



**ATTN: NEWS EDITOR
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**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, October 29. 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. More than 3,500 people in Smith County are estimated to be living with, and Alzheimer's disease is currently the fifth leading cause of death in Texas.

"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 families to see how they can help their loved ones, as well as health care professionals 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 observed by Wilson and trained UT Tyler nursing student volunteers. After the tour, participants go through a debrief session with Alliance staff to learn more about their experience and about supporting a person living with dementia.

"Experiencing their worldview firsthand is very impactful," said Luanne Harms, client services director at the Alzheimer's Alliance. "Increasing empathy for those with dementia not only leads to better care, but it enhances wellbeing for caregivers as they learn ways to improve communication and reduce any frustration they may be experiencing."

The tour will be held at Oak Hills Terrace Memory Care, 2651 Elkton Trail in Tyler, beginning at 9 a.m. To register, visit www.alzalliance.org or call (903) 509-8323.

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