Grants will support people with dementia, those who care for them

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Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia affect a large and growing number of Minnesotans, but help is on the way for some of the organizations that support them. Eleven organizations have received $750,000 in grants to help meet the needs of both individuals with dementia and those who care for them. The funds were appropriated by the Legislature and awarded by the Minnesota Board on Aging.

Activities planned include memory screenings, collaborations with health care providers to improve referrals and culturally responsive trainings. Several organizations are offering Dementia Friends training, designed to change the way community members think, act and talk about dementia.

The grants are being announced in conjunction with National Family Caregivers Month in November. This year’s theme is “Be Care Curious,” which empowers caregivers to ask questions and reminds them that knowledge is power.

“These funds support not only people with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia but their family and friends, who play such a critical role in caregiving,” said Kari Benson, executive director of the Minnesota Board on Aging. “Alzheimer’s alone impacts some 91,000 Minnesotans over age 65, a number that continues to grow, and more than 254,000 people who provide care informally.”

The grant recipients for State Fiscal Year 2020 are:

- **Lao Advanced Organization of America**, Minneapolis, $47,437 to produce videos and other materials to raise awareness of dementia within the Lao community.
- **Isanti County Community Health Board**, Cambridge, $50,098 for awareness-raising community events and training for health care providers and caregivers.
- **VINE Faith in Action**, Mankato, $76,270 for cognitive training programs for people diagnosed with early stage dementia and their caregivers.
- **Korean Service Center**, Minneapolis, $50,755 for training of 20 home health aides to recognize Alzheimer’s and related dementias and how to care effectively for patients with these disorders as well as mild cognitive impairment.
- **Northwoods Caregivers**, Bemidji, $114,562 to engage a nurse to focus on dementia clients with high medical needs and their caregivers and to retain specialists to focus on outreach to LGBT and diverse cultural communities, including three tribal nations.
• **Granite Falls Living at Home Block Nurse Program**, $25,594 for memory screening, Dementia Friends training and activities to strengthen collaboration among area medical providers.

• **A.C.E. of Southwest Minnesota**, Slayton, $72,900 for Dementia Friends training, virtual aging and dementia experience trainings and dementia-specific educational plays.

• **Volunteers of America**, Minneapolis, $151,100 for trainings on cultural differences as well as memory screenings and caregiver support.

• **Family Means**, St. Paul, $84,206 to broaden a suite of memory loss services for people with dementia and their caregivers and to foster a dementia friendly community.

• **Barnesville Area Helpers**, $26,504 to expand Dementia Friends training to emergency response crews, students, clergy and business employees.

• **Greater Northwestern Emergency Medical Services**, Bemidji, $32,161 to join forces with West Central EMS to provide awareness training on Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia to EMS providers in a 21-county region.