



Carolyn Cristina Manzoni will host a TimeSlips program for people with memory loss Friday at the Jefferson County Library in Port Hadlock. (Diane Urbani de la Paz/for Peninsula Daily News)

TimeSlips: A new way to engage those living with dementia

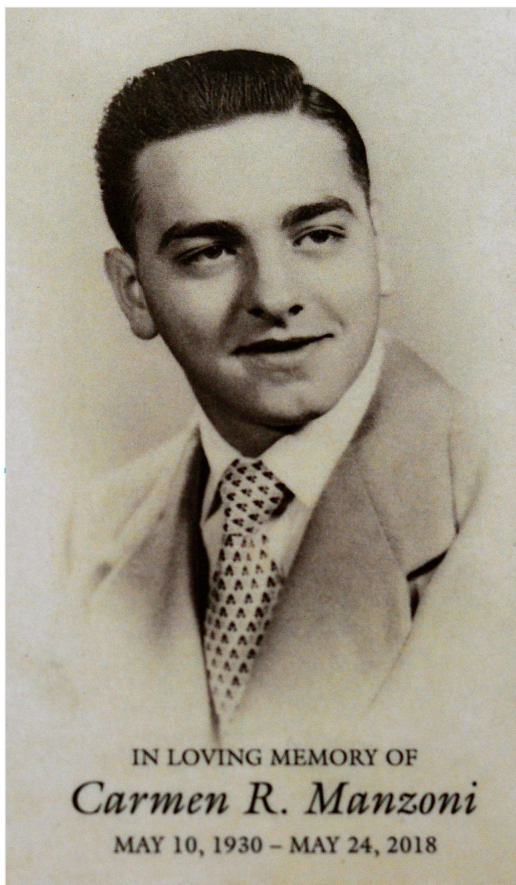
Program to start Friday at Jefferson County Library in Port Hadlock

By Diane Urbani de la Paz

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PORT HADLOCK — It's about time for fun.

There's this new invention called TimeSlips. A creative circle for people living with dementia and their care partners, it sets aside time for inventing stories, tapping into your imagination — and having a good time together.



Carolyn Cristina Manzoni is inspired by her late father Carmen Manzoni.

TimeSlips makes its public debut this Friday at the Jefferson County Library, 620 Cedar Ave., where the 2 p.m. program is free and open to all. Carolyn Cristina Manzoni, a certified dementia practitioner and trained Time-Slips facilitator, hosts the circle.

It's not easy to explain what TimeSlips is. But it turns out to be fairly simple. Participants — people with memory loss — are each handed an image: a comic, whimsical or vintage photograph.

It could be a cowboy kicking up his heels over a campfire, for example. Then Manzoni asks: "What do you see here?"

The people in the circle start imagining who the cowboy is; why he's doing what he's doing and where. Manzoni asks open-ended questions, always encouraging people to be themselves and be in the moment.

TimeSlips is a radically different way to engage people with memory loss. Often, Manzoni said, we ask things like “Mom, don’t you remember ...?” If Mom is facing dementia, she might feel a lot of embarrassment and shame when she can’t recall some piece of shared history.

TimeSlips isn’t about remembering past events; it’s a chance to create new stories, sagas those photos inspire.

“You’re the storytellers here. There’s no right or wrong,” Manzoni says at the outset of the 90-minute gathering.

Her co-facilitator is Randi Winter, the scribe who writes down everything the storytellers contribute. When the tale is built, it’s read aloud and the group comes up with a title.

“The most rewarding thing for me,” said Winter, “is seeing people perk up through engagement with us and each other.

“The program is structured in a way that people with differing abilities can participate,” and as TimeSlips stories come alive, the room fills up with laughter.

There’s no need to sign up for Friday’s program, but more information is available by calling Manzoni at 360-379-3661 or emailing RLWintin@gmail.com.

For more about the program, visit TimeSlips.org.

Manzoni also recommends Anne Basting’s book, “Forget Memory: Creating Better Lives for People with Dementia,” as well as the Memory Cafe offered here once a month. That social gathering is open to anyone dealing with memory loss — care partners, too — at the Port Hadlock Ferino’s Pizzeria, 846 Ness’ Corner Road. The next one is set for June 27 at 2 p.m., with more details available by contacting Patricia Smith at 360-379-4186 or patriciaandjaap@olympus.net.

Manzoni recently wrote to Basting, the MacArthur “genius” grant fellow who created TimeSlips, to ask where the name comes from.

Basting replied that “TimeSlips” captures the non-linear quality of the stories, in which the participants mix past and present together in a fluid, freewheeling way. People who are nonverbal can take part too, with sounds and gestures.

TimeSlips is something Manzoni is adding to an already busy life. She is the spiritual care and bereavement coordinator for Jefferson Healthcare’s Home Health & Hospice in Port Townsend as well as an advocate for people whose lives are affected by dementia.

Last week Manzoni gave a presentation, also at the county library, on Dementia Friends, a worldwide program seeking to make communities more inclusive to those with memory loss and other dementia-related conditions.

This month marks one year since she lost her father, Carmen Manzoni. He suffered from dementia; she walked that journey with him.

Today Carmen’s daughter’s work in the community, facilitating the Dementia Friends and TimeSlips programs, are part of his legacy.

“It began as personal and became professional,” Manzoni said.

“It is really what I am supposed to be doing.”

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