

Junior Committee Outreach: Creative Expression

Ari Naamani Goldman, Chair

Many art programs for people with Alzheimer's don't really take into account they have Alzheimer's. Therapists often turn to preschool activities and sometimes do too much of the work.

Alzheimer's, however, isn't regressive. Those who have it have history that can't always be easily communicated.

Junior Committee Outreach has launched a new program that emphasizes the creative expression of the individual, the personal relationship between the individual and the volunteer and public education. Our volunteers learn how to communicate with the Alzheimer population and facilitate their creativity and autonomy.

Using painting as a vehicle, we offer choices—tools, canvas, color—and freedom, and ask the artists to title and sign their work, which stimulates memory and encourages a sense of accomplishment. It's simple, but it's adult, and it can achieve great things.

We meet monthly on late Sunday mornings at the 80th Street Residence, on the Upper East Side. (The award-winning assisted-living facility is the only one in New York dedicated to Alzheimer's and memory loss.) We brief and debrief over Ess-a-Bagel bagels, bond as a team, and spend about an hour with a group of residents, one on one.

Volunteers are appreciated in any capacity. For more information, contact Junior Committee Coordinator Chelsea deMarrais at cdemarrais@alzny.org.