

Alzheimer Society

PETERBOROUGH, KAWARTHA LAKES, NORTHUMBERLAND & HALIBURTON

Safely Home and Finding Your Way Program Information By: Lisa Morasse

Safely Home

Have you heard of Safely Home? This was a program administered by the Alzheimer Society of Canada, where persons with any form of dementia would be registered in case of a situation when that person might get lost. Although the program was very worthwhile it was difficult to manage and keep member information current. In the Spring of 2013 the Alzheimer Society decided it was time to look at who has a similar service registry and would be willing to partner. Their search brought forward the MedicAlert® Foundation. This well-known agency assists people dealing with medical emergencies – around the world, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, in 140 different languages.

Now you might say having a form of dementia is not a medical emergency, and I would agree. But when someone with dementia goes missing at any stage in their illness, it is an emergency. There are real safety risks to the individual, and it is also a time of worry and anxiety for the person and their loved ones. The MedicAlert® Safely Home® program is a great support to help the person connect with assistance when needed.

Finding Your Way Update

When every step counts being prepared is just another step in the journey.

Last fall, we hosted a community meeting to introduce the Finding Your Way program. Community agencies from across our four county coverage area were invited, including Police, Fire and EMS services. We looked at how to engage in the process of helping people with dementia that have gone missing to return to their home. It was quickly discovered that each of our geographical areas needs to develop a process, be aware of the resources that can help in the planning process, and provide education to everyone on the risks of getting lost and the tools available to help.

This spring, we will be hosting a number of sessions throughout our coverage area to consult, develop a community response plan, and educate all. If you are interested in more information, please feel free to contact Lisa Morasse, Public Education Coordinator at lisa@alzheimerjourney.ca

Getting lost or becoming disorientated are realities for someone that has dementia. Being frightened, scared and worried are realities for the person with dementia and all of their care providers! So what can you do?

As a Person with Memory Loss:

Be proactive. Apply for your MedicAlert® Safely Home® bracelet. The application is available at our offices or online at www.medicalert.ca/Safely-Home

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Consider your activities and find strategies to reduce your risk of getting lost. The Finding Your Way website has suggestions that can help you plan supports and continue to live an active life. <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/pklnh/Finding-Your-Way>

As a Care Provider:

Educate yourself. Review the information and tools on the Finding Your Way website and implement strategies where possible. <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/pklnh/Finding-Your-Way>

It can be difficult to have conversations about balancing safety and independence. But talking, asking questions, and learning some strategies will help lead to peace of mind.

If you have questions or need support in discussing safety issues related to dementia, please contact our office. One of our staff would be happy to help.