

# Walk, performance at BC3 to raise funds to benefit Alzheimer's research

Sept. 13, 2018



Janie Caruso, of Rural Valley, left, portraying Dr. Delane, rehearses a scene from “Absence” with Jerry Johnston, of Butler, at Butler County Community College’s Succop Theater on Wednesday, Sept. 5, 2018. Johnston portrays David Bastion, whose wife, Helen, has been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. The two-hour play will be performed at Succop Theater at 7 p.m. Sept. 21-22, and at 2 p.m. Sept. 23. Profits from “Absence” will benefit the Alzheimer’s Association.

(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College on Saturday will host a Walk to End Alzheimer’s and next week will stage an award-winning play about dementia to raise money for the care and support of patients, and to fund research into the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States, according to the Alzheimer’s Association.

“This disease is devastating and the numbers of those affected continue to grow exponentially,” said Brittany Coulter, constituent events manager of the Alzheimer’s Association Greater Pennsylvania Chapter. “Any opportunity we have to raise awareness for this disease helps us get closer to finding the first survivor.”

About 5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, which, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a progressive illness "beginning with mild memory loss, possibly leading to loss of the ability to carry on a conversation and respond to the environment."

Registration for the Walk to End Alzheimer's begins at 9 a.m. Saturday on BC3's main campus in Butler Township. Team BC3 participants will walk two miles on the Shaffer Walking Trail beginning at 10:30 a.m., according to Sherri Osborne, BC3's assistant director of student activities.

"It is important that we find a cure," Osborne said, adding that BC3's student activities office is sponsoring the walk. "Alzheimer's disease not only affects patients, but the people who care for them on a daily basis."

Team BC3 will present a check to the Alzheimer's Association following the walk, Osborne said.

More than 16 million Americans provide unpaid care for patients with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

## Play "a sort of catharsis or closure"

Plights such as theirs will be chronicled in Peter M. Floyd's "Absence" – winner of the Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award at the 2012 Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in Washington, D.C. – at Succop Theater from Sept. 21-23.

Presented by Newhaven Court at Clearview, Butler, and directed by Larry Stock, BC3's Cultural Center director, "Absence" illuminates the struggle of character Helen Bastion, a woman diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and proceeds, Stock said, "until she has no memory left."

Several members of the "Absence" cast have experienced loved ones suffering from Alzheimer's disease, Stock said, "and this play is a sort of catharsis or closure."

That cast features Nedra Casey, of Butler, as Helen Bastion; Jerry Johnston, of Butler, BC3's admissions and business relations representative, as David Bastion, Helen's husband; Amy Cannard, of Butler, as Barb, Helen's daughter; Gabrielle Lisella, of Jackson Township, a 2018 BC3 fine arts graduate, as Samantha, Helen's granddaughter; Dennis Casey, of Butler, as Dr. Bright; and Janie Caruso, of Rural Valley, who in different scenes portrays Dr. Delane or Ms. Moss.



Larry Stock, director of Butler County Community College's Cultural Center, will direct "Absence," a two-hour play that chronicles the struggle of a woman diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and proceeds until her memory is gone. The play will be performed at BC3's Succop Theater at 7 p.m. Sept. 21-22, and at 2 p.m. Sept. 23. Profits from "Absence" will benefit the Alzheimer's Association.

“This is one of the most powerful scripts I have directed,” said Stock, who has directed more than 20 plays and musicals, “and the cast is outstanding.”

Viewing the play may help those “who have dealt with this disease personally,” Stock said, “and let them know that they are not alone.”

The two-hour, two-act play, sponsored in part by BC3 and the Alzheimer’s Association, will be performed at 7 p.m. Sept. 21-22, and at 2 p.m. Sept. 23.

Reserved seats are \$15 for adults, and \$13 for students and for seniors age 65 or older. Tickets can be purchased by calling Newhaven Court at 724-477-8701 or the Succop Theater Box Office at 724-284-8505; or online at [bc3.edu/succop-theater](http://bc3.edu/succop-theater).

Profits will benefit the Alzheimer’s Association, Stock said.

“Much research and money is needed,” Stock said, “to rid the world of this horrible disease.”

For information on how to donate to Team BC3 prior to the Walk to End Alzheimer’s, email Osborne at [sherri.osborne@bc3.edu](mailto:sherri.osborne@bc3.edu).