

THE JOURNEY

Alzheimer Society
Dufferin County

WINTER

JANUARY IS NATIONAL ALZHEIMER AWARENESS MONTH

2007

Head's Up for Healthier Brains

The brain is arguably the most important organ in our body, playing a role in every action and in every thought. But what do we do really know about maintaining a healthy brain?

According to the Alzheimer Society, it is never too soon, or too late to improve your brain health and make changes that might also help reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

While currently there is nothing to indicate you can prevent Alzheimer's disease, a growing number of studies are showing there are things you can do to help reduce your risk.

"You can't do anything about aging, and you can't do anything about your genes, but practically everything else you can do something about," says Dr. Jack Diamond, scientific director for the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

The Society, who will be launching a nationwide campaign "Heads Up for Healthier Brains!" during Alzheimer Awareness Month in January, recommends the following actions people can take to help maintain or improve their brain health:

- Challenge your brain – keep the brain active every day. For example, play games, or maintain a hobby. Research has found that keeping the brain active seems to increase its vitality and may build its reserves of brain cells and connections.
- Be socially active – staying connected socially helps you stay connected mentally. The more engaged you are the better. This can include taking a class, staying active in the work force or becoming a volunteer.
- Choose a healthy lifestyle – a healthy lifestyle is as important to brain health as it is to the heart and the rest of the body. Diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity are all risk factors for Alzheimer's disease. It is important to make healthy food choices, reduce stress, be active and avoid smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

Protect your head – brain injuries, including repeated concussions, can be linked to the later development of Alzheimer's disease. Wear an approved helmet when participating in sports, wear a seatbelt and protect against concussions.



Skate and Walk 2007

If you cannot participate at the event, you can still raise pledges to support us, or make a donation.

"Donate to Skate"

Just come make a donation if you would like to join in the 10-11am skate.



Saturday, January 27

10am to 12 Noon

Registration at 9:30am

Alder Recreation Centre

For more info: 519-941-1221
or online: walkformemories.ca

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Message from the Office

As winter arrives, our thoughts turn to ways we can enjoy the season. Among the choices is the Skate and Walk for Memories event here in Orangeville, to benefit the programs and services that the local Society provides to support families in need. There will be a "Donate to Skate" option for people not collecting pledges but would like to join in the skate. Please read more about it in our newsletter.

This local chapter has begun the process of taking an in-depth review at the community it serves, the needs of the families dealing with dementia, and the resources available to the society at this time. We are also taking a hard look at best ways to increase our capacity and capability to meet the broader range of needs, but also with a keen eye to the future when increasing need for these supports will require us to be ready to provide them, with the best possible resources.

That is why we making sure we conduct a carefully constructed strategic plan for our short and long term goals. A large part of the growth we need to do will require a huge fundraising effort. It is time for us to rally strongly around our community members dealing with dementias and being ready for their future needs.

Over the next few months, board members, volunteers, and other stakeholders will be gathering to work out this plan which we hope to begin rolling out in the spring.

We have recently opened a satellite office of the Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County, and it is located in the new Mel Lloyd Center in Shelburne. The days and times it is open are listed on page 4.

*Laurie Turza
Executive Director*

The Journal is published four times a year and distributed free to our members, patrons, sponsors, board members and volunteers, and is available to the general public.

We invite your comments on the newsletter.

Would you like to receive our newsletter by email to help us save on printing and mailing costs?

Call or email us and we will add you to the list.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County is dedicated to improving the quality of life for persons with Alzheimer Disease or related dementias and their families, through support, information, advocacy, education, and promotion of research.

'Brain Health' Public Opinion Poll

In October 2006, Leger Marketing conducted a public opinion poll on behalf of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. The objective of the poll (based on a randomly selected sample of 1,859 adult Canadians¹) was to determine the general public's level of knowledge regarding brain health and Alzheimer's disease. Here are some results:

Physical Health vs. Brain Health

- **78%** of Canadians said brain health is as important as physical health, with an additional **19%** saying it is actually more important. However, when asked to name the first thing that comes to mind when describing a 'healthy person,' **63%** of people said physical fitness, and **32%** said healthy eating habits. Only **5%** of people answered being socially or intellectually active as attributes of a healthy person.

Keeping your brain healthy

- When asked what one should do in order to keep the brain healthy, **27%** said exercising the brain, while another **20%** said reading. Only **15%** said eating right and staying healthy, followed by **7%** who said staying physically active.
- Canadians said that a favourite social activity for them was enjoying time with family and friends. However, when asked what their primary motivation was for doing so, only **29%** associated it with improving brain health.
- In terms of brain challenging activities, **38%** of Canadians said they participated in hobbies (such as reading, painting or sewing) every day. Only **35%** of people associated these activities with improving brain health.
- When asked whether trying something new, such as brushing your hair with the opposite hand, may reduce their likelihood of developing the disease, **45%** of people were unsure, with an additional **43%** disagreeing.

Healthy living and its connection to brain health

- About **70%** of the people surveyed said they ate brain-healthy foods and engaged in cardiovascular exercise a few times a week.
- **61%** of Canadians said maintaining a healthy weight and feeling good motivated them to eat healthy. Only **20%** said they were eating healthy to help prevent illness, with an additional **11%** saying it was to live longer.
- What motivates Canadians to exercise regularly appears to be about the same as eating healthy: **67%** said to feel good and maintain a healthy weight. In this case, however, only **9%** said they exercised to prevent illness, and **8%** to live longer.

While diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity are all risk factors for Alzheimer's disease, more than **50%** of people were unsure if they were, with an additional **15%** disagreeing altogether. **70%** did, however, agree that smoking negatively impacts brain health.

Protecting your head

- **96%** of Canadians said they *always* wear a seatbelt, however **31%** said they *never* wear a helmet when participating in activities like riding a bike, skiing or rollerblading.
- **67%** of Canadians said their primary motivation to wear a helmet was to protect their head from injury, but only **6%** stated it was because of fear of long term-brain damage.

In fact, when asked, **78%** of people were either unsure or disagreed altogether that brain injuries can be linked to the later development of Alzheimer's disease.

What Canadians say about Alzheimer's disease

- Alzheimer's disease is the **second most feared disease** among Canadians as they age, tied with heart disease (Cancer is the most feared). Canadians that fear Alzheimer's disease most are generally over the age of 45.
- **32%** of people said they personally know someone with Alzheimer's disease. **21%** said they have someone with the disease in their family.

71% of people were aware that there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, and **70%** of people were also aware that memory loss in itself doesn't mean Alzheimer's disease.

Educational Workshops in Dufferin for Family & Caregivers

HEADS UP...For Healthier Brains

LOCATION/TOPIC	DATE	TIME	PLACE
Grand Valley: What to expect... Progression of Dementia	Tuesday, January 16th	10—11:30 am	Public Library
Orangeville: Prevention and Dementia Dr. Geoff Daniel	Wednesday, January 24th	7:00—8:30 pm	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Shelburne: Coping Strategies and Community Resources	Thursday, January 25th	1:30—3:00 pm	Mel Lloyd Health Centre



A very big thank you to Barb at Deborah's chocolates in Orangeville for her donation of a chocolate star for each of the individuals in our support group this month as a special Christmas treat !!

Over \$4000 raised in Coffee Break 2006 Campaign this fall.



Coffee Break 2006 has come and gone and this year over \$4000 was raised to support the services of the Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County. Our heartfelt thanks to community members who donated to this year's campaign and sported the waterless tattoo of the forget-me-not flower to raise awareness. Many thanks and appreciation to the following establishments for graciously hosting Coffee Break activities:



Giant Tiger in Shelburne * Hinds Foods in Grand Valley * Closet to Closet * Hiding Inn Hockley
 Hockley General Store and Restaurant * Bulk Food Barn * DUCA Financial Services * Royal Bank on
 Broadway * Café Uno * Mochaberry's * Moguls in M'Ocean * Shoeper * Aveda * Harmony Whole
 Foods * Body Graphics * Tanfastic * Curves Kids Can Do * Booklore * Jeffers Pharmacy * Shoeper
 Rolling Hills Day Care * East Coast Fish and Chips * Blighty's Tuck Shop * Marsville United Church
 Dufferin Association of Community Living * Investors Group * Dufferin Oaks * Bethsaida Retirement
 Lodge * Parson's Florist * Avalon Retirement Lodge * Lord Dufferin Center * Community Mental Health
 Care * Mansfield General Store * Second Cup * Shelburne Royal Canadian Legion—and all our individual
 Coffee Break hosts. Your generous support helps to improve the quality of life for families dealing with
 Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.