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From the Executive Director's Desk

Believe it or not....

Most people with Alzheimer Disease or some other form of dementia do not come to the medical community's attention until the damage to the brain has already advanced to the moderate stage.

Therefore:

Many of us end up dealing with a crisis rather than pro-actively seeking strategies to reduce the risks of heart and vascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and their inevitable impact on memory impairment and a future dementia.

Believe it or not ....

The baby boomers have arrived. Every five minutes, a Canadian will develop dementia.

Therefore:

Without the right diagnosis, the opportunity to start treatment early when it can be most effective will be lost, as will the person's capacity to communicate their own individual preferences and values for treatment and care decisions for themselves.

Believe it or not....

What families see is often very different than what the person with dementia experiences.

Therefore:

While we see someone up and dressed, we may not be aware of how long it took the person to choose the clothing, to figure out how to put it on, or that they

would want to wear the same thing every day because they have it figured out.

Believe it or not...

Dementia does not damage all parts of the brain nor is it damaged all at the same time.



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Therefore:

Acknowledge that we all become forgetful on occasion, we forget a name or an appointment which is normal. If the cause is stress, or a thyroid imbalance or depression, we need to address that. If the cause is dementia, we need to develop a plan to effectively & respectfully manage these symptoms.

Believe it or not....

In the Eastern Counties, we believe it is a person's right to get the latest, best and most appropriate diagnostic tests and treatment.

Therefore:

There are many ways to pro-actively manage this journey IF the decision to manage it happens early. There are ways to look at an assessment score and to determine that supports must be developed to compensate for the area of the brain that is damaged.

### **Help for Today. Hope for Tomorrow...**

The Alzheimer Society is here to help. Together we can work as a team, to understand the brain changes and to work toward managing the memory judgement, the confusion and the behaviour changes. Our team is caring and works in partnership with our community, we are willing to help.

## A Caregiver's Consolation

*By André Charlebois, caregiver*

I get consolation when I think of the following:

I know in my heart that my wife is well looked after.

She made it to 80! I know she is not aware of, and not troubled by, world difficulties and family stresses.

I know that she will not fear the moments at the end of her life.

There is a chance that she will finish her years with as little pain as possible.

It doesn't bother me that she does not recognize me.

I know that my wife has suffered great losses, losing two brothers in the same year during the war when she was 15...she is not troubled by this sadness anymore.

I am comforted by the fact that, for the remainder of our days together, she will be with me and I will be with her.



## Your head and heart —more connected than you think

Stroke and Alzheimer's disease are more intimately linked than people realize, says Dr. Sandra Black, Director of the Brain Sciences Research Program at Sunnybrook Research Institute in Toronto.

"It's tough to keep on top of these two worlds," says Dr. Black, one of the few clinical scientists who have an international reputation in both stroke and dementia research. "They don't talk to each other as much as they should, though it's starting to happen more with the younger generation."

While it's widely understood that stroke can deprive brain cells of oxygen and lead to vascular dementia —the second most common form of dementia after Alzheimer's disease—these two diseases are intertwined in more subtle and surprising ways.

Dr. Black points to an influential study of a group of 102 elderly nuns whose brains were examined after death. Those who showed significant signs of brain damage from

Alzheimer's disease and had suffered small strokes were far more likely to have dementia than those whose brains were damaged by Alzheimer's alone. "I think we need to raise people's consciousness that prevention of stroke can also delay the dementia of Alzheimer's disease," she says.

Dementia means that memory loss and other problems with thinking, language and judgment have become severe enough that the person needs help carrying out day-to-day tasks.

"Having advanced Alzheimer's pathology doesn't necessarily mean you will develop Alzheimer's dementia, especially if you are very elderly. How's that for a surprise?" says Dr. Black.

On the flip side, Alzheimer's can lead to and worsen the effects of stroke. The amyloid protein deposits in the brain of those with Alzheimer's can accumulate around the brain's blood vessels. In turn, vessels are weakened and are more likely to bleed and cause cerebral hemorrhage.

### Healthy heart, healthy brain

"Because Alzheimer's disease and cerebral blood vessel disease often occur together in the brain, it's important for people to know that the same recommendations for preventing strokes like exercising regularly and eating a heart-healthy diet also apply in delaying Alzheimer's disease," explains Dr. Black.

The fact that these two diseases are among the most threatening illnesses of aging, and that their burden on the health-care system will increase relentlessly over the next few decades, motivates Dr. Black to press ahead in her research.

"In terms of my own mortality and future, I suppose there's an additional motivation —so there's something available for me and my generation," says Dr. Black.

"I'd like to be optimistic and think in five to 10 years we may have some real disease-modifying therapies."

# Caregiver Column

## What you can do to support someone with memory loss

### Be knowledgeable and think broadly

- Become “in tune”, not “in the dark” about my condition.
- Be open minded to new concepts and don't doubt my diagnosis.

### Listen to me and ask me

- Ask me what is meaningful to me.
- Learn to become observant, and truly listen and see how various activities make me feel.
- Listen to what I express about my personal journey and to my ideas for coping, learning, and adapting to the challenges of the disease process.
- Listen without verbal conversation. You don't have to agree or disagree, just be there.

### Know me

- Understand my individual preference for activity and involvement.
- Find out what I am interested in doing and how I would like to be supported.
- Validate my feelings and emotions. The phrase “it's going to be alright” doesn't validate my experience. Instead, ask “Tell me what you are feeling? How can I help?”.

### Believe in me and my potential

- Find out about my abilities and interests and use those to help me thrive.
- Encourage me and find ways to support my abilities.

### Enable me

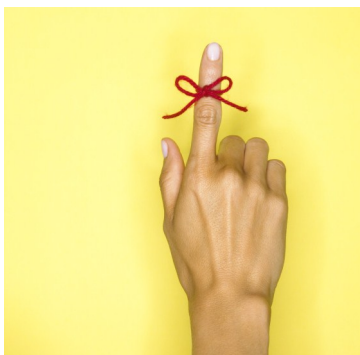
- Assist me in finding new ways or adaptations to maintain my current leisure activities.
- Provide opportunities for activities that enhance my self-confidence.
- Limit the use of forms (e.g., registration and assessment forms) and other things that make participating more confusing.
- Support me in whatever way you can, such as offering to participate with me, driving me, and accepting me for who I am.

### Partner with me

- Include me in decision-making and in the planning and design of programs meant for me.
- As a professional, explain why things are the way they are and help me to understand if certain things are not possible.
- Be honest and open with me.
- Develop a relationship by sharing in activities with me.

**Source:** Living and Celebrating Life Through Leisure from the By Us For Us Guide series, Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program.

For more information: <http://marep.uwaterloo.ca>



***“It helps me when my wife and I stick to a routine. I get less frustrated and feel like I have some control.”***

*-Anonymous, Person with dementia*

***“We work as a team. I give him the time he needs, but I'll supply a word every now and then.”***

*-Anonymous, Caregiver*

## Helping with routines

If you are supporting someone with Alzheimer's disease, you may find it difficult to know how to help and how much to help. Sometimes he needs help but wants to look after personal care independently. This can be frustrating, especially when you know you could carry out the task more quickly, or help do the task more efficiently. Try to avoid the temptation to take over, even if he is really struggling. The loss of confidence could make it harder for him to keep trying. When you do offer help, try to do the task together, rather than doing it for him. This will help him to feel more in control and more involved. When talking through activities like this, try to focus on what she can do, rather than on what she can't. Keep in mind that it's hard for people with dementia to learn new ways of doing things, remember steps involved in instructions, and stay focused for long on a task. Take things slow, try to be patient, and take breaks. Be encouraging, and try to maintain your sense of humour.

### Tips for making routines easier



- Try breaking the task down into sections. For example, she may find it easier to continue dressing herself if you put the clothes out for her in the order that she needs to put them on. Or you could pass her the next garment, holding it out ready to grasp at the right place, or encourage her to put her shirt on over her head before you straighten it down for her.
- Even if she can't complete the full task, carrying out one or two steps of it—particularly the final step—can give her a sense of achievement.
- Make sure that any reminders or instructions are simple. Use short sentences, with gestures and body language to add meaning.
- Be tactful. Try to imagine that you are the person receiving help, and speak in a way that you would find helpful if you were in her position.
- Try doing things together, such as folding clothes or drying dishes.
- If there are activities you do regularly, try integrating them into the daily routine.
- Make sure she doesn't feel she is being supervised or criticized in any way. This means checking your tone of voice as well as the words you use.
- When the dementia gets to a more advanced stage, try pointing, demonstrating, or guiding an action rather than giving a verbal explanation. For example, she may be able to brush her own hair if you hand her the brush and start by gently guiding her hand. Try using your voice to make reassuring and encouraging sounds rather than using actual words.

**This list was adapted from the Alzheimer's Society U.K.**

**[www.alzheimers.org.uk/](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/)**

## Walk for Memories

Chinese New Year helped us ring in 2012 and our annual Walk for Memories which was held on January 29th. The Cornwall Walk received sponsorship this year from the Chinese Embassy to promote our theme. The beautiful red and gold lanterns, scrolls and mementos complimented by each of the displays with various Chinese themed items were an attraction to participants. We are also very grateful to receive tremendous support from our other sponsors: Ontario Power Generation, Cornwall Square, No Frills, Shoppers Drug Mart, Furniture Village, Chateau Cornwall, McIntosh Inn, Upper Canada Playhouse, Aultsville Theatre, Cedars, Bell, and Concepts du Sablier. Our top fundraisers were Cathy Conway, who raised \$2145, Gail Shaver \$1910 and Jeannine Bourassa \$1865. Our top Long Term Care facility fundraising team was the Glen Stor Dun Lodge "Lodger Dodgers" who presented us with \$2060. Our entertainment this year was Karaoke with Mike Palfrey and MC Entertainment. Guest singers were Debbie St. John De Witt, Carrigan Davis, Elixabeth O'Connor and Graham Greer. We welcomed Guest MC Amanda Logan of Variety 104.5 and our friends with Tai Chi Cornwall who led us in our warm up.



Trophy presentation to the Lodger Dodgers

New this year was a Walk for Memories in Alexandria which was also held on the 29th. We are thankful for the community support we received. Special thanks to volunteer event organizers: Kim Gadbois and Danielle Hards. We had the sponsorship of Scotia Bank and Alexandria Moulding. We had wonderful support from Tim Hortons Dome, Giant Tiger, Home Hardware, Tim Hortons, Royal Bank, Action Video, McLeister House, R&L Book Nook, Alexandria Glens, Town and Country Flowers, Alexandria Restaurant, Curves, Georgian House, Jean Coutu, Shopper's Drug Mart and the Ottawa '67's. We thank our Master of Ceremonies, Deputy Mayor Jamie MacDonald, and our warm up leader, Nancy Galway. Top fundraiser was Barbara Lehtiniemi.

On February 10th, we took our Walk a little further north to the Canadian International Hockey Academy. The staff at the Academy were very supportive as were our volunteers that helped get the walk in motion: Nicole Ouelette, Denise Pigeon and Façoise Nolet. We received a lot of support from the Community: Caisse Populaire Trillium, Filles d'Isabelle Cercle #1210, Chevaliers de Colomb conseil 6198, Royal Bank, Banque Nationale, Chez George, Friendly Restaurant, Booster Juice, Jean Coutu, La Traverser and Dr. Audet. Our top fundraisers were Nicole Ouelette, Denise Pigeon and Gilbert Arial.

The three Walks raised over \$25,000 collectively.

## 1 RUN 2 REMEMBER

This summer will be busy! To kick off our fundraising, our 2nd annual 1 Run/Walk 2 Remember will be held on June 9th at the Long Sault Parkway. Registration is at 9am, event starts at 10am. It is a 5 km run or walk and there will be markers for each km. This event will be organized in collaboration with Joe McNamara from the Cornwall Multisport Club.



### Third Party Events

Join Hybrid Marine for their 3rd annual Paddle Poker Run on Saturday, July 28th. All proceeds raised will benefit the Alzheimer Society of Cornwall and District. There will be door prizes, B.B.Q. lunch as well as prizes for winners and top fundraisers.

Looking forward to September! On the 23rd, there will be a Paul Émile Séguin Memorial Car Show at 6500 Hwy 34, Vankleek Hill, ON, with proceeds coming to the Alzheimer Society of Cornwall & District.

### 12th annual Golf Tournament *-Sponsored by Investors Group*



Our annual Golf Tournament will be held on Friday, August 17th at Summerheight Golf Links in Cornwall. For more information or to register for this event, please

contact Sherry Davis at 613-932-4914 ext. 26. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. As sponsor, your company will benefit from advertising during the event, all the while helping families across the five Eastern Counties gain access to our support and information services.

### Education Sessions

Our **Annual General Meeting** will be held at 8:30am on June 18th at the Ramada Inn in Cornwall. The presentation by Dr. Andrew Wiens will focus on "How to avoid getting dementia".

**Next Steps Learning Series for Caregivers** Sessions in Cornwall on May 3rd, 10th and 17th from 1:30 to 3:30pm. French sessions on April 24th, May 2nd and May 8th. May 2nd session to be held in the evening with guest speakers, Roger & Éric Dubé.

\*Registration is required. Please contact us **613-932-4914 ext. 22**. Visit our website:

**[www.alzheimer.ca/cornwall](http://www.alzheimer.ca/cornwall)**

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