Media release

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Join the Alzheimer Walk for Memories and Make a Difference

The annual Alzheimer Society Grey-Bruce Walk for Memories is off to a very strong start with online pledges already up more than 450 per cent over the same date a year ago.

"Walk for Memories continues to be one of our most important annual awareness and fundraising events," said Deborah Barker, Executive Director of the Alzheimer Society of Grey-Bruce. "The strong early support this year is very gratifying and we are encouraging all of our walkers to keep up the momentum."

Walk for Memories is an indoor walkathon that raises money to help provide the information, education, support and counselling services the chapter offers to a growing number of clients across Grey-Bruce.

"It is also very important in raising awareness of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, and of the services we provide," Barker said.

January is awareness month. This year the theme across Canada is "Let's Talk About Dementia" and it is aimed at encouraging people to talk openly about the disease and at ending the stigma.

"As part of the campaign to encourage open dialogue, we will be introducing an opportunity for individual walkers to share their reasons for supporting The Alzheimer Society of Grey-Bruce," Barker said. "We know our walkers have many different reasons for walking – to support a family member or friend, to acknowledge the efforts of a caregiver, or to honour the memory of someone close to them."

There will be a display area at each of the five Grey-Bruce Walks where people can share their stories. Walkers will be invited to post a memory, a tribute, a photo, or simply the name of a loved one.

Investors Group is sponsoring the display areas.

"We are grateful to Investors Group for their support," Barker said. "Investors has long been a strong partner for our chapter – they are the lead sponsor for our annual golf tournament and for many years have also sponsored the radio advertising campaigns for our annual Coffee Break and Forget-Me-Not tree campaigns.

"Making this opportunity available to our walkers will help people feel more comfortable talking about their experiences and this is very important in helping to improve the quality of life for affected individuals, their families and their caregivers." Barker said.

Online registration and donations to the 2013 Walk for Memories is stronger than ever before at this date.

Online registrations and donations are a very strong indication of how many people are planning to take part in the walk.

To date there are 35 Walkers registered online and $5,790 in pledges paid.

“This is up significantly from a year ago today when we had 24 walkers registered and $1,245 pledged,” Barker said.

Last year in total there were 85 walkers registered online and $17,451 pledged at the end of the walk. Overall in 2012 164 walkers raised $65,000.

This year the Alzheimer Society is adding two new walks – in Blue Mountains/Meaford, and Kincardine - to the three that have been held annually in Owen Sound, Hanover and Saugeen Shores.

The 2013 Walks for memories will be held at:

- **West Hill Secondary School in Owen Sound,**
- **Hanover Heights Community School in Hanover**
- **Saugeen District Secondary School in Port Elgin**
- **Huron Heights Public School in Kincardine**
- **Beaver Valley Community School in Thornbury**

Walks for Memories are indoor, family events, designed for participants of all ages. All Walks take place Saturday, January 26, 2013. Registration starts at 9 a.m., the Walks officially begin at 10 and activities wrap up around noon.

Although walkers are encouraged to register and collect pledges online, it is not a requirement.

To register on line go to www.walkformemories.coa and register for the walk of your choice.

You can download a pledge form from that website when you register, or if you prefer contact our office and we will send you a pledge form.

For more information please call 519-376-7230 or 1-800-265-9013 or email btwaddle@alzheimergreybruce.com