

MARIA SHRIVER'S

SUNDAY PAPER

ARCHITECT OF CHANGE
OF THE WEEK



LORI LA BEY
Moving Humanity Forward

This week, we honor Lori La Bey as our Architect of Change of the Week. She is a woman who is truly moving humanity forward. Lori is the founder of [Alzheimer's Speaks](#), a Minnesota-based advocacy group that provides multiple platforms of education and support for those dealing with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Alzheimer's Speaks provide cutting-edge and accessible resources for individuals to connect on these issues and learn how to support themselves and their families.

We caught up with her this week for our Sunday Paper Q&A.

1. What motivated you to become an advocate for Alzheimer's & caregivers?

I lived more than half of my life trying to figure out how to live gracefully with my Mother's dementia. For 30 years, we walked hand in hand with Alzheimer's disease as my Mother taught me life lessons through the disease process that enhanced my life. I made a commitment to my mom to share what she taught me to help other families avoid the struggles we faced. Now I speak, train and consult families, professionals and companies to connect on deeper levels. Through my emotional-based training, I believe others can see and feel the gifts wrapped in this unusual package called dementia.

2. Why do you think everyone should get involved with this issue?

Dementia is not a disease of one, but of society. It knows no boundaries and all minds are fair game in its system's eyes. The United States is way behind other countries in meeting the needs of those diagnosed and those caring for them. Every three seconds someone is diagnosed with dementia in the world, yet this is a very under-diagnosed disease. Part of this is due to the stigmas attached to the disease and part is due to the lack of doctors being trained to look for it. Dementia alone can break not only our healthcare system, but our federal and county budgets along with our family structures and personal finances. We must work together to take aggressive action toward raising awareness of dementia, utilizing the people's language, putting support services in place and increase funding for research.

3. What is one thing you want people to know?

I want people to know there is beauty in life even when disease and aging hits. I believe people only remember three things in life and that they will find only what they are looking. The three things are: Tears, Fears and Joy. Tears are for our grief and what we feel we have lost as we look through our review mirror into the past, when we could choose gratitude for what we had. Fears are what we worry about as we project into the future, even though we all know much of what we worry about never happens. Joy is only available to us in the current moment of time. It is the only place you can find joy or create it. If we spend too much time in the past or projecting into the future, we lose

the opportunity to look for and find joy. So, to all I say, “What do you want in your life? What are you going to consciously choose to look for? Know you are the only one in control of what you will find in life and what you will have left to remember.”

To read more about Lori La Bey and her work, go to MariaShriver.com.