



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***Alzheimer's Caregivers Encouraged to Improve Well-Being***

**Atlanta, GA, November 16, 2015**— A diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or dementia can be emotionally overwhelming for the individual as well as the family. As we recognize National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and National Caregiver Month this November, it's important to be aware of the unique challenges Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers face.

Nearly 60 percent of Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers rate the emotional stress of caregiving as high or very high, and more than one-third of them report symptoms of depression, according to the Alzheimer's Association. The demands of physical caregiving and constant supervision combined with the emotional toll of seeing a loved one so altered by dementia can be a lot to handle. However, the best thing caregivers can do for their loved ones is to stay mentally and physically strong.

In Atlanta, increased attention has been devoted to caregiving for those with Alzheimer's Disease with the success of nationally-recognized play, "Blackberry Winter." This play was a co-production between Actor's Express and Out of Hand Theater.

Georgia psychologists encourage caregivers to improve their well-being in a number of ways:

**Actively manage stress by taking time to exercise, meditate or talk to a friend.** Finding positive, healthy ways to manage stress can lower the risk for negative health consequences.

**Accept the changes that the person with dementia is facing.** Even if they can't remember a name, they may still recognize and have feelings for their friends and family.

**Understand that no one can do this alone.** Seek support from friends, family or a support group. For many this support may be enough. But if a caregiver finds himself or herself overwhelmed, a psychologist may be able to help. Psychologists can work with the individual and family to develop strategies to improve quality of life and manage emotions related to the diagnosis.

Athens-based psychologist, Dr. Kip Matthews, points out that "it is imperative to rely on your social support network when caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's Disease. The responsibilities can be incredibly demanding and isolating and so it is crucial for people to take time to take care of themselves as well."

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*Advancing the profession of psychology in Georgia*

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