Countryside Support & Memory Center

415 S. Crow St., Pierre, South Dakota 57501 Phone: (605) 945-0827

August 2026

15th Anniversary – Countryside Memory Center

The concept for the Countryside Memory Center began in 2007, sparked by an "aha" moment during an Alzheimer's workshop led by Dr. Kim and Gail Petersen, who had successfully established memory diagnostic centers in other states. Recognizing a significant gap in local services, Countryside identified an opportunity to bring similar resources to the region—aligning closely with its mission to support individuals and families facing memory loss. In 2011, the Countryside Memory Center was formally established to provide accessible, community-based memory screening and support services.

Countryside Memory Center provides *free, comprehensive memory loss screenings* to individuals and families seeking clarity and guidance during a critical time. These screenings are designed to assist providers in ruling out dementia and reduce barriers for early detection to rural residents who otherwise face significant financial and geographic challenges in accessing specialized cognitive care.

Countryside's interdisciplinary team conduct comprehensive screenings which includes a thorough review of medical history, patient intake questions, a family support interview, and a series of standardized cognitive assessments. Results are evaluated by our consulting physician, Dr. Ellen M. Pinholt**,** who is board certified in Geriatric and Internal Medicine. A detailed report is shared with the individual's primary care provider, who may recommend additional diagnostic testing, such as laboratory work or neuroimaging, when clinically indicated.

Early detection of memory loss is essential. It can uncover reversible causes of cognitive changes and improve long-term outcomes. In other cases, screening may represent the first step in identifying Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, allowing families to plan and access appropriate support earlier in their journey. The Memory Center does not replace primary care services. Instead, it functions as a collaborative community resource, offering expert evaluation and recommendations while leaving diagnosis and treatment decisions with the primary care provider.

Unlike many screening programs which only provide testing and reports, Countryside Memory Center offers comprehensive, ongoing support at no cost. **Participants receive follow-up visits, caregiver education, referrals to community programs, and access to a monthly caregiver support group. Individuals with moderate to severe memory loss may also participate in Opening Minds through Art (OMA)**, **an internationally recognized program that promotes self-expression and social engagement.**

Demand for services continues to grow. Requests from families and healthcare providers for baseline screenings and re-testing are currently scheduled out two months in advance**.** Each patient screening requires an average of 10-12 hours of staff time, including medical record review, intake processing, family interviews, assessment administration, and documentation.

Countryside Memory Center serves approximately 25 rural counties in central South Dakota, where access to specialized memory assessment is extremely limited. The nearest comparable healthcare facilities offering this level of cognitive evaluation are located two to three hours away, creating a significant access gap for older adults and their caregivers.

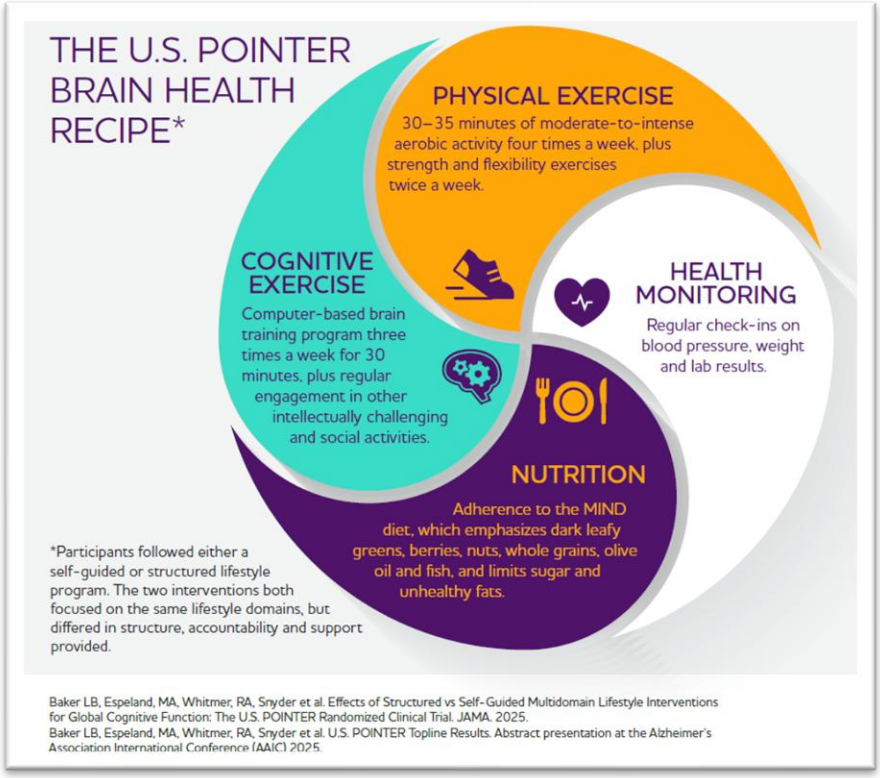
A simple memory screening can change the course of a family's journey. Countryside Support is committed to providing free memory screenings because financial barriers should never stand in the way of early detection and support. Many people ask how they can help. **Donations of any size allow us to continue offering these screenings free of charge for our community.**

COUNTRYSIDE MEMORY CENTER
PIERRE, S.D.

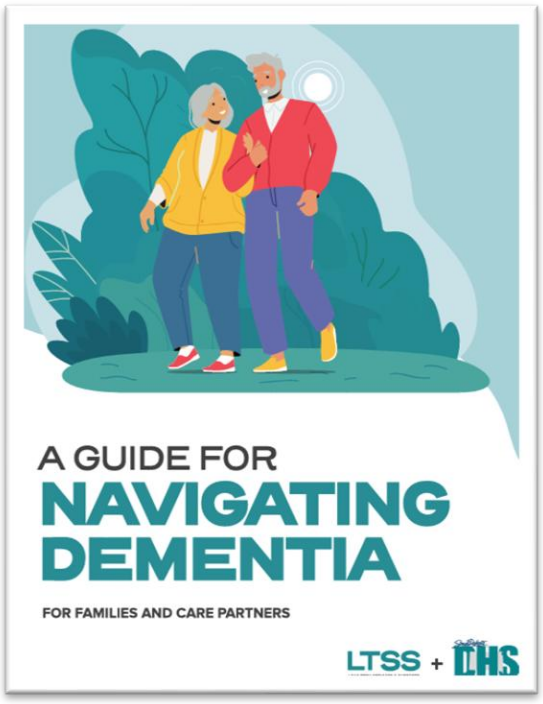
I often reflect on a Reader's Digest story about Alzheimer's. It was about a daughter caring for her mother who no longer recognized her. At first, that broke her heart. But she eventually realized that although her mother didn't know who she was, she often told this "stranger" wonderful stories about her daughter. Her mother's mind couldn't always find the present, but her heart never forgot the love she had for her child.

Years later, when my own grandmother developed memory loss, I remembered that story. One visit, she proudly showed me the beautiful flower garden outside her window. There were no flowers, but I admired them anyway because they were real to her. Another time, she told me the coffee was on and the cattle crew would soon be coming in to eat. In her mind, she was back in a time when she lovingly cared for her family.

Those moments taught me that people living with dementia are often revisiting times when they felt needed, loved, and purposeful. **Meeting them where they are**, rather than correcting them, can bring comfort and peace. With memory loss it's important to remember that love is often found in entering someone else's reality rather than trying to bring them back to ours. – *Kim Leiferman*



Learn More at – click here https://www.alz.org/us-pointer



A *Free* Guide for Families navigating Dementia – click here https://dhs.sd.gov/content/dam/digital/united-states/south-dakota/sdo/pdf/long-term-services-and-supports/caregiver-resources/Guide-to-Navigating-Dementia.pdf

I have been caring for my wife for the past five years. Today, she no longer remembers her own name. What I share isn't meant to be advice—it's simply what I've learned from living this journey with her every day. Every person with dementia is different, and every caregiver's experience will be different too.

Over time, **I've learned that patience and consistency matter most.** Small routines help my wife feel safe, whether it's approaching her from the same side, counting the stairs together, recognizing her nonverbal cues, or simply giving her a long hug when she needs comfort. I've also learned that she reflects the emotions around her, so I try to begin each day by checking in with myself. If I'm calm and patient, she usually is too.

We've also made personal choices about our daily routines, nutrition, and overall wellness that we feel are right for us. They aren't recommendations—just part of how we've chosen to navigate this journey together.

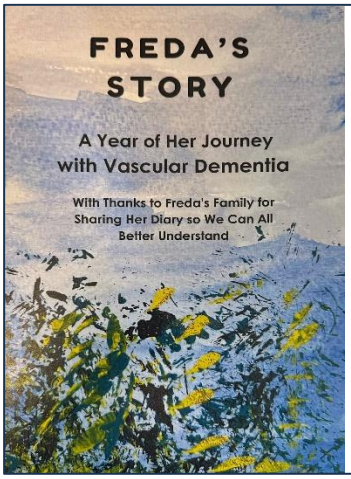
Perhaps the most important lesson **I've learned is that caregivers need to care for themselves, too**. This path can be exhausting, and each of us needs to find a way to recharge. I hope that by sharing a little of our story, something might help make your own journey a little easier. Wishing you strength, patience, and many moments of grace.

– *Bill Ellis*

Supporting Your Brain Health Journey

https://doh.sd.gov/programs/head-forward/

HEAD FORWARD
SOUTH DAKOTA



Freda's Story – A year of her journey with Vascular Dementia.
This book is a gift from Freda's family in a small attempt to bring dementia into our daily conversations to help support both patients and caregivers. **Pick up a copy** of Freda's Story at Countryside Office, 415 S. Crow St. Pierre, SD 57501 or **order on-line** at Amazon for Kindle or Paperback. **Donations** for this booklet go to support Countryside Memory Center and print more copies.

"Countryside has been invaluable in helping me to deal with my wife's deteriorating mental and physical state with Dementia. From initial testing, art therapy, recommendations and monthly group support meetings. Where, if nothing else, we can cry on each other's shoulders"
– Anonymous

OMA – Opening Minds Through Art

Countryside hosts Opening Minds Through Art (OMA) each week. This award-winning, evidence-based, intergenerational art-making program is designed for people living with dementia. OMA builds bridges across age and cognitive barriers through art. In the OMA program, individuals living with dementia are honored as artists and paired with trained volunteers. Together, they create artwork using imagination and a variety of mediums, focusing on strengths and creative expression each week. While artists are creating, caregivers have an opportunity to run errands or enjoy the caregiver coffee group on site.

Memory Walk began as a tribute to Rhonda, a beloved sister, whose life was forever changed by Alzheimer's disease. At just 60 years old, Rhonda, a highly accomplished nurse with a doctorate degree—began experiencing unusual symptoms. Simple tasks which once came naturally became difficult. She could no longer calculate medication dosages in her head, struggled to plug a cord into an outlet, and her handwriting became childlike. After a car accident and extensive testing, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

Despite medication that helped slow the progression, there was no cure. Rhonda's intelligence and spirit remained evident, and with the devoted care of her husband, Neal, she lived with the disease for more than five and a half years. Eventually, she required memory care placement and passed away at age 66, just a few months later. Wanting to honor Rhonda's memory before the first anniversary of her death, her sister, Carol, began exploring ways to raise awareness and support those affected by Alzheimer's. Around the same time, Mary Turner had also lost her father to the disease. Together, they envisioned **a community walk which would remember their loved ones and make a difference locally.**

Working with Holly Hoing and Countryside, they organized the first Memory Walk. The group decided proceeds would support the Countryside Memory Center by keeping memory screenings free to the public. Rhonda's husband, Neal, and daughter, Jenny, traveled from Colorado to participate in the inaugural walk, helping launch **a lasting community tradition dedicated to honoring loved ones and supporting families affected by memory loss.**
– *Carol Gengler*

My dad, Frank Farrar, was an advocate for healthy living and took care of my mother when she had dementia. Ironically, Frank came down with vascular dementia a few years after she passed. **We went to Countryside Support for guidance and a free evaluation. Our care was fantastic.** We received coaching tips how to navigate through his challenging journey. They even provided support to caregivers.

In 2022 shortly after my father passed, Carol Gengler approached me to start a memory run/walk. Her sister had early onset dementia. Our family had some undesignated memorial funds to use and thought it would be great to bring local awareness to the Pierre/Ft Pierre community. The event was held starting near Carol Gengler's Edward Jones office through the gulch to Mickelson Pond and back. We served breakfast and showcased Countryside programs. The 5k Memory Walk/Run was started. Now we are about to enter the fifth year. There are many people who have gone through the same things our families did. **Please join us** to honor and fight for our loved ones. **No one should have to walk alone.** – *Mary Turner*

MAKE PLANS TO DRIVE/RIDE FOR A GREAT CAUSE!

9th Annual Rally for Robert Dice Run – Come drive/ride with us to support Pennies for Robert.

Raffle Tickets can be purchased each Thursday night at Grey Goose Bike Night, Countryside Office at 415 S. Crow St., Countryside Thrift Store and popup locations.

Countryside Memory Center

By the Numbers for April 2025 – March 2026

181 Screenings

$217,200 free services

31 OMA Artists

Memory Connect Caregivers Support Group
Third Thursday of each Month at 6:00 pm

77
Memory Connect Group Attendees

32 OMA Volunteers

804 OMA Volunteers Hours

Countryside Programs

Pennies for Robert | Memory Center | St. Benedict's Guest House | Hospice Support

Countryside Community Groups

Meet in the Countryside Community Room | 415 S. Crow Street, Pierre, SD | 605-945-0827

Parkinson's Support Group – First Wednesday of each month, at noon. Visit with others who have a Parkinson's diagnosis. Topics include medications, exercise, safety issues and day-to-day challenges. Family members are also welcome.

Memory Connection – Third Thursday of each month, at 6:00 p.m. Discussion group for family members and friends caring for a loved one with dementia. An opportunity to offer support and share information.

OMA – Thursdays 10:30 -11:30 – Opening Minds through Art (OMA) is a program that matches individuals who have memory loss with a volunteer, together they create art. For more information and/or to volunteer, call Cindy at 605-945-0827.

Cancer Support Group – *Avera Helmsley Center* – Last Wednesday of each month from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm at Helmsley Center in the Bistro Conference Room, 801 E Sioux Ave. Pierre, SD. This support group is for individuals who have been diagnosed with cancer and are at any stage in their journey, from active treatment to remission. Participants will receive education and support as well as have an opportunity to share experiences and ask questions. For more information call Kathi Mueller at 605-224-3186 or email her at kathlene.mueller@avera.org.

Find Countryside Support information online at:

Website	Facebook	Instagram
www.countrysidesupport.com	Countryside Support – Pierre, SD	countryside_support_pierre

Countryside's Newsletters are available anytime on our website at https://countrysidesupport.com/about-us/newsletters/

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IN HONOR/MEMORY OF...

In Memory of
Tyler Wilcox
Happy Heavenly Birthday on August 23

-Jean Denton

In Memory of
Sonny
Living without you has changed everything in my life. Being your wife was and always will be a privilege. I love you.

-Charlene

In Memory
Dalton Williams
Happy 30th Birthday Dalton.
You are deeply missed.

-Love, Mom Dad, Cole, Shyanne, Kenya, and Taya

In Memory of
Dalton Williams
Happy Birthday to our grandson Dalton. We miss you so much.

-Love, Grandma Jody and Grandpa Cody

In Memory of
Ricki J Bloomenrader
Remembering my red headed "sister"
On her birthday
August 18, 1955 - June 15, 2022
All the memories we made are still in my heart. You are missed!

-Cindy

In Honor of
Connie Palmer
Deb Shafer
Karen Sindelar
Holly Hoing
Happy September Birthdays!

- Steve & Julie Ellingson

In Memory of
Our Daughter
Lindy Patrick
On her 41st birthday on September 28th.
We love and miss you every day!

-Mom & Dad

In Honor of
Countryside Support Director
Kim Leiferman
Happy Birthday on August 26!
Thank you for your constant guidance, support, and leadership.

- Countryside Support Staff & Volunteers

In Memory of
Mansour & Ruth Karim
Happy Heavenly Birthday on
Aug. 14 Mansour & Sept. 12 Ruth

- Zahra Pfeifer

In Memory of
My sister
Laura Kist

- Zahra Pfeifer

In Honor of
Marty Davis
A loving, caring person

Audrey Hullinger
by
Colleen Hullinger

Colleen A. Weiss
by
Larry Weiss & Family

Larry Carlson
by
Gary & Grace Schmitgen

Veloris Elaine Christiansen
Linda Rausch
John Hoffert
by
Margaret & John Ellefson

Peggy Laurenz
by
Jean Denton

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Patti Petersen

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Bruce Nelson
by
Charlene

Harvey Wald
by
Wade & Karen Pogany
Jay & Elizabeth Vogt

Lana Heitz
Linda Brooks
Mike Maskovich
by
Norm & Joann Weaver

Linda Brooks
by
Dale & Donna Gohl
Margaret & John Ellefson

Harvey Wald
Linda Brooks
by
Anita Baker

Larry Carlson
Linda Brooks
Carrol Hanten
Roberta Cahill
by
Patrick & Holly Hoing

Darrell Reinke
Crayton Bouchie
Drew Miller
Peggy Laurenz
by
Brent & Betty Lindbloom

AJ Lenz
Keith Garber
Lana Heitz
by
Terry & Mary Ness

Lana Heitz
by
Janice Deis

Countryside Support & Memory Center
415 S. Crow St.
Pierre, SD 57501

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Return Service Requested

Donations: We Care-Dakotamart, Community Donor, Lynell Asher, Deborah Holland, Teton River Traders, Onehope Impact

Pennies for Robert: SD Central Chapter Credit Union, Amber & Josie Johnson, Pierre/Ft. Pierre Rotary Club

Memory Center: Nagel Agency, Riter Rogers **St. Benedict's Guest House:** Virginia & Kenneth Hertel, Lynell Asher

Memberships: Gary & Grace Schmitgen, Margaret & John Ellefson, Jamie Damon, Tom & Peggy Huber, Donna Welch, Carol Butzman

THIS GIFT IS FROM:

Name _____

Address _____

FOR:

- ☐ As needed
- ☐ Pennies for Robert (Travel funds for cancer patients)
- ☐ Freda's Story (booklet)
- ☐ Avera @ Home Hospice
- ☐ St. Benedict's Guest House (Lodging for cancer patients)
- ☐ Memory Center
- ☐ Membership
- ☐ OMA (Opening Minds through Art)
- ☐ Honor a Cancer Survivor

In memory/honor of: _____ Notify: _____

In memory/honor of: _____ Notify: _____

In memory/honor of: _____ Notify: _____

This newsletter contains donations processed through August 1st. The approximate cutoff for the September newsletter will be September 1st.

Donations can also be made by credit card or Venmo on our website www.countrysidesupport.com, or you may call the office with your credit card information 605-945-0827.