

Alzheimer Society Peel. Spring 2017 Quarterly Newsletter (text only)

Mary- Lynn Peters - Board President of Alzheimer Society Peel

My name is Mary-Lynn Peters and it has been my honour to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Alzheimer Society Peel (ASP) for the past six years; four of them as Board President. I am proud to be a member of the Board and very proud of ASP and the services it provides. The work that happens, day in and day out, is important to many people and impacts many lives. Through my interactions with people living with dementia, their families/caregivers, staff members and volunteers, I can say with certainty that the work done at ASP matters. It matters a lot.

Dementia intersects my professional and personal lives. In my professional life I am a nurse practitioner specializing in geriatrics. In the 20+ years of my career spent in geriatrics, I have cared for many people with dementia, and supported many of their families/caregivers. Through it all, Alzheimer Society Peel was a source of support, guidance, and information. I have fond memories of many conversations with Brandi Deimling, when she was the First Link Coordinator for Alzheimer Society Peel. My personal life experiences with dementia began with my mother-in-law. Soon after the death of my father-in-law, we learned that my mother-in-law had Alzheimer's disease. I saw the effect this illness had on her and our family. We watched her slip away from us, a little more each day. We felt helpless to stop it and were saddened by the changes in this formerly vibrant and bright woman. My choice to volunteer with Alzheimer Society Peel was based on my experiences with dementia and a desire to give back to my community.

Serving on the Board has been a tremendously rewarding experience. We have a six year limit to Board membership and it is with tremendous sadness that I find myself now saying "goodbye" to my fellow board members. I have enjoyed participating in the various ASP events over the years: Galas, bowl-a-thons, day program celebrations, Nora's house celebration, golf tournaments, and more. A dear friend once said to me, "the happiest people in this life are the ones who give back". I believe this to be true. The ability to give back is one of the greatest gifts we possess.

Thank you for allowing me to give back.

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

~Winston Churchill

Developing a Strategy to Help Caregivers Deal with Alzheimer's and Dementia Related

By Paul Avanthi, Home Instead Senior Care
Forget Me Not Gala Champion Sponsor

One of the biggest dangers and points of anxiety for those caring for an aging adult is that their loved one with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia will wander from home and become lost. In fact, according to the Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Society of Canada six out of 10 or, 450,000 Canadians, living with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia will wander at least once. This number is expected to double by 2031 in absence of a cure.

With this in mind, it's critical that both families and caregivers take precautionary measures to help curb the risk of wandering and put safeguards in place to help locate missing seniors who do wander as quickly as possible. Embracing new technology aimed at mitigating the risk and damage of wandering events is one way families and caregivers alike can proactively work to keep aging adults safe. One such tool that has recently been made available to family caregivers is the Missing Senior Network, a free alert system that was launched by Home Instead Senior Care to improve the response process when an aging adult does wander or get lost.

The free alert system is available at www.missing seniornetwork.ca and enables family caregivers to alert a network of friends, family and businesses to be on the lookout for a missing senior via text or email. Families can also choose to post an alert to the Home Instead Remember for Alzheimer's Facebook page, which is connected to 270,000 followers.

The new alert system and similar technologies help keep loved ones with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia safe, while also providing peace of mind for family caregivers. These tools shouldn't be used in isolation however and should be employed as part of a wider strategy to minimize the dangers of wandering. Other proactive steps families can take to help manage wandering behaviours include:

Ensuring senior loved ones who may be a wandering risk always wear some sort of identification

Preparing the home for wandering by closing off certain parts of a room or locking doors to help create a path that is less likely to cause individuals with Alzheimer's to become disoriented or confused

Using higher security locks that will prevent someone with Alzheimer's from wandering out of the home in the middle of the night
When developing a strategy to combat wandering it's important for family caregivers to familiarize themselves with the various tools, tips and technologies available to them and utilize the resources that make the most sense for their unique situation.

Family caregivers can sign up for the new tool and create an alert network at MissingSeniorNetwork.ca and learn more about Alzheimer's and Dementia-related wandering at www.preventwandering.ca. Additionally, the Home Instead Senior Care office serving Mississauga can be reached at (905) 276-2273 or online at www.homeinstead.ca/mississauga-on.

Raising Voices

By Ruth Watkiss, Music Therapist for Alzheimer Society Peel

It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to introduce an exciting community program in this issue of the Alzheimer Society Peel's newsletter. Two years ago, the Mississauga Festival Choir (MFC) approached the Alzheimer Society Peel (ASP) to create a new community choir for people with dementia and their care partners. Inspired by a similar program in the Waterloo area, the MFC saw an opportunity to bring people together through music. Together MFC and ASP piloted the Raising Voices choir in October 2015, by including 7 clients from ASP and their care partners, equal numbers of seasoned singers from the MFC, and students from the choral program at Cawthra Park Secondary School.

Prior to meeting for the first choral session, ASP's Public Education Coordinator and I met with students and choir members in an

education session on dementia, the purpose of the Raising Voices program and the power of music. The Raising Voices group met for eight sessions, once a week, singing well-known favourites like The Sound of Music, Edelweiss, Que Sera, Sera and High Hopes, and others. The choir was arranged in groups of four, one MFC member, one ASP client, one care partner and one Cawthra student. Together these groups would support each other and work together through a weekly icebreaker or trivia game. Conducted by veteran conductor and former choral teacher at Cawthra Park Secondary School, Bob Anderson, songs were rehearsed weekly ending with an informal evening where we invited our friends and family to hear their accomplishments. Since then, Raising Voices has run successfully for four sessions, has been featured on Rogers Cable 10 Television, and performed at the Credit River Retirement and Sunrise of Erin Mills. Since inception the choir has grown to include over 60 participants.

Those who sing on a regular basis know the power singing together can have. Science is only now beginning to investigate and prove the power that singing in a choir has. As reported by numerous sources, there are both physical and psychological benefits of singing in a choir.

Singing creates chemical change in our bodies, including:

Releasing endorphins, the body's feel good chemicals;

Lowering levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, relieving anxiety and contributing to quality of life;

Releasing dopamine, a neurotransmitter linked to basic human biological needs;

Producing oxytocin, the love hormone associated with feelings of trust and bonding, leading to less feelings of depression and loneliness; and,

Increase in cytokines, immune proteins that boost the body's ability to fight serious illness.

Singing is even considered an aerobic activity, when singing we draw more oxygen into the bloodstream, improve circulation, and regulate heart rate.

Within the Raising Voices choir we have been collecting information from all parties concerning mood. We have discovered that there is an overall increase of 47% for all members from feeling tired to energetic, a 30% increase from feeling sad to happy and 45% increase from feeling stressed to calm. Raising Voices is a collaborative and encouraging environment comprised of singers of all types having fun together. No singing experience is necessary and you do not have to be able to read music; all we require is the willingness to have a good time. The Raising Voices choir is free due to the sponsorship of Benefit Plan Administrators, Retired Teachers Ontario, Community Foundation of Mississauga, and Bayshore Health, through MFC. As part of the MFC family, we also receive discount tickets for choir members for other MFC events. If you are interested in joining the Raising Voices choir please contact myself, Ruth Watkiss, at r.watkiss@alzheimerpeel.com or 289-632-2273 Ext. 353. We will begin a new session in the Fall of 2017.

Unable to participate in Raising Voices? You can still benefit from the power of music in your own home, below are some ideas to try:

Watch old musicals together, some of versions of the DVDs or Blu-rays have options to watch the movie with karaoke style lyrics on the screen

Organize an old CD, cassette or record collection, talk about the artists or songs as you do

Use music as a cue for routine activities, i.e. use the same song for bathing, setting the mood for the experience

When providing personal care, sing to/with the individual, you are non-threatening and communicate caring while you sing

Use music to spark conversation, i.e. listening to your wedding song together and then talking about the memories

Create playlists for different times of day, setting the mood for various activities, i.e. upbeat music to get moving in the morning, quieter music to prepare for bed in the evening, etc.; or

Play instruments along while singing or along with recorded music.

Upcoming Fundraising Events

Previous Events

Alzheimer Society Peel Bowlathon

Thank you for your support for the April 8th, 2017 Bowlathon!

Walk For Alzheimer's and 5k unforgettable run June 10, 2017

Join us at the beautiful Lakefront Promenade Park in Mississauga.

Register now at www.walkforalzheimers.ca or contact

r.adolph@alzheimerpeel.com for more information.

Volunteer Opportunity

To Volunteer at the upcoming Walk for Alzheimer's as a parking/route ambassador, contact r.adolph@alzheimerpeel.com

Donations:

Thank you to the Rexall Foundation who donated \$10,000 to the Alzheimer Society Peel!

You Can Help!

Online! you would like to assist us from the comfort of your desk, feel free to donate through our

Amazon.ca Wish List, or through our Canada Helps page. Links to each site can be found on our Donate Page on our website.

For more information on donating contact Brandi Deimling, Business Development at 905-278-3667 extension 214 or

b.deimling@alzheimerpeel.com

Meet Our Sponsors

If you are interested in becoming an Alzheimer Society Peel sponsor, please contact: Brandi Diemling 905-278-3667 extension 214 or b.diemling@alzheimerpeel.com

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www.icarehomehealth.ca
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www.southbrook.on.ca

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UniFirst
905-828-9621

Verve
www.verveseniorliving.com
(905) 821-1161

Our Location Services:

Port Credit- Head Office and Counselling
60 Briarwood Avenue, Mississauga, Ontario L5G 3N6
905-278-3667

Sam MCCallion
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1-6535 Millcreek Drive, Mississauga, Ontario L5N 2M2
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Brampton/Evelyn's Place
150 East Drive, Brampton, Ontario L6T 1C1
Day Program 905-789-1306
Counselling 905-792-1319

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E-mail: n.bhamra@alzheimerpeel.com

Website: www.alzheimerpeel.com

Office hours: Monday to Friday
8:30am – 4:30pm

If you, or someone that you represent, has a disability and needs accessible services, information in an alternate format, or any other accommodations, please contact Danielle Farrell at 905-792-1319 Ext. 710.

We will work with you to make the appropriate arrangements.