

PRESS KIT

July 2023





MISSION STATEMENT

The Beyond Dementia Coalition mission is to reduce stigma and inspire people through awareness and education to recognize, engage, assist, and ultimately embrace people living with dementia as valued and beloved members of the community.

Its programs and services are intended for caregivers, both paid and unpaid, as well as friends, neighbors, first responders, businesses, faith groups, and all members of the community.

Beyond Dementia Coalition collaborates and partners with local and national organizations



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW GAINESVILLE ORGANIZATION BEYOND DEMENTIA COALITION FORMS

(Gainesville, GA) - Beyond Dementia Coalition, Inc. announces its formation as a non-profit organization committed to eliminating stigma and fostering community awareness and understanding about dementia, based in Gainesville, GA. While their 501(c)(3) status is pending, the organization has been accepted as a fiscal sponsorship by the North Georgia Community Foundation (NGCF) in order to manage and accept tax-deductible donations. NGCF supports area non-profits with educational programs, designated funds for donations, fund management, and grant opportunities.

Beyond Dementia Coalition was founded in 2015 as a volunteer organization seeking to ensure that Hall County and north Georgia are prepared to both accept and embrace the population of Georgians who will be impacted by Alzheimer's and other dementia, which is projected to increase at an astounding rate over the coming decades due primarily to the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. During COVID-19, the coalition took a hiatus, but was reorganized in January 2022 with Bill Wittel, a member since 2018, as Chair and CEO. "Thanks to the previous years of planning we launched two successful pilot initiatives in 2022, validating the need for a non-profit organization dedicated to dementia care education and resources," Wittel said.

Beyond Dementia Coalition developed and delivered a Brenau University Lifelong Learners Institute (BULLI) six-session course for dementia caregiving spouses in 2022, which included an evidence-based dementia simulation experience known as the Virtual Dementia Tour. The Virtual Dementia Tour was created, tested, and patented by P.K. Beville, PhD, Founder of Second Wind Dreams, also a non-profit 501(c)(3).

The coalition's 2022 Emergency Comfort Kit program, a joint effort with Wisdom Project 2030 as the lead in collaboration with sponsor American Red Cross and funding from Cresswind LLC Fund, compiled and distributed hundreds of Emergency Comfort Kits to Hall County residents experiencing dementia through area churches and the regional Legacy Link office.

"The NGCF fiscal sponsorship of Beyond Dementia Coalition will allow us to gain visibility and credibility as we become an established non-profit – both of which are essential to funding our work," Wittel said. "Also, the partnership with NGCF makes tax-deductible giving possible, possibly boosting both the numbers and size of donations we receive and, by extension, our potential for meaningful impact across north Georgia in the short- and long-term."

Beyond Dementia Coalition aims to place existing and new education and support resources within the grasp of more north Georgians impacted by dementia. The organization will bring the Virtual Dementia Tour, a state compliant dementia training experience, to healthcare providers, corporate sites, houses of worship, retail establishments, restaurants, and local government and as part of a multi-modal education platform tailored to each audience. The kick-off event will be a Virtual Dementia Tour offered exclusively and specifically tailored to first responders in north Georgia including EMTs, firefighters and police officers in Gainesville and Hall County, to be held July 14th, 2023. Beginning in summer of 2023 Beyond Dementia Coalition will further its educational intentions by offering quarterly dementia simulation experiences using the Virtual Dementia Tour for the general



public, hosted at Interactive Neighborhood for Kids (INK) in Gainesville, GA. The coalition will continue developing partnerships with other organizations to provide resources to caregivers and others in the community with the goal of optimizing engagement with individuals living with dementia in Hall County and North Georgia.

ABOUT BEYOND DEMENTIA COALITION

Beyond Dementia Coalition, Inc. was founded to support those providing care to someone living with dementia. Its mission is to reduce stigma and inspire people through awareness and education to recognize, engage, assist, and ultimately embrace people living with dementia as valuable and beloved members of the community. Its programs and services are intended for caregivers, both paid and unpaid, as well as friends, neighbors, first responders, businesses, faith groups, and all members of the community. Beyond Dementia Coalition collaborates with local and national organizations that include Cresswind LLC Fund, Wisdom Project 2030, Alzheimer's Association, Brenau University, Interactive Neighborhood for Kids, Legacy Link, NGHS, American Red Cross, Georgia Mountain Fiber Arts Guild and area churches. Beyond Dementia Coalition is a license holder with Second Wind Dreams, authorized to deliver Virtual Dementia Tour events to the community. CEO Bill Wittel joined the Beyond Dementia Coalition in 2018 as a volunteer following the diagnosis of his wife, Ellen, with dementia, then stepped into a leadership role at the organization following her passing. He brings over 40 years sales management experience to this role. Beyond Dementia Coalition status as a non-profit 501(c)(3) is pending, EIN# 92-2825339.

www.beyonddementiacoalition.org

ABOUT NORTH GEORGIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Founded in 1985, the North Georgia Community Foundation (NGCF) is devoted to their mission of helping people and nonprofits invest generously in the lives of those who call our community home. NGCF manages over \$115 MILLION in charitable assets as of April 30, 2023. In 2022, NGCF invested \$12.1 MILLION in the Community through Grants & Scholarships. www.ngcf.org



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INK Executive Director Mandy Volpe attempts a simple task as she takes part in a virtual dementia tour demonstration Tuesday, May 30, 2023, at an Interactive Neighborhood for Kids meeting room with help from Beyond Dementia Coalition CEO Bill Wittel. The demonstration helps people understand what it feels like to have dementia. - photo by Scott Rogers

Rachel Estes
The Times
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A new resource for understanding dementia officially exists in Hall County.

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INK Executive Director Mandy Volpe takes part in a virtual dementia tour demonstration Tuesday, May 30, 2023, at an Interactive Neighborhood for Kids meeting room with help from Beyond Dementia Coalition CEO Bill Wittel. The demonstration helps people understand what it feels like to have dementia. - photo by Scott Rogers

On July 14, the coalition plans to facilitate a virtual dementia tour for 60 first responders from the Gainesville Police and Fire departments, Hall County Sheriff's Office and Hall County Fire Rescue, according to Beyond Dementia Coalition CEO Bill Wittel.

INK Executive Director Mandy Volpe takes part in a virtual dementia tour demonstration Tuesday, May 30, 2023, at an Interactive Neighborhood for Kids meeting room with help from Beyond Dementia Coalition CEO Bill Wittel. The demonstration helps people understand what it feels like to have dementia. - photo by Scott Rogers

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"Hopefully it will drive down through the ranks of the departments to where maybe it will become a part of their training process on a regular basis," he said. "When first responders go on a call, let's say it's a fire or something, and a loved one is there with them and they tell the first responder, 'My loved one has dementia,' they're going to have a much better understanding of how to handle that victim."

As essential as the virtual dementia tour itself is the debriefing that follows, which is aimed to help participants apply what they learned and experienced during the simulation to their "real-life situation."

"You go into a classroom and you can sit there for a day and talk about the behavior, but unless you feel it yourself (by) going through the virtual dementia tour and the debriefing — you can't beat that experience," Wittel said.

For the participating first responders, Conrad said the virtual dementia tour will be tailored specifically to the work they do with the public, and hopes to offer the same customized experience to health care workers, bank tellers and grocery store clerks, tying the debriefing back to the work they do on the hospital floor or the checkout counter.

"The debrief is a vital part of the experience as well," Conrad said. "It's not just the virtual gear; it's having that conversation and having someone connect their own experience to dementia and back to their home life or work life."

"It (is) important for everyone to have some kind of understanding of what it's like to live with dementia," she continued, "because we will all encounter a person living with dementia, whether that's at our house of worship or the restaurant around the corner, or at the bank, the grocery store or a party situation, or with a neighbor. If we all knew a little bit more about what living with dementia is like, we could all create a more hospitable community for those living with dementia, and that allows us to create a world where the stigma about dementia is diminished, where awareness and understanding about dementia is increased."

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With its newfound nonprofit status and financial support from the Cresswind Foundation and North Georgia Community Foundation, the coalition hopes to deliver more projects and programs to the community, including the revival of field trips to INK for dementia patients and assisted living residents, which the coalition regularly organized prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We've got to crawl before we can walk," Wittel said.

According to Wittel, advocacy groups for caregivers of those with dementia are few and far between — an essential, but missing, link he hopes Beyond Dementia can supplement.

"These (caregivers) are the people that are getting burned out, not just healthwise, but financially, (it's) taking a big toll," he said.

According to Conrad, the coalition hopes to make its vision of a dementia-friendly world a reality by creating an environment "where we not only understand what a person living with dementia is going through, but we can embrace them, we can show them the dignity and the value that they still deserve and hold in a community."

For more information on Beyond Dementia Coalition and virtual dementia tours, visit beyonddementiacoalition.org or contact 770-335-1481.



Virtual Dementia Tour Schedule Summer/Fall 2023

To date, Beyond Dementia Coalition has scheduled the following VDT events:

- July 14: Gainesville/Hall County Police and Fire Execs – Mulberry Community Center – full day *
- August 22: Community VDT – Interactive Neighborhood for Kids (INK) – half day*
- August 23: Cresswind Community – Cresswind Club house – full day
- October 18: Community VDT – INK – full day*

Additional Sponsors interested in on going relationships include NGHS Simulation Lab, Northeast Georgia Physicians Group, North Georgia Senior Resources, Community Council on Aging, Legacy Link



Beyond Dementia Board of Directors

Chad Black – Exec VP, Pro-Genex - 40 years in Fire/EMS and Air Medical

Jill Crunkleton – Luminary Counseling and Consulting – 12 years with Hospice of Northeast Georgia Medical Center

John Copenhaver – former Southeast Regional Director for FEMA

Joe Dennis – 40 years financial planning with Northwest Mutual

Libby Dunahoo – Manager of Advanced Planning, Northeast Georgia Health Systems

David Frye - Retired communications executive from Nortel, TRW, NEC, and other entrepreneurial business interests – sBoard Vice President

Doug Hanson – 40 years with Dupont, Founder North Georgia Works, Rotary Man of the Year 2022 – Board Treasurer

Will Hicks – Vice President/Investments- Stifel – Board Secretary

Bill Rhoads – Attorney with Smith, Gilliam, Williams, and Miles

Anslee Wilson – Founder and President, A Helping Hand Home Care

Bill Wittel – Retired IT sales management – CEO and Board President