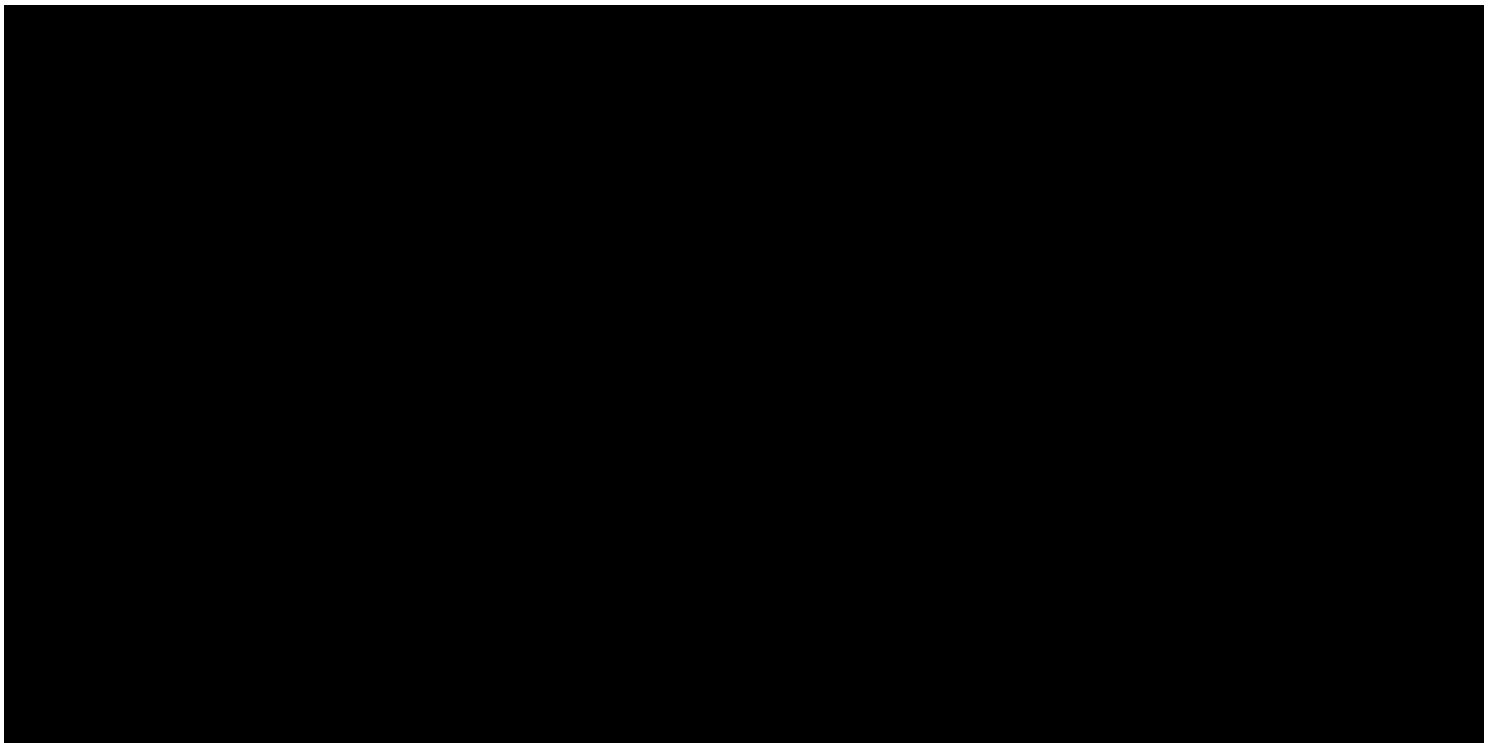


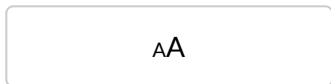
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# Virtual dementia tour brings Keith Havens to tears

by Anna Velasquez  
Thursday, December 13th 2018



*Keith Havens takes Virtual Dementia Tour.jpg*



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LEWISTON, ID – On November 30, 2018, our Chief Weather Forecaster and Anchor Keith Havens experienced 8 minutes that would change his perspective on Dementia patients forever.

He and I went to Guardian Angel Homes in Lewiston for a Virtual Dementia Tour brought to the LC Valley by Dementia Coach Rick Bennett.

Keith had to wear special glasses to impair his most of his vision, gloves to mimic loss of fine motor skills, insoles to simulate constant dull and driving pain, and headphones that played

constant background noise to provide audible distractions.

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All those combined gave him a virtual walk in the shoes of a Dementia patient.

It's a tour that Guardian Angel Homes Regional Director Liz Hall wants her staff to experience. She's passionate about long term care and said 95% of her staff have gone

through it. They now have a better understanding for caregiving.



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"These are some very compassionate people," she told me. "You don't work in this industry unless your heart is enormous. And to have the opportunity to walk in their shoes for that short time it broadens that even further for them."

Rick Bennett is a certified Dementia practitioner and coach.

He said in previous years, his friend and colleague P.K. Beville invented the Virtual Dementia Tour. She is also founder of the nonprofit Second Wind Dreams. In previous years, she allowed news crews to record inside the experiment room.

But on this day, Bennett told me I could not shoot video nor record audio inside of the experiment room while Keith went through the test. We were also not allowed to record a debriefing after the experiment. He said this restriction is to protect the research.

Later, Keith told me was given five simple tasks to do in 8 minutes, including taking two pills out of two different prescription bottles and putting them in a cup. He told me because his hands had gloves on them and he couldn't see very well, he wasn't able to complete that task.

By the end of the experiment, he also said he forgot one of the tasks.

During that time, he said became frustrated, mumbled to himself, and got confused.

By the time we returned to the news station, I could tell he was emotionally affected. Minutes after I began to interview him about his experience, he choked up and couldn't speak.



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Soon after, he described what was going through his mind: for him to be trapped in that physical state for just 8 minutes made him think about Dementia patients who live like that every day.

He wondered: what is their quality of life?

"It's this difficult for someone like me to put the words together," he explained. "It's enormously difficult for somebody with Alzheimer's or Dementia to do it. The frustration level is off the charts."

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