

Alzheimer Society

YORK REGION

MEDIA RELEASE

Keeping people living with dementia safe and engaged thanks to an OTF Resilient Communities Fund Grant

AURORA, ON (May 24, 2023) – On Wednesday, MPP Michael Parsa and MPP Laura Smith met with the team at the Alzheimer Society of York Region (AS York) to hear how a \$149,500 Resilient Communities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is making an impact. Thanks to OTF, AS York was able to keep clients in their DAY programs safe last year and those clients at home engaged with virtual programs. It received a \$149,500 Resilient Communities Fund grant from OTF in 2022 to help it rebuild and recover from the impacts of the pandemic and continue to deliver its vital services.

"Congratulations to the Alzheimer Society of York Region on receiving this well-deserved grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The Alzheimer Society actively assists individuals living with dementia with compassion and respect, offering a wide range of counselling and support to members and families," said Michael Parsa, MPP for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill. "They are also a leading organization in dementia research, transforming the ways in which we understand Alzheimer's disease. For these reasons and more, the Alzheimer Society of York Region is the ideal recipient for the Resilient Communities Fund, enabling the organization to continue providing quality care for their clients."

The MPPs toured the Aurora DAY program and spoke with clients at AS York. The DAY program is slowly returning to pre-pandemic levels of service after three years of closures, reduced capacity, and online programming.

"The Resilient Communities Fund grant has gone towards enhanced cleaning services and upgrading technology that enables the staff and volunteers at the Alzheimer Society of York Region to provide better care and service," said Laura Smith, MPP for Thornhill. "Resilience, it's a great word that truly fits this organization. I would like to extend a huge thank you to the staff and volunteers that keep the Alzheimer Society one of the leaders in dementia care - your work, dedication, and compassion are an inspiration."

Being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is isolating. Family and friends often disappear when someone is diagnosed with this fatal disease, leaving caregivers alone when they need support the most. COVID-19 made isolation worse: programs such as AS York's in-person DAY programs were continued to operate at a lower capacity in 2022 and the start of 2023 while support groups and public education sessions remained online.

"Virtual programs remained critical for our clients in 2022 and the start of this year. New equipment, computer security and training improved our service delivery in this virtual environment," said AS York CEO Kari Quinn-Humphrey. "Clients who remained home due to the risk associated with COVID-19 or could not access in-person programming due to COVID-19 exposure, could remain engaged with our programs thanks to computers, zoom licences and training funded by the Resilient Communities Grant."

Isolated at home, 20 families benefited from regular meal delivery thanks to Ontario Trillium Foundation grant. Over the course of the last year these families had 6,000 deliveries from Meals on Wheels.

Finally, for those clients who were attending in-person programs, enhanced cleaning helped ensure that clients remained safe. The grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation made it possible for AS York to enhance overnight cleaning at 2 program sites.

Hon. Michael Parsa and MPP Laura Smith took the opportunity to tour the Aurora DAY program and speaks with clients at AS York today. The DAY program is slowly returning to pre-pandemic levels of service after three years of closures, reduced capacity, and online programming.

The Alzheimer Society of York Region is a leader in actively supporting individuals and families living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. As York's quality, dementia-specific DAY program services, enriched social work program and education opportunities are well respected.

The DAY programs at AS York are comprehensive services that provides a structured, individualized recreational social programming for people diagnosed with dementia residing in York Region and offers respite for their care partners.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations celebrates 40 years of grant-making in Ontario and making a lasting impact in communities. Last year, OTF invested over \$110M into 1,022 community projects and partnerships. Visit otf.ca to learn more.

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