



MEDIA RELEASE

Making connections thanks to an Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant

AURORA, ON (April 29, 2022) – Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), the Alzheimer Society of York Region (AS York) was able to stay connected with people impacted by dementia last year. It received a \$150,000 Resilient Communities Fund grant from OTF in late 2020 to help it rebuild and recover from the impacts of the pandemic on delivering its vital services.

“Congratulations to the Alzheimer Society of York Region for the work you have done with your Resilient Communities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation,” said Michael Parsa, MPP for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill. “Your organization does so much to help alleviate the pressure of those impacted by Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and the grant has helped improve the quality of care for clients by hiring additional staff members, purchasing new computer equipment, and making it easier to access PPE.”

Being diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias is isolating. Family and friends often disappear when someone is diagnosed with this fatal disease, leaving caregivers alone when they need support the most. COVID-19 made isolation worse: programs such as AS York’s in-person DAY program was cancelled, then re-opened at lower capacity and support groups and public education sessions moved online.

“AS York’s programming provides care for people living with dementia, and much-needed respite for their caregivers,” said AS York CEO Loren Freid. “With this much-appreciated funding from the OTF, we have been able to gradually increase service levels to our current clients and the increasing number of people needing our support.”

Thanks to the grant, AS York was able to hire staff to do overnight cleaning at two sites and buy computer hardware and software and other technical equipment. The grant was also used to purchase PPE to safely operate in-person when possible. AS York stayed connected, however, by providing virtual programming – a compilation of activities, music and exercises emailed to current clients and those on the waitlist Monday to Friday; offering activity kits with masks and wipes as well as animated cats and dogs, colouring books, games and more; and sharing vital supplies such as incontinence products, personal products, and tablets to 20 families in need.

The Alzheimer Society of York Region is a leader in actively supporting individuals and families living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. Our quality, dementia-specific DAY program services, enriched social work program and education opportunities are well respected.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada’s leading granting foundations. Last year, nearly \$112M was invested into 1,384 community projects and partnerships to build healthy and vibrant communities and strengthen the impact of Ontario’s non-profit sector. In 2020/21, OTF supported Ontario’s economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit otf.ca to learn more.

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Photos with cutline: AS York staff wear PPE purchased thanks to OTF's Resilient Communities Fund grant. PPE ensured the health and safety of staff and people living with dementia during the pandemic.