



An Australian Government Initiative

Communities of Practice in Dementia Care Project (CoP-D1)

PERSONAL LIFE HISTORY

BOOKLET

We acknowledge Alzheimer's Australia SA Inc
as the original source for this document



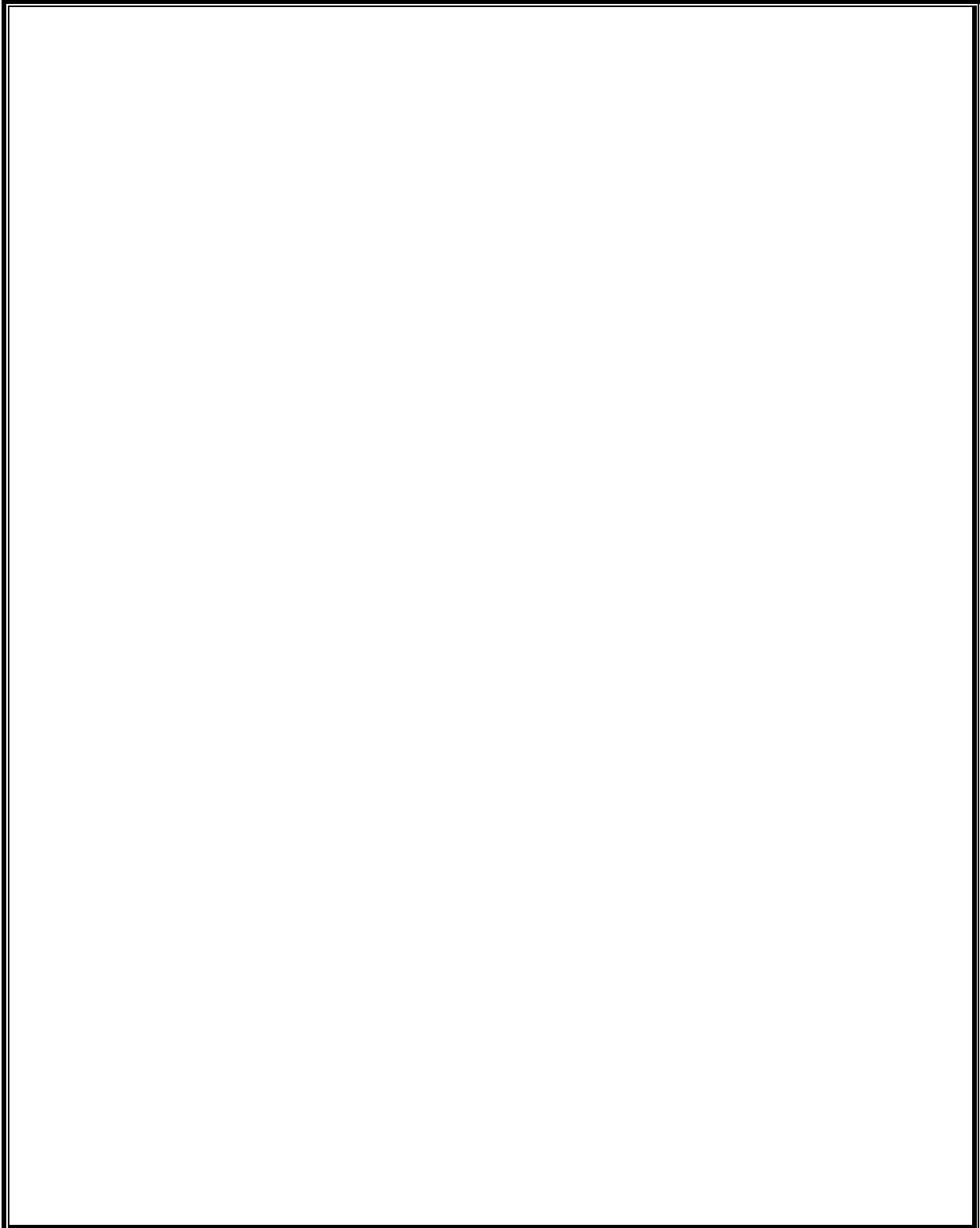
General recommendations

This booklet is intended to be a tool for enhancing personalised care and reminiscence. The development of the booklet may be undertaken by the family of the person with dementia, with input from that person whenever possible. However, booklet development may take many months. Also, each family's perspective needs to be respected.

For some families, the process of booklet development will be welcomed as a shared family project. In other families, support worker involvement and/or guidance may be welcomed. However, there are families who may view booklet development as a burden or who may choose not to share what they regard as private information; for this group, booklet development should not be pursued.

Service provider protocols need to establish which staff members are appropriately qualified to explore the option of booklet development with the family/person with dementia and how support may be offered during the development process. When service providers have supported booklet development and/or the family provide a booklet for use within the service, protocols need to be agreed with the person/their family regarding by and with whom the booklet may be used or shared.

This booklet details the life of



Birth

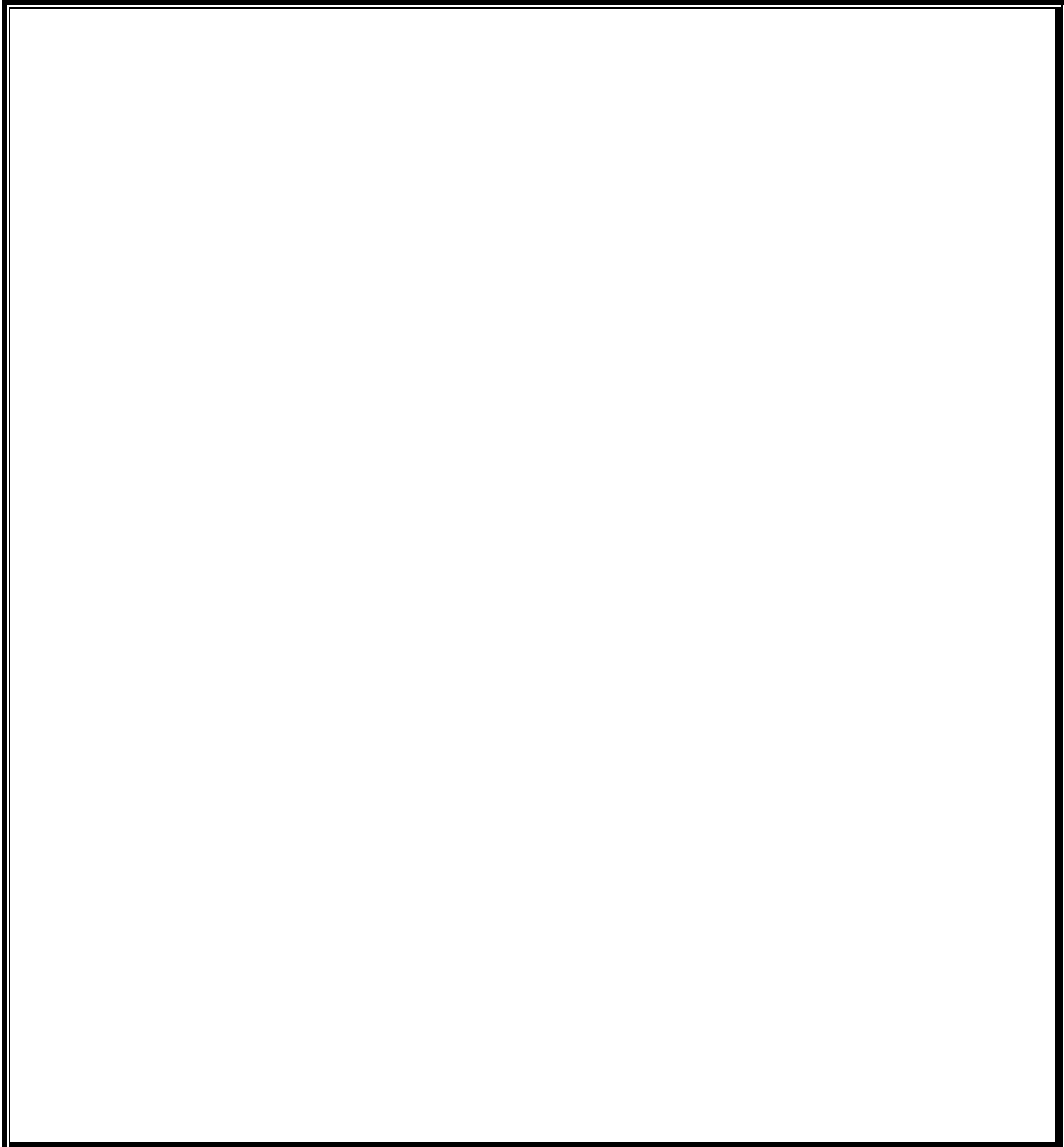
_____ birth date is

_____ in the year _____

and was born at _____

(location)

Special stories and photographs



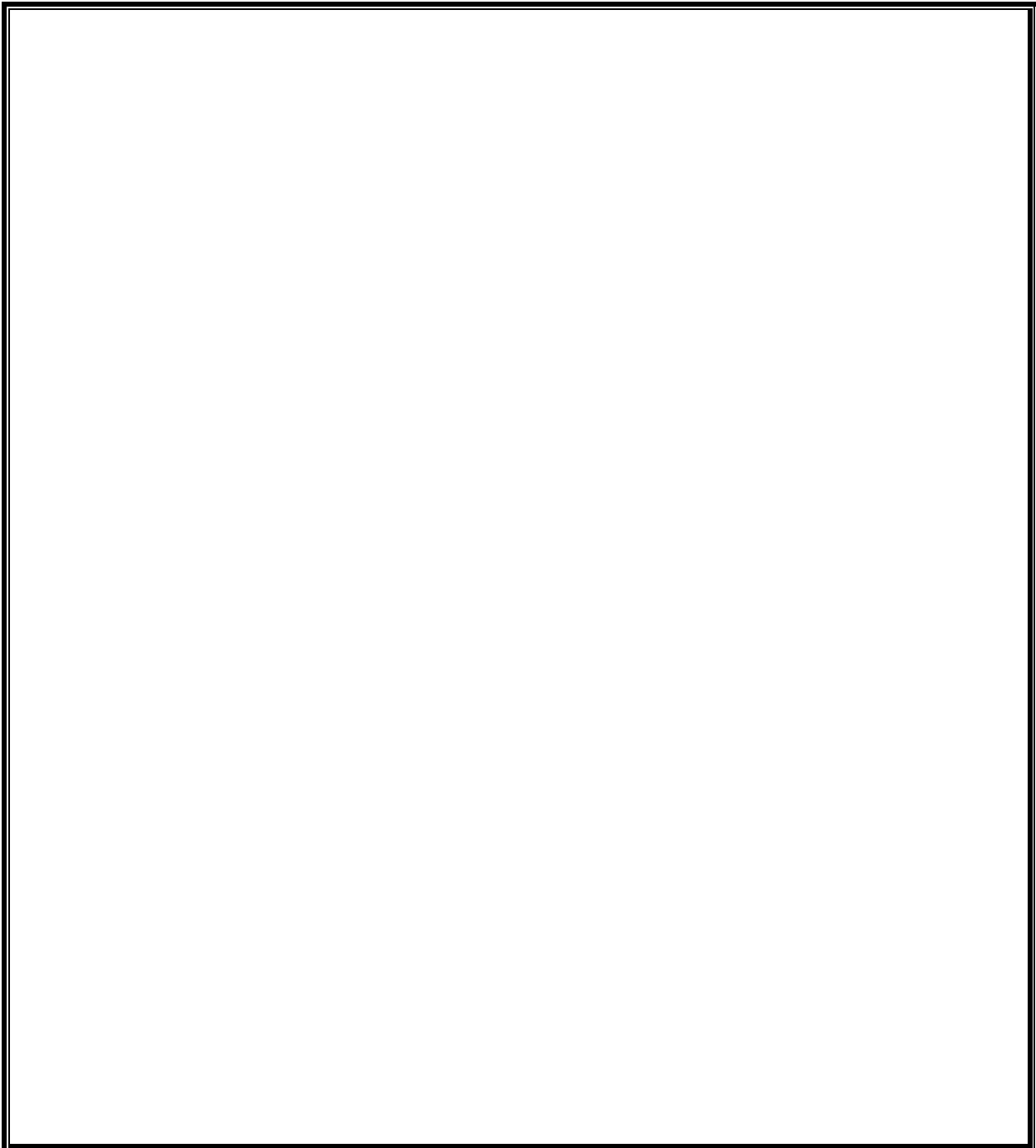
Parents

_____ is the _____

child of _____

and _____

Special memories and photographs



Siblings

Name

Date of birth

Special memories and photographs

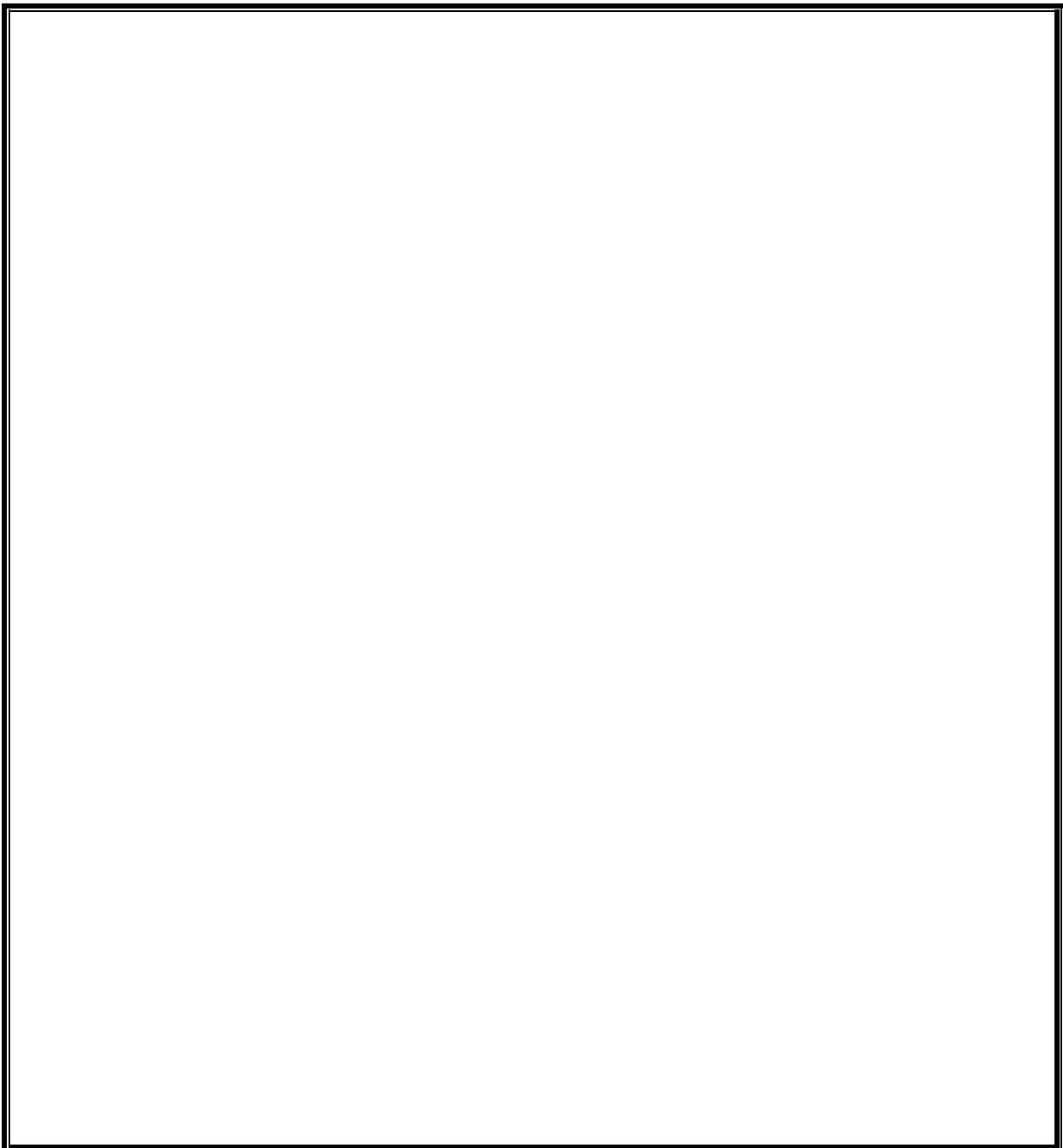


Childhood

During their childhood _____ lived in

(e.g. country, region, town, city, suburb)

Special memories and photographs



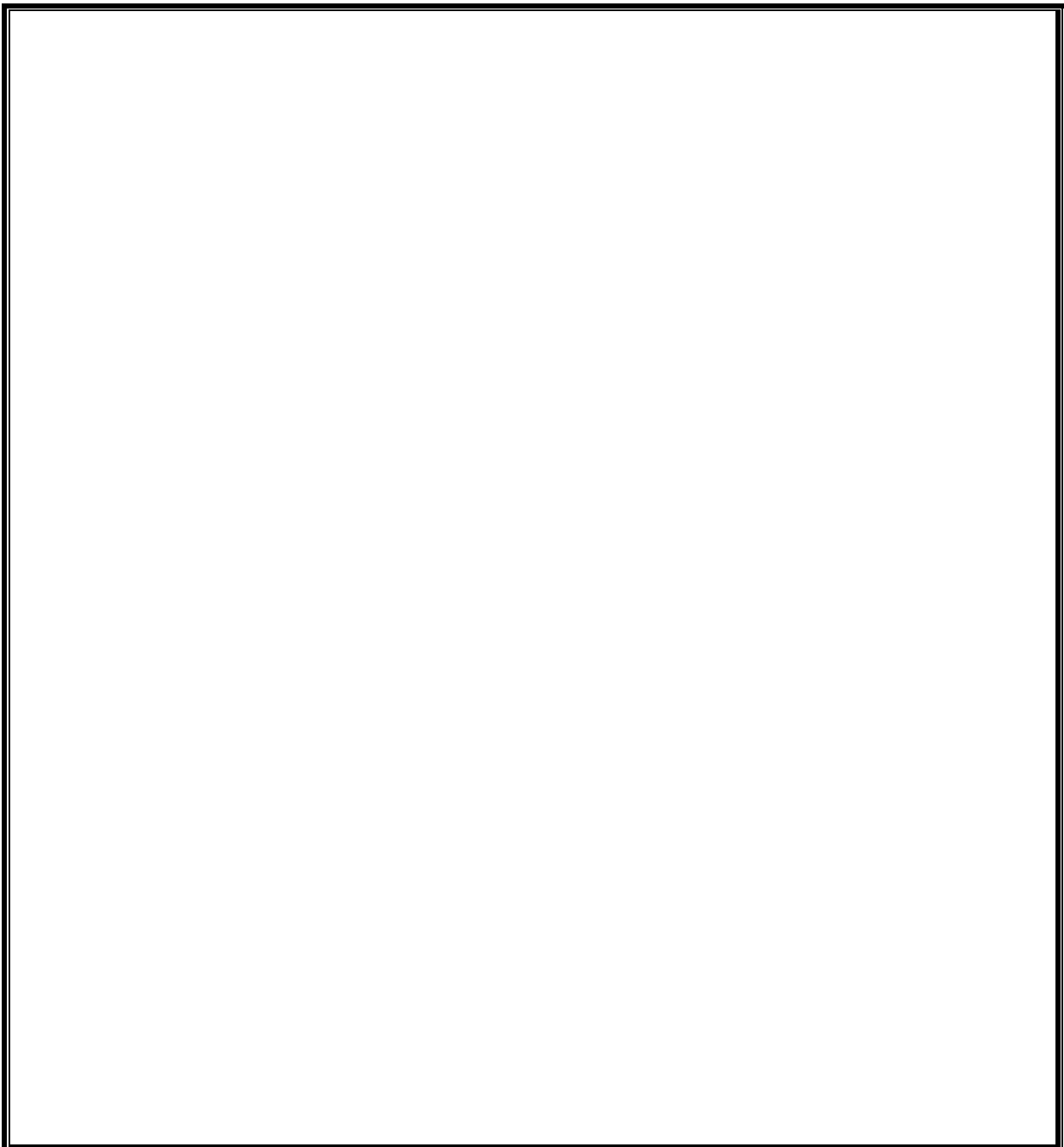
Religion and Spirituality

_____ is of _____ faith

Religious or Spiritual practices _____

(e.g. attends church services, celebrates religious days, daily religious or spiritual practices and possessions)

Special memories and photographs



Education

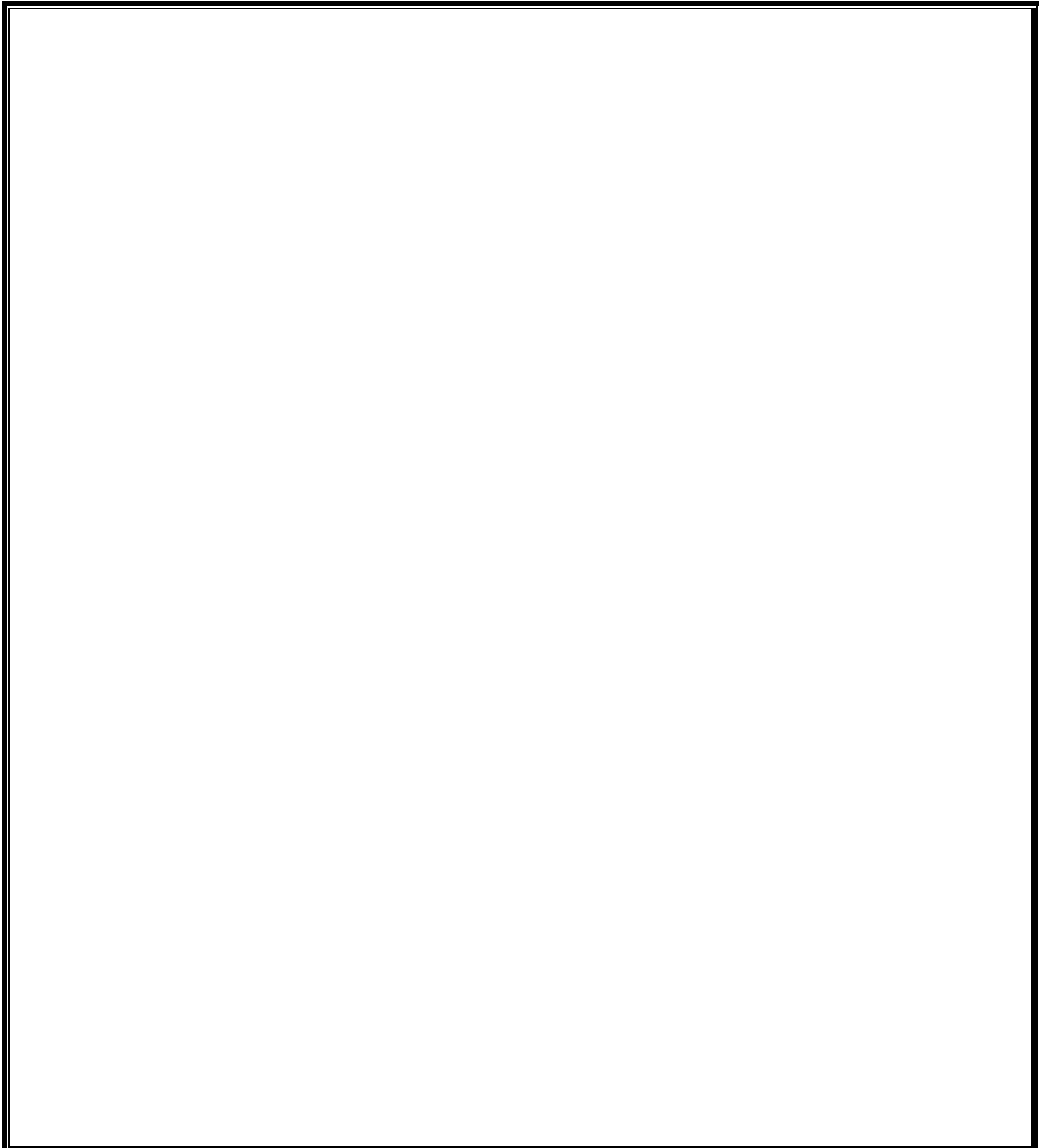
_____ undertook their schooling

at _____

(education facility)

Special memories and photographs

Include stories from their school days, if they enjoyed school, how they travelled to school, education level reached, any special awards received.



Work

_____ main or most memorable occupation was a _____

with/at _____

(name of organisation, location)

in the position of _____ (job title)

and was _____ years of age when they started and worked for

_____ years in their main occupation.

Special memories and photographs

Include information about how they got their first job, whether they enjoyed their job and how long they stayed with the company. Also include details about other companies the person worked for and different positions they held.

Marriage and Relationships

_____ united with _____

In _____ at/in _____

(date)

(location of ceremony, place where they met)

Special memories, stories and photographs

Include details of how the couple met, how long they were courting, the engagement, marriage, commitment, separations, including current and significant past relationships

Children

_____ and _____

have _____ children, their names and birth dates are

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Special memories and photographs

Grandchildren

_____ and _____

have _____ grandchildren, their names and birth dates/age are

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

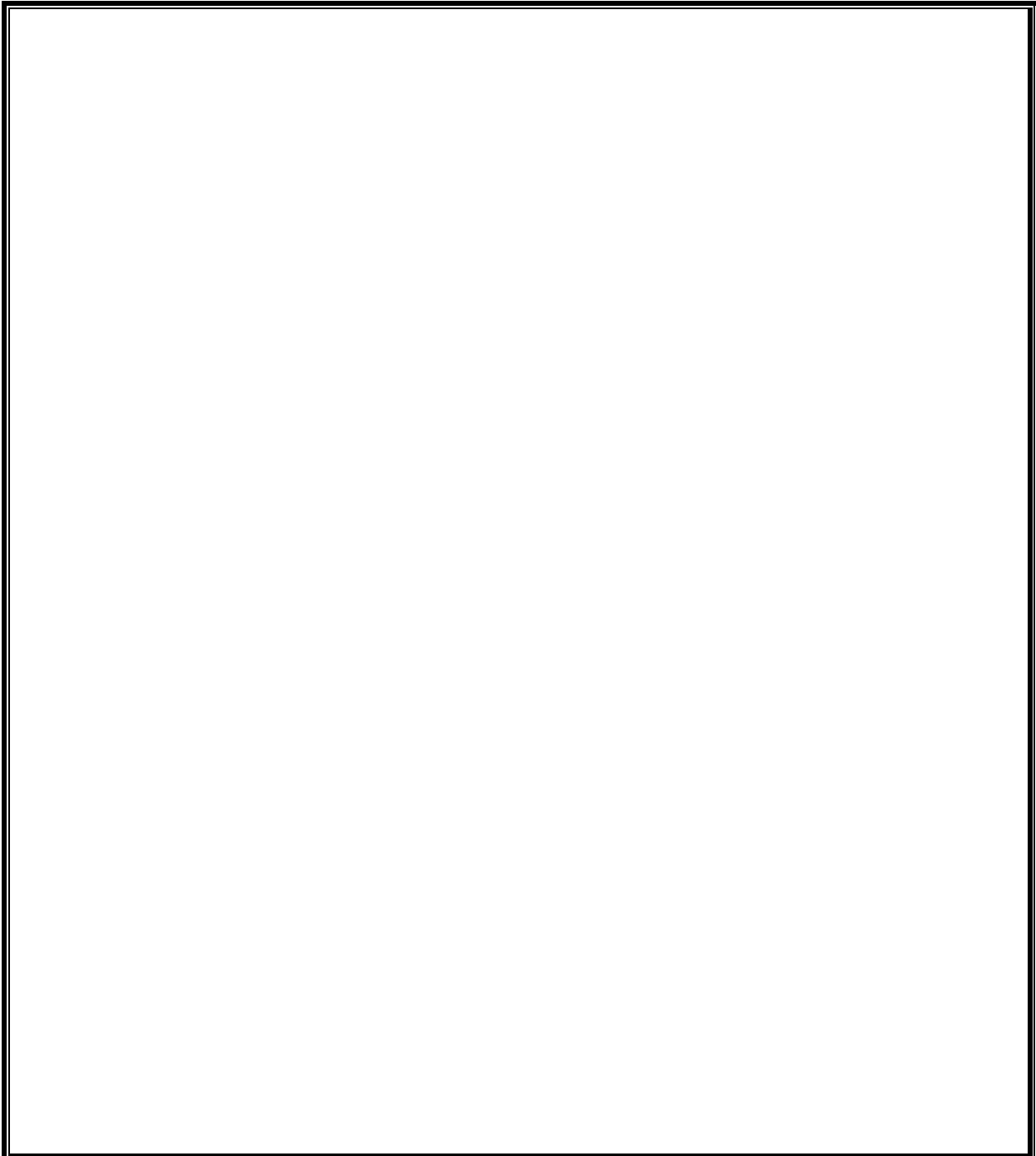
Special memories and photographs

Retirement

_____ retired from work on
_____ after _____ years of work.
(date)

Special memories and photographs

Include details of parties given and gifts received to celebrate retirement, what plans were made for retirement, feelings on day of retirement, etc.



Friendships

_____ closest friends include

Special memories and photographs

Include stories about activities / travels they did with their friends.

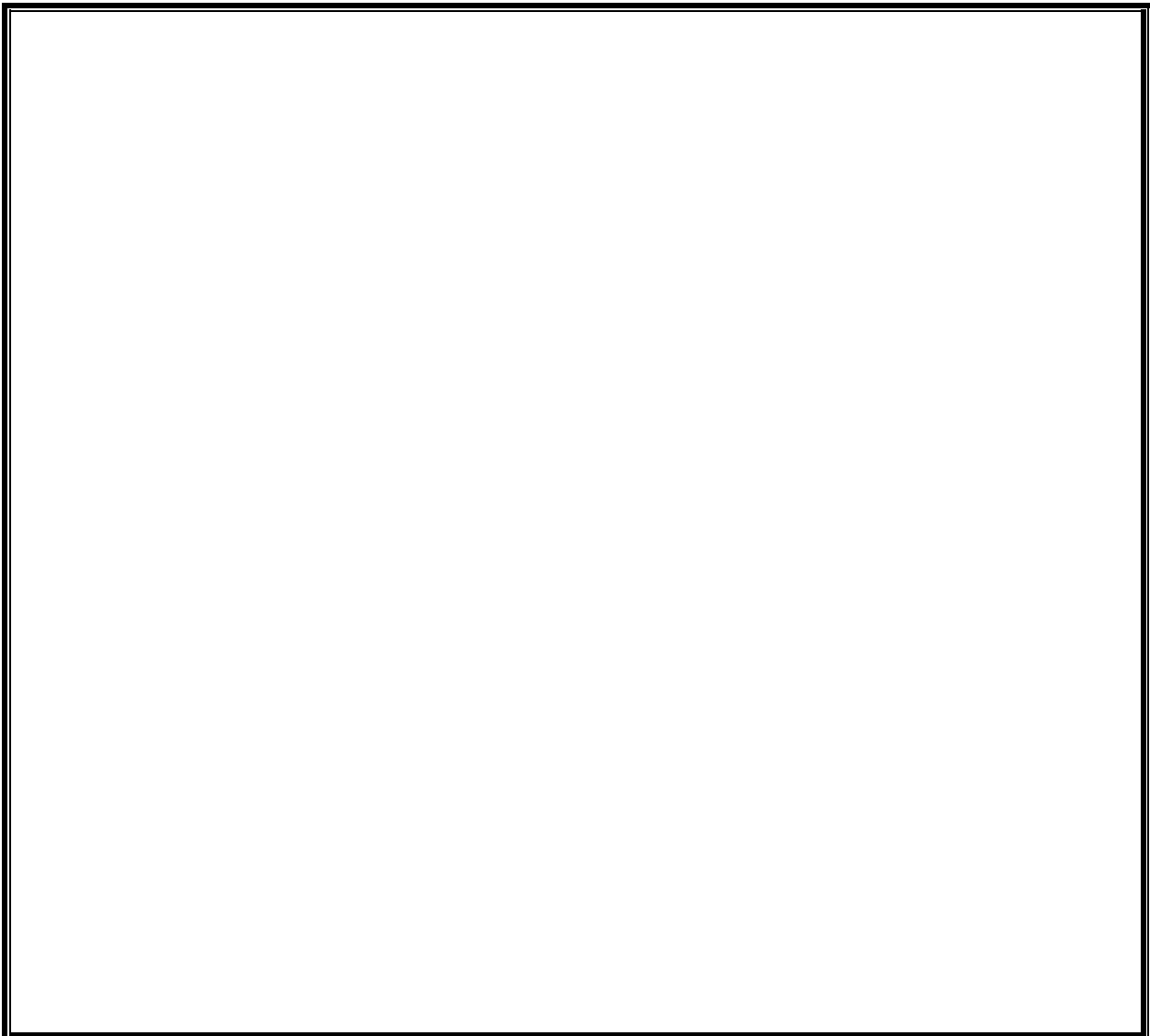
Creative Expression

Creative expression not only refers to artistic pursuits and activities people do physically but can also be gifts a person may have, such as the ability to make people feel at ease. A person may consider their creative expression to be the manner in which they brought up their children, or their skill in a certain field of employment.

_____ creative expression includes

Special memories and photographs

Include details of the person's creative expression.



Hobbies and Interests

_____ hobbies and interests include

Special memories and photographs

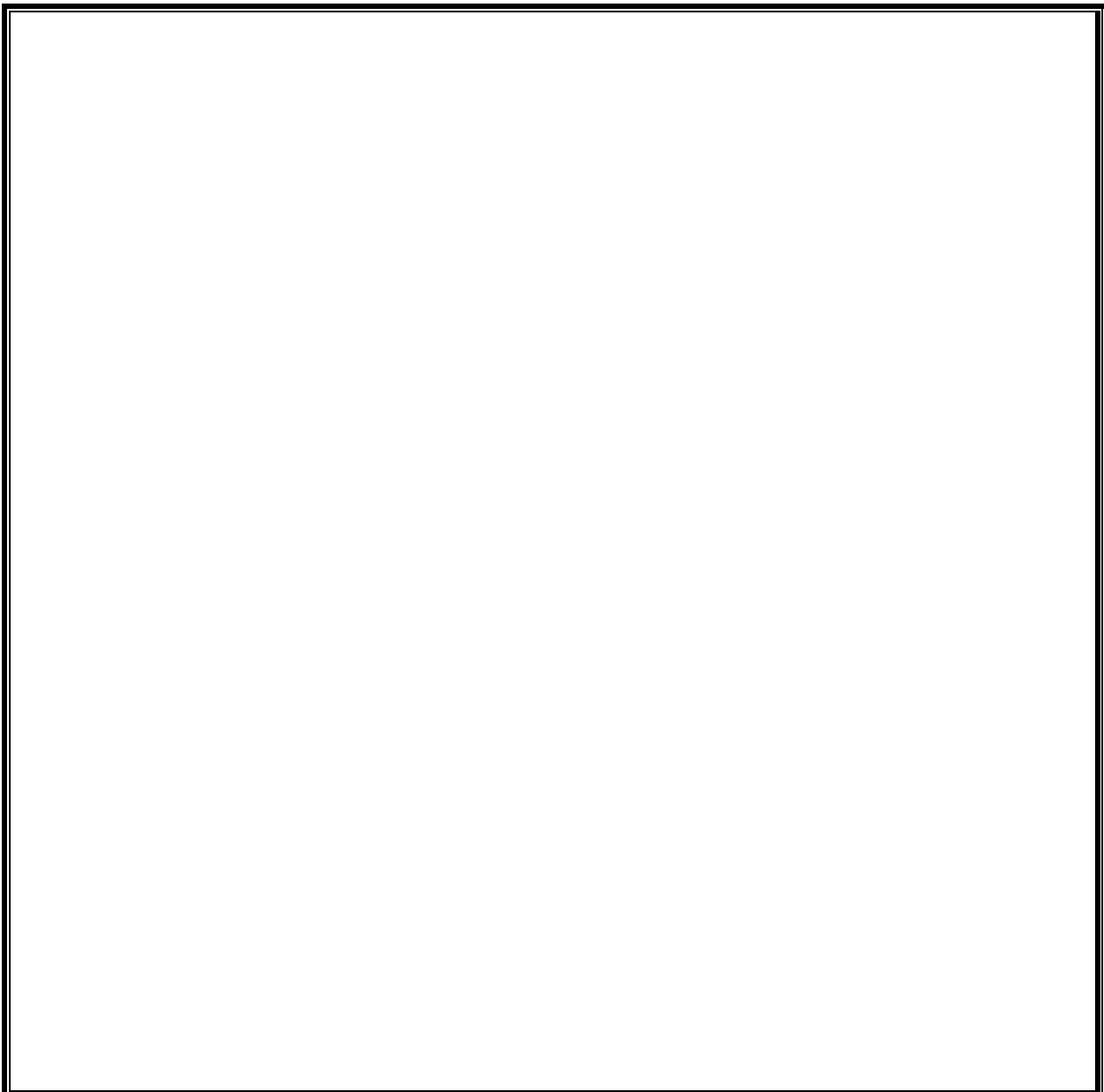
Include stories about their involvement in hobbies and interests, any achievements they were particularly proud of, any sporting or hobby clubs they were involved in. Include the type of music, books and movies they enjoy.

Travel

Outline the person's travel experiences, where they travelled to, with whom and if they enjoyed travelling. Also include stories and anecdotes about their travels.

_____ travel experiences include

Special memories and photographs

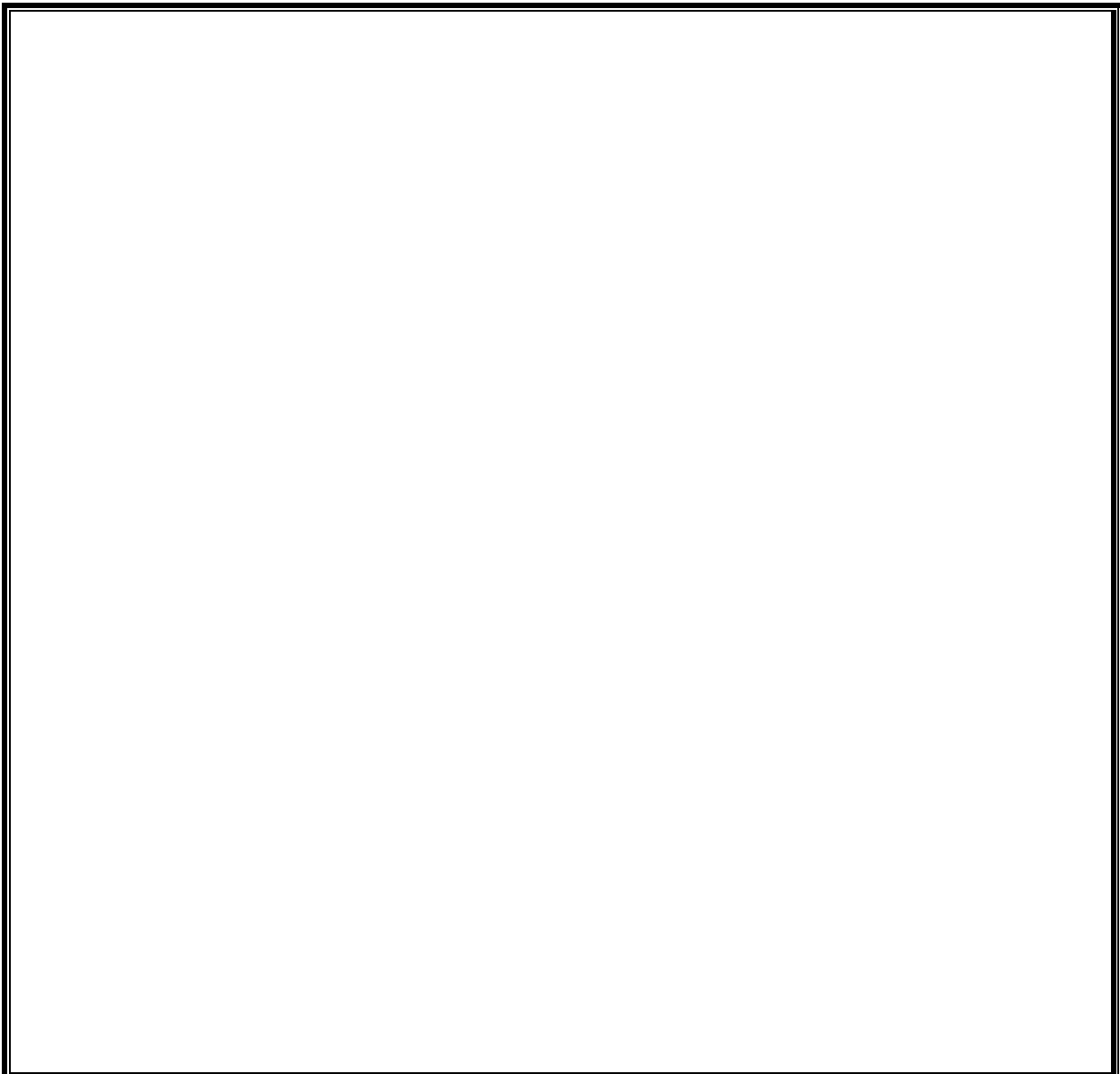


Important Cultural Values and Beliefs

Include information about what they regard as their cultural background and personal philosophy on life. This may be demonstrated by cultural practices, favourite sayings or stories of incidents in the person's life.

_____ cultural values and beliefs include

Special memories and photographs

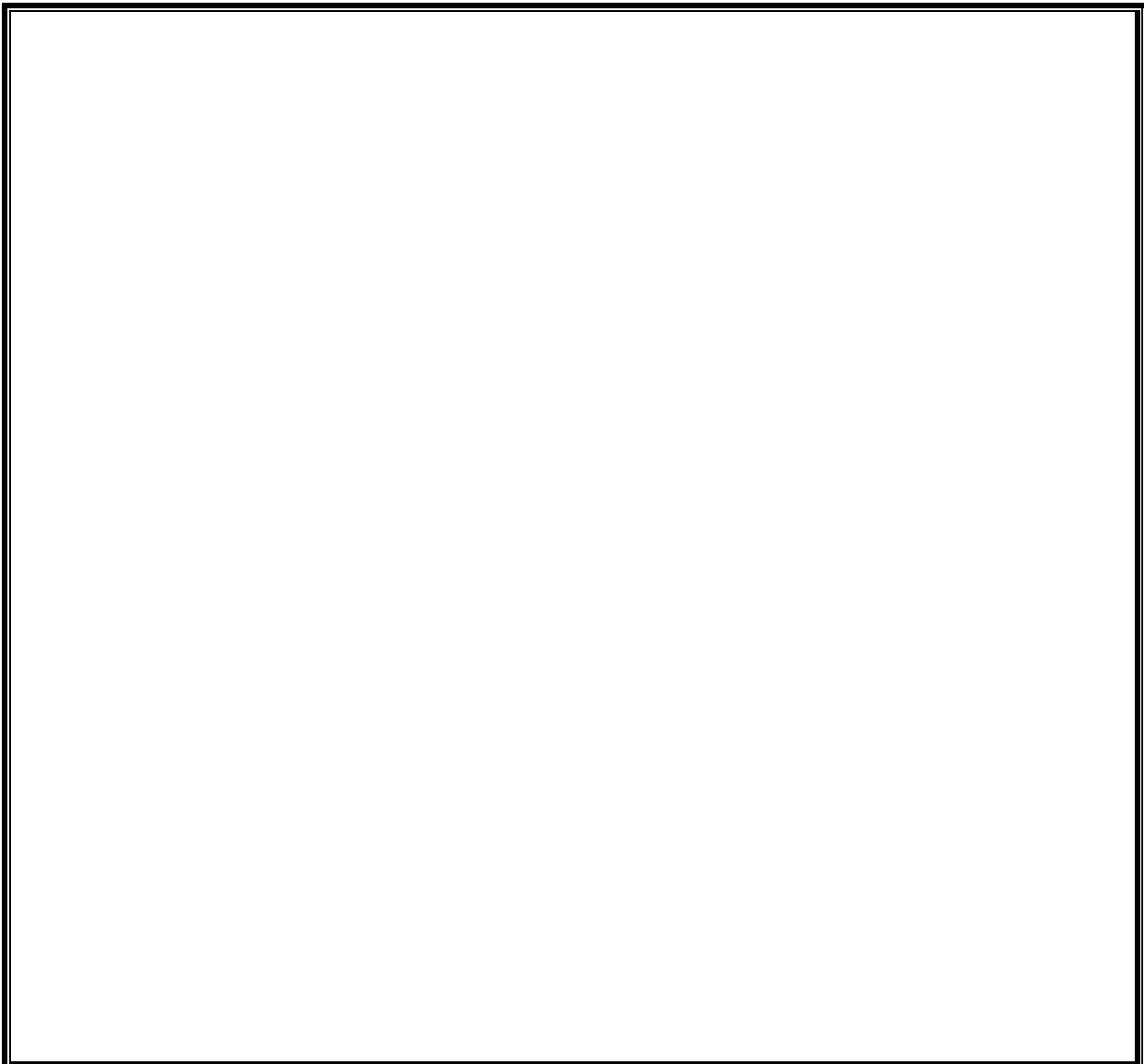


Particular Likes and Dislikes

Include information about the person's likes and dislikes in regards to food, music, movies, books etc. Did the person like animals and have pets, if so what type? Was the person an outdoors type, what was their favourite time of the year, what was their favourite time of the day? Include any memorable stories relating to the person's particular likes and dislikes.

_____ likes and dislikes include

Special memories and photographs

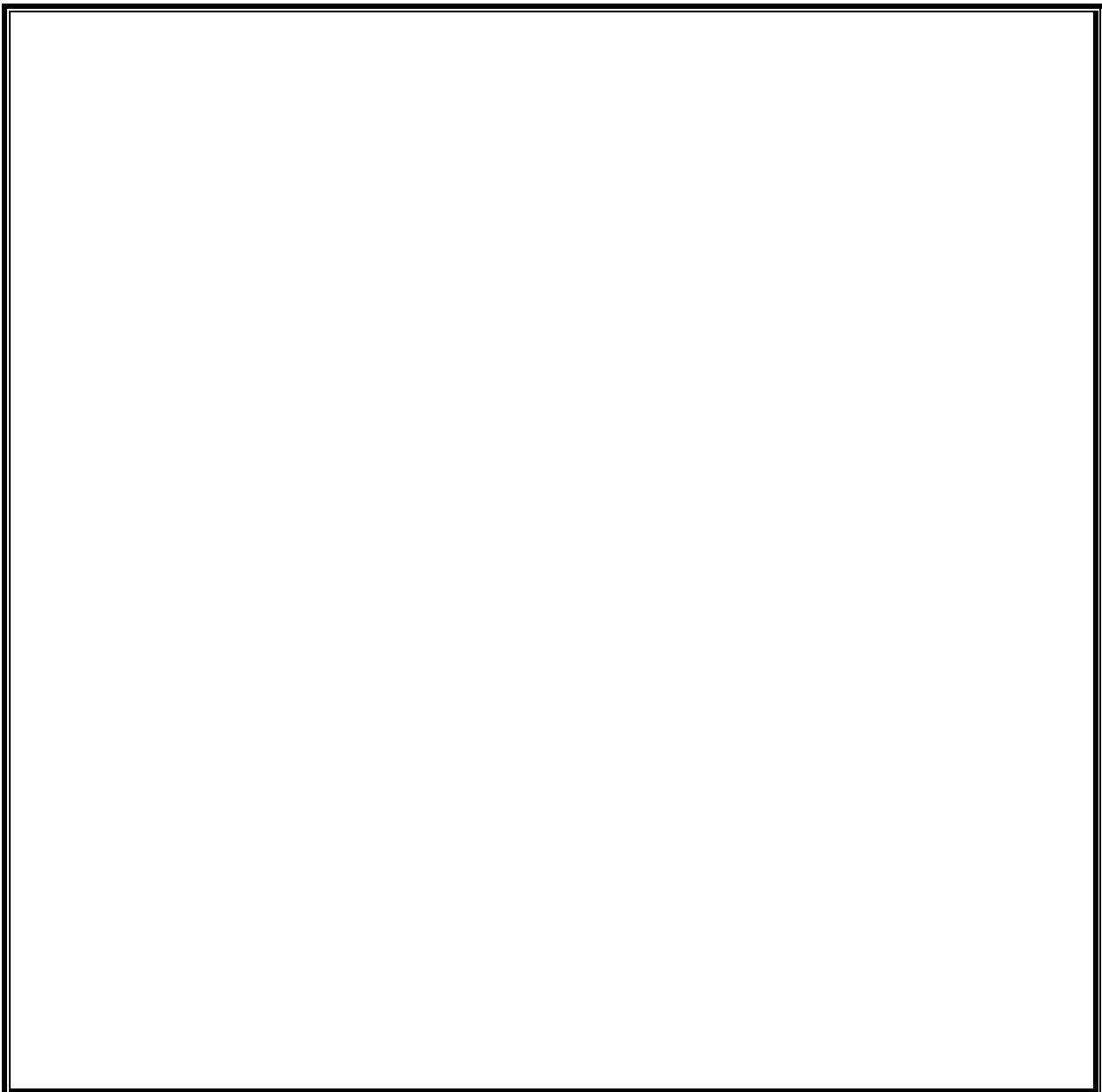


Nicknames/Preferred Names

Include stories and information about what the person prefers to be called, any nicknames they have and how they acquired their nicknames.

_____ nicknames include

Special memories and photographs



PERSONALISED REMINISCENCE BOOKLET DIARY

This page is to be used to record when and how the booklet is used with the person with dementia and their reactions to its use. Such information will be useful in determining how often the book is used and what sections the person with dementia finds most enjoyable. Once this is established further information could be added. Also, if the person with dementia becomes agitated by certain information this can be documented so all carers are aware of what may be difficult memories for the person. Copies can be made of the following page for the diary to be an ongoing feature of the booklet.

Date: _____ Time: _____

How the booklet was used: _____

Reactions to use: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

How the booklet was used: _____

Reactions to use: _____

Information about this booklet

A person's life represents the accumulation of a wealth of experiences which form their social and life history. Every person's memories are unique to that individual. This booklet has been designed to collect the unique social and life history of an individual with dementia. This life history will help individualise the care of the person with dementia and maintain their identity. It will also help people caring for the individual to know them and develop strong relationships with them.

As everybody is an individual this booklet has been designed to be adapted. Space is provided in the booklet for photos and objects which are important.

The booklet may also be used to promote reminiscence with the person. It does not provide information about how to conduct reminiscence, however, a bibliography featuring books on reminiscence and other relevant subjects has been included in the appendix. Brief definitions of dementia, individualised care and reminiscence are also outlined in the appendix.

Pages have been included within the appendix to note when and how the booklet is used with the person with dementia and their reactions to its use. This information will provide other people with information about the best way to use the booklet with the person with dementia. It will also highlight areas where more information could be useful or outline if certain topics are no longer relevant.

Every person has some aspects within their social and life history (e.g. death of a loved one, experiences of war) which may stir up painful memories. Information regarding painful experiences may not be appropriate to include within the main context of the booklet if it agitates the person with dementia. However, it is still important staff and people caring for the individual are aware of these memories as it may help explain behaviour patterns. It will also make them aware of subjects which will upset the person with dementia. For this reason space has been provided within the appendix to include any of this information.

It is my hope that the use of this booklet can bring enjoyment to the individual whom it is about, their relatives and carers. Feel free to individualise it to make it as relevant as possible to the person with dementia, and enjoy yourself.

Written by Kate Gregory
Occupational Therapy Student
Alzheimer's Australia SA

APPENDIX

USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Dementia refers to a loss of intellectual function (e.g. thinking, remembering and reasoning) of sufficient severity to interfere with an individual's daily functioning. Dementia is a general term used to describe illnesses with a progressive and usually irreversible loss of mental function. Dementia is not a disease in itself but a term for symptoms (i.e. memory loss, confusion, disorientation, loss of insight and changes in personality) which may accompany certain diseases or conditions, the most common being Alzheimer's disease.

Reminiscence is a natural process which all individuals undertake. It is the act or habit of thinking about or relating past experiences. Reminiscence enables the listener to understand part of the teller's mind whilst enabling the teller to relive and rethink aspects of the past. During reminiscence the carer learns about and appreciates the life of the individual with dementia. The carer is also able to gather information concerning the individual's psychological factors, underlying health beliefs, coping skills and cultural perspective.

Individualised care is defined as an interdisciplinary approach which acknowledges elders as unique persons and is practiced through consistent caring relationships. Individualised care uses personal knowledge to create ways of living which are congruent with past patterns and individual preferences. It centres on the person and each individual's goals rather than task and rule. Research has indicated that individualised care may improve an individual's functional status, wellbeing, family relationships, mortality rates and social interaction. In order for individualised care to work within a residential setting the carers must know the person, develop a relationship with the person, provide choice and facilitate resident participation and direction.

Painful aspects of social and life history

Information for carers to read regarding painful aspects of the person's life, which is not being included in the main text of the book, could be written separately and shared only with appropriate people as you choose.

Bibliography

- Coleman, P (1986) *Ageing and reminiscence processes: social and clinical implication*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Forsythe, E (1990) *Alzheimer's disease: the long bereavement*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Gilles, C (1994) *Reminiscence work with old people*. London: Chapman & Hall.
- Gruetzner, H (1988) *Alzheimer's: a caregivers guide and sourcebook*. New York: Wiley.
- Heston, L (1989) *Dementia: a practical guide to Alzheimer's disease and related illnesses*. New York: Freeman.
- Mace, N (1981) *The 36 hour day: a family guide to caring for persons with Alzheimer's disease, related dementing illnesses & memory loss in later life*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Norris, A (1996) *Reminiscence with elderly people*. Winslow Press: Bichester.
- Oakley, F (1993) *Understanding the ABC's of Alzheimer's disease: a guide for caregivers*. Rockville: American Occupational Therapy Association.
- Prochazka, Z. Henschke, P. Skinner, E. and Last, P. (1993) *Dementia: memory loss and confusion; a guide for caregivers*. Alzheimer's Association: Glenside SA.

Where to obtain advice and further information

National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500

Alzheimer's Australia WA

9 Bedbrook Place,

Shenton Park, WA 6008

Telephone: (08) 9388 2800

Fax: (08) 9388 2739

www.alzheimers.org.au/wa