



Resident diagnosed with Alzheimer's gives a presentation on marketing to other residents at The Greens.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GREENS AT GREENWICH

Did you just tell me I have Alzheimer's Disease?

BY MARIA SCAROS
GUEST COLUMNIST

"There I was squeezing my wife's hand as the doctor shuffled through his papers. He made no eye contact. He stopped, without looking up, as if he were reading something of little interest

and matter-of-factly said, "Yes. It seems definitive. You have Alzheimer's Disease." This is what Henry shared with a group of healthcare providers. He was on a panel with three other people who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease within the last few years. They

were presenting at the American Society on Aging's annual conference in March 2023. Each relayed similar stories of physicians offering horrendous news with little to no compassion. Esther mentioned that after her doctor gave her the news, he said, "Go home and put your affairs in order and I'll see you in six months." Henry, Esther, Robert and Gene were all living with Alzheimer's Disease. They wanted to speak up in their own voice and advocate for themselves. It is hard for us to put ourselves in their shoes. The disease is complex, as is the attitude

towards it by professionals, friends and loved ones. Cancer patients, the mentally ill, disabled people and others advocate for themselves. For some reason, those with Alzheimer's Disease are not offered the chance. "We are still quite able. We are the only ones who can best share what it is like to be dismissed, ignored, tossed away and left for dead before the end," said Robert, who held his therapy dog close as he shared. Gene nodded. "We are still very much here. The disease takes years for most of us. We ask you don't

leave us as soon as you hear the diagnosis. We are still men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers and more." I left the panel discussion with such admiration for these very courageous human beings. They deserve their platform with our undying support and our promise to treat them always with the respect and dignity they deserve. Maria Scaros is the Executive Director of The Greens at Greenwich. For more information, visit thegreensatgreenwich.com, or call 203-531-5500.

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