

Alzheimer's Art

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Once there was a 77 year old grandmother named Ann who was much loved. In turn, she loved someone in particular, her granddaughter Charlotte. She was Charlotte's biggest fan. She went to all of Charlotte's basketball games. They played every day. They would make fashionable clothes for Charlotte's dolls and hold fashion shows every weekend. It wasn't uncommon to hear loud music and open a door to the biggest dance party with the fanciest ladies on earth taking place in Charlotte's room when Ann visited. Ann's favorite thing that Charlotte and her mother did with her was take her out to breakfast at her special restaurant. Charlotte always had to sit by Ann; they had such a special bond. One day Ann began repeating herself and the stories she told Charlotte. Charlotte's mom became worried and took Ann to the doctor. This is when Ann and Charlotte's world began to change forever because Ann was diagnosed with Alzheimer's; Charlotte was heartbroken when she found out. Although Charlotte was young, her mother explained that Alzheimer's is a disease that affects the brain and that Ann would start to forget things. Charlotte feared that Ann would forget her.

The once carefree playdates turned into Charlotte telling Ann what things were.

"What is this Charlotte?" Ann asked.

"Oh that is a colored pencil ," Charlotte said as she bent down to get the handheld pencil sharpener. Then, she got Ann's notebook and said, "You can draw in this Ann".

Ann started doodling Ann Roberts Smith over and over. As Ann went on Charlotte felt sad, she missed the times that her and Ann were playing.

Ann put the notebook down and stared at Charlotte "Hey what is your name", she asked.

Charlotte almost cried, she had just said her name and Ann had already forgotten. She held back her tears as she answered, "Charlotte".

Charlotte began to remember when she and Ann were best friends. If only Ann could remember. There was nothing that Charlotte could do to stop what was happening. Charlotte tried to think of a way to make this situation better for all of them. She began to look around the room at the colored pencils and paper. Charlotte began to draw her favorite memories of her and Ann. She drew a colorful picture of her bedroom with tons of decorations for one of their dance parties with them in the middle busting a move. Charlotte smiled thinking about how long it took her to get all the silly string out of the carpet after that dance party. The memories took over and soon pages and pages of Ann and Charlotte covered the table.

Ann looked down from her notepad and saw Charlotte's drawings. Ann began to smile and tape the drawings on her walls. She would go from drawing to drawing asking Charlotte about the silly girls and their adventures. Charlotte enjoyed retelling her memories to Ann and watching Ann laugh and giggle about those silly girls.

Charlotte's art work was good for both of them. She captured all her memories in a way she could share with Ann without being so sad. One night Charlotte prayed and prayed and prayed that Ann was getting a bit better. Charlotte's mom overheard her prayer and explained how Ann was the same; she just had good days and bad days.

New Year's Day was around the corner, Ann and Charlotte's favorite day.

Ann asked "What day is it?"

Charlotte replied "Well it is new year's eve!"

Ann repeated, " New Year's Eve?!"

Charlotte confirmed in a bubbly tone, "Why yes it is!"

Charlotte couldn't believe Ann forgot something like that because it was their favorite day of the year. Ann had always made it the biggest celebration of the year. Ann would make homemade popcorn, chips, and make funny hats for them to wear. They would wave their dollars for prosperity as they watched the ball drop each year. It was one of their biggest celebrations.

"What do we do", Ann asked. Charlotte drew a huge picture of their biggest New Year's bash. Charlotte drew a picture of her and Ann with huge party hats with popcorn waving their dollars at a t.v. Ann loved the picture and asked if they could do that. Charlotte felt ecstatic, she felt like she had Ann back. Charlotte realized that even though these moments were different, she was creating new memories with Ann.

That night as the ball dropped Ann looked over at Charlotte and said, "Charlotte, baby, I sure do love you."

Then Charlotte looked back at Ann and said, "That is the best New Year's present ever, I love you too." and they hugged until the ball dropped to the floor.