

# Eisenhower Memory Care Center

## CARING FOR ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS



Although caring for a memory-impaired parent or relative at home can be extremely rewarding, experts warn that caring for a relative who is suffering from the effects of Alzheimer's disease, stroke, or other illness that affects memory can be very stressful for the caregiver. Consequently, caregivers are encouraged to seek out respite care, such as adult day care centers, that provide a temporary break from their daily responsibilities.

Eisenhower Medical Center has been providing families with a respite care alternative for nearly 25 years at the Eisenhower Memory Care Center. Established in 1984, the Club is an adult day care center that offers respite for the caregiver and a chance for the family member they are caring for to develop skills and explore new interests. By using these services, caregivers can get much needed support, which may actually improve their ability over the long term to care for a loved one in the home. And the individual for whom they are caring has an opportunity to get outside the home into a social environment that keeps them engaged and stimulated.

Denise Lantini, Manager, Eisenhower Memory Care Center, says that the Club focuses on creating a caring, social environment that gives Club members (as they are known) the opportunity to enjoy activities in a group setting that they might not have access to at home. "We focus on creating a place that is safe and secure, but at the same time stimulating and fun," Smith says. "Even individuals who are memoryimpaired have the ability to be engaged in the moment. So that is what we strive to give them — a moment that they can enjoy."

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Lanitin adds that her top priority is to ensure the Eisenhower Memory Care Center, the largest non-profit adult day care center for people with dementia, Alzheimer's or other memory impairment in the Coachella Valley, also provides a secure environment, so that family members are confident that their loved ones are safe and Club members have a feeling of security and of being in a place where they belong.

"Routine is very important for memoryimpaired individuals," Lantini says. "We focus on keeping them engaged with some new activities, like field trips, or visits from local arts groups, or the zoo, for example. But we also make sure that there is a set routine, and familiar faces around them, so they feel safe." Smith adds that most of the Club's staff has been in place for many years, some as long as 20 years, so they know all the patients, and their individual needs, extremely well.

Open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Club is licensed to care for 35 people each day. There is no enrollment fee, and members are charged only for the days they attend. The daily fee is \$65, with bathing and transportation services available at an additional cost. A light breakfast, full lunch and afternoon snack are served. There is a waiting list for each day, with the schedule of attendees set at the beginning of each week. Smith leads a support group for caregivers every Thursday from 9 to 11 a.m., with free day care provided during that time.

**To learn about Eisenhower Memory Care Center, or to be placed on the waiting list, please call 760-836-0232.**