

The SHRIVER Report

A Study by Maria Shriver and the Alzheimer's Association

EVERYONE CAN HELP TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.

The First Lady of California Maria Shriver is a long-time advocate for families struggling with Alzheimer's. Shriver's father, Robert Sargent Shriver, the founding director of the Peace Corps, received a diagnosis of the disease in 2003. Since then Shriver has been deeply involved in raising awareness and funding for Alzheimer care and research.

Ten days before her annual "Women's Conference", Shriver and the Alzheimer's Association released "The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Takes on Alzheimer's."

According to the Alzheimer's Association, two-thirds of the people who have Alzheimer's are women. In addition, 60 percent of Alzheimer caregivers are also women. The number of people with Alzheimer's disease expected to triple, reaching as many as 16 million by 2050. These statistics presented in the report are convincing evidence that if the disease is not touching your life today, it will at some point in your life. Being prepared for that eventuality will make it much easier to handle when the time comes.

The report is a comprehensive study which details how the Alzheimer's disease have an enormous impact in women as caregivers, advocates and patients. Maria Shriver's personal narrative takes you behind the scenes of the disease. There is no better resource than someone who understands the issues firsthand and can share the wisdom of their experiences.

"It's time to harness the power and ability of women helping other women to start a dialogue around this disease. We've made great strides around treatment and prevention of other diseases, such as breast cancer, and heart disease. Why not Alzheimer's?"

The Shriver Report it helps start a conversation about Alzheimer's. One of the many consequences of being a caregiver of someone with memory loss is that you often feel overwhelmed and alone. The report's inspirational stories and new revelations act as conversation starters with friends and family. It is sometimes easier to talk about someone else's story than it is to share your own. In a very reader-friendly way, the report also helps explain the disease and its impact to someone who has never had to confront it.



The SHRIVER Report CONTINÚA

Contributors to the report include everyday Americans and well-known public figures, including former First Lady Laura Bush, President Ronald Reagan's daughter Patti Davis, Barbra Streisand, former Sen. Bob Kerrey, Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, Vice President Joseph Biden, Terrell Owens, Soleil Moon Frye, ABC News Nightline anchor Terry Moran, and CBS News Correspondent Barry Petersen.

From October 24 to 26, California first lady Maria Shriver hosted the Women's Conference in Long Beach, California. The event showcased more than 100 high-powered speakers and attracted more than 30,000 people to the city's Convention Center. The event was an excellent opportunity for Mrs Shriver. The three-day event kicked off with Shriver's March on Alzheimer's and candlelight vigil. Next day, the event started with Leeza Gibbons, Peter Gallagher and Jane Fonda helping on warming up and motivating marchers with stretching exercises. The effort raised more than \$276,000 to benefit the Alzheimer's Association.

"We need more money for this disease, but more importantly, we need dignity for families who have people with Alzheimer's in them," Shriver said. "This disease needs more money, more conversation, more adjustments by all of our leading institutions." The disease disproportionately affects women. We need help! We need help from our businesses where we work, with flex hours. We need help from our government, which is the largest employer in the nation."

The disease strikes an especially personal cord. "Despite President Ronald Reagan's openness in discussing his Alzheimer's diagnosis, for many the disease is one of fear, guilt, shame and confusion," said Shriver. "I knew that President Reagan had been diagnosed, but that was really about all ... My brothers and I and my mother had no idea what our father would go through."

When she tried to gather information, she found an empty landscape. People didn't talk about it. So Shriver returned to her own journalistic instincts to create and share information and resources about the disease, beginning

with writing the children's book, "What's Happening to Grandpa?" "I had written two previous children's books about issues that people found difficult to talk about, like dealing with the progress of the illness and its disabilities. And it was a way to really process for myself the diagnosis of Alzheimer's." Shriver said. "I think anybody in their 50's or 60's or 70's should be concerned that they may be going to get Alzheimer's, whether you have a loved one with it or not," she says.

Shriver tries to stay healthy by exercising and eating right – "I try to be conscious of what I eat for my heart, with the idea that what's in my heart can go to my brain" – but she admits to some weaknesses. "I like cookies, any cookie you put in front of me – animal cookies, sugar cookies, anything crunchy."

Maria's story is just one of many presented in the full report. Other stories from well-known figures such as Patti Davis, daughter of President Regan, and from unknown individuals impacted by Alzheimer's combine to paint a powerful portrait that is both emotionally touching and highly informative.

An eBook edition of The Shriver Report created by Free Press is be available online at

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