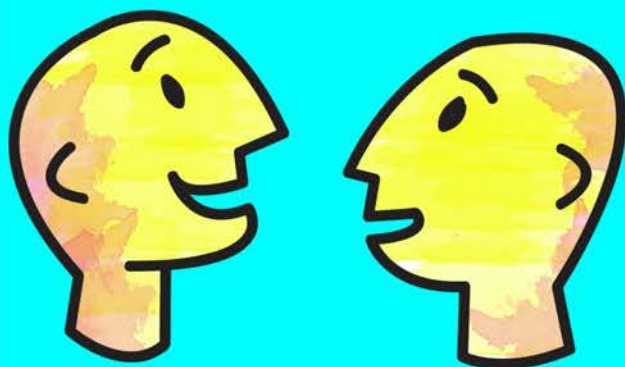
REACH OUT AND ALMOST TOUCH
YOUR FINGER TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S
FINGERTIPS.



HOW DO BRAIN CELLS
TALK TO EACH OTHER?



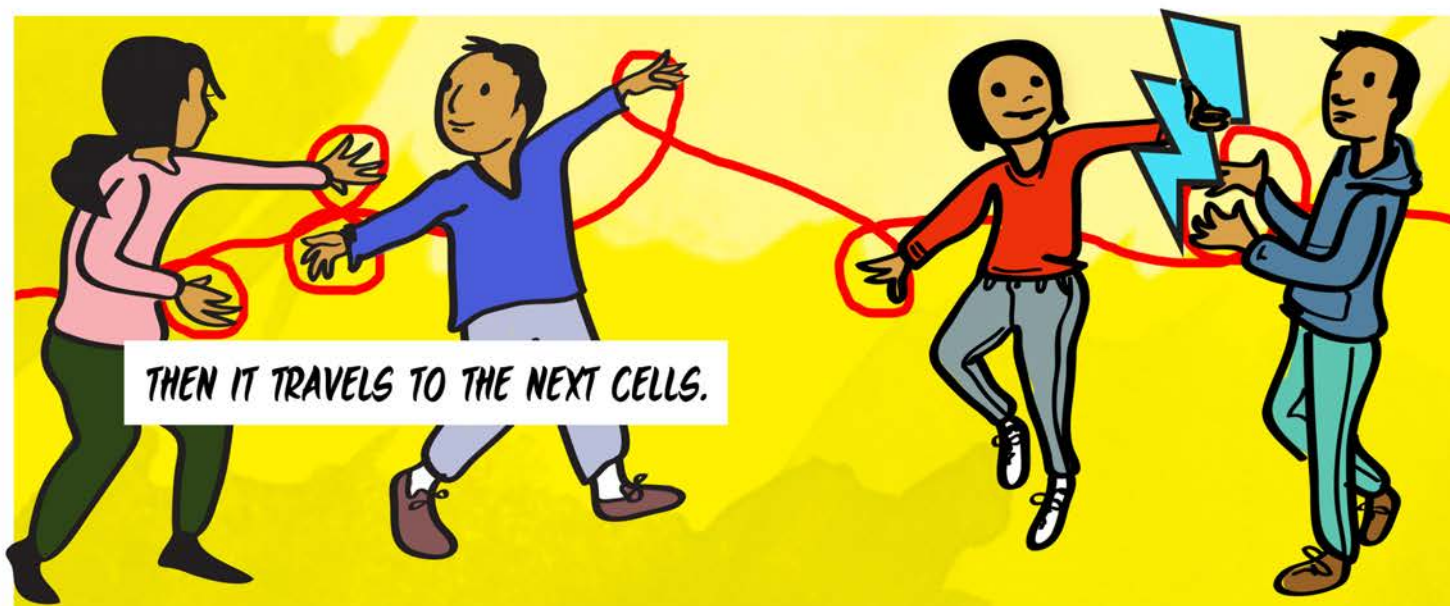
BRAIN CELLS TALK TO EACH
OTHER. THAT'S HOW WE THINK,
LEARN, REMEMBER, FEEL...

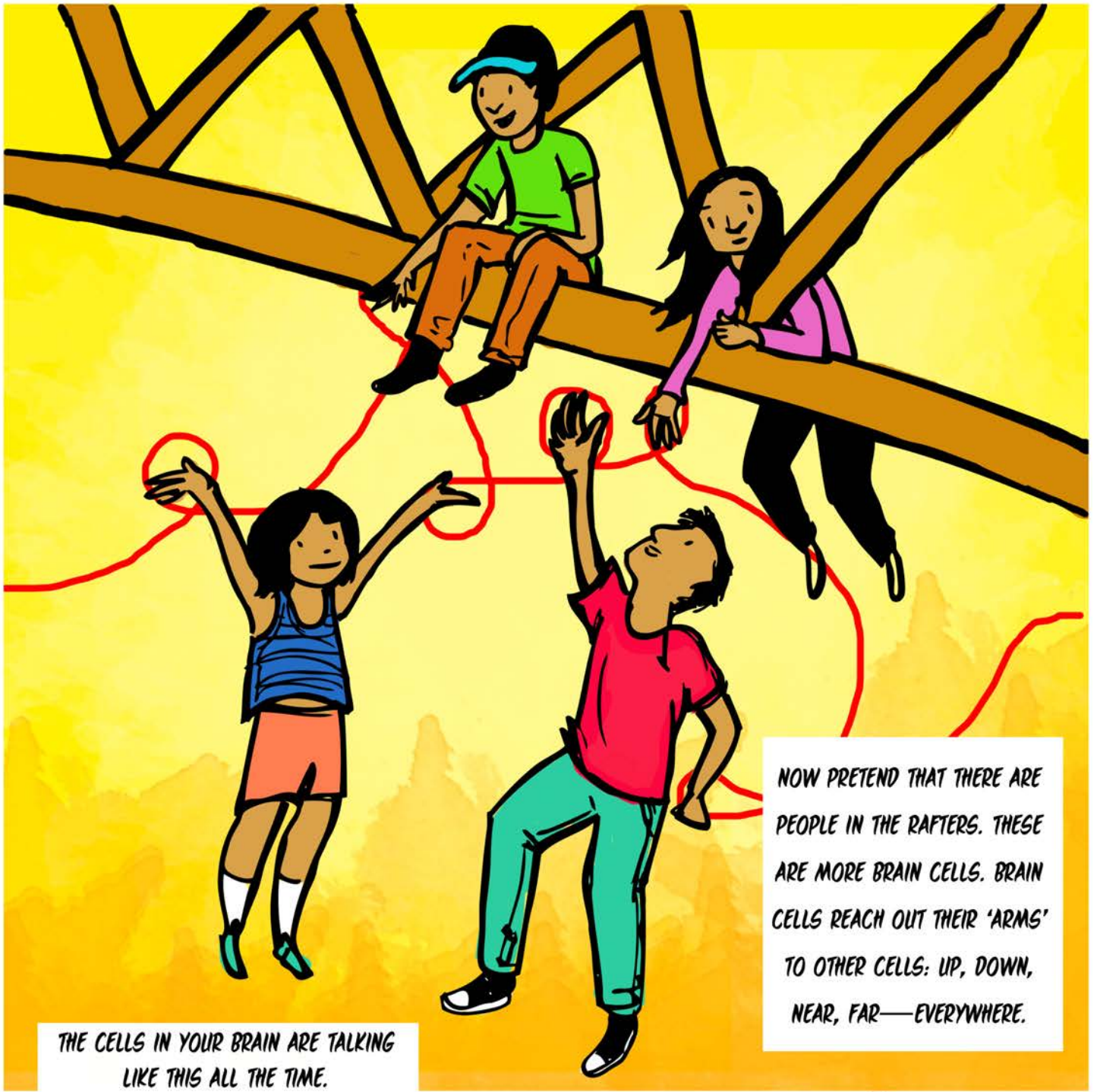


WHEN YOU HAVE A THOUGHT, YOUR
BRAIN CELL SENDS AN ELECTRICAL
CHARGE DOWN ITS 'ARMS',



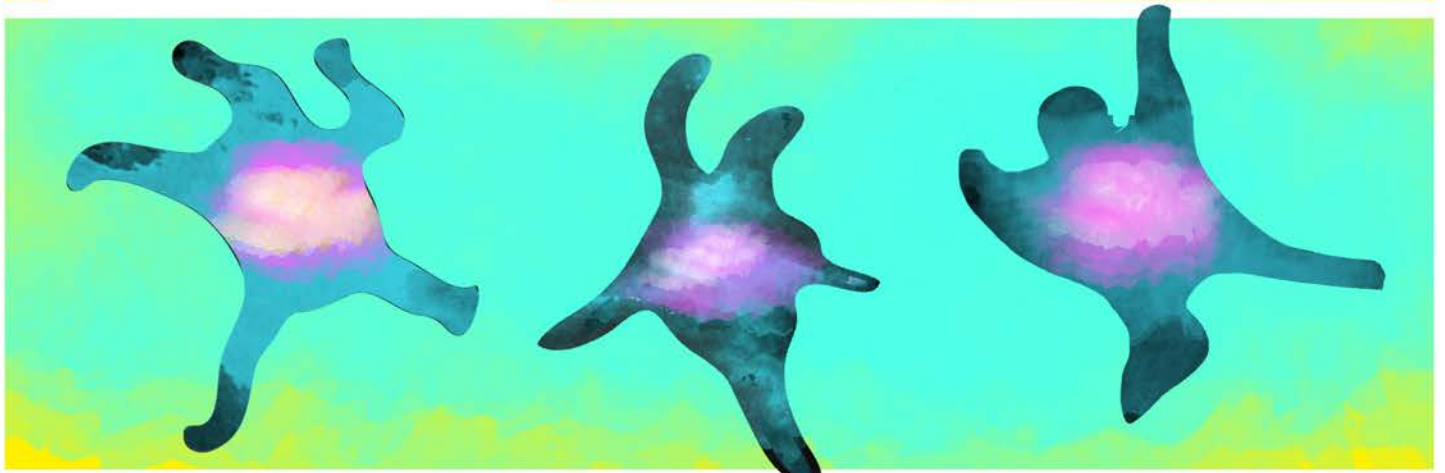
THEN IT TRAVELS TO THE NEXT CELLS.





THE CELLS IN YOUR BRAIN ARE TALKING LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME.

NOW PRETEND THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE RAFTERS. THESE ARE MORE BRAIN CELLS. BRAIN CELLS REACH OUT THEIR 'ARMS' TO OTHER CELLS: UP, DOWN, NEAR, FAR—EVERYWHERE.





WHERE DOES OUR BRAIN GET ITS INFORMATION?



SEEING



HEARING



TOUCHING



TASTING



SMELLING



THINKING

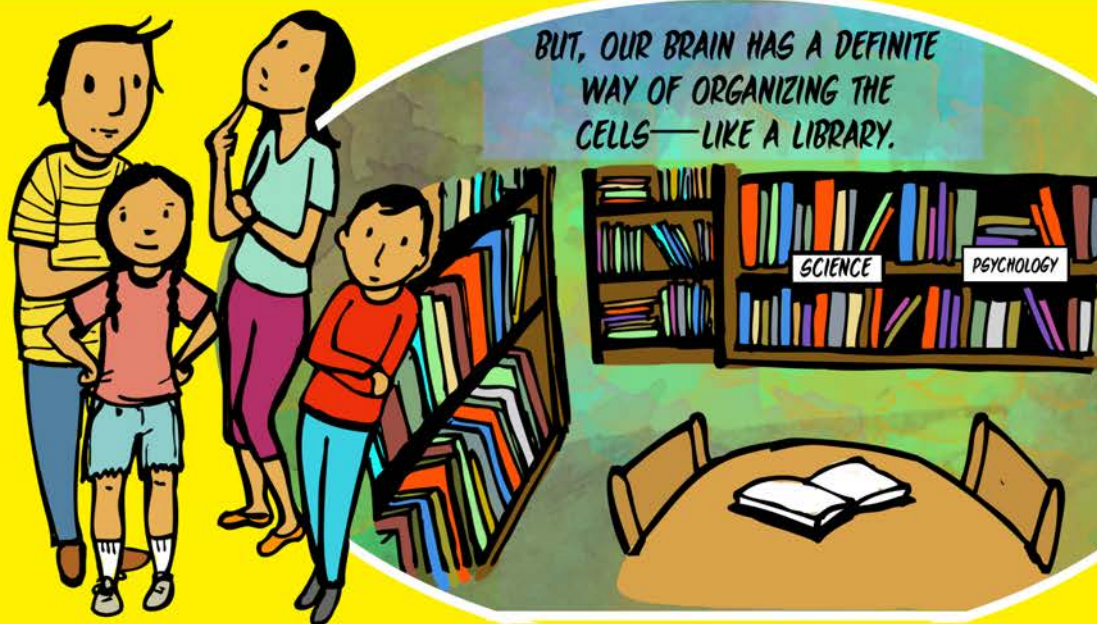


LISTENING



INFORMATION COMES INTO THE BRAIN—AND THE CELLS SHARE IT. TO UNDERSTAND THIS BETTER, LET'S SEE HOW THE BRAIN ORGANIZES ITSELF.

LOOK AT THE CHILDREN—OUR BRAIN CELLS—THEY ARE NOT ARRANGED AT ALL.



BUT, OUR BRAIN HAS A DEFINITE WAY OF ORGANIZING THE CELLS—LIKE A LIBRARY.

LET'S GROUP THE KIDS IN SOME KIND OF ORDER. IDEAS?

BOYS AND GIRLS!

GOOD ONE! GIRLS, HERE. BOYS, THERE.



BOYS WITH HATS!

ALL BOYS WEARING HATS, PLEASE GO TO THE BACK.



YOUNG KIDS. SEVEN AND YOUNGER TO THE FRONT.

THE BRAIN ORGANIZES CELLS INTO GROUPS. BOYS WITH HATS ARE THE VISION CENTER. THEY STORE INFORMATION COMING IN FROM THE EYES.

EYES SEE THINGS, THEN SEND THE MESSAGE TO THE VISION CENTER.



CELLS IN THE VISION CENTER SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH OTHER CELLS.

SO, THE EARS SEND MESSAGES TO THE HEARING CENTER, AND SO ON?

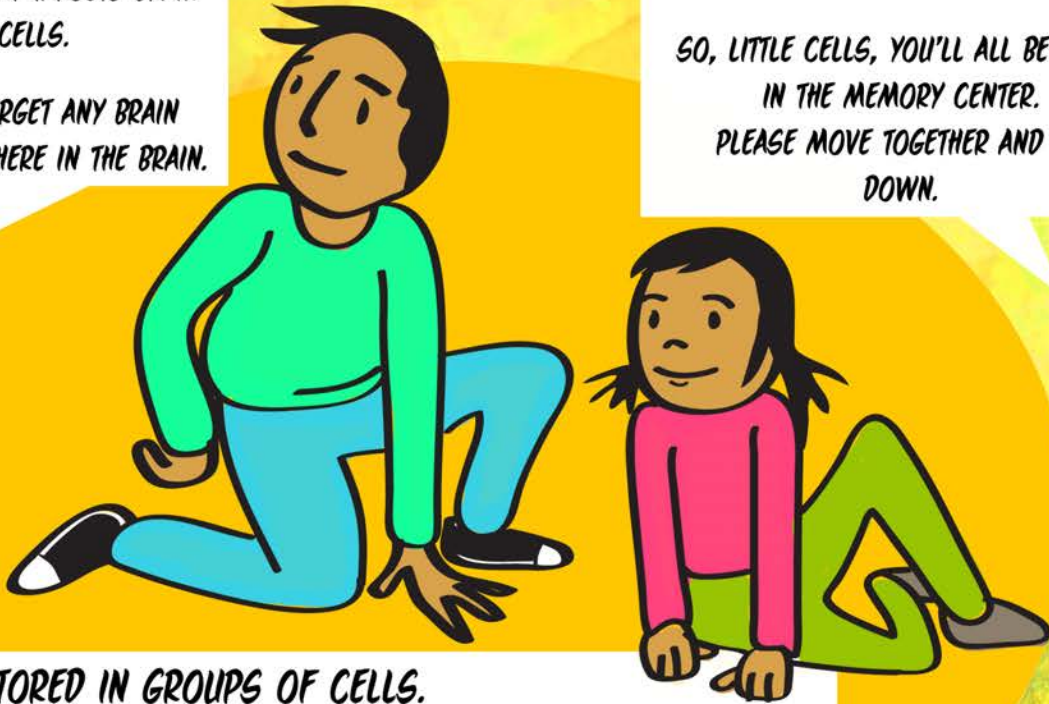
EXACTLY.

REMEMBER: ALZHEIMER'S IS A DISEASE THAT TARGETS BRAIN CELLS.

IT CAN TARGET ANY BRAIN CELL, ANYWHERE IN THE BRAIN.

WE'LL USE THE MEMORY CENTRE FOR THIS DEMONSTRATION.

SO, LITTLE CELLS, YOU'LL ALL BE CELLS IN THE MEMORY CENTER. PLEASE MOVE TOGETHER AND SIT DOWN.



MEMORY IS STORED IN GROUPS OF CELLS. EACH OF YOU WILL BE A GROUP OF CELLS IN THE MEMORY CENTER.



WE ALL FORGET THINGS, LIKE WHERE WE PUT OUR KEYS. BUT A PERSON WITH ALZHEIMER'S FORGETS THINGS IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

LET'S LOOK AT BUB'S STORY. BUB LOVED TO DRIVE...



...BUT ONE DAY, BUB SIMPLY COULD NOT BACK HIS MOTOR HOME INTO PLACE. THERE WERE OTHER SIGNS OF SERIOUS MEMORY PROBLEMS.

WOW, THAT'S JUST LIKE JESS. JESS STARTED TO REPEAT WHAT SHE SAID, WITHOUT REALIZING SHE WAS REPEATING HERSELF.

I CAUGHT TWO FISH YESTERDAY!

I CAUGHT TWO FISH YESTERDAY



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN BUB'S BRAIN?



BUB IS FORGETTING A LOT...SO YOU AND YOU LEAVE.

HOW TO BACKUP A MOTORHOME—PLEASE GO AND SIT OVER THERE.

THE 'HOLES' ARE LEFT BY BRAIN CELLS THAT HAVE DIED FROM ALZHEIMER'S.

THESE 'HOLES' IN THE MEMORY CENTER ARE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CELLS DIE IN A BRAIN WITH ALZHEIMER'S.



ALZHEIMER'S IS STEALING BUB'S BRAIN!

...BUT ALZHEIMER'S IS STILL MORE COMPLICATED. WE'LL LEARN MORE AFTER THE BREAK.



FACT: THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF ALZHEIMER'S.

ONE IS THE REGULAR KIND THAT ANYONE CAN GET. IT USUALLY STARTS WHEN A PERSON IS OVER 60.

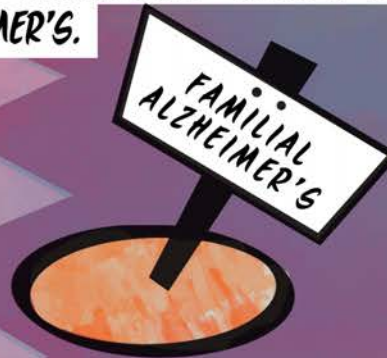


THE SECOND IS KNOWN AS FAMILIAL BECAUSE IT RUNS IN FAMILIES. PEOPLE INHERIT A GENE THAT CAUSES THE DISEASE.

FAMILIAL ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IS VERY RARE, BUT THIS TYPE OF ALZHEIMER'S IS IN OUR FAMILY.

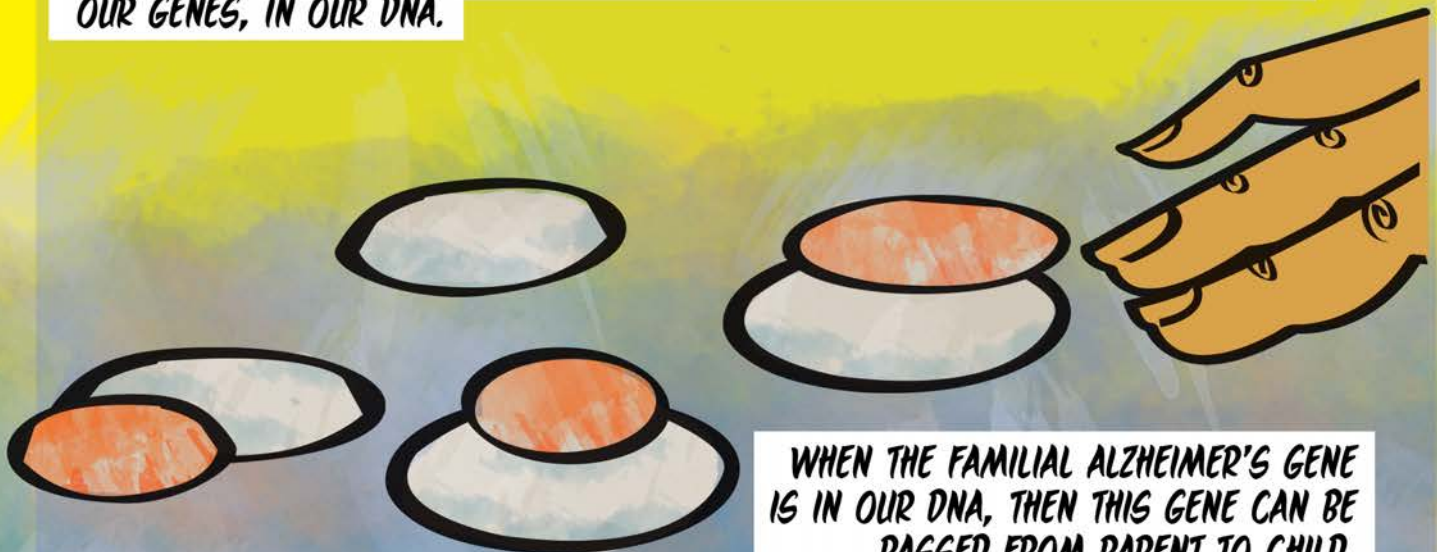
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO TYPES?

THE RED STONE STANDS FOR ALZHEIMER'S.



A PLAIN STONE WITH A LITTLE RED STONE ON TOP SHOWS THE REGULAR ALZHEIMER'S THAT ANYONE CAN GET.

THE RED IS INSIDE THE STONE—THE WAY FAMILIAL ALZHEIMER'S IS INSIDE US, IN OUR GENES, IN OUR DNA.



WHEN THE FAMILIAL ALZHEIMER'S GENE IS IN OUR DNA, THEN THIS GENE CAN BE PASSED FROM PARENT TO CHILD.

JESS IS MY COUSIN. WILL I GET ALZHEIMER'S LIKE HER?

IT'S COMPLICATED. THIS STORY WILL HELP US TO UNDERSTAND.



A WOMAN NAMED DANCING DEER, MARRIED JOHN RIVERS. THEY HAD A CHILD, LITTLE DEER

JOHN RIVERS WAS KILLED IN A FREAK ACCIDENT. LATER, DANCING DEER REMARRIED.



WHAT SHE DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT HER NEW HUSBAND NAMED GREAT BEAR HAD A FAMILIAL ALZHEIMER'S GENE.



THEY HAD FIVE CHILDREN. WHICH ONES CARRIED THE ALZHEIMER'S GENE?

ALL OF OUR GENES COME IN PAIRS. EVEN THOUGH GREAT BEAR CARRIED A GENE THAT CAUSES FAMILIAL ALZHEIMER'S, HE ALSO CARRIED A MATCHING GENE THAT DID NOT CARRY THE FAMILIAL ALZHEIMER'S GENE. EITHER THE ALZHEIMER'S GENE OR THE NON-ALZHEIMER'S GENE WILL BE PASSED ON TO EACH OF HIS CHILDREN.



WOULD FIVE OF YOU CHILDREN TAKE ONE STONE WITH RED AND ONE WITHOUT RED. PUT ONE IN EACH HAND, AND PUT YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK.

ELLEN WILL CHOOSE A STONE FROM EACH CHILD. IF SHE CHOOSES A STONE WITH RED IN IT, THIS MEANS THE FAMILIAL ALZHEIMER'S GENE WAS PASSED ON BY GREAT BEAR TO THAT CHILD.



AT THIS TIME, SCIENTISTS SAY THAT IF YOU HAVE A FAMILIAL ALZHEIMER'S GENE, YOU WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY GET ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.

IF SHE CHOOSES A STONE WITHOUT RED, THIS MEANS THAT THE HEALTHY GENE WAS PASSED ON BY GREAT BEAR TO THAT CHILD.



COULD DANCING DEER'S DAUGHTER GET ALZHEIMER'S?
LITTLE DEER COULD GET REGULAR ALZHEIMER'S.

YES. ANYONE CAN GET
REGULAR ALZHEIMER'S.

SO, THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF
WHETHER OR NOT YOU'LL GET FAMILIAL
ALZHEIMER'S IS: WE DON'T KNOW.

NO ONE KNOWS WHAT YOUR FUTURE WILL HOLD.
THAT IS ONE OF LIFE'S GREAT MYSTERIES.



ONE OF LIFE'S GREAT MYSTERIES

**CAN I PREVENT
ALZHEIMER'S?**

PREVENT IT?
MAYBE NOT

- AT THIS TIME.



BUT YOU CAN DO
SOMETHING TO HELP
YOUR BRAIN STAY
HEALTHY. A HEALTHY
BRAIN IS THE BEST
'TREATMENT' FOR THIS
DISEASE.



**IS THERE A CURE
FOR ALZHEIMER'S**

NO. NOT THAT ANYONE KNOWS
OF—AT THIS TIME. BUT, THERE
ARE SOME MEDICINES THAT CAN
HELP SLOW IT DOWN.



SO, WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?



IT'S FRUSTRATING WHEN WE DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER, YET,
GROWN-UPS CAN GET TESTED IN THE MEANTIME!
AND THAT LEADS US TO THE NEXT PLACE ON THE MEDICINE WHEEL...

TO THE EMOTIONS OF THE SOUTH.

WHEN OUR GROUP FOUND OUT WHAT ALZHEIMER'S IS, WE WENT THROUGH A RANGE OF EMOTIONS. WE WENT THROUGH WHAT IS CALLED THE STAGES OF GRIEF.

DENIAL

It has to be a mistake.



FEAR

What's going to happen to her?



ANGER

I won't take this!



BARGAINING

If only this can be cured, then I will...



DEPRESSION

What can I do? It's hopeless.



ACCEPTANCE

I will make the best of what is in my life.



WE ALSO HAD LOTS OF QUESTIONS, LIKE THIS ONE: WHY DID OUR FAMILY GET FAMILIAL ALZHEIMER'S?

BUT NO ONE KNOWS FOR SURE WHY THIS GENE MUTATION HAPPENED.

DOES THIS MEAN, "WHY DID OUR GREAT-GREAT GRANDFATHER GET ALZHEIMER'S?"

SCIENTISTS TELL US THAT HIS GENE CHANGED. THEY SAY IT GOT A MUTATION.

OUR ELDERS SPEAK OF SPIRITUAL REASONS FOR THE CHANGE IN HIS DNA.

MAYBE THE CHALLENGE WAS GIVEN TO THIS FAMILY FOR A REASON. MAYBE THEY HAVE THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO FACE THE DISEASE — AND THE DETERMINATION TO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO "CURE IT" OR "LIVE WITH IT".

MEETINGS LIKE THIS MAY HELP THE FAMILY TO ACCEPTANCE SOONER.



BUT THE PATH THROUGH OUR EMOTIONAL ISSUES AND ON TO THE WEST-SPIRIT IS OFTEN THE MOST DIFFICULT.

OUR GREAT-UNCLE JOSEPH EXPLAINED THE DIFFICULTY THIS WAY:

THINK OF STANDING ON A HILL, LOOKING ACROSS A LITTLE VALLEY TO A HILL ON THE OTHER SIDE.

THE TOP OF THE HILL ON THE OTHER SIDE IS WELLNESS,
MEANING IN BALANCE, HARMONY.

THE HILL YOU ARE STANDING ON IS UN-WELLNESS, MEANING
NOT WELL, OR, LACKING HARMONY.

EACH PERSON TRAVELS BETWEEN
THE TWO HILLS IN THEIR OWN
WAY—AND IN THEIR OWN TIME.

THINK OF SIGNPOSTS FROM WHERE
YOU ARE STANDING TO THE UPPER
SLOPE OF THE OPPOSITE HILL.



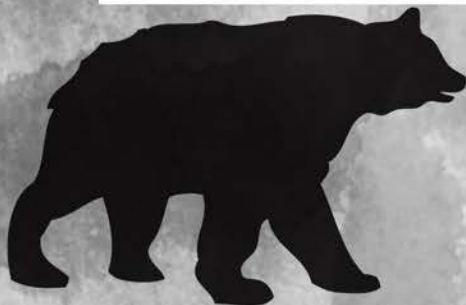
OR, A PERSON MIGHT GO AHEAD,
AND THEN FALL BACK TO AN EARLIER
POSITION.

SOMETIMES A HELPER (LIKE A
COUNSELOR OR A MEDICINE MAN)
IS NEEDED TO HELP A PERSON BECOME
UNSTUCK, OR TO BREAK THE
UNHELPFUL REPEATING LOOP.

AND, A PERSON MIGHT GET STUCK
IN ONE PLACE FOR A LONG TIME.



WEST IS THE NEXT POSITION ON THE MEDICINE WHEEL.
OUR ELDERS SAY THERE IS A CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN
SOUTH-EMOTION AND WEST-SPIRIT.



AT THIS POINT IN THE MEDICINE WHEEL, WE GO INSIDE OURSELVES TO
THINK ABOUT WHAT IS SACRED TO US. THE SAME WAY THAT THE BEAR
GOES INTO HIS CAVE TO DIGEST HIS FOOD, WE 'DIGEST' OUR IDEAS.

THEIR INNER SELF-TALK MIGHT INCLUDE: "WHAT IF THERE IS A CREATOR (OR GOD, OR ALLAH, ETC....)? IF THERE IS, THEN WHY DID THIS HAPPEN?"



THEN SUDDENLY, WITH GREAT PEACEFULNESS, THE PERSON ACCEPTS THEIR SPIRITUALITY. IT'S LIKE THE PERSON WALKED INTO A DIFFERENT SPACE AND SAW ALL THAT THEY NEEDED TO BE AT PEACE WITHIN THEMSELVES.

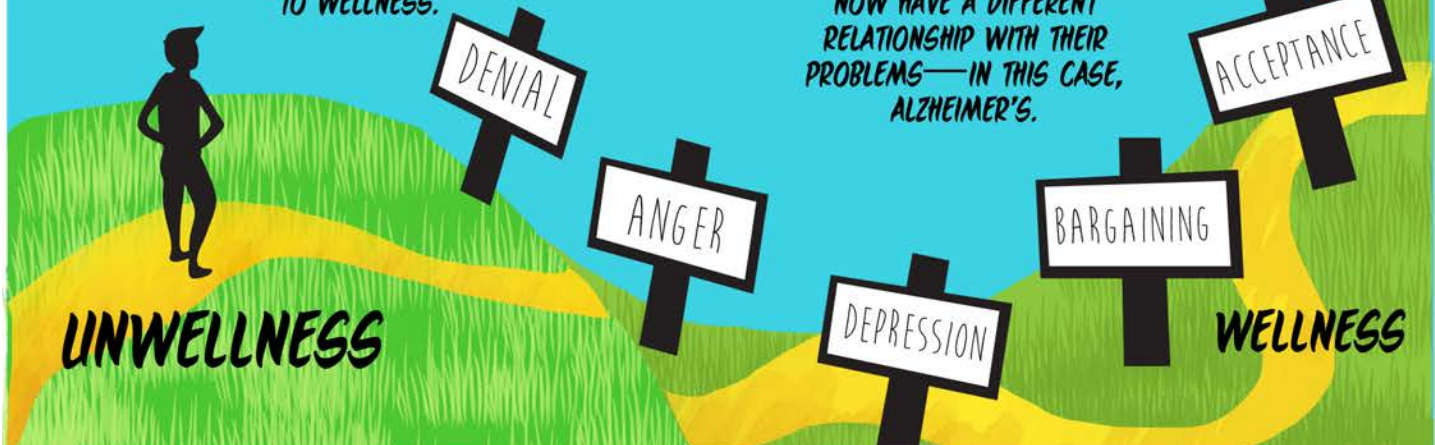
WHAT DID THEY SEE?

POSSIBILITIES? THE WHOLE PICTURE? THEIR LIFE PURPOSE? THEIR SPIRIT, HEALED? EACH PERSON SEES WHAT HE OR SHE NEEDS TO SEE.



WHEN A PERSON IS TRULY COMFORTABLE IN THE WEST, THEY CAN FINISH THEIR CLIMB TO THE SUMMIT OF THE HILL, TO WELLNESS.

GREAT-UNCLE JOSEPH SAYS THOSE WHO HAVE REACHED WELLNESS, NOW HAVE A DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR PROBLEMS—IN THIS CASE, ALZHEIMER'S.



WE MAKE CHOICES ABOUT HOW TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT GIVES OUR BRAIN THE BEST CHANCE—BY BEING HEALTHY.

SO—WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S?



WHAT WE DO, WHAT WE EAT AND DRINK, WHAT WE THINK—ALL HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECT ON US...



WHAT CHOICES CAN WE MAKE TO KEEP OUR BRAIN HEALTHY?



SOMETIMES, BY THE TIME THE SPIRIT'S HEALING JOURNEY REACHES NORTH—PHYSICAL ON THE MEDICINE WHEEL, ANY ILLNESS MAY BE HEALED, OR IN THE PROCESS OF HEALING.

OUR ANCESTORS 'EXERCISED' A LOT. THEY WERE LEAN, STRONG PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY NEEDED TO BE. NOWADAYS, WE DON'T NEED TO BE SO ACTIVE TO EARN A LIVING—BUT WE DO NEED EXERCISE.



EXERCISE BRINGS OXYGEN AND FOOD TO THE BRAIN.



OUR ANCESTORS USED THEIR IMAGINATION TO SOLVE PROBLEMS, TO SURVIVE EVERY DAY. THINKING KEPT THEIR BRAINS HEALTHY.



TODAY, WE KEEP OUR BRAIN ACTIVE IN MANY WAYS. WHEN WE LEARN, WE GROW NEW CELLS AND NEW 'FINGERS'.

OUR ANCESTORS ATE HEALTHY FOOD WITH LOTS OF ORGANIC MEAT, FISH, VEGETABLES, AND BERRIES.



OUR ANCESTORS UNDERSTOOD AND VALUED A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.

I WONDER HOW MANY OF US ENJOY A FULL NIGHT'S SLEEP? DOES PLAYING TOO LATE, OR WATCHING TV INTERFERE WITH OUR SLEEP?



WE HAVE ALWAYS VALUED OUR FAMILY. IN THE OLD DAYS, WE LIVED CLOSE TO EACH OTHER—DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER FOR HELP IN EVERYTHING.



TODAY WE HAVE A SOCIAL NETWORK—AND KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER IN MANY WAYS.



IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING THAT WE DO, WE MIGHT NOT RECOVER OUR HEALTH. BUT IF WE HAVE MADE OUR SPIRIT JOURNEY AROUND THE MEDICINE WHEEL, WE KNOW THAT WE WILL BE IN A GOOD PLACE.

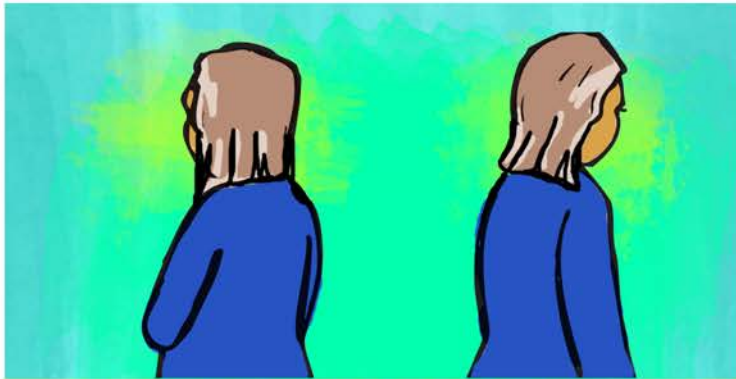




JESS'S DAD GOT ALZHEIMER'S WHEN HE WAS 49. JESS WAS AFRAID THAT SHE'D GET THE DISEASE. THEN SHE STARTED REPEATING WHAT SHE HAD JUST SAID.



WE WERE HEART-BROKEN. ANGRY. SCARED. HOPELESS. I CAN TELL YOU—ALL OF US WENT AROUND THE MEDICINE WHEEL! SOME OF US WENT AROUND MORE THAN ONCE.

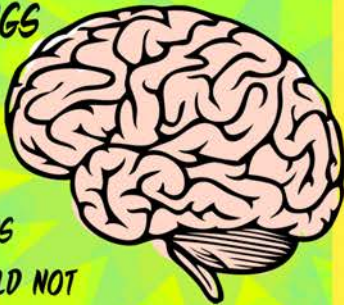


JESS HAS HAD ALZHEIMER'S FOR FIVE YEARS NOW, AND THE DOCTORS ARE SURPRISED AT HOW SLOWLY THE DISEASE IS PROGRESSING. OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS FOUND OUT WHAT WE COULD DO TO HELP KEEP JESS'S BRAIN HEALTHY FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.



WE ALL WENT LOOKING FOR INFORMATION.

AUNTY BEA LEARNED TWO IMPORTANT THINGS THAT GAVE US HOPE. ONE. WHEN WE WERE YOUNG, SCIENTISTS TAUGHT US THAT OUR BRAIN COULD NOT CHANGE. WELL, IT TURNS OUT THAT THE SCIENTISTS WERE WRONG. THE BRAIN CAN CHANGE.



SECOND. AUNTY BEA LEARNED IS THAT OUR BRAIN CAN GROW NEW CELLS. AND WHILE EXERCISE AND LEARNING NEW THINGS CANNOT STOP ALZHEIMER'S, IT WILL HELP CREATE NEW BRAINS CELLS AND POTENTIALLY SLOW DOWN THE PROGRESSION OF THE DISEASE



WE MADE UP OUR MINDS TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT WOULD HELP JESS'S BRAIN.

THE FIRST INFORMATION THAT WE LEARNED SAID THAT THE FOOD WE CHOSE IS IMPORTANT TO A HEALTHY BRAIN. WE LOOKED AT THE FOOD THAT WAS HEALTHY. WHY! OUR GRANDPARENTS ATE THAT ALL THE TIME!



A GROUP OF US LOOKED TO SEE WHAT FOOD IS IN JESS AND MY CUPBOARDS. THIS IS PART OF THE LIST WE MADE. I TYPED IT—I LEARNED TO TYPE ON THE COMPUTER. I'M NOT GOOD AT TYPING, BUT I AM GOOD AT CORRECTING!

Uncle Joey's list

- A FREEZER FULL OF MOOSE, FISH, GEESSE.
- RASPBERRIES, LOWBUSH BLUEBERRIES.
 - 20 LB BAG OF RICE
 - 1 SMALL BAG OF CARROTS
 - 2 ONIONS
- 3 PACKS OF POTATO CHIPS
- 10 JARS OF FRUIT—PEACHES & PEARS.
 - A BOX OF ORANGE JUICE
 - 2 JARS OF STRAWBERRY JAM
- 5 LOAVES OF HOMEMADE WHITE BREAD
 - 2 BRICKS OF LARD
 - 1 BRICK BUTTER
- 1 CASE OF POP—DIFFERENT KINDS
 - COFFEE, TEA, HOT CHOCOLATE



THEN WE PUT THE FOODS THAT AREN'T SO GOOD AND THREW THEM OUT.

YOU SEE ALL THESE? WELL, WE LEARNED TO READ THE LABEL. ALL OF THESE HAVE TOO MUCH SUGAR, FAT AND SALT.



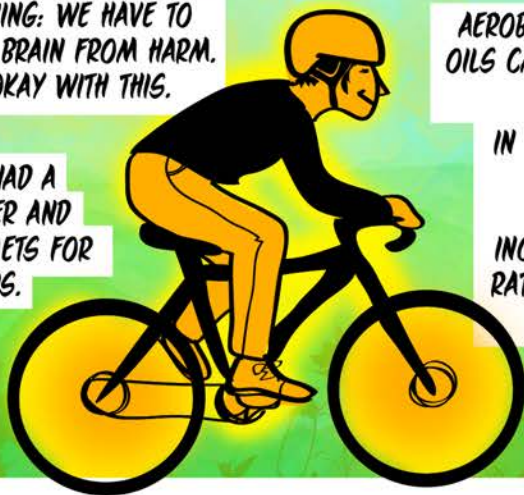
WE SAW THAT OUR CUPBOARD WAS ALMOST BARE OF VEGETABLES! SO I BOUGHT SOME FRESH VEGGIES. SOMETIMES I BOUGHT FROZEN VEGGIES.

ALL OF US PLANNED TO MAKE GARDENS. MINE IS FILLED WITH LEAFY GREENS RIGHT NOW.



ANOTHER THING: WE HAVE TO PROTECT OUR BRAIN FROM HARM. JESS IS OKAY WITH THIS.

BUT WE HAD A FUND-RAISER AND BOUGHT HELMETS FOR THE KIDS.



AEROBIC EXERCISE AND SPECIAL OILS CALLED OMEGAS HELP GROW NEW BRAIN CELLS.

IN PLAIN TALK, AEROBIC EXERCISE MEANS EXERCISE THAT INCREASES YOUR HEART RATE FOR A GOOD LONG TIME.



JESS LIKES TO CLIMB THE HILL BEHIND OUR HOUSE. SO, THAT'S WHAT WE DO, TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK.



I DON'T KNOW IF THIS HELPS THE ALZHEIMER'S...BUT JESS SEEMS TO FEEL GOOD.



LOTS OF PEOPLE HELP OUT BY VISITING US EVERY DAY. WE ENJOY EACH OTHER'S COMPANY—AND IT HELPS JESS' BRAIN HEALTH. (AND OURS, TOO.)

NOW, OMEGAS ARE FOUND IN MANY FOODS, LIKE FISH. SALMON IS VERY GOOD!



JESS LIKES TO PLAY NUMBER GAMES, SO WE PLAY TILE RUMMY.



I ALSO BOUGHT HEMP HEARTS TO PUT IN JESS' FOOD SO SHE GETS OMEGAS IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS.



PRAYING IS IMPORTANT. WE PRAY EVERYDAY. WE GIVE THANKS FOR EVERY BLESSING IN OUR LIVES. OUR FAMILY BELIEVES THAT PRAYING IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THAT WE DO. IN THE MEDICINE WHEEL, THIS IS PART OF TAKING CARE OF OUR SPIRITUALITY.

WE SHOW JESS THAT WE LOVE HER.

WE WILL KEEP HER AT HOME UNTIL WE CAN'T GIVE HER THE CARE SHE NEEDS ANYMORE.



WE LOVE JESS, EVEN THOUGH SHE IS NOT THE SAME ANYMORE.

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, NONE OF US ARE! WHY, I USED TO BE A SEVEN AND A HALF POUND SQUAWKER.



REMEMBER WHEN GREAT-UNCLE JOSEPH SAID THAT WHEN WE GET TO WELLNESS, WE HAVE A "DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIP" WITH OUR PROBLEM?

WELL, I THINK THAT ALL OF US WHO STUDIED ALZHEIMER'S HAVE CHANGED OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT.



I WOULDN'T SAY WE LOVE IT, BUT WE LOOK AT IT IN AN ACCEPTING WAY. WE DON'T GET SO ANGRY, FOR INSTANCE.



WE LEARNED A LOT BECAUSE OF JESS'S PROBLEM. ALL OF US FOUND THAT WE LIKE TO DO LOTS OF THINGS.



I LOVE GARDENS AND AM LOOKING AT NEW PLANTS TO TRY OUT HERE.

REG, HERE, TOOK A COURSE ON REPAIRING SMALL MOTORS...SO, IF ANYONE HAS A LITTLE MOTOR THAT NEEDS WORK...



WE STILL GET SAD SOMETIMES. ONLY NOW, INSTEAD OF JUST GETTING ANGRY OR DEPRESSED, OR WHATEVER, WE HAVE STRATEGIES TO HELP US.



MY FAVOURITE IS SOMETHING I SAW ON TV. THIS YOUNG WOMAN WAS HURT IN AN ACCIDENT, SO HER FACE WASN'T SO NICE-LOOKING ANYMORE.



ONCE WHEN SHE WAS MOANING TO HER SISTER ABOUT IT, SISTER SAID, "IT'S OKAY TO COMPLAIN, BUT FOR ONLY FIVE MINUTES."



SO, THE ONE SISTER STARTED COMPLAINING AGAIN. THEN HER SISTER LOOKED AT HER WATCH, AND SAID, "TIME'S UP."

THAT'S WHAT I DO. AFTER FIVE MINUTES, I THINK OF SOMETHING CHEERFUL.

SOMETIMES IT'S HARD FOR OTHERS TO UNDERSTAND THE IDEA THAT JESS IS DEAR TO US.

I HEARD A STORY ABOUT AN OLD MAN WHO WAS HAVING COFFEE IN A COFFEE SHOP WITH HIS BUDDIES. THE OLD MAN LOOKED AT HIS WATCH AND SAID THAT HE HAD TO GO. HE ALWAYS ATE LUNCH WITH HIS WIFE WHO HAD ALZHEIMER'S.



ONE OF THE MEN SAID, "SHE WON'T KNOW, WILL SHE?"

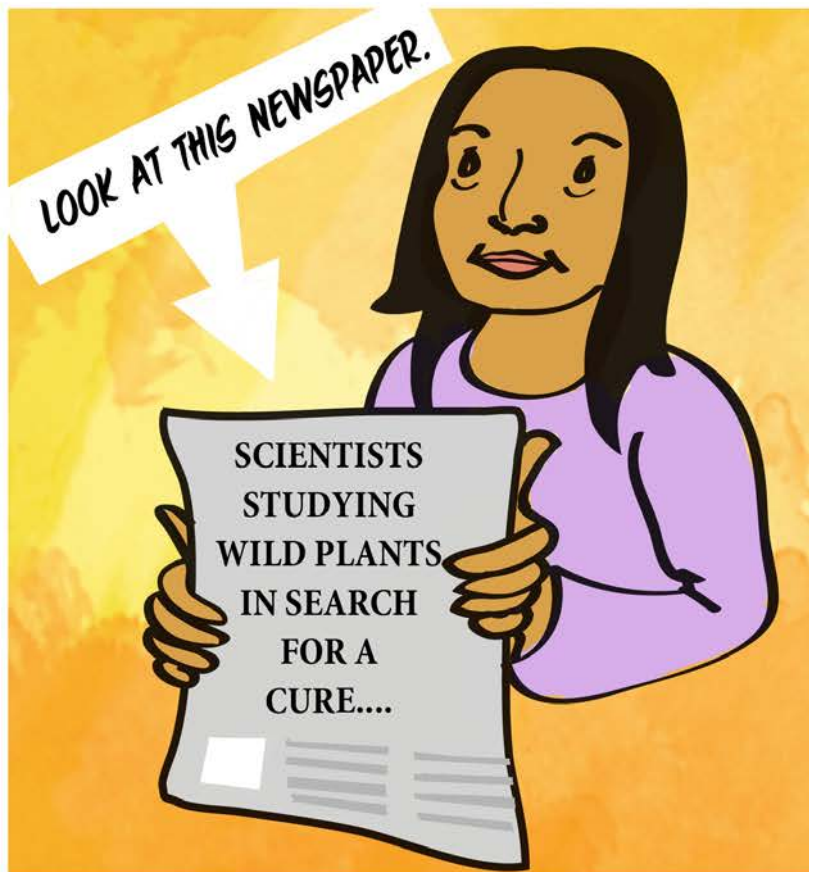


THE OLD MAN ANSWERED, "BUT I WILL."

THERE'S SO MUCH MORE THAT WE COULD TELL YOU...WE WANTED YOU TO HAVE SOME INFORMATION ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S SINCE IT DOES RUN IN SOME OF OUR FAMILIES. WHEN YOU LEAVE TODAY, PLEASE PICK UP THE TAKE-AWAY THAT WE HAVE MADE FOR YOU. IT'S A LIST OF SOME MATERIALS THAT WE USED FOR STUDYING.



DID YOU NOTICE THAT WE HAVE COMPLETED OUR JOURNEY AROUND THE MEDICINE WHEEL?—AND ARE NOW BACK TO EAST.



COULD IT BE THAT THE 'CURE' FOR ALZHEIMER'S IS IN NATURE'S MEDICINES?



MAYBE ONE OF US WILL BE THE ONE TO FIND A CURE FOR ALZHEIMER'S.

OUR WISH FOR THIS GATHERING IS THAT YOU WILL BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING IN A BRAIN-HEALTHY WAY.

WE MAY NOT HAVE A CURE FOR ALZHEIMER'S, BUT OUR CHOICES CAN GIVE US A HEALTHIER BRAIN.

"THE LORD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS."
MAYBE ALL OF US WORKING TOGETHER ON THIS DISEASE WILL SOLVE SOME OF THE DISEASE'S MYSTERIES.



IN CLOSING, PLEASE GIVE YOUR THANKS TO ALL THE HELPERS. (INDICATES THE CHILDREN AND THE ADULT HELPERS.)
THANKS TO AUNTY JESS'S FAMILY AND UNCLE JOEY WHO INSPIRED THIS GATHERING.



LORD, WE GIVE THANKS FOR ALL THAT WE HAVE LEARNED TODAY AS WE TRAVELLED AROUND THE MEDICINE WHEEL.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING HELP TO AUNTY JESS'S FAMILY, UNCLE JOEY, AND THEIR FRIENDS WHO SHARED THIS TEACHING TODAY.

THANK YOU FOR THE SAFE TRAVEL OF ALL THOSE WHO CAME TODAY. PLEASE BLESS THEM AND GIVE THEM A SAFE TRIP HOME.

AMEN.

THE END

The Good Start List

If you want to learn more on your own, this list is a good place to start your learning. These are some of the materials that our group found to be the most useful. Maybe they will help you, too.

TV SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- ✓ **Super Brain** with Dr. Rudy Tanzi, a TV special presentation on KPBS TV, aired on 10 March 2014. <http://www.kpbs.org/news/2012/nov/19/super-brain-dr-rudy-tanzi/>

Dr. Tanzi demonstrates ways to keep the brain youthful at all ages. Uncle Joey liked this presentation.

- ✓ **Brain Change** with David Perlmutter, M.D. a TV special presentation on KCPT. <https://www.kcpt.org/funding-drive/brain-change-with-david-perlmutter-md/>

- ✓ **Dr. Perlmutter** shows us how to prevent, treat, and reverse many brain-related disorders. His plan includes choosing specific foods and lifestyle choices.

GOOD BOOKS

- ✓ **The Great Brain Book: an inside look at the inside of your head** by H. P. Newquist. 2004. ISBN 0-439-45895-1.

We looked at lots of 'easy' books - they all had simple diagrams and pictures to teach us about the brain. This one had good pictures of brain cells.

- ✓ **The Sacred Tree: reflections on Native American Spirituality** by Phil Lane, Jr., and Bopp. 1984 (4th ed. 2012). ISBN 978-0-9415-2458-2.

We liked this book because it gave us teachings about ancient wisdom from indigenous people in America and around the world. It shows ways that we might use the Medicine Wheel.

- ✓ **Super Brain: unleashing the explosive power of your mind to maximize health, happiness, and spiritual well-being** by Deepak Chopra, M.D. and Rudolph E. Tanzi, Ph.D. 2012. ISBN 978-0-307-95683-5.

Super Brain was one of our most important sources of information. After we had studied this book, we had a new understanding of the power of our brain - and much more, too much to write here.

- ✓ **Magic Trees of the Mind: how to nurture your child's intelligence, creativity, and healthy emotions from birth through adolescence** by Marian Diamond, Ph.D. and Janet Hopson. 1999. ISBN 0-452-27830-9.

Magic Trees is highly recommended by parents and teachers. It is a bit technical, but well worth the time and effort. (This is one of Auntie Bea's favourites.)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S
AND THIS PROJECT? PLEASE VISIT:



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Meet the author: Louise S. Framst, of the Tahltan First Nations in northern British Columbia, Canada, was born and raised in the north. She graduated from UBC with a B. Ed. (5-Year) in History and Special Education. She served as an Itinerant Teacher/Resourceperson with Special Services prior to her retirement from the classroom. Her publications include books for beginning readers (*On My Walk*, *Manny's Many Questions*, *Kelly's Garden*, *Feathers*) and *The Tahltan Cookbook* series.