



Carefree and Cave Creek are officially part of Dementia Friendly America®

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE [March 11, 2026]

Carefree and Cave Creek are officially part of the **Dementia Friendly America** collaborative network, joining more than 14 communities across Arizona including Tempe, Scottsdale, Fountain Hills, and Phoenix.

This milestone reflects a community-wide commitment to ensuring residents experiencing memory loss can continue to live with dignity, connection, and purpose. With Arizona projected to experience the nation's highest growth rate of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, preparing its population through education, awareness, and accessible resources is becoming increasingly vital.

The Dementia Friendly Arizona initiative, led by Banner Alzheimer's Institute, is working to ensure communities across the state are better equipped to support people living with dementia and their care partners.

Through their work serving seniors for over 25 years, **Foothills Caring Corps** has seen firsthand the growing impact of memory loss, cognitive decline, and social isolation on individuals and families. Last year, Caring Corps approached Dementia Friendly Arizona about the towns of Carefree and Cave Creek. Caring Corps then took on the role as the local "Champion" organization leading the Dementia Friendly effort, in partnership with Home Instead, Banner Alzheimer's Institute, local leaders, business owners, and community members.

Caring Corps approached both towns, inviting them to be a part of and support their efforts through community initiatives and events. Carefree and Cave Creek joining the Dementia Friendly America network highlights their dedication to fostering safe, respectful, and inclusive environments for individuals and families navigating dementia.

"Dementia, and all of its different forms, is affecting more residents and families in the Cave Creek area than we may know," said **Cave Creek Mayor Robert Morris**. "Becoming a Dementia Friendly community helps bring the resources that support families through these difficult times closer to home through the Foothills Caring Corps."

"Carefree is deeply committed to working with the Foothills Caring Corps so that the needs of our residents and visitors living with dementia and their care partners/families are met," said **Carefree Mayor John Crane**. "We wish for them to thrive, feel secure, and be treated with dignity and respect while remaining engaged in our community."

The groundwork for this initiative has already begun, through expanded programming and strategic partnerships. Support letters from local leaders and business owners further demonstrate both communities' commitment. The process and plan have been reviewed by ***Dementia Friendly America*** as part of joining the national network, and progress will continue to be evaluated periodically.

Current local efforts include:

- A monthly **Memory Café**, offering a welcoming space for individuals experiencing memory loss and their caregivers
- **Music, Memory & Movement workshops**, promoting cognitive engagement, gentle physical activity, and social connection
- **Partnerships** with local businesses and organizations to provide education and practical tools
- An active community **Action Team** focused on training, outreach, and ongoing resource development

For more information about upcoming training sessions, to learn about action team meetings, or to join the list of local businesses interested in staff education, contact Sherri Boozikee at sherrib@foothillscaringcorps.org.

QUICK SUMMARY OF "DEMENTIA FRIENDLY"

A Dementia Friendly community is one where individuals living with dementia are supported rather than sidelined, and caregivers are recognized and resourced. The multi-sector approach includes increasing dementia awareness, reducing stigma, equipping businesses and organizations with practical tools, and expanding supportive programming.

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