

My name is Luba Routsong, I am a retired school counselor and a resident of Colchester. I'm here to share the importance of the Adult Day program and to ask you to restore the \$2 million cut to the Moderate Needs group under Choices for Care.

My husband has Alzheimer's. It is a disease that robs him of heart, soul, and body, a disease of perpetual loss. Over the last three years I have created social engagement opportunities, enhanced my own abilities to care for him through classes and support groups, and been his primary caregiver. This is very, very hard work and as his Alzheimer's progresses it becomes more and more challenging for me. Vermont is woefully lacking in support for those caring for a loved one with dementia.

When my husband was diagnosed three years ago, I put his name on the waitlist to attend the Adult Day program in South Burlington. At that time there were more than 150 people on the waiting list. I continued to check back, each time a little more desperate.. Finally, last year there was space for Tom to attend one day a week. I was thrilled.

We have now secured him a place two days a week and this is allowing him to remain home with me for the time being. More challenges loom in the near future.

I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of respite and the value of the Adult Day program for Tom and I. He is safe, fed, and cared for. Social engagement is one of the most important interventions that may slow the progression of dementia. The staff is trained to provide appropriate social interaction. Please do all you can to keep opportunities like these available for the more than 13,000 Vermonters over the age of 65 with dementia and for their family caregivers. Please do not cut any service that allows someone with dementia to remain at home with their family. I hope you will restore the \$2million dollars to the Moderate Needs Program. Thank you.