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Hope in Action: I'm Still Here Foundation Awards 2025 Grants to Fuel Creativity and Connection in Dementia Care Through the Arts and Community

Nine organizations across the U.S. were selected to receive funding for innovative, non-pharmacological programs that redefine what's possible for people living with dementia.

LEXINGTON, MA – August 7, 2025 – The I'm Still Here Foundation (ISH) has announced its 2025-2026 Innovative Program grantees—nine nonprofit organizations across the U.S. will each receive seed funding to launch or expand groundbreaking programs designed to engage people living with dementia through the arts, culture, movement, and community engagement.

The annual grants aim to empower community-based changemakers whose work challenges outdated assumptions and stigma about living with dementia. From storytelling to dance, visual arts to memory cafés, each recipient is using creativity as a catalyst for connection, dignity, and joy.

“Each of the Innovative Grant Programs aligns with our mission to reframe the dementia narrative—from despair to possibility—and we’re thrilled to help expand their reach and impact,” said Susan Law, Executive Director of the I'm Still Here Foundation. “These grantees are helping people living with dementia (and their care partners) stay deeply connected to their families, communities, and passions. That’s what our Innovation Program is all about, planting seeds that grow into lasting change.”

Founded in 1996, ISH has long championed non-pharmacological approaches to dementia care. Its Innovation Program supports projects that put ISH Principles into action, prioritizing meaningful involvement of individuals with dementia and their care partners in everyday life. Programs typically reflect authentic engagement, well-being, and creative approaches.

The selected 2025 projects reflect our mission, offering opportunities from intergenerational art installations to culturally inclusive memory programming. Each one exemplifies the philosophy laid out by ISH Founder Dr. John Zeisel in his book, *I'm Still Here: A New Philosophy of Alzheimer's Care*.

“Art touches and engages the brain in a more profound way than other activities,” said Dr. Zeisel. “It’s found in every corner of our communities—in museums and music groups, theater productions and

historical societies. These grants are not about charity—they're about change. Each recipient is doing extraordinary work to replace the narrative of despair with one of hope. Through the arts and community, they give people the tools to create moments of meaning and joy, no matter where they are on the dementia journey.”

This year’s grantees, chosen from a competitive national pool of applicants, represent a diverse cross-section of the country with a wide range of impactful approaches—from dance, visual arts, and poetry to cultural enrichment and support to underserved communities . Each project was evaluated for innovation, creativity, community impact, sustainability, and alignment with ISH’s values.

Grantees for the 2025-2026 grant cycle include:

- Generations in Bloom at Theo’s Flowers (Medfield, MA)
- Singing Your Memories at Valley Oak Respite Center (Danville ,CA)
- How to Incubate Your Program hosted by R Place (Chapel Hill, NC)
- Writers Workshop Retreats sponsored by the International Writers Workshop Guild (IWWG) (Kingston, NY)
- Celebrating Ugandan Elders at the Waltham Africano Cultural Services (Waltham, MA)
- Mind-Body Dance Connections with the Early Alzheimer’s Foundation (New York, NY)
- Toy and Miniature Stories hosted by the National Museum of Toys and Miniatures (Kansas City, MO)
- Pre-School Library Partners at Paw Paw District Library (Paw Paw, MI)
- Honoring Native American Elders - Poetry on Wheels - hosted by The Illinois St. Andrew Society, dba Chicago Scots and Caledonia Senior Living & Memory Care (Oneida Nation, WI)

A full list of the 2025-2026 ISH Innovation Program grant recipients and their program descriptions is available at www.imstillhere.org/programs.

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About I’m Still Here Foundation

The I’m Still Here Foundation (ISH), a nonprofit charity since 1996, helps people living with dementia flourish through engagement in life, family and community. ISH finances and supports innovative programs that engage persons living with dementia and their care partners in the arts, culture and community engagement activities demonstrating success based on the narrative of capacity, hope, and non-pharmacological treatment for people living with dementia. ISH seeks to spread the message of hope and possibility, especially to underserved individuals and communities.