

Tudor and Cashel hosts Alzheimer's Society HPE Lunch and Learn



By Michael Riley

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Tudor and Cashel Township hosted their Alzheimer's Awareness Lunch and Learn on Aug. 27. Alzheimer's Society HPE's Kylie Moser, Minds in Motion coordinator, told the attendees about the Minds in Motion program while Amelia Huffman, communications, IT and grants coordinator, talked about what the Alzheimer's Society HPE does and the programs and services it offers. Councillor Elain Holloway introduced Hoffman and Moser and then quickly let attendees know about upcoming Lunch and Learns, like the Power of Attorney and Wills Lunch and Learn on Sept. 17, the Cancer Awareness Lunch and Learn in October and the Historical Society Lunch and Learn in November (exact dates to be determined). Moyer told the crowd that the Minds in Motion program started in May, 2024 in Belleville, was made possible by full-time grant funding, and has been expanding outward to other points in the Alzheimer's HPE catchment area since. It is an eight-week program, two hours per week. She said it was so important to keep the mind and body active. So, each week, there is a 45 to 60 minutes of fitness, run by a certified fitness trainer, so I'm able to run it as I'm a certified fitness trainer, and that's followed by social interaction. We play different games; brain games and have different discussions. I've noticed people in that social interaction, people are making friends, they're making connections, they're getting to know one another. Those who are going through a similar journey and it's been really impactful for them. And it's just been so amazing to see them make those connections, she says. The fitness portion includes; fitness, cardio, balance and core strength, with a warm up and cool down period. She says there's not only an increase in fitness but in independence with people living with dementia because they're more active and mobile. With the social facet of the program, she says that decreases anxiety, depression, and increases confidence. She handed out bags to everyone that contained a ball, resistance bands and information sheets on the Mind in Motion program. She then ran the attendees through the fitness portion (which can be done standing or sitting) and social portions of the program to let them see and experience what it's like. Huffman then told attendees about the Alzheimer's Society HPE and what they do. She said they provide free programs and services to all local individuals experiencing memory loss and all forms of dementia. No formal diagnosis is required to receive services from the Alzheimer's Society and no formal referral is required. You can self-refer as we call it. We are available to everyone in the HPE region and to anyone who may be supporting someone locally, she says. Huffman said their catchment area covers from Waupoos in Prince Edward County to the south, to Maynooth in the north, to Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory in the east to Brighton in the west. They have offices in Bancroft, Belleville and Picton. Alzheimer's Society HPE offers in-home, over the phone and online programming and support and also offer support groups (one on one or in groups). They offer education and training, including the Finding your Way and Project Lifesaver programs, the Taking Control of Our Lives program and the Music for Me program. She also mentioned that they'd just hired a new educational support coordinator, Candice Lichner, who started the week of Sept. 2. Huffman then revealed some sobering statistics. In January 2024, there were 733,000 people living with dementia in Canada, which had been only 300,000 to 400,000 nine years ago, when she started working with Alzheimer's Society HPE. She said that everyday 350 people in Canada develop dementia and

it's predicted that by 2030 there could be one million people living with dementia in this country. By 2050, that number could reach 1.7 million people living with dementia. But there's a lot we can do. So, I encourage you to come out in January to our Brain Health educational session. I can touch on it a little right now. A really good rule of thumb is that anything that is good for the heart is good for your brain. So, eating well, sleeping well, staying physically active, looking after other health conditions, things like diabetes and hypertension. If it's going to improve your health, it's going to improve your cognitive functioning and the impact on your brain. Things like hearing and dental and vision are so important. Things that help you stay connected," she says. The Bancroft Alzheimer's HPE office is located at 24 Flint Avenue and can be reached at 613-332-4614. The executive director is Angela Meraw and her email is angela.meraw@alzheimerhpe.ca. Huffman said that the local Alzheimer's Society HPE office is always there, but they don't get a lot of funding; less than 47 per cent of their funding comes from the Ministry of Health and that they're part of the HPE Ontario Health Team. "So, we do receive donations and we do a lot of fundraising. Our Bancroft Walk for Alzheimer's typically raises over \$20,000 to help support the programming in this area and it all stays local," she says. Huffman revealed that they are part of the Alzheimer's Society of Ontario and part of the Federation of Alzheimer's Societies across Canada, but they are all independent and all funds stay in the area and help provide their own local programming. Some of their funding does go towards research but when people make a donation to the Alzheimer's Society of Canada that goes directly to research. "Unfortunately, we're right on the cusp of a lot of answers but we still don't have a cure and we're still trying to determine the cause. We're looking at those modifiable risk factors for dementia and there's a new landmark study at www.alzheimers.ca that covers those risk factors. I encourage you to check them out and see if there's any actions you can take and we're hoping that even by small changes now, we can help get that one million in 2030 down. Let's try to do that most we can now to help each other out," she says. Huffman also went over other events they hold to raise money, like book sales, the aforementioned Alzheimer's Walk, a 24-hour snowmobile ride by Wes Oram that raised \$18,000 and more. She adds that volunteers are always needed and encouraged to get in touch. Huffman thought the presentation went very well. "What a great crowd. They seemed engaged, which was amazing. It's nice when you can be a bit more informal and challenge people and connect with them," she says. Moyer agreed, saying it makes them more comfortable to ask questions. "It really becomes more of a conversation than a presentation," she says. Holloway told Bancroft This Week that she thought the presentation was fantastic and she didn't know much about Minds in Motion before, so it was great. "What's exciting about that is the exercise programs we have in place here, so we're headed in the right direction. So that's exciting. But the information and the services provided remotely is so beneficial because a lot of individuals wouldn't be able to get out, especially without family support. I'm just excited we can keep doing this. Some of it is a joint venture with the library, which is doing a few things again which is good. Because there's so much information that's available, it's so vast, and some of the ideas came originally from the library board last year, like the historical society. It's the grants that weigh everything out. But these ladies [Huffman and Moyer] were well received," she says. "It was a great session!"