

## Bancroft council declares January Alzheimer Awareness Month

By Kaitlin Sylvester

Bancroft council formally proclaimed January 2024 as Alzheimer Awareness Month. This declaration is a call for citizens to actively engage their understanding of the impacts of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias within the local community. Alzheimer's is a progressive neurological disorder, which causes memory loss and cognitive decline while dementia is actually a catch-all term for a variety of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain. Dementia symptoms go beyond simple memory loss and can include difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language and changes in mood or behaviour. The statement made by council is echoed by nationwide calls to action as the Alzheimer Society launches its annual public awareness campaign. The Alzheimer Society's goal with this program is to raise public awareness of their varied programs. The Society offers free navigation, education, support, and resources to all those impacted by various forms of memory loss. This inclusive approach aims to foster a community of understanding and practical assistance. The Alzheimer Society of the urgency to raise awareness and promote understanding. Every three seconds, an individual in the world receives a diagnosis of dementia, emphasizing the rapidity and prevalence of this condition. By 2050, it's projected that nearly 1.7 million Canadians will grapple with dementia. Locally, over 5,000 individuals are estimated to be affected, underlining the urgency of addressing this issue within our communities. In a letter outlining the above statistics, Amelia Huffman, communications coordinator of the Alzheimer Society of Hastings-Prince Edward, wrote to the council members to request their support in declaring January Alzheimer's Awareness Month. Huffman expressed her gratitude for the support and participation, and included a collective call to action, inviting everyone to join in dispelling misconceptions and enhancing knowledge about Alzheimer's and related dementias. During a December meeting, council members reviewed the request from the Alzheimer's Society and unanimously voted to declare the month of January 2024 as Alzheimer Awareness Month. Council included an urge to all citizens in the community to become more aware and educated concerning the far-reaching effects of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia. Outside of raising awareness of the realities of living with Alzheimer's, the Society functions as a cornerstone of support and guidance, offering a multifaceted approach to addressing the challenges posed by dementia. One tenet of their mission is in identifying warning signs, which emphasizes the paramount importance of early diagnosis. The Alzheimer Society has offices across Canada and offers a website ([www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)) with robust resources. The site also features advocacy information for those living with or caring for those with dementia and features several guides to identifying and living with the disease. The decision by council to endorse the request from the Alzheimer's Society is a step towards addressing and supporting individuals impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia. As the Alzheimer Society launches its public awareness campaign, communities across Canada are being reminded of the importance of early diagnosis and increased understanding.