



**ATTN: NEWS EDITOR
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

APRIL 14, 2016

**ALZHEIMER'S ALLIANCE HOSTS
VIRTUAL DEMENTIA TOUR FOR COMMUNITY**

TYLER – The Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County will be hosting a virtual dementia tour on Saturday, April 16. The tour will be led by Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, a clinical nursing instructor at The University of Texas at Tyler.

First designed in 1997 by geriatric specialist P.K. Breville, the tour is an experiential tool for medical professionals, families, and caregivers to learn firsthand the day-to-day challenges for persons with dementias. Over 350,000 Texans are currently diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, and it is the fifth leading cause of death in the state.

"I went through the tour myself after my mother was diagnosed," said Wilson, who then became a certified tour facilitator. "I was in tears because I finally understood her experience, and it made it simpler for me to communicate and connect with her. I want others to see how they can help their loved ones, and I make it available to student nurses throughout East Texas so they can better care for their patients."

During the tour, participants are outfitted with clothing and accessories designed to simulate the sensory and mobility experience of persons with dementia. They are assigned a set of simple tasks such as folding clothes, setting the table, or counting change while being evaluated by Wilson. After the tour, the participant goes through a debrief session and can meet with Alliance staff to learn more about supporting a person with the disease.

"It's the interactive, hands-on approach that gives this experience such impact," said Leslie Lindsey, community outreach coordinator for the Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County. "With this new degree of empathy many have after the tour, it helps us break down stigmas we have about those with dementia and ultimately provide better care."

The tour will be held at Meadow Lake Senior Living, 16044 County Road 165 in Tyler, beginning at 9 a.m. To register, contact the Alzheimer's Alliance at (903) 509-8323.

About the Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County

Founded in 1982, the Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County is a local nonprofit organization committed to walking alongside all of those affected by Alzheimer's disease and related



dementias. Our services include personal consultations, education and awareness, caregiver support and resources, and brain health advocacy in Smith County.

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