

October 15, 2020

DEMENTIA AWARENESS PROJECT STARTING IN CAMPBELL RIVER

Work has begun to develop greater dementia awareness and support in Campbell River.

A \$5,000 Plan-H Community Connectedness grant received by the City and the Campbell River Seniors Network will support a dementia awareness project based on local needs. The initial work will bring together a volunteer advisory group composed of families, caregivers, key local organizations and others working or living with people experiencing dementia.

“This project will help people with dementia feel comfortable shopping, walking, getting around and enjoying life to its fullest in our community,” says Mary Catherine Williams, executive director of Volunteer Campbell River.

“It will also help community members understand that dementia is not a disease. It’s a group of symptoms caused by disorders affecting the brain,” says Brenda Wagman of the Campbell River Seniors Network.

Alzheimer’s Disease is the most common form of dementia. The group of symptoms involves vascular dementia (the second most common type), Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease and Lewy body, to name a few.

Wagman adds: *“One big misconception is that dementia only occurs in elderly people.”*

Bill Reekie was a well-known community member who managed Strathcona Gardens for 26 years. Bill started to experience symptoms of dementia at the age of 55. He lived with dementia for the next 15 years. Bill’s wife Jocelyn stresses the importance of having a supportive and well-informed community to improve the quality of life for those living with dementia.

“Bill did everything he could to keep himself active in the community and fit for as long as he could,” she says. *“For several years after he retired from his position at Strathcona Gardens, he volunteered with the Mountaineer Aviation Rescue Society and Greenways Land Trust. For two and a half years, he attended the Adult Care Program three mornings a week, where he found joy and stimulation in the social aspects and the activities provided. It is a wonderful program, and was a great help to me, too.”*

Initial project work will begin this fall, and includes:

- researching awareness campaigns in other communities,
- identifying specific local needs
- developing a strategy for Campbell River

For more information on this project, please contact:

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Photo: Bill and Jocelyn Reekie dancing at a Campbell River adult care event in 2014

COVID-19

Please note: We have new procedures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We are gradually – carefully – resuming in-person services and limited public access to City facilities. For the most recent information on City services, please see our website (campbellriver.ca). Reach us with general inquiries by email (info@campbellriver.ca) or telephone **250-286-5700**.