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To: George Bush, Electoral Area B, Cawston, Regional District Okanagan
Similkameen
Tim Roberts, Electoral Area G, Keremeos/Hedley, Regional District Okanagan
Similkameen, OSRHG Vice Chair
Jason Wiebe, Mayor, the Village of Keremeos

Copy: Donna Benson, PhD., Medical Arts Health Research
M. Rutherford, Penticton, Alzheimer's Society of BC
Sana Aziz, Dementia Friendly Communities, BC, Alzheimer's Society of BC

Re: **building dementia friendly communities – a rural health equity approach**

Happy Summer. I hope you are all well.

West Vancouver has won the prestigious award as being the most Dementia Friendly Community in Canada. A rural model would be great, and we could aspire to that – together! Based upon the work that we have been doing over the past 10 years and more specifically post COVID in the South Okanagan Similkameen with the following, we think we could win the award next year for a rural community in Canada.

We have been able to:

- organize and pilot 2 memory cafes with only \$2000 support from our local Community Foundation (CFSOS) (January 2023 – Cawston Community Hall, February 2023 Keremeos Rec Center) and now we have \$2,000 from Treasure Chest Thrift Store to host a September 2023 Memory Café at Cawston Community Hall.
- produce 'perspectives on dementia' you tube video series of multi-sector interviews which has been shared in research circles internationally.

- create a network of passionate people across health, education, indigenous, non-profit, municipal, and business sectors and
- set up remote memory testing clinics,
- work with Dr. Gow (the Division of Family Practice) conceptualizing what further work can be done,
- attract interest from West Vancouver Parks and Recreation for a multi-sector approach to re-introducing Memory Cafes across the province with BC Parks and Recreation

Background: Worldwide, nearly 50 million people are living with dementia. Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) predicts this number will reach nearly 82 million in 2030 and over 152 million in 2050 unless interventions are identified and implemented to prevent or delay onset, slow progression, or stop Alzheimer's disease (AD) and other disorders that cause dementia. Indeed, delaying the onset of AD by only a few years could substantially reduce its prevalence and related human and economic burdens.

Recent WHO guidelines for risk reduction of cognitive decline and dementia include increased physical activity, healthy diet, intellectual stimulation, and social engagement. We consider that these are four very good reasons to situate a rural dementia friendly communities initiative within the Regional District Okanagan Similkameen. And, as we have seen, West Van Parks and Rec concurs.

We would like to explore the concept and possibility with RDOS of gaining designation as a Dementia Friendly Community from BC Alzheimer's Associations. The process is primarily a shift in mindset and entails embarking on a long-term commitment which is in alignment with provincial, national and World Health Organization priorities.

The steps to becoming a dementia friendly community are: -

1. partner in providing dementia friendly education.
2. create a dementia friendly working group.
3. Develop a dementia friendly action plan.
4. Stay accountable and connected with the Alzheimer's Society of BC

The benefit we imagine for us in the South Okanagan Similkameen are:

- There will be a rural health equity lens taken to dementia friendly community building, and an intergenerational approach taken
- those individuals with dementia and their families and care partners who are involved in the pilots of memory café and pilots of early memory testing mobile clinics will be the immediate beneficiaries of a more empathetic and understanding community of care, and that knowledge with transfer locally.
- it will help harness energies and organizations by having a unifying aspirational goal -- the Best Rural Community in Canada for Dementia Friendliness.

The structure of the Dementia Friendly Community toolkit from the Alzheimer's Society is very well laid out and flexible as to the adoption of various components.

- we will have better access to funding,
- We will be able to network with other communities who have already made this commitment and will be able to share lessons.

May we discuss the process within RDOS to initiate becoming an Alzheimer's Society of BC designated Dementia Friendly Community?

Let me know if there is any information I can submit to you to answer any questions you might have regarding the intentions, objectives and toolkit of the Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friend Community designation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

We attach the ASBC LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOOLKIT

Local Government Toolkit

Less than a minute read

Learn more about the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s Local Government Toolkit, a resource to help local governments understand how they can become more inclusive of people living with dementia.

<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=307a5464edf62b62JmltdHM9MTY4Njc4NzlwMCZpZ3VpZD0yZWm1MDg5ZS00NjQ4LTZjNjYtMDJiNS0xYWZiNDdiODZkOTgmaW5zaWQ9NTE4Mw&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=2ec5089e-4648-6c66-02b5-1afb47b86d98&psq=alzheimer%27s+society+of+bc+dementia+friendly+communities+to+olkit&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9hbHpoZWltZXluY2EvYmMvZW4vdGFrZS1hY3Rpb24vZGVtZW50aWEtZnJpZW5kbHktY29tbXVuaXRpZXMvYmVjb21lLWRlYWVudGlhLWZyaWVuZGx5LW11bmljaXBhbGl0eS9sb2NhbC1nb3Zlcm5tZW50&ntb=1>

Sincerely,

Barb Stewart

Medical Arts Health Research Penticton

I am from Cawston and I respectfully acknowledge that I reside on the unceded territories of the Syilx^w people.



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