

# John and Connie's Story

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Ten years ago, John's wife, Connie, was diagnosed with dementia and John became involved with Alzheimer's Society. Here, John tells us why he decided to leave a gift in his will:

'Following Connie's death I've been taking stock.

While talking to my children and close friends about my new will, there was one decision which was very easy to make - I knew that I wanted to leave a legacy to the Alzheimer's Society.

The reason for doing this is part of the story of the last ten years of my marriage to Connie.

Shortly after Connie's diagnosis in 1999, we decided together that we needed more support and advice if we were to deal with the illness and my new role as a carer. The result was a decision to become part of a very important community - their local Alzheimer's Society in South Warwickshire - made up of people with dementia, their carers and families, volunteers and professional staff.

It would take too long to list all the marvellous things which we were involved in, but here are just a few of them.

The monthly Saturday morning social group where we made so many friends; the 'Out and About' group which Connie loved and which reminded her that she was still an independent person in her own right; the visits from professionals who helped us to see how it was still possible to go on living a worthwhile life; the Alzheimer's Café - a remarkable example of an open and egalitarian dementia community where consultants, psychologists and people with memory problems and their families meet together to talk and support each other.



These experiences gave us something so important that it is impossible to imagine how we would have managed without them.

We grew from a position where we felt isolated and alone (even with marvellous loving support from our family) to one where we felt wonderfully connected. When the end came, very suddenly, I found myself still part of a loving and compassionate community.

So I decided to do two things which in a modest way I hoped would continue the work of Alzheimer's Society.

Firstly, since I had power of Attorney for Connie's estate, I was able to ensure that there was a gift from her to Alzheimer's Society - and although in her later years she wouldn't have been able to articulate her wishes, I know for certain that she would have been delighted to help in this way.

Secondly, in drawing up my new will, I have given a share of my estate.

It's my passionate wish that the Alzheimer's Society should go on flourishing so that others can benefit, as Connie and I did, from the services it provides.'

## **John Goodfellow**

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Alzheimer's Society National Dementia Helpline

England, Wales and Northern Ireland: 0300 222 11 22

9.00am-5.00pm Monday-Friday

10.00am-4.00pm Saturday-Sunday

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