

# Connections

March 2011



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## MONTESSORI

The Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region (ASNR) is working towards implementing a new model that provides an opportunity for more meaningful engagement known as Montessori. The philosophy of Montessori is "to enable individuals to be as independent as possible, to have a meaningful place in their community, to have high self-esteem, and to have the chance to make meaningful contributions to their community." The purpose of the program is to enable engagement in meaningful activities for persons with dementia. These activities are specific and individualized for each person depending on their interests and needs, and aim to preserve their functional abilities. Kellie Halligan and Mary Scarborough, students in the Recreation and Leisure program at Brock University, have joined the Montessori team at ASNR. Their goal is to introduce Montessori-based-programs to individuals with early stage dementia in the Niagara region. Research has proven that Montessori-based-programs have been successful in long-term care, which encourages us to believe that persons with dementia living in the community will also benefit from the program. Our hope is that the program will not only improve and preserve existing skills, but will also increase their quality of life.

Kellie and Mary have created Montessori kits that are all designed with a purpose in mind. The benefits of these activities for the individuals that participate are to help maintain motor skills, physical activity, emotional well-being and intellectual stimulation. There are a variety of activities designed that target one or more of these areas and also allows for family and friends to participate, thus encouraging social interaction. The activities use real-life materials and can be adjusted from simple to complex depending on the demand of the individual. Kellie and Mary's goal is to have an array of activities that will be of interest to persons with dementia in the Niagara Region.



# Dr. Phill

Well-known in the Niagara Region, Dr. Phillip O'Reilly currently sits on the board of the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region. He is also offering his medical expertise to answer any questions you may have about Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias. If you have a question for our very own Dr. Phill, please see the last page for how you can contact us.



## Dear Doctor Phill,

### ***How can I tell if my memory drug Aricept is working?***

**Aricept** (donepezil) prevents your body from breaking down acetylcholine, a chemical in your brain that is necessary for thinking and memory. There are two other drugs Exelon (rivastigmine) and Reminyl (galantamine) that have similar effects on memory and cognitive function. Doctors choose which one to prescribe based on a number of factors including side effects, dosing schedules and ease of use, and individual response to a particular medicine. These medications may have some use in other dementias as well, such as dementia with Lewy bodies and vascular dementia.

While it is important to understand that none of these medications stops the disease itself, studies show that they can slow the progression which will provide patients with independence for a longer period of time. What you may find in your own experience is that you have improvement in your memory, awareness, and your ability to function. The extent of improvement varies with each individual. These changes may not be evident for several weeks but, even if you do not see any real improvement, it does not mean that the medication is not working. Since they have shown to slow the progression of the disease, this may be how the medication works for you.

Some people experience side effects like **Muscle cramps, Insomnia, Nausea and Diarrhea (MIND)**. They are usually mild and will subside but if they occur, be sure to discuss this with your doctor. - **Dr. Phill**

### Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region News & Events

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Alzheimer Bonspiel**  
**Saturday, March 19, 2011**  
Welland Curling Club  
497 King Street, Welland

**Coffee Club** is every other Tuesday of the month from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

**A Changing Melody has two forums:**  
- March 26/11 Toronto  
- May 7/11 Hamilton

For more information, please call the office at 905-687-3914.

A Learning and  
Sharing Forum  
for Persons with  
Early-stage Dementia  
& their Partners in Care

# A Changing Melody

Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011

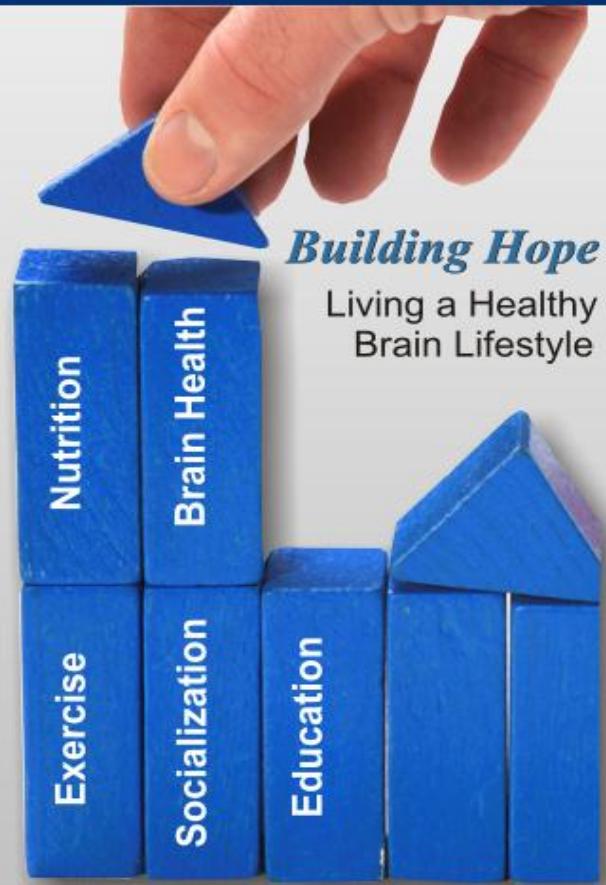
10 am – 2 pm

Courtyard Marriott Hotel  
1224 Upper James St.,  
Hamilton

Keynote Speaker  
Dr. Christopher Patterson,  
MD, FRCPC, FACP, FRF(Glasg)  
McMaster University,  
Chief, Geriatric Services  
Hamilton Health Services

*This forum will also include  
special presentations from  
people with dementia  
and care partners.*

For more information call  
905-687-3914.



**A Changing Melody** is a forum specifically designed for persons living with Memory Loss. This forum is conceived out of the need to develop meaningful partnerships among persons with dementia, their families and all others involved in dementia care and support. This year Southern Ontario will play host to two "A Changing Melody" Forums. Local LHIN 4 will be hosting the second annual A Changing Melody forum for persons with early stage dementia and their care partners which will be held on Saturday, May 7, 2011 in Hamilton, Ontario. The theme for this year's forum is *Building Hope: Living a Healthy Brain Lifestyle*. Hosted by the Alzheimer Societies of Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton-Halton and Niagara Region, this forum will address topics including Nutrition, Exercise, Brain Health, Socialization and Education. The Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region will be providing subsidized transportation to and from the forum on a first come first serve basis. For registration information please contact Vicki Bragagnolo at 905-687-3914 ext. 536.

The International "A Changing Melody" Forum will be held on Saturday, March 26, 2011 in Toronto, Ontario. This forum will play host to people from all around the world. The theme for this forum is "*Coping, Adapting, Enabling, and Creating: Striking a Balance.*" This forum is Hosted by the Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program (MAREP), the Alzheimer Society of Canada, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario and the Dementia Advocacy and Support Network International.

This forum will address topics including Coping with stigma and fear, Adapting to change so as to enhance well-being, Enabling persons with dementia rather than disabling and Creating strong partnerships in dementia care and support.

For registration information contact MAREP at 519-888-4567 ext. 35040 or visit [www.marep.uwaterloo.ca](http://www.marep.uwaterloo.ca) or [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca) Contact your local Alzheimer chapter for more information.



**Current Research** Researchers with the Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program at the University of Waterloo continue to focus on creating By Us For Us Guide's to help people living with dementia and their care partners. By Us for Us Guide's are "created by a group of talented and passionate persons with dementia. The guides are designed to equip persons with dementia with the necessary tools to enhance their well being and manage daily challenges. What makes these guides particularly useful is that they are created "By persons with dementia For persons with dementia."<sup>1</sup> There are 6 By Us For Us Guides available the topics include, Tips & Strategies, Enhancing Wellness, Enhancing Communication, *Managing Triggers, Memory Workout, and the most recent guide Living and Transforming with Loss & Grief.* You may access these guides through the University of Waterloo's Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program website at <http://www.marep.uwaterloo.ca> Copies are available to purchase through the Alzheimer Society Niagara Region Resource Center.

<sup>1</sup> "By Us for Us© Guides" <http://www.marep.uwaterloo.ca/products/bufu.html> retrieved: January 18,2011

## From the editor...

Even though this is the spring, 2011 edition of Connections, this is our first opportunity to wish you and your families a very Happy New Year! This winter has given us a lot of cold and snow, but knowing that spring is just around the corner gives us something to look forward to.

Please take a few moments to read our feature article about our new Montessori program. The purpose of the program is to enable engagement in meaningful activities for persons with dementia. Also, please read the information about "A Changing Melody" forum. There are two conferences being held this year; one is our local LHIN 4 conference taking place in Hamilton and the other is the international conference being held in Toronto. These conferences are for persons with dementia and their care partners. Attending these events with a friend or family member will provide you an opportunity to meet so many other people who share the experience of living with dementia. As always, your thoughts, ideas and suggestions about the newsletter are always welcome. Please contact Carolyn or Sarah at (905) 687-3914. Many thanks to our "Connections" team, Gina Bendo, Editor, Cynthia Krawczuk, Graphic Designer, Marge Dempsey and Sarah Putman, Assistant Editors.

- Until Next Time, Carolyn Dowd, Assistant Editor

## Contact & Feedback

What I liked: \_\_\_\_\_

What I didn't like: \_\_\_\_\_

Things I would like to see in the next issue:  
\_\_\_\_\_

How I would like to contribute:  
\_\_\_\_\_

My question for Dr. Phil:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_

### How to reach us

#### **By mail:**

403 Ontario St., Unit #1  
St. Catharines, ON  
L2N 1L5

#### **By phone:**

905-687-3914 extension  
543 (Gina)

#### **By email:**

[gbendo@alzheimerniagara.ca](mailto:gbendo@alzheimerniagara.ca)

# Did You Know...

A Shamrock is a traditional Irish symbol coined by Saint Patrick for the Holy Trinity. It is commonly associated with clover which has three leaves. Clovers occasionally have leaves with four leaflets, instead of the usual three. These four-leaf clovers, like other rarities, are considered lucky. Clovers can also have five, six, or more leaves, but these are rare, and are considered to be unlucky. The most ever recorded is a fifty-six leaf clover, retrieved May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009. This beats the twenty-one leaf clover, a record set in June 2008 by the same man who held the prior record and the current Guinness World Record of eighteen.



Four-Leaf Clover

Take a break from reading and challenge your brain in a fun way! Activities like word searches, crosswords, puzzles and Sudoku are great ways to exercise your brain.

## Saint Patrick's Day Word Search

o	h	a	j	t	g	r	e	e	n
i	r	a	i	n	b	o	w	w	x
h	g	e	c	d	l	q	z	r	q
n	o	h	l	g	s	y	i	p	p
j	l	u	u	k	a	v	r	a	o
l	d	i	c	z	i	u	i	t	t
e	t	z	k	t	n	y	s	r	k
z	i	w	y	u	t	y	h	i	v
c	p	a	r	a	d	e	j	c	r
e	n	k	i	b	z	j	p	k	i

### Words to Look For:

Patrick

Saint

Irish

Lucky

Rainbow

Parade

Gold

Green

Pot



# St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day is here, you see.

We'll pick some shamrocks, one, two, three.

We'll count the leaves and look them over,

And maybe find a four-leaved clover.

I'll sew green buttons on my vest,

Green for St. Patrick is the best.

I'll wear a green hat, very high,

And dance a jig--at least I'll try!

