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Memory Cafés launching in 2026 for people with dementia, caregivers

Area Agency on Aging and the Campus for Creative Aging are launching an exciting new initiative in the new year for people with cognitive changes, such as dementia, and their families.

Memory Cafés will be held in New Buffalo, Niles and Stevensville starting in January thanks to a grant from the Berrien Community Foundation.

Memory Cafés are a place for those with dementia and their caregivers to engage in art, enjoy games and puzzles, and learn about interesting topics in a safe and welcoming environment.

“The Cafés will be set up just like any other cafe with coffee, tea, and snacks to make all feel welcome,” Jess Kolbe, Campus for Creative Aging Coordinator, said. “Research demonstrates that participants experience joy, purpose, and belonging within these Cafés supporting our ongoing initiative to create a Dementia-Friendly Community in Southwest Michigan.”

The Cafés are scheduled for:

- 9:30-11:30 a.m., the 1st Tuesday of the Month at the New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St., New Buffalo
- 9:30-11:30 a.m., the 2nd Thursday of the Month at the Niles District Library, 620 E. Main St., Niles
- 1:00-3:00 p.m., the 3rd Monday of the Month (2nd Monday in January and February due to holidays), at the Lincoln Township Public Library, 2099 W. John Beers Road, Stevensville

Memory Cafés are led by volunteer facilitators and are not for respite care. Caregivers, family members or friends join the person with dementia to, together, experience a haven for nonjudgemental fun.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer facilitator, please reach out to Jess at JessKolbe@areaagencyonaging.org or 269-932-7865.

All Memory Cafés are free and open to the public. Registration is requested in case of inclement weather or illness.

For more information, to express interest as a volunteer, and/or to sign up for a Memory Cafe, visit <https://areaagencyonaging.org/memory-cafes/>

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Region IV Area Agency on Aging has been serving Southwest Michigan with aging and disability services for over 50 years. RIV AAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation. Established in 1974 for the business of developing age supportive commerce and services, it plays a major role in planning, funding, and delivery of a host of services. Empowerment and independence of community members are driving themes behind its efforts. Designated by the State of Michigan to receive federal Older Americans Act funds for planning and development, the agency manages an array of government contracts for service delivery in Southwest Michigan. Its primary service area includes Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties. For more information, visit www.areaagencyonaging.org.