



# Dementia Friendly Tweed

## What is a Dementia-Friendly community?

The Alzheimer Society defines a dementia-friendly community as a city, town, or village where people with dementia are understood, respected, and supported. Over 564,000 Canadians live with dementia and in less than 15 years, that number will double. One in 10 people over 65 have some form of dementia. The Municipality of Tweed has a population of 6600, 47% of our residents are 55+.

## Where we started from

On April 10, 2019 Michael O’Keeffe from Moira Place Long Term Care Home and Deborah Hierlihy with the Alzheimer Society of Hastings – Prince Edward attended a Council Meeting and presented their vision for a Dementia Friendly Tweed. At the May 29, 2019 council meeting a resolution was passed for the Municipality of Tweed to support their vision for a Dementia Friendly Tweed.

Around the same time the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility opened the Seniors Community Grant Program. It was decided that a grant application would be submitted to help with the Municipality of Tweed’s proposed actions for a Dementia Friendly Tweed. We were very fortunate that our grant application was approved. The Municipality of Tweed set goals that to be achieved with the help of our partners - the Alzheimer Society of Hastings Prince Edward, Moira Place Long Term Care Home, the Tweed Public Library and other community partners:

1. Promote understanding and awareness
2. Help people with dementia feel safe and supported
3. Help businesses meet the needs of individuals living with memory loss
4. Increase the skills and confidence of staff and the community interacting with dementia
5. Identify and promote organizations that have adapted Dementia Friendly concepts

## The steps to achieving our goals

We identified three main areas that we wanted to focus on to achieve our goals. They were:

1. Provide Dementia Friendly training to our municipal staff, council members, business owners, volunteers, service groups and residents.
2. Create impactful video content that can be used by the Alzheimer Society in their training and that we could use to share our message and assist in the Dementia Friendly Communities movement.
3. Assemble cognitive care kits for the Tweed Public Library and have library staff training on how best to facilitate their use.

**Provide Dementia Friendly training to our municipal staff, council members, business owners, volunteers, service groups and residents.**

Working closely with Debroah Heirlihy, Coordinator Dementia Friendly Communities we organized the training sessions. We started the training with municipal staff and council member; the training was done in one day, we offered an AM and PM session, each lasting 90 min. Certificate of participation were presented to each participant. The next group to receive training was our fire department, who took part in the First Responders training.

Once Municipal staff and council were trained, we provided sessions for our residents. We held two 90 min sessions which were geared towards 1. Event Organizers, Service Club Members, and Volunteers and 2. Business Owners & Employees. This allowed for specific scenarios to be discussed which were relevant to what they may experience. Both these sessions were very well attended. Each participant received a Certificate of Participation. In addition to the Business session we also offered in house training for any business who was interested. The Alzheimer Society has set out criteria that if 75% of employees or members of a club/group/event organization participate in the training and there is future training in place for new employees/members that the designation of Dementia Friendly Business/Organization will be given. Our hope is that each of our businesses, groups and organization will receive this designation.

Our final session was open to the public. We advertised in print and radio to get our message out to as many people as possible. Our public session was a half day where we discussed the Municipality of Tweed's plan and progress to date, we asked the Alzheimer Society to speak about their support and services, then we moved on to the 90 min Dementia Friendly Communities training and finished with lunch and a Q&A period. We also showed a sneak peak of two of our videos that we filmed. Attendance for this session was very good. Each attendee received a certificate of participation. The Alzheimer Society also circulated a questionnaire 25% of those who attended asked for a follow up phone call or email from the Alzheimer Society. This meant to us that not only was the message getting out, but we had provided a platform where those who had questions could make that all important first contact with the Alzheimer Society.

**Create impactful video content that can be used by the Alzheimer Society in their training and that we could use to share our message and assist in the Dementia Friendly Communities movement.**

While this is not a necessary step to becoming a Dementia Friendly Community, we felt that with the funding we received from the Seniors Community Grant we could help make impactful videos that represent a more rural vision for Dementia Friendly Communities. We met with the Alzheimer Society to brainstorm what content they could see being of value. We decided on three topics for the videos: 1. Person living with dementia and their care partners, 2. Resources available and 3. What a dementia friendly community looks like.

Working with the Alzheimer Society we were able to find residents in our community who were willing to be part of the video. The first couple is a gentleman living with dementia and his wife who is caring for him. The second couple is looking after their mother who is living with dementia. In the end, it was decided to make two videos as they were dealing with different stages of dementia and the associated challenges.

For our resources video we interviewed an Education Support Coordinator and a First Link Care Navigator with the Alzheimer Society of Hastings Prince Edward. Both shared valuable information about that first phone call and the resources available to those living with dementia and their care partners.

Our Dementia Friendly Community video included members of our community who had been sitting on a Dementia Friendly Tweed task force along with Municipal Staff. Each member shared their thoughts on what Dementia Friendly Communities look like, and how the Municipality of Tweed was working towards it.

When all videos were completed, we had 5 in total. We plan to share these videos with the Alzheimer Society, our community and beyond. We will be hosting a Thank You video launch party at Moira Place Long Term Care Home to showcase the videos and thank all those who helped us during this project.

**Assemble cognitive care kits for the Tweed Public Library and have library staff training on how best to facilitate their use.**

When we were doing research for this project, we learned of the Cognitive Care kits that the Burlington Library was making available to its patrons. We felt that this was something that would benefit our residents. We approached the Tweed Public Library about these kits, and they were excited to be able to offer them to their patrons. With research and discussion with the Burlington Library regarding what their kits included we were able to assemble kits for early stage, mid stage, and sensory kits.

We also sent library staff to the DementiAbility workshop so that they could learn how best to utilize the various items in the kits and in turn, share that knowledge with those who will be using the kits.

In addition to the cognitive care kits we also purchased dementia friendly books to be added to the library shelves.

## Final Thoughts

This project was a journey worth taking. What started with an idea grew into a movement that our whole community can get behind. We, as a Municipality laid the groundworks. Now it is time for our residents to keep the movement going.

We were very fortunate to receive the Seniors Community Grant which allowed us the freedom to complete projects quickly. The main concepts can be completed with very minimal financial output for any community that does not have funding. The Alzheimer Society offers the Dementia Friendly Community training free of charge. Although we offered food at our events – it is not required. We tried to use Municipally owned halls to reduce the costs as well. We found that of all the advertising we did, posting on our Facebook page was one of the most effective. We did use Canada Post to deliver the flyers for our public training session with good results. Our radio advertising was not as effective as we had hoped in getting people to register. It did however help to raise awareness for the Alzheimer Society and the Dementia Friendly Communities idea.

While we were able to purchase items for 20+ cognitive care kits with the grant funding, it is something that can be done slowly over time. 1 or 2 kits per category at a time. We found using a combination of the manufacturers website and amazon produced the most economical kits. There are also creative ways you could include items with little cost associated with them. We are also fortunate to have a local crafting group offer to make fidget quilts that they will donate to the library for people living with Dementia to keep.

**Partnership is KEY.** Without the support and education from the Alzheimer Society, the resources from Moira Place, the Tweed Public Library, input from our Dementia Friendly Tweed task force, and support from our businesses and residents we would not be able to call this project a success. We were also fortunate to work with an amazing film crew from Vantage Point Media House who took the video stories and turned them into something incredible.

***Partnership is key to the success of Dementia Friendly Communities.***