

Société Alzheimer Society

NEW BRUNSWICK /
NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September, 2015

The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick to launch innovative Memory Café program in Miramichi for those impacted by Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick, in partnership with the Department of Social Development, will be launching its innovative Memory Café program in Miramichi on September 27, 2015. The Memory Café is a place where people with dementia, their families and professional caregivers come to meet once a month. Memory Cafés are intended to be a real café. Although there is a support, and educational component to the Café, the focus is to provide a warm, relaxed environment for social interaction without judgment. Families who come to the Memory Café each month enjoy refreshments, entertainment, education and friendship.

This program aims to support the educational, emotional and socialization needs of the attendees on a monthly basis. To also encourage the building of natural support networks among families, helping reduce the isolation often associated with caregiving and to offer a stigma-free program for all those diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

The Memory Café reduces social isolation and provides information and education for families. "By reducing the stigma associated with a diagnosis we are also giving the community the opportunity to see dementia through a different lens", says Noreen Langdon, Memory Café volunteer.

No matter what stage of the disease, those diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, their families, health care professionals, and the general public are all invited to join and contribute to this program. Research indicates that when people impacted by dementia have early access to resources, they are better able to learn about what to expect and to plan, resulting in a reduction in crisis, and more appropriate use of the health and long term care system. "Alzheimer's disease and dementia can be very isolating for those diagnosed as well as their families who may be struggling to balance their personal and professional lives", says Jana Jones, Memory Café Coordinator of the Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick.

With other Memory Cafés already underway, when completed the Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick will have extended this program into 16 communities across the province. It is the hope of the Alzheimer Society that no New Brunswicker will have to travel more than 50 km to access this program. To find out more about the Memory Café or any of the other programs being offered, please call the Alzheimer Society at 1-800-664-8411 or at any of our Resource Centres located in Edmundston, Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John.

How it all started:

The café concept began in the UK in 1997 and offered peer support and provided regular and informal sessions for people with dementia and their caregivers. It was a means of providing education and support services for those living with dementia, their loved ones and caregivers. It began to make its way across Europe and to North America. The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick has now made it a priority to offer Memory Cafés in communities across our province to those families impacted by Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Volunteering:

If you would like to get involved in the Memory Café and have 5 hours a month that you can share we would appreciate hearing from you. With your help we can better support the 15,500 fellow New Brunswick families living with dementia today. Memory Cafés are currently being offered in Edmundston, Fredericton, Moncton, Rothesay and St. Stephen, with plans to extend this by the Spring 2016. Call today to join one of our existing committees or form your own to help us provide help for today, hope for tomorrow.

About the Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick:

The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick has Resource Centres around the province, and runs numerous monthly Caregiver Support Networks for people with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia and their families. The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick provides support and information through a toll free bilingual 1-800 line, and provides comprehensive information kits to help families navigate their way through a diagnosis or suspicion of Alzheimer's disease. The Society provides in-office and telephone support, and organizes various fund development activities to help fund the national Alzheimer Society Research Program.

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