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## **Local Alzheimer Society Staff taking Dementia Friendly Communities across Ontario**

David Webster, Executive Director for the local Alzheimer Society, is leaving his post to take a new position with the Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

After piloting a new program in nearby Bobcaygeon, “Living Well With Dementia”, also known as the “blue umbrella program”, interest has been received from across Ontario and Canada in expanding the initiative further.

In his new role, Webster will be focusing on this and other activities that are being designed to encourage and support individuals living with dementia to remain active and engaged in the home and community of their choice. This is part of a larger focus of Alzheimer Society in Ontario in developing and implementing an Ontario Dementia Plan.

“I will be part of a team of people who will be focusing on several initiatives throughout the province” states Webster. “I am proud of the work we have done locally to develop the *blue umbrella* program, and look forward to a time when anyone living with dementia can live well for longer periods of time, supported by their families, friends and communities.”

With the “blue umbrella” program, individuals living with dementia wear a personal identifier (pin). Retailers and businesses receive education on how to support individuals with dementia who may visit their location, and once they receive that training, can display a window decal signifying their readiness to help if needed. As part of the process, negative stereotypes and stigmas are reduced, and those living with dementia can expect to be accepted as any other member of the community.

Webster has been in his current role for over 5 years, and leaves knowing that the organization is very strong. “This organization has a solid reputation within the community for delivery of dementia-related services” notes Webster. “Our activity levels have increased substantially in the last several years, and our team of staff and volunteers have done a great job at ensuring quality is maintained”. The hiring process for a new Executive Director will be starting in the near future.