



It all started as a birthday party.

In 2017, our founders, Eric & Sheryl Kolb gathered their family to honor Sheryl's mom, Trish, on her 78th birthday. They turned part of their weekend celebration into a public fundraiser for the Alzheimer's Association, and they called it Songs & Smiles. Many people joined them for a Sunday afternoon of family-friendly entertainment. Others sent best wishes and donations.

After that first event, Eric and Sheryl were often asked about the future of Songs & Smiles. *Was it coming back? Was it going to grow into something bigger?*

They shrugged and said they didn't know. Sheryl's mom had been living with Alzheimer's for many years, and her memory loss was getting worse. Our founders realized they would have to focus more of their time and energy on caring for Trish.

Eric and Sheryl lost Sheryl's mom to Alzheimer's last year. Honoring Trish, they have now established Songs & Smiles as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization supporting all those who find themselves facing the challenges of Alzheimer's — those living with the disease and those caring for them.

Eric and Sheryl know firsthand how tough it is to care for a loved one who has dementia, and they want to share what they've learned with other families. Songs & Smiles is coming alongside caregivers during the Alzheimer's journey, bringing practical help and encouraging people to celebrate life with love and laughter.

"We need more people like you."

Ruth is a sweet lady living with Alzheimer's. She likes to dress nicely and carry a purse with her wherever she goes. Eric leads singalongs every week at the memory care facility where Ruth lives. One week, when the singalong was finished, Ruth walked up to him, placed her hands on his, looked into his eyes and said: *"Sometimes we're lonely and sad living here, but you make us feel happy. We know all the songs you sing for us. You smile from your heart. We need more people like you."*

Ruth's words are a reminder of how music — songs we sing together — can be a powerful tool for building connections.

Changing the Narrative

Songs & Smiles is working to increase awareness of the unique challenges faced by families caring for a loved one who has Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's destroys connections, first between a person and their memories, and then between people. Family and friends drift apart. Celebrations cease. Isolation increases.

The mission of Songs & Smiles is keeping families connected during the Alzheimer's journey. When caregivers receive training and support, they experience lower stress and better health and are better equipped to care for a loved one. Programs — including singalongs, educational resources, and magazines — are designed to build and strengthen connections between family, friends, and communities.

Please visit songsandsmiles.com or email Eric and Sheryl Kolb directly for more information.



Trish at the first Songs & Smiles event in 2017



Eric, Trish, and Sheryl in 2019



Eric leading a singalong in 2021