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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 489

Offered March 1, 2012

*Commending "The Forget Me Not Project."*

Patrons—McQuinn, Carr, James, McClellan and Tyler

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, is a progressive neurologic and incurable disease of the brain that causes problems with memory, cognition, and behavior; and

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease leads to the irreversible loss of brain cells and intellectual abilities which become severe enough to impede social and occupational functioning; and

WHEREAS, although several of the signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease also exist in other conditions and diseases, often making diagnosis difficult, the disease affects approximately 5.4 million persons in the United States, and nearly 130,000 cases were diagnosed in Virginia in 2010; the number of affected Virginians is projected to reach 160,000 by 2025; and

WHEREAS, causes of the disease include increasing age, family history and genetics, and some of the strongest risk factors link serious head injury and heart and other vascular diseases to Alzheimer's disease; and

WHEREAS, according to the Alzheimer's Association's Greater Richmond Chapter, one in eight older Americans has Alzheimer's, and it is the fifth leading cause of death for those 65 and older; African Americans are twice as likely and Hispanics are 1.5 times as likely as other racial groups to contract the disease; family caregivers deliver 80 percent of care provided at home; Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States; and there are 422,000 caregivers in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease worsens over time and is fatal; persons afflicted with the disease require constant care, particularly as the disease progresses into its final stages; and the disease takes a devastating emotional, physical, and financial toll on families; and

WHEREAS, several health and advocacy organizations work diligently to increase public awareness, education, and support for Alzheimer's patients and caregivers, such as "The Forget Me Not Project," a unique program that brings together the arts, entertainment, medicine, research, and faith-based communities to promote public awareness of Alzheimer's disease, enhance support for those affected by it, highlight the importance of scientific research, and help shape public policy to benefit Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers; and

WHEREAS, "The Forget Me Not Project" also provides caregiver support, advances targeted outreach to disparate communities, helps to change the way people perceive and respond to Alzheimer's disease, advocates for community leadership, supports research funding that can lead to discoveries and outcomes to help avoid a public health crisis, and promotes sustainable revenue streams to aid in the long fight against Alzheimer's disease; and

WHEREAS, "The Forget Me Not Project" consists of four related events: a VIP Gala, Prayer Breakfast, Health Fair/Caregiver Forum, and presentation of "The Forget Me Not" stage play; the Project's events also provide opportunities to bring caregivers, politicians, and medical professionals together to reach the community, particularly African Americans and Hispanics, who are at a higher risk than other racial groups to develop Alzheimer's disease, with a culturally sensitive message through churches, barbershops, beauty shops, and other organizations; and

WHEREAS, "The Forget Me Not Project" has worked tirelessly throughout Virginia's communities to successfully engage citizens and raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease through entertainment, workshops, and training about the continuous need for education, public awareness, and the eradication of this dreaded disease; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend "The Forget Me Not Project"; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to Sherry Peterson, CEO of the Alzheimer's Association of Greater Richmond Chapter; Garrett Davis, creative director and CEO of "Gdavis Productions"; and Bernadette Stanis, national spokesperson for "The Forget Me Not Project," in order that they may be apprised of the General Assembly's appreciation of their service to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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