



Meet Our Volunteers | Jean Georges

Jean Georges knows full well the physical toll of being a caregiver. Two years ago, while at the Mayo Clinic with her husband, Leonard, for his routine Alzheimer's/vascular dementia visit, she suffered a stress-induced heart attack. Despite having been told for years during annual physicals that she was the picture of heart health with low cholesterol, a healthy diet, and plenty of physical exercise, Jean found herself undergoing a quadruple bypass the next morning.

Jean, who has since recovered fully, is delighted that the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health has come to Las Vegas. Now, rather than traveling to Mayo, her husband is being treated locally by Dr. Bernick. Jean herself attends the weekly caregiver support group at the Center. But being a full-time caregiver is not enough for Jean. She feels compelled to educate others on the subject of dementia, and says, "I talk about my husband's disease because it gives others permission to talk about it. I want to educate people so that they, too, can heed the early warning signs. Early detection is critical, and something that I wasn't aware of myself."

Jean says that volunteering at the Center is a wonderful way to continue that education, adding, "I'm just

thrilled to be a part of what is going on within these walls. It's truly first class. Things are going on here that I feel will bring a solution to dementia."

Given her lifelong interest in reading and in education, it's not a surprise that when presented with the array of volunteer opportunities at Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health, Jean chose the library. She says it's full of knowledge about the various forms of dementia, and contains helpful information for caregivers themselves. She is proud that the Center's collection is already believed to be the largest of its kind in the state of Nevada.

"Alzheimer's is a terrible disease, but a fascinating one," Jean proclaims. "It's another frontier, and I've been fascinated by frontiers since my husband and I moved to Las Vegas 50 years ago when the city itself was a frontier. The Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health is now an oasis in the desert."

She says that back when her husband was first diagnosed over six years ago, prevailing philosophy at the time dictated that the Alzheimer's patient not be told of his condition. Jean comments, "If the patient knows, the couple can walk down the road together. If not, the burden is entirely on the caregiver."

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