Connections

DECEMBER 2012

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"You can be bitter, or you can be better. I choose better…"

Bea is a retired nurse who participates in the Early-stage programs here at the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region. She was not surprised when given a diagnosis of Dementia, as she had noticed changes in her memory before. However, it was still a "hard pill to swallow" and it took her a while to pull up her bootstraps. She now realizes that life is a lot of choices, and you make of it what you can. Bea is more at peace with her diagnosis now. The Wellness Program and Early-stage Learning Series at ASNR made a big difference in helping her get to where she is today.

Bea is an avid recipe buff, and also enjoys making handmade cards. She has to make simpler recipes now, and finds that she is not as creative with her cards now, but she loves it and would not give it up. For Bea, losing her driver's license was more upsetting than the diagnosis of dementia. It was a big loss of independence for her, which was difficult because she enjoyed being independent before.

Bea thinks that it is important to have strategies in place, especially if you are living on your own. Some of the strategies that she uses are setting a timer when boiling water, and writing everything down on the calendar.

Bea really enjoys being involved in the programs here at Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region. She says "you feel like you count to somebody when you're here. You are understood, and there are people like me here. I had never met anybody like me until I came here. You are listened to, taken seriously. You feel loved." She loves making friends with others in the programs here because it gives her the opportunity to stay in touch with people, which is especially difficult if you can't drive.

Bea encourages others living with dementia to get the support that you need, it's out there for you. Join the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region's Early Stage programs. Get to know as much as you can, and listen to their suggestions. She also encourages others to attend the annual Changing Melodies convention for persons with dementia.

Featured Question & Answer…

Staff members of the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region are a multidisciplinary team of professionals who will answer questions you may have about dementia.

Please ask your question using the "Contact and Feedback" form in the newsletter or call us at (905) 687-3914.

Question:

The holiday traditions are important to me and I am sad that I am not able to do the things I once did, for example I used to help with the Christmas cards. I also cannot manage a large meal like I used to. I know things have changed since my diagnosis of dementia but I want to enjoy the holidays with family and friends.

Answer:

I am sure you are finding life has changed in many ways. The abilities we all take for granted do not come as easily for you as they once did. It is good to think ahead about how you can still find ways to enjoy the special occasions with family and friends. Family traditions can be maintained but your role in how they are carried out may be different. For example, you could get your Christmas card list together and ask your grandchildren to help you write them out. This could become a "new" tradition for you and your grandchildren.

Social gatherings could become "potluck" affairs with everyone contributing their signature or favourite dishes. It is important to share your feelings with your family. Most people want to help but are not always sure how to discuss the situation - you taking the lead will empower everyone. Hopefully these ideas will add enjoyment for all during the holiday season.

Tips and Strategies for the Holiday Season

For many people the holidays present an opportunity to spend time with your family, celebrate and take part in special activities. Here are a few of the best ideas we found to help make the holidays a little less stressful.

- Prior to the holiday season think about what activities you would like to take part in and which traditions are the most important to you. Share your thoughts with your family and friends so they know what your hopes and expectations are.

- Give yourself permission to do only what you can manage. There are certain activities that may be overwhelming for you and it is okay to choose not to take part or only take part in portions of certain activities.

- If you are feeling tired or overwhelmed during your holiday celebrations find some quiet space to take a little time for yourself. Communicate with your family that you may need to take some time away during parties or other gatherings.

- Try to maintain as much of your normal routine as possible. When your schedule permits take part in your regular routine whether it includes exercise, napping, reading or attending community programs.

- Take this opportunity to share your most valued traditions with the younger generations in your family. This is a great way to reminisce and plan which traditions you would like to follow this year. Remember, it is okay to adapt your traditions to fit your lifestyle today or create new traditions that you can use every year.

- Use lists for tracking your shopping and spending, holiday gatherings and events and other things you would like to do this season.

- Work with a partner to do familiar and fun holiday activities such as making, signing or mailing cards, wrapping presents or decorating cookies. This can be a meaningful way to share time with your loved ones.

Sources: Alzheimer Association website www.alzheimertoronto.org, November 2001 Research Update: Tips for an enjoyable holiday season prepared by the ASO Education Dept.

Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region's

News & Events

For more information please call the office at (905) 687-3914

Early-stage Best Friends Coffee Club

You are invited to join us on the second and fourth Thursday of each month from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. for the Best Friends Coffee Club starting in January, 2013.

For more information and weekly brain teasers, check out our facebook page…

Find us on Facebook

Note from the Editor…

Welcome to this issue of Connections. My name is Chris and I am a student from Niagara College in the Social Service Worker Program. I will be doing my field placement at the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region until the end of April 2013. I will be working in the Family Support and the Early-stage Programs.

I hope to learn from this experience and be able to apply it to my future career.

We would love to hear back from you! The feedback slip has moved to the back of the newsletter. Please tell us what you think.

Thank you to all the staff and persons with dementia who have contributed to this issue.

- *Chris Richards, Guest Editor*

Do you have any questions? Contact Gina Bendo, Early-stage Programs Coordinator at 905-687-6856 ext. 543.

Early-stage Resources…

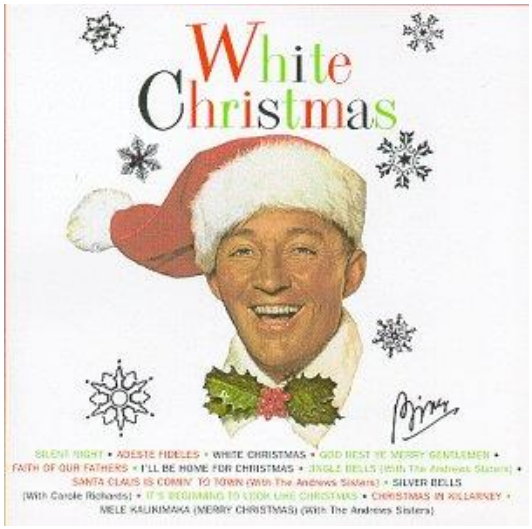
Living Your Best with Early-stage Alzheimer's
Lisa Snyder
Sunrise River Press, 2010
A thorough, practical guide on coping with the diagnosis, managing symptoms, finding meaningful activity, planning for the future, maintaining important relationships, and much more.
283 pages

Dancing with Dementia: My Story of Living Positively with Dementia
Christine Bryden
Philadadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2005
Diagnosed at the age of 46, Bryden was a top civil servant and single mother of three children. She shares her vivid account of her experience in living with dementia and describes how, with the help of her husband, she continues to lead an active life.
172 pages

By Us For Us© Guides: are a series of guides created by a group of talented and passionate persons with dementia and/or family partners in care. The guides are designed to equip persons with dementia with the necessary tools to enhance their well-being and manage daily challenges. They are created by persons with dementia and/or partners in care **for** persons with dementia and/or partners in care. Please contact www.marep.uwaterloo.ca for more information.

Remember When…

In 1942, the Song "White Christmas" written by Irving Berlin, and sung by Bing Crosby topped the US Billboard charts for 11 weeks straight. White Christmas returned to the number one spot in 1945 and 1946 becoming the first ever single to have three separate runs at the top of US charts. Since then, the song has been sung by over 100 artists in all different genres of music. White Christmas is ranked the number one Christmas song of all time.



Holiday Movies…

The following bold words can be found horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forwards, and backwards.

L	Y	E	W	T	C	E	Y	C	H	W	T	C	C	Z
Z	E	C	L	C	H	W	Q	G	H	X	E	A	V	E
P	G	V	F	F	R	A	O	I	E	A	E	R	W	A
X	N	D	L	B	I	Y	T	W	V	T	R	O	Q	A
N	S	R	Y	W	S	E	K	L	M	N	T	L	B	L
V	F	R	V	H	T	W	Z	V	E	A	S	X	N	F
R	F	J	R	T	M	X	O	X	P	S	Y	D	X	D
I	V	K	Y	B	A	M	P	N	H	O	E	D	H	U
T	G	O	J	H	S	R	E	Y	D	H	L	B	P	S
L	I	F	E	V	E	E	C	L	R	E	R	A	K	K
P	U	M	L	S	L	L	N	E	C	O	R	Z	R	V
M	O	B	S	G	E	N	O	L	A	A	T	F	F	Q
H	Q	Z	N	Y	A	D	I	L	O	H	R	S	U	H
A	X	I	L	P	K	E	R	F	A	C	R	I	U	L
N	J	A	T	M	C	L	A	U	S	E	B	X	M	V

HOME ALONE

A CHRISTMAS **CAROL**

A CHRISTMAS **STORY**

THE **SANTA CLAUSE**

ELF

THE **POLAR EXPRESS**

HOLIDAY INN

JINGLE ALL THE **WAY**

IT'S A **WONDERFUL LIFE**

MIRACLE ON 34TH **STREET**

WHITE CHRISTMAS

Be Happy

Give up anger
Express problems cheerfully.
Give to the poor
Never laugh at anyone's dream
Respect and Respond
Never let an injured friendship go-
Go and apologize!
Realize your Blessings
Smile when you answer the phone
Open your arms to change
Remember silence is your friend.

- VEL -

Contact & Feedback

What I liked: _____
What I didn't like: _____
Things I would like to see in the next issue: _____
_____
How I would like to contribute: _____
My question: _____
_____
Other comments: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How to reach us

By mail:
403 Ontario St. Unit #1
St. Catharines, On L2N 1L5

By phone:
905-687-6856 ext. 543 (Gina)

By email:
gbendo@alzheimerniagara.ca