

## **Alzheimer Society of Ontario seeks to build a safer Oxford County for people living with dementia**

**WOODSTOCK, ON – January 18, 2018** – The Alzheimer Society of Ontario is calling attention to the serious risk of going missing that people living with dementia-related memory problems face – 60 per cent will become lost at some point.

“Half of the people living with dementia who go missing for 24 hours face serious injury or death,” said Lisa Salapatek, Chief Program and Public Policy Officer, Alzheimer Society of Ontario. “It is everyone’s responsibility to keep these people safe. While having dementia presents challenges, there are many things we can do to manage the risk of getting lost or going missing.”

Through Finding Your Way, the provincial charity is helping people in Oxford County who are living with dementia, their families and caregivers recognize the risk of going missing, be prepared for incidents of going missing, and ensure that people with dementia can live safely in the community. The program outlines simple, but vital strategies that can help people stay safe while maintaining their quality of life.

One of the primary tools is an identification kit individuals complete and keep on hand for first responders. Through a partnership with the Woodstock Police Service and the Ontario Provincial Police, Alzheimer Oxford has taken it to the next level.

“For five years we have been scanning the kits submitted with the permission of people living with dementia and their caregivers,” explains Lisa Narancsik, a Provincial Constable and Abuse Issues/Community Mobilization Officer. “The kits include personal information, potential places to look for the lost individual and emergency contact information. Just last month a new recruit identified a lost woman while on patrol. She recognized the woman from our database and was able to safely and compassionately return her home.”

“Having a plan to reduce the risk of wandering is critical for people living with dementia and their caregivers,” says Dipika Damerla, Minister of Seniors Affairs. “By raising awareness and using strategies through Finding Your Way, we can proactively keep people safe in their home and community.”

### **About Finding Your Way**

Finding Your Way is a program developed by the Alzheimer Society of Ontario and funded by the government of Ontario through the Ministry of Seniors Affairs. Available in 12 languages, it offers valuable resources and information to help people living with dementia live safely in their communities. A full resource guide for people living with dementia, caregivers and first responders can be found [here](#). An interactive guide is available, [here](#).

### **About the Alzheimer Society of Ontario**

Since 1983, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario has been dedicated to improving the quality of life for Ontarians living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and advancing the search for the cause and cure.

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**For more information or to arrange an interview with a spokesperson, please contact:**

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