

Emotional evening at Donor Appreciation

The Alzheimer Society of York Region (AS York) hosted its Donor Appreciation event, Thursday, Oct. 18 to thank the people who volunteer, donate and raise funds and awareness for the organization.

We heard an amazing story from caregiver Bruce Rhodes, who spoke about his journey in caring for his wife. He also brought many people to tears by sharing the impact AS York's people and programs have had on his life.

We honoured Ken Hackenbrook for his 14-year commitment to the organization.

Since 2004, Ken has raised more than \$30,000 for AS York. Ken was a Georgina councillor when he volunteered to raise money for the organization.

At the time, a representative from AS York had come to a town council meeting requesting money. She didn't receive it, but she may have got something even better – a promise from Ken.

Rob Grossi, the mayor at the time, turned to Hackenbrook and said: 'Ken here is good at fundraising, he will raise it for you', Ken recalled during a



Photo/Bill Giannos

recent interview at his Virginia home where he has lived with his wife Lorraine for more than 40 years. Ken told the AS York representative: "I can't promise you much, but I can promise I will raise you \$1,000."

Ken kept his promise, raising the promised money and participating in the Walk for Alzheimer's every year since then.

"We just thought it was a good cause," said Lorraine as to why they decided to help. Ken agreed: "Why wouldn't we want to help them?"

Thank you, Ken, for your commitment in helping your neighbours.

To all our donors, sponsors and volunteers, thank you for helping to improve the lives of our families, friends and neighbours who are living with or caring for people diagnosed



Photo and story by Lisa Day

Left, Board member Scott Crone presents Ken Hackenbrook with a painting by former client Diane Styrmo. Above, Bruce Rhodes delivers a powerful caregiver story.

with dementia. Your dedication to our vision is inspiring and we are grateful to each one of you for your outstanding commitment and support.

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Free spirit Catalino Mercurio still finds love, laughter and adventure

Since he was a boy in the Philippines, Catalino Mercurio has always been a free spirit. So much so, before he was 17 he had already explored almost every part of his town.

So when Catalino was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2012, his daughter Alma Mercurio was devastated about the loss of his freedom.

"I was heartbroken when he was diagnosed because there is no known cure and it means the end of his freedom, loss of identity," Alma said.

While in the past, Catalino would have hopped in the car and explored various locations, he no longer drives, instead relying on his children to take him places and let him have the

adventures he craves – whether that is exploring his Newmarket neighbourhood, going grocery shopping with Alma or visiting his siblings and extended family.

Catalino was born Sept. 15, 1933 in the town of Binan, which is south of Manila.

"I never lived at home," Catalino said. "My mother was always looking for me. I just wanted to wander, to see the world."

When he was 21, to keep him out of his trouble, his mom sent him to her brother who was a doctor and owned a hospital, Alma said.

The first time he helped, "I passed out because of the blood," Catalino said. But not

everything was terrible: Catalino met his now wife, Jimema at the hospital. They dated for a short period before getting married. Catalino was 21.

Jimema was 17.

"People fall in love with each other and they forget everything," Catalino said of his short engagement.

The couple have six children - Arlene Mercurio, Shirley Townley-Smith, Alma Mercurio, Merlou Everatt, Arden Mercurio and Lani Mercurio-Violi. Catalino and his family immigrated to Canada in 1971, settling in North York. Catalino worked two jobs to support his family including as an orderly

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The Roxy Sewers donate fidget blankets

At the beginning of October, The Roxy Sewers visited AS York.

The fun group of ladies, consisting of Vicki Edney, Marilyn Jackman, Bev Chambers, Leslie Cloake and Gerry Sterling, visited AS York's Aurora head office to present the Alzheimer Society of York Region with fidget blankets, beautifully handcrafted blankets with various embellishments sewed on.

According to various websites and studies, sewed fidget blankets (or knitted or crocheted muffs) helps calm and reduce anxiety of those living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. It provides hours of stimulation as the client plays with the zippers, loops and buttons sewed into the



The Roxy Sewers present AS York with dozens of fidget blankets to help those living with Alzheimer's and other dementias do something with their hands. Photos/Lisa Day

pieces.

The Roxy Sewers, who all except Bev Chambers live at The Roxborough Retirement Residence Verge Senior Living in Newmarket, have been creating the blankets for about 10 months, meeting weekly to

discuss and create. There was "lots of shopping involved" and lots of testing as the ladies would sew something on, then pull at it to ensure nothing fell off or apart.

Marilyn, the ideas person of the group, said she came across the idea of fidget blankets on Pinterest and suggested the sewers create their own. The ladies embraced the project especially since everyone was able to get involved including those who machine sewed and those who sewed by hand.

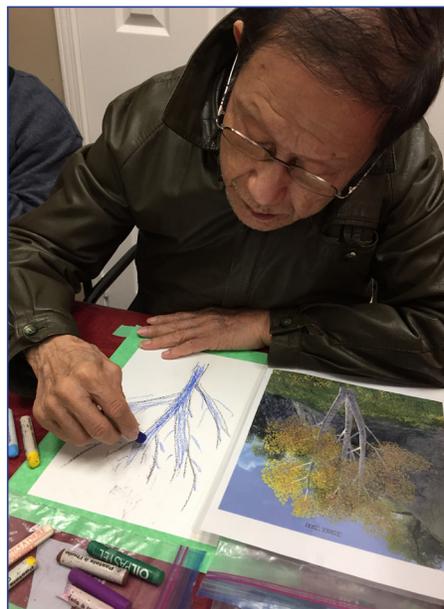
The blankets are being given to clients who are still in their homes as well as to be used in the DAY centres.

The Artwell Project returns

The Artwell Project, a partnership between AS York and McMichael Canadian Art Collection, sees older adults volunteering to help clients at our DAY centres create art.

The Artwell Project, funded by the federal government's New Horizons for Seniors Program, launched in the spring and ran for six weeks. The second session began in September.

The clients do a variety of art with the goal of increasing reminiscence, reducing anxiety and depression. It also validates their sense of self-worth and shows they can still contribute.



A client at our Thornhill DAY centre recreates a painting during Artwell Project.



Stories by Lisa Day

Change the stigma – share your story

At AS York we have the same goal as you – to improve the lives of those living with Alzheimer’s and other dementias and to raise funds and awareness about the disease.

We are able to do this because people like you have shared your stories.

There is still a stigma associated with an Alzheimer’s/ dementia diagnosis. Those living with the disease are often embarrassed to admit they have it in fear of a negative response. In order to change the stigma, we need to talk about the disease.

YOU CAN HELP

Everyone has an interesting story. Stories are used for newsletters such as this, annual reports and mailings. They are used to share news stories with the media in hopes



journalists do a bigger story. Stories are also used on social media to show people what our organization is about and who we help.

For example, during World Alzheimer’s Month in September, we launched #ASYorkStories, a social media campaign that told the impact of AS York on a family through a series of social media posts.

We would love to share your story and the story of your family member’s.

People interested in sharing their stories can contact

Lisa Day, communications coordinator, at lday@alzheimer-york.com or call 905-726-3477, ext. 229.

Contacting Day doesn’t mean we will automatically contact you. It means if we are looking for a story, we may contact you to see if you would like to speak with us at that time.

You may say yes, you may say no, you may say not at this time and that is OK. We know your life is busy and your No. 1 priority is your family. We respect your time and your privacy.

If your story is accepted, Day will visit you and ask questions, creating a story. You will be able to read your story before it is printed. She will also take some photographs.

Thank you for helping us change the stigma of a diagnosis.

Celebrating our amazing donors



Clockwise from left, Peter Styermo, whose wife Diane painted the picture that was presented to Ken Hackenbrook; Artwell volunteer Anaar and her husband Mohammed; Jacinta Ferrao; musician Kirstin Ward performed during the event; and Nora Egan, left, and Adela Whitmell.

Singing, dancing and having a good time

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at various hospitals including at what is now called North York Branson Hospital and later at St. John's Convalescent Hospital.

"I had to save my children," said Catalino about why he worked so hard, including washing dishes at a hotel from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. every night.

Catalino retired from his jobs in his 60s. The couple eventually moved in with Alma in Newmarket to be closer to their grandchildren, who they looked after.

In 2012, Catalino was by himself at the mall when he couldn't find his way out.

"He couldn't remember where to exit," explained Alma. "He was stuck in the mall for more than an hour trying to figure it out."

Catalino was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease after that incident, although Alma said, looking back, family members noticed things may not have been right as far back as 2010.

"Before the diagnosis, he was caring, sociable outgoing and just curious," said Alma. "He's also very passionate about music and adventurous with foods. After the diagnosis he's pretty much the same, only difference now is that he has a personal driver, my brother (Arden), who is so patient with him." Alma, Arden and Jimema are Catalino's main caregivers.

Catalino's other daughter,
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Story and photo/Lisa Day

Alma Mercurio joins her dad Catalino on a recent fall day.

**"I just have a good time.
My daughter takes care of
me. I just go to the centre.
There's lots of colouring,
singing and dancing.**

~ Catalino Mercurio

Arlene agreed: "Actually there hasn't seem to be much change in our dad except for the fact that he asks questions that he has asked a minute ago. Also, he has more long-term memory/stories and less short-term memory."

Catalino has been attending the Aurora DAY program three days a week for three years.

Alma said the social interaction is important for her dad, who has bonded with a number of people including fellow clients. Alma says he enjoys the art and exercise program and loves

to sing along with musicians Steve and Ryan. "I just have a good time," Catalino said. "My daughter takes care of me. I just go to the centre. There's lots of colouring, singing and dancing. I try to help them. I collect plates and push the cart. I ask them if I can help, for free, with no salary," he laughed. The DAY centre also allows Jimema time for herself, said Arlene, although Catalino worries about his wife being alone all day.

The Mercurio family says they are grateful to AS York. "The staff are wonderful and approachable," Arlene said.

While the family would love to see an increase in funding for research in finding a cure or delaying the onset of the disease, Alma said for now:

"This is my dad's journey and I'm happy to go along for the ride."

Help support the Music Project during Giving Tuesday campaign



When you think Giving Tuesday this year, think about the Alzheimer Society of York Region.

Giving Tuesday is a global movement that takes place Nov. 27 and is considered the “opening day of the giving season.”

Last year through the gifts of generous donors, we were able to purchase two iPads, which are used at the Aurora and Thornhill DAY centres. This year, we are asking people to donate in order to help fund the Music Project in York Region.

The Music Project provides clients with MP3 players equipped with their favourite

music. It costs \$200 to provide one MP3 player with customized music, and our goal is to purchase 15 MP3 players.

Music has been found to improve emotional states and mood, manage pain and discomfort without drugs and increase recall capabilities, among other things.

To donate to the Giving Tuesday Music Project campaign, visit bit.ly/ipodGiveTues .

Thank you.



Michele Lenick speaks at Music for My Mom, an event she hosted in memory of her mom to help bring the Music Project to York Region.



Abhijeet Manay from Reena and Andrea Ubell from AS York at a recent presentation.

Reena and AS York create partnership

Reena and the Alzheimer Society of York Region have developed an Aging with a Developmental Disability program for family members of those with a developmental disability.

The province-wide program offers free Q&A sessions at Ontario locations geared toward helping people get information to help plan the aging process. There is also a workshop geared toward professionals. Visit <http://alzheimer.ca/en/york/News-and-Events/Events> for details.

Free programs to help you on your journey

There are lots of programs and education sessions taking place at AS York.

FIRST LINK MEMORY CAFE

People diagnosed with young-onset Alzheimer’s and related dementias and their caregivers are invited to The First Link Memory Cafe.

In partnership between AS

York and Mosaic Home Care, The First Link Memory Cafe is facilitated by AS York’s First Link coordinator Jonathan Macri.

Those living with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers are invited to come out from 1 to 2:30 p.m. on the last Tuesday of the month at **Mosaic Home Care Services & Community Resource Centre**, The Shops

on Steeles and 404, lower level by the Centre Court, 2900 Steeles Ave. E., Suite 218 to interact and network in a place that is safe and supportive.

The cafe encourages friendships and acceptance and is a great place to go to remain physically, socially and mentally active.

Visit bit.ly/FirstLinkAS .

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Minds in Motion comes to Georgina

Minds in Motion, an-eight week program that incorporates physical activity and mental stimulation for people with early to mid-stage signs dementia and their care partners, is coming to the Town of Georgina.

Thanks to funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, AS York will be bringing the program to the under-served York Region community beginning in January. Call 905-726-3477 to register.



HONG KONG VISITORS

In September, occupational therapists from the Hospital Authority in Hong Kong visited our Aurora and Thornhill locations learning about our DAY centre programs. Thank you to (front from left) Menda Chan, Christopher Lam, Thersea Kwok, Daisy Ma and Ronny Lam for your enthusiasm.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

The Caregiver Support Framework, a 10-page document two years in the making, is now available for organizations to help them provide care and services to caregivers.

A number of organizations
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have already adopted the framework.

You can learn more about the framework and download a copy by visiting bit.ly/cgframe



GOLF 2 REMEMBER

The annual Golf 2 Remember tournament that raises money for AS York and Alzheimer Society of Toronto had its biggest success this year, raising \$22,000. The money is split between the two organizations. Congratulations to Tara Morse, Betsy Sumner and Jane Simard for another successful tournament.

TRIBUTE GIVING

Thank you to Layla and Alberto Conde, pictured below, Ashley and Richard Boake and Samantha and Mike Mazurek who made a donation to AS York celebrating their recent weddings. Call Lauren O'Brien at 905-726-3477 for details.



Alberto and Layla Conde on their wedding day.

CARERS Program now at AS York

The Reitman Centre CARERS Program, an eight-week program for people caring for someone with dementia, is now in York Region.

Nancy Kraft is a caregiver who participated in the program about three years ago.



Nancy Kraft and her husband, Bernie.

“There is life after caregiving if you do it right, and that is what the program is trying to teach.”

The program focuses on practical skills and emotional supports needed to care for people living with dementia; teaches problem-solving techniques; provides strategies for keeping a meaningful relationship; and coaches care partners through simulation.

Nancy said the simulation was incredibly helpful.

“It validated the journey. It was like watching a movie of your life. When you are in the midst of a caregiving role you can't see the crisis you are in, you are reacting. The role playing allows people to see their situation, but like watching a movie so you can see what you need to do differently.”

There are more new sessions coming up in York Region. Contact Simone Ma at 905-726-4377, ext. 236 to reserve spot.

Make a gift to help

More than 15,000 York Region residents are living with dementia, with that number expected to more than double by 2031.

We need your help to provide program and services to reach as many people journeying through this disease as possible.

Here's how you can help:

- **Make a gift**
Donate by mail, phone or online. Visit bit.ly/ASYorkhelp
- **Volunteer**
Help us with events and more
- **Leave your legacy**
Continue your tradition of giving with a bequest in your will. Make sure you share your wishes with your loved ones.
- **Plan your own event**
Organize a fundraiser in support of AS York.
- **Give a gift of appreciated stock**
Transfer your stock to AS York.

Alzheimer Society YORK REGION

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1-888-414-5550
Fax: 905-726-1917

Charitable No.:
10670 5429 RR0001

Email: info@alzheimer-york.com

Thornhill (Markham) • Georgina
• Richmond Hill • Vaughan
• Whitchurch-Stouffville

Connecting people to resources

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NEXT STEPS

Next Steps is an educational program and part of First Link, a program that connects people to AS York and its programs and services. Next Steps Education series is eight hours of learning over a four-week period.

Sessions are ongoing. Call Stacey Mendonca at 905-726-3477 or email smedonca@alzheimer-york.com

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

There are a number of family support groups taking place throughout York Region with the goal of providing information and support to people diagnosed with Alzheimer's and other dementias and their families.

Visit bit.ly/ASYSupport for more details including dates, times and locations.

Visit us online



@ASYork1



AlzheimerSocietyYork



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<http://alzheimer.ca/en>



bit.ly/ASYorkLinkedIn

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