



SUPPORT FOR ADULTS WITH MEMORY LOSS AND THEIR FAMILIES

CELEBRATING OVER 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

## ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IN PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME



Meet Tim. He's 52 years old and until last year was an active, happy and healthy guy with so much going for him. Tim worked for ABC, and then ABC Disney, for 28 years. He played tennis, was active in track and field and bowling and attended Weight Watchers every week. All that changed when Tim was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease with additional symptoms of Parkinson's last year. The disease has progressed extremely fast. Today, in hospice, Tim is bed bound and doesn't speak. He has difficulty swallowing and, at times, doesn't recognize his mother or sister.

Tim's story is different from the ones we usually hear about adults with early onset Alzheimer's because Tim has Down Syndrome.

Adults with Down Syndrome are susceptible to the same conditions and diseases that any non-intellectually disabled aging adult would experience, but because this genetic disorder is characterized by an extra copy of chromosome 21, the chromosome that carries the amyloid precursor protein (APP) gene, too much of which causes problems with how brain cells function, the risk of developing Alzheimer's is increased.

“ For people with Down's syndrome, the risk of developing Alzheimer's is increased. ”

People with Down Syndrome are living longer than ever before due, in part, to improved health care, and estimates suggest that 50 percent or more of people with Down Syndrome will develop dementia due to Alzheimer's disease as they age.

Tim's mother, Mary, had no idea of Tim's risk to develop Alzheimer's as an adult. The correlation between Down Syndrome and Alzheimer's wasn't well documented 50 years ago.

Tim's symptoms began with showing lack of balance and increased confusion like getting on the wrong bus to go to work. A visit to a neurologist confirmed Tim had Alzheimer's in 2016.

Tim was a member of OPICA for eight months and loved it. He must have known his condition was deteriorating because one day he woke up and said he didn't want to come any more. Tim passed away on January 24th, after this article was written, at the age of 52. The picture on the cover was taken on his birthday...his favorite day of the year! We'll never forget his smile and loving nature, and that he played a mean harmonica.

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Bunni Dybnis

Deborah Gauvreau

Shila Hazan

Shirley Kleiman

Gee Martin

Kathleen McCann

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Rita Williams



## A Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends of OPICA:

We are proud to be celebrating our 40th anniversary this year. The OPICA story is one of hard work for a good cause. Essential to the story are the dedicated, committed and skilled volunteers. Since its inception a rich bank of licensed professionals were willing to give of their expertise and time.

A question often asked, "What does OPICA stand for," presents its challenges. We'd prefer to focus on what OPICA does but sometimes the answer, "OPICA supports adults with memory loss and their families," is simply not enough. Beginning in 1974, the Older Persons Information and Counseling Associates was formed. OPICA became incorporated in 1979 and later changed its acronym (for obvious reasons) to Optimistic People in a Caring Atmosphere.



*Professor Yung-huo Liu of UCLA*

Thanks to the visionary leadership of Professor Yung-huo Liu of UCLA, the concept of setting up a service program specifically for older adults emerged gradually from her travels in other countries and observing how the needs of older adults were being met.

OPICA might have been, at the beginning, the commitment of a few people, but for the past 40 years it is a collective venture shared by all of those involved. Today, OPICA provides comprehensive programming specifically focused on all stages of memory loss in a nurturing environment. OPICA fills a critical need as one of the leading not-for-profit community-based organizations focused solely on memory loss.

Celebrating 40 years serving the Alzheimer's community, OPICA looks to the future with great optimism and excitement. We are in an era where we have more access to age-related information than ever before. We better understand the progression of memory loss, preventative measures and how best to guide our families through the journey of dementia.

Members of OPICA have lived rich and full lives with amazing stories to tell and we have the privilege to add to their stories. The looks of joy, wonder, learning and creativity on members' faces remind us every day that we have so much to offer and learn from one another.

**Mary Michlovich**

*Executive Director*

"Your kindness and compassion made such a difference for my father. He looked forward to attending OPICA and participating in all of the activities. His last months and days were spent in the finest atmosphere where he felt safe, cared for and loved." **-Sandy**

# Greetings from OPICA's Board Chair

Dear Friends of OPICA:

Recently, there have been many newspaper and magazine articles and television segments about the challenges of being a caregiver. It is a very stressful job and there are many suggestions about what caregivers can do to reduce their stress and ensure that they are taking care of themselves. Recently, on the *Today Show*, Maria Shriver, a leader in the Alzheimer's movement, spoke about what she and her four siblings did to support their mother when she was the primary caregiver for their father, Sargent Shriver. She shared that once a week all five siblings, none of whom lived close by to their parents, had a conference call with their mother, Eunice. Each sibling was responsible for a separate area of need for their father, such as ordering medication, having supplies delivered and making medical appointments. Each one checked in to see what was needed for the upcoming week. I think this is a brilliant way to support a caregiver from afar. Certainly, a primary caregiver's load is lightened if family members' share responsibilities. I think many families could adopt this model and adjust it for their particular circumstances.



This year our annual luncheon will be celebrating forty years of OPICA services by honoring caregivers. We are continually moved by the love and devotion OPICA families show to their loved one's needs. I was inspired when I attended OPICA's Family Day last month to see our members and their families engaged in activities that we do at OPICA on a daily basis. It was evident that everyone enjoyed themselves. The fact that we can provide stimulating activities to our members is a great comfort to their caregivers.

I hope you will join us at our annual luncheon on the 14th of June to celebrate the wonderful caregivers we have known in OPICA's forty years of providing support to adults with dementia and their families.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Teresa Riddle".

**Teresa Riddle**

*Board Chair*



## Advisory Council

Teresa Bond  
Michael Broida  
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Michael States  
Marty Stevens-Heebner  
Sally Vasen  
Paul Wishingrad  
Diane Wolf  
Wendy Yano

## In Memoriam

Roy Azarnoff  
Nancy Lee Freed  
Richard Giesberg  
Joseph Kleiman  
Yung-huo Liu (founder)  
Brian Manion  
George Pollinger  
Louis Reisman  
Bernard Segelin  
Milton Tepper  
Bob Willard  
Ted Williams (founder)

OPICA's roots run deep. If we have omitted the name of an OPICA Board member who has passed away, please let us know so that we may include him or her in future publications.



# The Original “Angels”



*Shirley Kleiman (R) with her cousin Johanna Schor at an OPICA luncheon*

Where did the original funds for OPICA come from? When Dr. Yung-huo Liu presented her dream for a Day Care Center for older adults to Rita and Ted Williams, it struck a chord. Rita knew first-hand what a center like OPICA would have meant for her parents and convinced her husband, Ted, to supply the seed money for the first year. A Lutheran Church in West Los Angeles

agreed to rent three rooms to OPICA and Rita formed the OPICA Associates, a group of dedicated individuals who devoted their time and energy to fundraise for OPICA. Shirley Kleiman, one of the original associates, is still involved with

OPICA and only just this year retiring from the board directors at the age of 97.

The Associates held raffles, garage sales and theater parties. Inviting family, friends, and friends of friends to these events, the Associates not only raised money, they spread the word about OPICA's groundbreaking work. The OPICA Associates formally came to

an end in 2010 but by that time, they had amassed a substantial fund that continues to sustain OPICA in the form of emergency reserves.

Today, in addition to OPICA's emergency reserves, 44% of our operating budget is generous donations from individuals and foundations. It's because of support from friends of OPICA that we have not raised our subsidized daily rate fee in over five years and provide approximately \$150,000 for additional financial assistance each year.

OPICA's enhanced programs are designed to meet the needs of adults at every stage on the journey through dementia. Our unique services and commitment to be each family's partner in caregiving can make a difficult journey a little easier. And your support makes this possible.

## CELEBRATING OPICA'S LEGACY SOCIETY

There are many different ways to support OPICA, but a legacy gift will allow future generations to receive the same exceptional care provided to our members today. When you designate OPICA as a beneficiary of your estate, your enduring legacy honors yourself and your family. Your single action has the power to change lives.

To RSVP or to get more information about creating a legacy gift, please contact Stacey Barrett at 310-478-0226, or email her at [stacey@opica.org](mailto:stacey@opica.org).





# OPICA PREPARES FUTURE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

From its inception 40 years ago, OPICA has been preparing future health professionals, recruiting Marriage and Family Therapy students before and after graduation, providing opportunities to fulfill their required hours toward licensure and offering training and supervision. In OPICA's early days, a group of licensed professionals volunteered their time to provide supervision for up to ten students at a time. Today, the Counseling Center has a dedicated professional staff to oversee a program that has grown to 25-30 students who bring a breadth of creative talent that perpetually enhances and enriches OPICA's programs. Over the years, many trainees and associates (previously referred to as interns) have stayed on at OPICA after graduation, including our own Anne Galbraith, Arline Agay, Elizabeth Lira, Gillian Scott and Meredith Rossi.

Trainees and associates enhance all of OPICA's programs. Involved with the adult day program and counseling center, they assist in activities, co-lead support groups, and provide individualized attention to members who are experiencing anxiety, depression and/or transitioning into a new activity. All trainees and associates are assigned an adult day program member and serve as the point person for the member's family to ensure that each are getting the support they need.

OPICA is proud to provide training for future health care professionals so they have the opportunity to learn the need of supportive programs for older adults with dementia and to experience first-hand, the rewards of providing service to others.

All trainees and associates are assigned an adult day program member and serve as the point person for the member's family to ensure that each are getting the support they need.



# OPICA'S FORGET ME-NOT *Luncheon*

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS SERVING  
THE ALZHEIMER'S COMMUNITY

NEW DAY THIS YEAR  
FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 2019

HONORING OPICA CAREGIVERS

**ELLEN REISNER AND KEITH MCCOY**

AND RECOGNIZING ALL OPICA CAREGIVERS, PAST AND PRESENT

If you know someone who was an OPICA caregiver, please contact Stacey Barrett at (310) 478-0226 or [stacey@opica.org](mailto:stacey@opica.org) so we can ensure that they get an invitation to this special event in their honor.

## WHY CHOOSE US

Customized for an individual's emotional, cognitive and physical needs

1:5 ratio of staff to attendees

Expertise critical for memory loss care

Provides valuable respite for family caregivers



# Tributes and Memorials

OPICA tribute cards honor, celebrate and commemorate life's most important events with a unique message of care and compassion. We express appreciation to the individuals listed below who contributed to OPICA in the form of a tribute between July 1 – December 31, 2018.

## In Loving Memory of

### Hanni Berg

Esther Woo-Benjamin

### Eva Chorub

Gail Holtzman

### Dad

Jeffrey and Joyce Gampel

### Ellen Grim

Alan and Barbara Levy

### Michael Krane

Carol Vernon and Robert Turbin

### David and Jay Leanse

Thomas and Jessica Sipkins

### Neil Levinson

Sheri Samotin

### Esperanza Manlapid

Iris Rodgers

### Leslie Martinson

Reiko Pultz

### Lee Miller

Sue Miller

### Alice Parrish

Ron and Teresa Riddle

### Lawrence Powell

Rita Loew

### Bill Ross

Chris and Nancy Cooper

### Mike Rothberg

Sheila Goldman

### Alan and Helen Rowe

Ruth and Robert Yoshiwara

### Al Sentchuk

Phyllis Bellano

### Nancy Shaffron

Heidi Magner

### Connie Singer

Gail Holtzman

### Craig Trager

Phyllis Bellano

## In Celebration of

### Wesley Bilson's Birthday

Bert Woodruff and Barbara Bilson

### JoAnna Jarvis's Birthday

Pete England

### Shirley Kleiman's Birthday

Richard Kleiman

Nili Kosmal

### Barbara and Alan Levy's Anniversary

Alan Levy

### Jane Morgen's Birthday

Rita Loew

### Sherry Newman's Birthday

Rita Loew

### Lori Harrison's Birthday

Sharlene Wolf Basch

### Margie Rand's Birthday

Pete England

## In Honor of

### Mary Baker

Mary Ruth Brown

Mel and Stephanie Kay

Dan and Teresa Murphy

Judi Lippe

### The Honorable Michael Berg

Christina Davidson

### Mary Bomba

Cookie Galanti

### Esther Cidis

Vicky Foxworth

### Tom Dunsmuir

Bodhi and Telulah Younger

### Frannie and Jordan Hudson

Rita Loew

### Tom Keyser

Ron and Teresa Riddle

### Shirley Kleiman

Milt and Susie Gross

### Joyce Leanse

Thomas and Jessica Sipkins

Ernestine Elster

Eleanor Leanse

Alvin and Gloria Lanfeld

### Tom and Barbara Leanse

Kim Allen-Niesen

### Marilyn Levin

Ralph and Shirley Shapiro

Annie Lampl

### Barbara Levy

Martha Felton

### Rita Loew

Barbara and Ron Gordon

### Teresa Riddle

Lana Brody

### Sheri Samotin

Nella Webster

### Dr. Kevin Scher

Sheila Goldman

“To our surprise, OPICA was able to bring out the hidden artist and dancer that we didn’t know existed. We will forever be grateful for all that was done to make our dad’s time at OPICA a place where he could express himself and be happy.” -Debi and Danielle



## OPICA Adult Day Program and Counseling Center

11759 Missouri Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

(310) 478-0226  
[www.opica.org](http://www.opica.org)

### Adult Day Program Hours:

9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.  
Monday—Friday

### Counseling Center Hours:

8:30 a.m.—7:00 p.m.  
Monday—Friday

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
PAID  
Mercury Mailing  
Systems Inc.



# You don't have to do it alone...

OPICA support groups offer comfort on a very personal level. Limited to eight people each, individuals feel secure knowing the members of their group remain consistent week to week. Groups are segmented to meet the specific needs of adult children and/or spouses and are facilitated by licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and supervised associates.

For more information and/or to join an OPICA support group, contact Anne Galbraith, Director of Programs, [anne@opica.org](mailto:anne@opica.org).

"My weekly support group had huge positive impact on me. I still attend the meetings. My group has become so close and we all support each other deeply on an emotional level." **-Vicky**