

Local society recognizing Alzheimer Awareness Month

By Jasen Obermeyer

With Christmas behind us, and January being the month when everyone catches their breath from the busy holiday time, it also marks the start of Alzheimer Awareness Month.

‘There are many significant messages throughout Alzheimer Awareness month, but one of the key ones is that everyone with dementia is unique and that if you have met one person with dementia, you’ve met one person with dementia,’ says Lindsay Butcher, executive director for Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County (ASDC).

‘The disease impacts everyone differently and to group them all under one umbrella is an unrealistic picture of the disease and what it encompasses. Progression is different for everyone and it is possible to live well with dementia for a good period of time.’

In Canada, over 564,000 people are living with the disease, with 25,000 new cases diagnosed every year. The number of those living with dementia is expected rapidly double to over 1 million in 15 years. ASDC serves over 300 clients in the area through education, individual and/or support group.

During the month, Alzheimer Societies across Canada unite to put an end to dementia stigma, so everyone feels comfortable talking about dementia and sharing their own experience. Introduced in January 2018, the campaign’s theme is ‘Yes, I live with Dementia. Let me help you understand.’

‘Ending the Stigma is a key message during Awareness month,’ explains Ms. Butcher. ‘Persons with dementia can lead active lives, continue hobbies, exercise and enjoy spending time with family and friends. It is when persons with dementia are stigmatized that it can be hurtful and detrimental to their well-being.’

She adds, ‘This is why helping our community who may be uneducated on the subject to understand they are much more than a person with a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s Disease, they are a person with feelings just like everyone else.’

One way to help is participating in their current fundraiser, Catch the Ace, which currently has raised over \$15,000 for ASDC. It is a lottery raffle in which you purchase a weekly ticket for \$5, with the draw happening every Thursday at 4:00 p.m. If you correctly find the Ace of Spades, you keep 20 per cent of the weekly ticket sales, while 30 per cent of the weekly sales goes to the progressive pot, and the remaining 50 per cent to the society.

You can purchase tickets at the society’s office at 25 Centennial Road, Sproule’s Emporium on Broadway, BookLore, and Cobwebs and Caviar in Shelburne.

For information on the Alzheimer Awareness campaign, visit the website www.ilivewithdementia.ca.