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For Grace Launches Leona's Legacy Project to Build Awareness and Education About the Connection Between Chronic Pain and Dementia

*Medical research increasingly supports a correlation between these two major health challenges. More than **50 million people in the U.S. live with chronic pain**, potentially placing **millions at increased risk for dementia**.*

LOS ANGELES (September 1, 2026) – For Grace, one of the leading pain advocacy organizations in the U.S., will launch **Leona's Legacy** on September 15, a groundbreaking project exploring the emerging connection between chronic pain and dementia.

Named for For Grace founder Cynthia Toussaint's mother, who passed away from complications of Alzheimer's disease in 2025, **Leona's Legacy** is rooted in Cynthia's deeply personal experience witnessing the devastating effects of chronic pain and dementia. Leona was a beloved mother whose life and experiences—including her struggles with trauma, chronic pain, and dementia, and the vulnerabilities she faced as her cognitive health declined—profoundly shaped Cynthia's understanding of the need for greater awareness, compassion, and protection. The project carries Leona's story forward by providing tools and resources to raise awareness and educate the public about the intersection of chronic pain and dementia, two conditions that affect tens of millions of Americans. The initiative will also promote actions that support brain health, may help slow cognitive decline despite the challenges of persistent pain, and help protect older adults from exploitation and abuse during times of vulnerability.

To access Leona's Legacy after its launch on September 15, please visit forgrace.org.

Research suggests that people living with long-term chronic pain may face a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Researchers believe several factors may contribute to this connection, including persistent inflammation, changes in brain structure associated with chronic pain, long-term use of certain medications, childhood trauma, and chronic stress.

Leona's Legacy was created to shine a light on this often-overlooked connection and empower people living with chronic pain to take proactive steps to support brain health. Through education, resources, personal stories, and advocacy, the initiative seeks to inspire hope while helping individuals and families navigate the challenges associated with chronic pain and dementia.

"Leona's Legacy, named in honor of my beloved mother, holds my heart. It is the most intimate project I have ever undertaken. It was born from my love for this extraordinary woman and from the heartbreak of witnessing the devastating impact of Alzheimer's disease and the abuse my mother experienced while living with dementia," said For Grace founder and spokesperson Cynthia Toussaint.

Toussaint added, "Through Leona's Legacy, together we can work to protect ourselves and others. We can raise awareness about the connection between chronic pain and dementia, encourage

proactive approaches to brain health, and advocate for protections for those living with cognitive decline.”

Dementia can leave people especially vulnerable—not only to the effects of the disease itself, but also to financial exploitation, neglect, and other forms of abuse. Leona’s Legacy explores these vulnerabilities and advocates for stronger protections for people living with dementia, while examining how chronic pain, trauma, stress, and family dynamics may influence health and well-being.

Throughout the Leona’s Legacy site, visitors will find resources to better understand the connection between chronic pain and dementia, along with information and tools to support brain health, reduce vulnerability, and protect those living with cognitive decline. Personal stories exploring the intersection of chronic pain, trauma, dementia, and resilience will also be featured.

Broadening the project’s scope, Leona’s Legacy will introduce Toussaint’s forthcoming memoir, a deeply personal tribute to her mother and an exploration of the lifelong experiences that shaped their family’s journey with chronic illness and Alzheimer’s disease.

The initiative will also highlight For Grace’s California legislative efforts to strengthen protections for people living with dementia and help prevent financial elder abuse. **According to the World Health Organization, approximately 1 in 6 people age 60 and older worldwide experience some form of abuse.**

Leona’s Legacy is led by Toussaint and For Grace Director and longtime partner John Garrett, with guidance from an esteemed advisory committee of pain and dementia experts. Committee members include **Dr. Mary Driscoll**, psychologist at Yale School of Medicine; **Diane Hoffmann**, law professor at the University of Maryland; and **Dr. Steven Richeimer**, former Director of the University of Southern California’s Pain Center.

About For Grace

Founded in 2002, **For Grace** is a globally recognized nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting care and wellness for women living with high-impact chronic pain. Through public advocacy, legislative outreach, and mass media, For Grace has educated, supported, and empowered millions of women living with pain.

For Grace is known for its trailblazing advocacy and for connecting often-overlooked aspects of the chronic pain experience. In 2021, For Grace explored the connection between chronic pain and cancer through initiatives, media outreach, and a virtual conference. In 2023, it expanded this work to examine the connection between chronic pain and childhood and ongoing trauma.

For more information, please visit www.forgrace.org.

Media Contact:

Reporters interested in covering the launch of *Leona’s Legacy* should contact For Grace Director John Garrett at forgracewip@yahoo.com.