

## LOG LINE

People living with dementia and their caregivers connect and find joy through Inside Out Theatre's improv classes.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

*Garden Shark* breaks through the hopelessness and loss of a dementia diagnosis by giving people living with dementia and their caregivers a new way to connect and find joy. It explores improv's ability to teach people to live in the moment, communicate, and learn to laugh in spite of their struggles. *Garden Shark* highlights couples' individual experiences and shows how beautifully partners living with dementia respond to the risk free, playful and hilarious environment created by Inside Out Theatre's Village Improv for Alzheimer's program.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

As our loved ones age we are taught how to physically care for them. We are not often taught how to communicate or engage with them in new, meaningful ways. For many who have had a loved one diagnosed with dementia, one of their first comments is related to the inability to communicate and engage with someone they love.

*Garden Shark* explores the healing power of improv as we follow Inside Out Theatre and their program, Village Improv for Alzheimer's, as they use improv to provide adults living with dementia a safe place to creatively express themselves. Improv is **all** about saying **yes** and being in the moment. Memory isn't required and in improv's failure-free environment there are no bad ideas.

The goal of the VIA Program is to bring an hour of life, laughter, joy and creativity into the lives of folks dealing with a really difficult part of their life. And to do it in a way that sets them up for success. The VIA program uses an understanding of a person's life story to create attachment, inclusion and identity. By feeling safe, supported and respected, people living with dementia can prolong their cognition being meaningfully engaged in choices they make on a daily basis. Improv uncovers and encourages new ways to communicate.

By teaching the ability to live in the moment, communicate, and learn to laugh in spite of their struggles,

*Garden Shark* reminds us to be present and helps us uncover the joys that can exist after diagnosis. We don't lose people who have dementia, we just need to learn the skills necessary to find them again.