

Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region – 24th Annual Coffee Break

**Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Lord Mayor Betty Disero**

**Presenter: John Pula**

**Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region**

**September 16, 2019 – 6:00 pm**

Lord Mayor Disero, members of council, Town staff and members of the public, my name is John Pula, Secretary of the Alzheimer Society Niagara Foundation. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this evening and share information about our Annual Coffee Break campaign, now in its 24<sup>th</sup> year.

Coffee Break kicks off Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup> in St. Catharines at the Niagara Regional Headquarters with coffee and treats with this year's Honourary Chair, Jim Bradley, Regional Chair of Niagara. There will be an official flag raising and from 10 to 11 am you are invited to come enjoy a coffee and treats while supporting the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region.

Alzheimer's disease, already the seventh-leading cause of death in Canada, continues to grow as a public health concern as the number of Canadians with dementia rises. The latest statistics from Alzheimer Canada indicate that as of today, there are over half a million Canadians living with dementia - plus about 25,000 new cases diagnosed every year. Roughly 56,000 Canadians with dementia are being cared for in hospitals, even though this is not an ideal location for care. The combined health-care system and out-of-pocket caregiver costs are estimated at \$10.4 billion per year to care for people living with dementia.

Dementia doesn't discriminate – it can affect anyone regardless of background, education, lifestyle or status. It is not a normal part of aging. It's one of the fastest-growing diseases of our time, but still has no cure or effective treatments. Dementia is also a health condition with important social implications that impacts our communities. There is often a lack of awareness and understanding of dementia, resulting in stigmatization and barriers to diagnosis and care.

In the Niagara Region, there are over 10,000 people experiencing a progressive dementia and the number of cases continues to grow. Last year, we saw 2,056 new referrals to our Society and educated more than 12,500 Niagara residents and frontline staff. Our service provision includes all individuals impacted by the diagnosis of dementia - spouses, families, children and friends who also need education and support to facilitate lifestyle, health and wellness changes for their family member.

The Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region is a recognized leader in the field of Dementia Care. Our vision is a community where individuals with dementia and their care partners are fully supported to maximize their quality of life and well-being. We enhance safety and independence within the home and community, strengthen resilience and coping capacity, and ensure that people living with dementia continue to participate in family and community life for as long as possible.

We offer people living with dementia a welcoming place where they can access information and support, as well as connect with others who share a similar experience. By accessing education, personalized in-home support services and wellness programs, families can better understand dementia, navigate the health system and access the resources they need when they need them at every stage of the dementia journey.

We have had wonderful success with our many programs and services offered out in the community such as Brain Wave Cafes, Support Groups, Minds in Motion, Friendly Visiting, Tele-care friendly visiting, Aging and Dementia Simulations and numerous other educational series. Our Family Support Counsellors do in-home visits in every municipality in the Niagara Region.

To support a large variety of programs that are provided at no charge to individuals or their families, our Society must raise over \$500,000 each year and Coffee Break is one of our biggest events.

Coffee Breaks are an opportunity to invite your friends, family, neighbours, co-workers, clients or customers to come together to enjoy a cup of coffee or other beverage and even treats at a break time or another social get-together in exchange for making a donation to support the work of your local Alzheimer Society.

Hosting a coffee break is easy to organize and provides a fun social opportunity. Our Society supplies each host with a free kit, while hosts supply the people and place. The kit includes coffee for that first pot, supplied locally by Barclay & Todd's, signage and literature, as well as a donation box to support each event and some promotional items from our sponsors Giant Tiger St. Catharines locations, J&L Flooring and Seniors on The Move.

September 21<sup>st</sup> is World Alzheimer Day and popular attractions across the country are "Going Blue For Alz". In Niagara, The Falls, The Peace Bridge and Welland Canal Bridge 13 are going to be illuminated blue. We invite you to wear blue that day in support of those living with dementia and perhaps even host your own Coffee Break on World Alzheimer Day.

Coffee Break events are held in homes, work places, community centres, schools, churches, city halls, stores, and businesses – just about anywhere you can imagine a social gathering taking place, and where coffee, other beverages, or food and goodies can be served and a donation collected. Some of the most successful events have been a result of doing something a little different. Whether it's a barbecue, open house, raffle, dress-down days, selling coffee cup cut outs or rounding up your bill at the cash register.

The campaign runs from September through to December, so you can choose an event date that is convenient for you. No Coffee Break event is too big or too small and each one truly makes a difference in the lives of those living with the effects of dementia in the Niagara Region!

Thanks to this Council and over 100 hosts including Simpson's Pharmacy, St. Andrew's Church and Upper Canada Lodge, to name a few we raised close to \$60,000 last year.

Organizing or taking part in a Coffee Break event in your community not only raises much-needed funds, but it can raise awareness and encourage discussion about Alzheimer's disease and dementia. You ensure that individuals and their families – your loved ones, friends and neighbours, know that they are not alone in their journey.

Please consider hosting a Coffee Break event this year and 'make your coffee count'. It's a fun and easy way to show your support for the Alzheimer Society.

Anyone can register for a free Coffee Break kit by calling the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region at 905-687-3914 or by visiting the website at [www.alzheimerniagara.ca/coffeebreak](http://www.alzheimerniagara.ca/coffeebreak)

Thank you for your time this evening and your consideration in making a difference in your community today and making memories matter.

Lord Mayor Disero, may I please present you with your Coffee Break Host Kit? (present kit). Thank you.