

MIND, BODY & SOUL

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# State of Mind

PROGRAMS  
ENCOURAGE  
MENTAL  
EFFICIENCY

*Planning for the golden years is on everyone's mind. As baby boomers age and experience the anxiety of caring for loved ones, they can't help but wonder, "What does the future hold for me?" Many enroll in exercise programs and become nutrition conscious. Several programs—LearningRx and Memory Reach—focus on the strength and efficiency of the brain, introducing creative measures to keep the brain sharp and memory intact.*

Challenged with Alzheimer's disease, Jennie Percy and facilitator Veronica Sayin work together weekly to reclaim Percy's memories and improve her cognitive functioning through Partners In Care's remarkable Memory Reach program.

**OPPOSITE PAGE**

**TOP** Don Olin  
President of Partners In Care

**MIDDLE** Fred Sexton  
Director, Memory Reach

**BOTTOM** Jayne Bradley  
Director, LearningRX

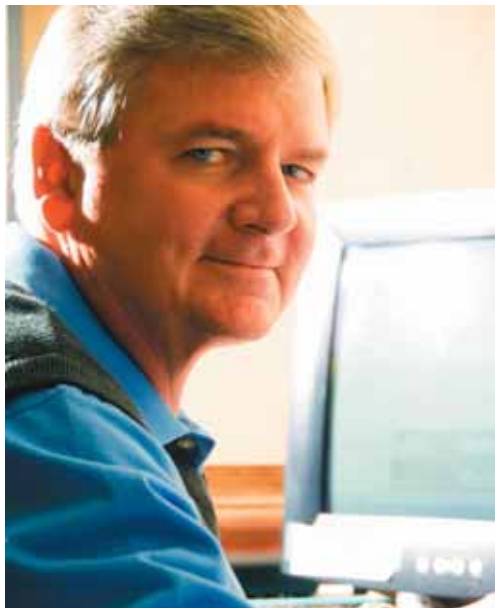
“Adults are in a quest to remain independent for as long as possible,” says Jayne Bradley, Director of LearningRx. “One way to accomplish this is to remain mentally alert. This can be accomplished by recapturing the processing speed and efficiency they once had. These skills help them stay on task, be more competitive in all environments and experience fewer frustrations.”

Following a move to Charlotte, Bradley, who has a background in education including serving as director of special education for a school district outside of Louisville, Kentucky, was looking for a different way to tap into the educational market. Having seen the need to get to the foundation that helps learning become easier, faster, more efficient and effective, she explored various programs and was drawn to LearningRx, whose programs can be applied to adults as well as students.

“At LearningRx, we’re not tutoring,” says Bradley. “We’re helping people strengthen the way their brain works.” The goal of the program is to strengthen long and short-term memory, visualization, processing speed, and comprehension as well as logic and reasoning. “As we age, our brain peaks,” adds Bradley. “Its greatest strength and efficiency is reached in the mid 20s. As time passes, things become routine. We may not challenge parts of our brain. Often people aren’t able to stay on task as well as they used to. There’s also a correlation between the cognitive functioning of attention and memory and balance. By strengthening one, we help the other. Through practice and exercises we can change how the brain works.”

“People who find themselves in downsizing situations know their competition in the business world is very keen,” she adds. “They come to us to sharpen their skills. They want to come up with ideas quicker and be able to increase their personal productivity. Their goal is to continually improve what they are doing which is a good objective for everyone.”

At LearningRx, the process begins with an assessment to identify one’s existing cognitive skills. A one-on-one training program is then customized to strengthen the weaker skills. Drills are structured in a non-academic manner, using exercises that are positive and enjoyable. New skills and information are introduced in a logical and sequential order. Distractions are added just as they occur in daily activities. Individual training exercises are layered one upon another, progressively



increasing in difficulty. This process of loading promotes rapid mastery and embedding of information in the subconscious so that retrieval of information becomes automatic, without delay or hesitation. In this manner, the program is challenging one’s ability to greater levels without frustration or discouragement. Most of the exercises are through games—card and memory digit games—many that follow the same principle as the game concentration. All drills work on multiple brain skills to strengthen them. Practicing the skills at home is essential.

“The LearningRx program helps individuals of all ages and performance levels by improving the person’s ability to receive, process, and retain information,” comments Bradley. “It can benefit mental abilities just as exercise can benefit the body while at the same time improving self-esteem and confidence.”

#### **PARTNERS IN CARE AND MEMORY REACH— MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN SENIORS’ LIVES**

Staying in one’s home throughout the aging process is the goal of many people as they enter their senior years. But when one’s health begins to fail, family members are faced with difficult decisions to ensure the best care and safety of their loved ones. Don Olin, who spent 35 years in the food industry, and his wife, Sally, who has 30 years experience as a Registered Nurse, founded Partners In Care after experiencing the anxieties of finding help for their mothers, when their health began to fail.

Partners In Care provides compassionate, one-on-one care in the familiar surroundings of one’s home when illness or chronic conditions abruptly change the ordinary daily routine. Caregivers and certified nursing assistants assist with errands, transportation to doctors, housekeeping, laundry, grooming, dressing and bath safety monitoring. All services are personalized to the needs of the client. Partners In Care helps their clients maintain their independence while offering peace of mind to their families. They are licensed by the State of North Carolina and serve Mecklenburg, Union, Cabarrus and Rowan counties.

Realizing that 45 percent of their clients experience some degree of dementia, the Olins founded Memory Reach, a division of Partners In Care. Memory Reach is based upon the principles of the Cognitive Retention Therapy (CRT) Program™ originally created by Dr. Mira Ashby. Whether it’s

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# Helping people strengthen the way their brain works

Alzheimer's disease, dementia, traumatic brain injury, stroke, or memory impairment, the results are often the same—loss of the ability to stay actively engaged in daily activities which often results in a disconnection from family and friends. Memory Reach offers hope to clients and their loved ones by giving them a new option in the fight to

maintain cognitive functioning.

Here's how it works. A Memory Reach facilitator meets with a client one-on-one. They ask them questions pertaining to their life in order to build a life story. By going through their adolescence and various stages of their adulthood, they discover what memories are intact in their minds. The next session

is with family members to verify the client's story. "It's a very customized and personal approach," says Fred Sexton, director of Memory Reach. "We then build a module around a topic. For example, if the client was a pilot, we may be able to stimulate his mind through tactile identification, such as placing a toy plane in a bag and having him identify its parts. We bring in model airplanes and pictures of airplanes to encourage him to talk about his experiences. Reading together about airplanes is another tool for recalling the past."

The results can be far reaching. A family member serving as caregiver, who due to frustration may have ignored the client, has discovered a topic that stimulates a conversation and brings joy. "I have the utmost faith in the Memory Reach facilitator," says Pamela Gillespie, whose mother has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and lives in a skilled nursing facility in Charlotte. "She has been successful in getting my mother to respond to her. It's very encouraging. Her certified nursing assistants relate that at times she is more alert. I now have direction as to what to talk to her about which makes my visits more enjoyable."

"Memory Reach encourages interacting with other family members," adds Sexton. "It has a snowball effect. Family members see something that was gone coming back. Relationships improve. There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease but through CRT we can slow down the process and help clients retain their memories for a longer period of time. We're going to see a lot more interest and research in cognitive stimulation as well as the therapeutic benefits," adds Olin.

Olin serves as the Sponsor Chair for the 2007 Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk which will be held on June 2, 2007. Their goal is to raise \$175,000, which stays in the community providing funds for 24-hour operators, awareness, education, daycare facilities, and support groups. "By accepting this responsibility, we are able to give back to our community," comments Olin. "It's a wonderful opportunity to work with the organization in a more in-depth manner." \*

*LearningRx is located at 7221 Pineville-Matthews Road, Suite 100, Charlotte, NC 28226, 704.541.1373. Partners In Care and Memory Reach are located at 1914 Brunswick Ave. Suite 1-B, Charlotte, NC 28207, 704.554.9904.*

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