

Programs and Services

Maximize Your Memory Day

November 19, 2010 · 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM · Pennington Biomedical Center



Maximize Your Memory day keynote speaker will be **Sherry Smelley, MSW, LCSW**, author of *"The Girl, the Star, and the Spider."*

One of the assignments for Sherry's bereavement counseling class at LSU is to have her students write a children's book on grief and/or loss. Little did Sherry know that requiring this assignment would affect her personally as she grasped the emotions and struggles in caring for her mother, Alice Van Atta, with Alzheimer's disease and subsequent death. In coping with her journey and her grief, Sherry's assignment to her students came back to her and as she writes in the Afterword of her book, "As I sat with my tears and torment, a story emerged from this darkness. Once again I found a safe place in a fairy tale." And so, Sherry's book, a fairy tale for grown ups dealing with Alzheimer's disease and similar dementias, was born and is called, *"The Girl, the Star, and the Spider."*

The book is a touching fairytale which allows some expla-

nation of the progression and process of Alzheimer's disease, involving symbolism and images for the caregiver or health-care professional to explore during the journey with a loved one who is experiencing the disease. Magically written, with wonderful illustrations by Christine Anderson Guildi, the book offers hope and inspiration in dealing with the "loss" of the loved one with Alzheimer's as well as emphasizing the celebration of life of the individual. Lastly, the book reminds all of us that the cost of love is great.

At Maximize Your Memory, Sherry will present the processes of grief and how the method of writing can play a large part in dealing with losses in our lives. "Sometimes the simplest concepts are the ones that often comfort most," Sherry writes in her book, which she reviews during her keynote presentation. As her earliest memories of her mother were her mother's love of books, poetry, and literature, writing became a natural form of comfort for Sherry, and as she struggled to find some peace in her own grief, she soon found comfort in writing a fairytale, one which now she calls a "fairytale for grown ups."

In addition to Sherry Smelley's presentation, other speakers are slated for the day:

- Panel Discussion- Part I
 - Topic: State Funded, Long-Term Care Benefits:
Jan Latimer- Louisiana Answers Coordinator and Capital Area Agency on Aging
 - Topic: Veterans Benefits: Paul Lamberty, Ph.D - Baton Rouge Veteran's Center
 - Topic: Accessing Social Security Benefits:
Susan Simoneaux, Public Affairs Specialist, Social Security Administration
- Panel Discussion- Part II
 - Topic: Assisted Living- Dementia Care Units:
Lisa Comeaux- Executive Director, Louisiana Assisted Living Association
- Topic: Nursing Homes – Dementia Care Units:
(A representative from the Louisiana Nursing Home Association)
- Topic: Hospice/Palliative Care: (Jamey Boudreaux- Executive Director, Louisiana-Mississippi Hospice and Palliative Care Organization)
- What is Research Telling us About Age - Related Dementia?
Presenter: Jeffrey Keller, Ph.D, Pennington Biomedical Research Center

Maximize Your Memory Day opens with Breakfast, Exhibitors and Screenings. To register for Maximize your Memory Day, please call the Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area office at (225) 334-7494 or (800) 548-1211, or register on-line at

www.BRhope.com. For information on sponsorship or booth opportunities, contact Rashida Keith, Program Coordinator, at the office or email at coordinator@alzbr.org.