

# ACTIVITY & ALZHEIMERS

## TRAINING CORNER ... by *Phyllis Hanvey, R.N.*

A recent AP news article reported that *older people who stay active in a wide variety of ways seem to have a better chance of warding off dementia*, according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University.

*The study found that it's the diversity, not intensity, of the exercise that counts*, and that pastimes can range from gardening to aerobics to playing board games. The study concluded it's not necessarily the energy you expend, but the variety of activities that matters.

Researchers tracked 3,375 men and women over age 65 for 8 years, surveying them on the kinds of daily activities they did. Those doing the widest variety were far less likely to develop dementia. The volunteers were questioned about the duration and frequency of the 15 most common physical activities in older adults: walking, household chores, mowing, raking, gardening, hiking, jogging, biking, exercise cycling, dancing, aerobics, bowling, golfing, general exercise and swimming. The exercise link applies to all types of dementia except those caused by a certain gene found in 1/4 to 1/3 of Alzheimer's patients.

The study findings were published last month in the American Journal of Epidemiology and also suggest that even sedentary activities such as card-playing might be beneficial.

Dr. Constantine Lyketsos, the lead study author said, *"Exercising your body is exercising your brain."* The reason for the link is not clear. It might be that the variety of activities keeps more parts of the brain active. Or it could be that the variety may show the person is more socially and physically active overall.

Dementia encompasses a group of diseases, including Alzheimer's disease, which gradually destroys brain cells and lowers mental

function. 4.5 million Americans now have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, a number that has doubled since 1980 and is expected to affect as many as 16 million by 2050.

The need for care in our community for people with dementia and their families will continue to grow as our society ages. The House of Friends is poised, with God's help, to be providers of a blessed service to our sisters and brothers afflicted with this devastating disease, as well as to their families. Our hope is in the Lord to provide continuing energy for all our precious volunteers who make this program possible, who truly are "Growing for God."

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*



**Romans 15:13**