

Alzheimer Society: Raising Awareness Through Fund Development

By Andrea J. Stenberg

Fund development for the Alzheimer Society of Grey-Bruce is also about raising awareness according to Bill Twaddle, Community Development Coordinator for the Alzheimer Society. “Every time we do something public, we have an opportunity to reach people and their families and encourage them to seek help,” says Bill. “After each public event, the number of calls for information goes up.”

The annual Walk for Memories, being held January 28th, is a prime example. This indoor walkathon in Owen Sound and Hanover had almost 140 walkers last year. With an average of 20 pledges per walker, that’s a lot of opportunities to spread the word. Bill agrees. “What the volunteers do, that can’t be measured, is touch people’s lives. Someone they talk to today may reach out to us next week or next month.”

The Walk for Memories, the Society’s second largest fundraiser, is held indoors to ensure anyone can participate, regardless of the weather. “We have babes in arms right through to grandparents,” Bill says of the participants. With music, clowns, prizes and food, this fundraising event is a fun, family event that also helps an important cause.

The Annual Coffee Break is the largest fundraising event. Last year there were 375 hosts registered. The average host had 15 to 20 people involved. Funds raised from individual Coffee Breaks ranged from \$10 up to \$3,693.00 with several over \$1,000. With the numbers involved in this event, again raising awareness is a key part.

The volunteers for all the fund raising events range in age from teenagers, and sometimes younger, right through to people in their 80s. Many volunteers have a family member who

has Alzheimer Disease or a related disorder. The common characteristic of volunteers is they recognize the need for the services the Society provides and are happy to help their community.

In addition to the events, Bill is developing the planned giving and major gifts program. “There are some individuals who are able and willing to do more when they understand the need,” says Bill. “They can support the Alzheimer Society now and into the future.” Bill works with people to let them know how they can make a gift through their estate, make a gift now to receive tax benefits and other innovative ways to contribute to the Society.

Community support for the Alzheimer Society has grown considerably in the past five years. The Walk for Memories has doubled the amount it raises. The Coffee Break has increased more than five times. These dollars are needed to meet the growing demand for service as the number of persons affected by Alzheimer Disease and related disorders continue to grow. And the Alzheimer Society tries to ensure everyone knows how much they are appreciated. “Our relationship with our clients and their families is very personal. We would like our relationship with our donors to be just as personal,” says Bill. To that end, donors are always thanked. Bill and volunteer Board members often make thank you calls to many donors to let them know how much their donation is appreciated.

To get involved with the Walk for Memories or any other fund raising event, please call Bill Twaddle at 376-7230 or 1-800-265-9013.

Andrea J. Stenberg is a freelance commercial writer from Owen Sound and a volunteer with the Alzheimer Society Grey-Bruce. She can be reached at www.stenbergwrites.com

