

Alzheimer Society Walking Club Due to Resume Outdoor Walks in May

By: Betty Batten, Friendly Visiting Coordinator

With the return to warmer weather our Step Out Walking Club returns to outdoor walks this month. Designed for those with early stage memory loss, The Step Out Walking Club helps to motivate and increase activity levels in persons with dementia, and to promote the positive impact that healthy lifestyle and physical activity can have on their condition.

New participants are always welcome and a team of trained volunteer Walking Buddies is ready to provide support. Eligibility criteria is simple - the walk participant is experiencing early stage memory loss, has medical clearance from their Doctor and is capable of walking independently or with use of an aid, with no significant history of falls.

Launched late last summer, the Peterborough group enjoyed weekly walks at Peterborough Zoo until winter weather forced them inside. Approximately an hour in length, walks culminate with a b.y.o. snack and social time. ***Careful attention has been given to risk management practices that accommodate differing walk speeds and rest break requirements.*** Care partners have the option of whether or not to participate, with the possibility of a Walking Buddy providing transportation if needed.

A trained Walking Club Leader maintains oversight for these weekly outings. Walking Buddies are assigned to offer discreet supervision and support while helping to facilitate conversation and social connectedness.

With an influx of new walkers comes the need for more Walking Buddies. How often have you heard someone say, "I know I should walk more but I'd be much more motivated if I had a companion"? ***The Step Out Walking Club is the perfect solution – use honoring your volunteer commitment to keep you motivated.*** Not only will you reap the personal benefit of increased physical activity but also the joy of helping others whose independence is now restricted. Both Club participants and volunteers attest to enjoying each other's company and the fun they experience together.

Individuals and families who support someone with a cognitive impairment can learn more about this program by calling Jennifer at 705-748-5131.

Individuals who wish to explore the volunteer role of a Walking Buddy can do so by calling Betty, also at the above number.

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