

## DAY Centre Benefits Dementia Sufferers and Their Caregivers

Alzheimer Society combines with Parkview Village to provide much needed program here in Town

The Stouffville DAY Centre offers planned activities and friendship for people living with dementia.

By Bruce Stapley

A local Alzheimer Society of York Region initiative has been welcomed with open arms by dementia sufferers and their caregivers in Stouffville.

The Stouffville DAY Centre is a facility that offers a structured and recreational program for people living with dementia, while offering counselling, support and relief for caregivers.

The Centre, located at Parkview Village, operates Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Originally open just Mondays and Tuesdays, a third day was added earlier this year thanks to funding from the Central Local Health Integration Network in partnership with Parkview Services for Seniors. In all, 27 clients benefit from the program, which provides person-centred, individualized care and planned social, physical and recreational activities for those in attendance. There is now a waiting list for people looking to join.

For participants, the outing is an opportunity for social stimulation in a safe environment that allows them independence. "They have a meaningful getaway which they can look forward to, spending time with good people and being stimulated in a new way," said Chantelle Morello, Program Manager for the Stouffville DAY Centre. "The caring staff provide a warm and welcoming environment and participants are able to connect with others and build new friendships."

"Our DAY program gives primary caregivers a much-needed respite," said Alzheimer Society of York Region CEO Loren Freid. "Caregivers give so much of their energy every day. The DAY Centre allows them to focus on other things, including themselves."

Caregivers have responded to the Centre with delight. "I have nothing but good things to say about the DAY Centre," said Stouffville resident Joan Gomes, whose husband, Selwyn, who is living with Alzheimer's, attended the program. "It's fantastic. The people who work there are very caring. They have a lot of empathy for your situation and Selwyn seemed to have a good time there."

The Parkview facility is one of three DAY Centres in York Region, with others in Aurora and Thornhill. The Society also offers monthly Family Support Groups which provide information on coping with and caring for people diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias. The Stouffville group convenes the fourth Tuesday of the month (except July and August) from 7 – 8:30 p.m. at Parkview Home, 123 Weldon Rd., Stouffville.

The DAY Centre concept is just one of the ways the Society assists those with dementia and their caregivers. Dilip Chetrum, whose wife Deviekha attends the Stouffville centre, found the journey from before his wife's diagnosis throughout the stages of her disease to be very challenging. But once he was referred to the Society he finally got the support he had been lacking. "The Alzheimer Society, the people...everyone who I met, they are my little angels," he said, adding that the people at the Society have helped him accept his vital role as his wife's primary caregiver. "I don't feel alone anymore, emotionally and mentally. I can't ask for anything more."

Among its many endeavours across the Region, the Society organizes fund raising ventures for those wishing to help the Society in its initiatives. A Walk for Alzheimer's is to take place Saturday June 9 at Richmond Green Park in Richmond Hill, the second leg of a double event that saw a similar walk take place at the Briar's Resort in Jackson's Point on May 26. Those looking to take part can register at [walkforalzheimers.ca](http://walkforalzheimers.ca). Sponsorship and volunteer inquiries can be made by contacting the Society's Events Coordinator Lauren O'Brien at [lobrien@alzheimer-york.com](mailto:lobrien@alzheimer-york.com)

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