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Family Facing Dementia Lives With Joy And Purpose

On March 20, the Annual "Meeting of the Minds" Conference took place in St. Paul, Minn. The conference this year gathered approximately 1300 individuals made up of professionals in the field of dementia, along with caregivers, families, and persons with mild cognitive impairment or the early stages of a dementia.

It was a conference that inspired hope and a sense of community. We learned how leading researchers are looking for ways to predict Alzheimer's disease, improve diagnostic techniques, identify high-risk individuals, and ultimately develop preventative treatments and an eventual cure. There were breakout sessions, service vendors and advocacy opportunities.

The conference introduced us to the DeMoe family from North Dakota. The DeMoe family is made up of six children, five of whom carry a gene mutation that has resulted in younger-onset Alzheimer's. Several members of the DeMoe family took the stage and while firmly interlocking hands, shared their journey. You may think that what we heard was a story of tragedy and heartache, but quite the contrary. What we heard and felt was a family in a place of acceptance and love. The family reminded me that none of us get to live this life without grief and loss. The DeMoe family understands this and lives each day with joy and purpose by participating in research, sharing their story, hugging any one who needs it, and with lots and lots of humor.

For me, the annual conference is like coming home after being away for a year. I see familiar faces dedicated to their work, I reconnect with families who I have met and supported over the years, and I stand proudly beside my colleagues who share my passion for making a difference in the lives of anyone impacted by dementia. I am certain the energy generated on this special day drenched us all with an undeniable feeling of community and oneness.

Until next year. [Free Medical Advice](#) published By [Dr Vivienne Balonwu](#).

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