

December 2020

# Alzheimer Society

S A R N I A - L A M B T O N

420 East St N. Sarnia, ON N7T 6Y5 \* 519-332-4444\* info@alzheimersarnia.ca



## Celebrating December

**Cookie Cutter Week**  
*December 1–7*

**Hanukkah**  
*December 10–18*

**Gingerbread House Day**  
*December 12*

**Christmas Bird Count**  
*December 14–January 5*

**Free Shipping Day**  
*December 17*

**Winter Solstice**  
*December 21*

**Christmas**  
*December 25*

**Kwanzaa**  
*December 26–January 1*

**New Year's Eve**  
*December 31*

## **Holiday Greetings from the Staff and Board of the Alzheimer Society of Sarnia-Lambton.**

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to you for your support of the Alzheimer Society of Sarnia-Lambton in 2020.

2020 certainly kept us busy adapting to a global pandemic. Above all else, we were determined to remain connected to our clients, and did not want to worsen the experience and effects of social isolation that are unfortunately already a part of the dementia journey for most. We recognize the patience and resolve that our clients have shown in learning and adapting to a virtual model of care.

Although this year has brought many challenges, there have been many positive moments too. Thanks to a COVID related grant from the United Way, we were able to deliver seventy-four activity kits to our clients, giving care partners a way to engage and connect with their person living with dementia while regular programs were closed. We were also able to open our Day Program in its new location, which is now on site with our administrative offices. We welcomed clients back to the day program in October, with resounding success.

To date we have served nearly 700 clients and have had close to 8000 client interactions. This has all been possible because of people like you, who show support for our programs and initiatives, and ultimately our clients.

Thank you again for your support this year. We wish you all the best this holiday season and hope that 2021 brings you happiness and health.

## Holiday Hours

### Reduced Hours of Operation:

Christmas Eve (Dec 24): 8:30am to 3:00pm

New Year's Eve (Dec 31) 8:30am to 3:00pm

### Holiday Closures:

Friday December 25 (Christmas Day)

Monday December 28

Friday January 1 (New Year's Day)

**Wishing you a happy and safe Holiday Season!**



## A Tough Nut to Crack



December brings many beloved holiday traditions, but one soars above the rest. No, not flying reindeer, but the dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Tchaikovsky's classic ballet *The Nutcracker* has become a holiday staple all around the world.

It was not Tchaikovsky's idea to write *The Nutcracker*. After enjoying success with his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty* in 1890, Tchaikovsky was asked to compose a ballet for the Imperial Theatre. Tchaikovsky turned to his friend and collaborator Marius Pepita, who suggested they write a ballet based on the fairy tale *The Story of a Nutcracker*, by the French writer Alexandre Dumas. Dumas himself had "borrowed" the story from the German writer E.T.A. Hoffman, who wrote *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* in 1816. In the 1800s, nutcrackers were common decorations in German households, revered as symbols of good luck. While composing in France,

Tchaikovsky discovered a new instrument, the *celesta*. He decided to feature its wonderful sound in his new ballet. Before the ballet premiered, a short concert of the musical suite was played in St. Petersburg. Every number was given an encore. Tchaikovsky knew the music was good, but he worried about the performance.

Tchaikovsky was right to worry. Critics did not like *The Nutcracker* when it premiered at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia, on December 18, 1892. One particularly harsh review read, "*The Nutcracker* cannot in any event be called a ballet." For decades, only the first half of the ballet, featuring the battle between the soldiers and the rat king, was performed. But in 1944, the San Francisco Ballet, led by William Christensen, staged the entire ballet, and it became an instant holiday hit. Nutcrackers suddenly became cherished holiday decorations. By the 1960s, dance companies all across America were performing *The Nutcracker* as an annual December tradition. For many children, *The Nutcracker* remains their first and best exposure to ballet and classical music.

# Happy Holidays

This time of year can be a wonderful occasion to connect with others and enjoy family traditions. This may be much harder this year with COVID restricting the ability to gather as before. It can also, at times, be busy and overwhelming for someone who is living with dementia. Trying to maintain the old ways in not necessarily helpful if it adds to their confusion. The following are tips for visiting over the holidays

## Visiting Tips

- As much as possible try to follow their routine.
- Be aware that group visits can be overwhelming, families may want to create a visiting schedule. This includes over phone and computer.
- Be prepared to end the visit early if necessary or to arrange a separate quiet area that feels calm.
- Conversation may not always be possible. Suggest a walk, read, listen to music or just hold their hand.
- Don't speak too quickly or give too much information. Keep your sentences short and simple.
- Use the names of the people visiting over phone/computer throughout the conversation to help cue.
- Anything from his/her past during holidays they should know about i.e. they always worried about finances at this time, lost a family member at this time.
- Take your time and make sure visits are calm during a rushed season.
- Keep opening gifts to only a few at a time.
- It is okay to celebrate on the wrong day if it is the best day for their ability.
- Celebrate earlier in the day since a holiday lunch may work better than a full Christmas dinner.



- Do not test their memory. Avoid saying “do you remember...” or quizzing. Instead, just talk about a childhood memory and see if they join in. Even if they do remember they may say they don't since they feel they are being tested.
- Have a couple activities that are soothingly repetitive and can keep him/her engaged i.e. hanging tinsel, shelling peas.
- If your family member is living in a care home, share with the team members if there is anything from his/her past during holidays they should know about i.e. they always worried about finances at this time, lost a family member at this time.
- Take your time and make sure visits are calm during a rushed season.
- Keep opening gifts to only a few at a time.

## Topical Tuesdays with Christine

Tips on Caring for Someone Living with Dementia

**December 1<sup>st</sup> 3pm** – Holiday Planning

**December 8<sup>th</sup> 3pm** – Treating the Caregiver

**December 15<sup>th</sup> 3pm** – Care Tips: Approach for Care

## Bonus Wednesday

**December 9<sup>th</sup> 7pm** – Understanding Dementia & Finding Your Way Program

Email Christine at [cwright@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:cwright@alzheimersarnia.ca) to receive information on how to attend. If this time and date does not work for you, still email Christine and alternatives will be looked at. Individual or family educational sessions can also be booked.



## VULNERABLE PERSONS REGISTRY

Do you know someone living with dementia?

3 out of 5 people living with dementia will go missing at some point, a frightening experience, and a dangerous one.



That's why the Alzheimer Society of Sarnia-Lambton is partnering with The Sarnia Police Services and OPP to provide an opportunity for individuals living with dementia to be registered as someone at risk of going missing. Critical information shared provides searchers with quick access to key information to assist in locating the individual and returning them home safely.

**Registration is easy! Call Alzheimer Society Sarnia-Lambton at 519-332-4444 to learn how.**

Let's all do our part to help individuals with dementia live safely in our community.



### Gift ideas



Planning for the holidays it can be a good idea to share a list of useful and needed gifts with family and friends.

They will want to bring gifts for you both and will appreciate the help you offer. You might want to suggest items that will make daily living easier. I.e. If the person living with dementia only seems to like to wear cardigans. Suggest that they would love one and their favourite colour is blue. Even if you have two blue cardigans one can be in the wash while the twin cardigan is being worn.

- Blankets, sweater and other warm items
- Photo books, digital photo frames, scrapbook or binder
- Closed toed, proper fitting and soled slippers that will decrease risk of falls
- If giving Shampoos and soaps (avoid ones that will dry the skin, or are greasy)
- Electric razor and other grooming items
- Music, mp3 player/Simple Player radio ,their favourite music or message from family, and a comfortable pair of ear phones
- Multiples of favourite clothing, comfortable and easy use clothing
- Calendar that can be easily hung
- Clock that clearly shows the time or days
- Books and magazines that can be used to reminisce
- Items that encourage past traditions I.E. stocking filled with gifts, favourite treat or decoration
- Flowers that are safe
- Things that are fun to touch and play with. I.e. The Alzheimer Society has beautiful tactile quilts donated by the Quilting Guild.

# AGO

## Virtual Art Talks with Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)

**When:** December 15, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

Do you want a more in-depth experience of the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)? The AGO offers engaging small group virtual art talks for Alzheimer Society Toronto. The AGO will help you explore their collection through conversation, exchanging ideas and observations about the selected artworks. This is a one-hour virtual art talk hosted on Zoom.

The program is designed for people living with dementia and their caregivers. The art talk is facilitated by an experienced AGO Art Educator and is assisted by Alzheimer Society of Toronto's volunteers.

Click [here](#) to register.



## Contact Information

Melanie Bouck CEO  
[mbouck@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:mbouck@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Kammy VanBoven Admin Assistant  
[kvanboven@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:kvanboven@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Ann McLean First Link Navigator  
[amclean@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:amclean@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Joy Cooke First Link Coordinator  
[jcooke@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:jcooke@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Christine Wright Education Coordinator  
[cwright@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:cwright@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Vanessa Barnes Program & Volunteer Coordinator  
[vbarnes@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:vbarnes@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Desiree Barrett Support Services Coordinator  
[dbarrett@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:dbarrett@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Ileana Rivas Support & Respite Services Coordinator  
[irivas@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:irivas@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Celia Conroy Social Worker  
[cconroy@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:cconroy@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Anna Labelle Social Worker  
[alabelle@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:alabelle@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Allison Brook BSO System Navigator  
[abrook@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:abrook@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Marie Marcy-Smids Fund Development  
[Mmarcy-smids@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:Mmarcy-smids@alzheimersarnia.ca)

Jan McKinnon Event Coordinator  
[jmckinnon@alzheimersarnia.ca](mailto:jmckinnon@alzheimersarnia.ca)