

## **Memories in the Making®**



A fine arts program for people with dementia

# **What is Memories in the Making®?**

Introduced in 1988, Memories in the Making® is the signature art program of Alzheimer's Orange County. Painting classes are tailored for individuals with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia and occur at assisted living communities and adult day centers on a weekly basis. Memories in the Making differs from traditional arts and crafts classes offered for the elderly because they focus on creative expression as a form of non-verbal communication.

Memories in the Making allows self-expression under the guidance of an art facilitator trained specifically to work with individuals with memory loss and dementia. The painting process is tailored to provide structure and support for the participant, while at the same time allowing them to create their own message on paper. Each participant chooses their subject and upon completion is asked to title their painting. From the title and image, the art facilitator engages in conversation and asks questions to encourage story telling through art. It is common for participants to paint memories from long ago or use images to express what they can no longer communicate using words. Classes are held in a group setting to allow conversation and reminiscing of life experiences. It can also be a one-on-one activity with a family member or through in-home care by a professional caregiver.

The part of the brain responsible for creativity remains largely intact and for some persons with dementia, their creative ability is enhanced. As verbal skills decline, the desire to express oneself remains. Memories in the Making strives to use artwork to fulfill the participant's need to communicate through art.

Each year the paintings are submitted to Alzheimer's Orange County for entry into the Memories in the Making Art Exhibition. Select paintings are framed and displayed to validate the participant's abilities, provide awareness for the disease and raise funds.

*For program information, please contact Brianne Ellsworth at 949.955.9000*