

# Camrose Public Library Dementia Project

## Final Report

### Executive Summary

The Camrose Public Library (CPL) Dementia Project was designed to increase engagement, decrease isolation, and provide affordable resources for those with dementia, as well as their caregivers and loved ones. Before this, the only local dementia-focused programs focused solely on physical health and medical-care needs, so our program was designed to increase happiness, connection and quality of life.

The intended impacts and desired outcomes of the CPL Dementia Project included:

1. Increasing social involvement of people affected by dementia and their caregivers.
2. Improving opportunities to form relationships in the community for people with dementia and their caregivers.
3. Increasing opportunities for physical activity.
4. Increasing opportunities to be out-of-doors.
5. Decreasing financial burden of dementia on families.
6. Increasing opportunities for caregiver support through access to materials.
7. Decreasing the stigma around dementia in the community.

The Dementia Project seemed to have the largest impact on caregivers and/or family members of persons with dementia. Having free, and on-demand online resources, such as blogs, podcasts, and videos allowed caregivers to get the “sound bites of information” (quick to find and consume, and easy to take in) efficiently. Caregivers noted that having a variety of Dementia Kits and newsletters available provided the recreational tools they often needed when caring for a person with dementia. Many noted that having these resources available and free of charge saved them time searching for resources and saved them money. Overall, the Dementia Program filled an important gap in the community, particularly for caregivers and dementia patients.

Perhaps an unexpected outcome of the Dementia Project worth noting is its impact on the CPL staff. During the interviews, several staff mentioned that being able to support their community and broaden their services, was inspiring, motivating, and enriched their job.



## Lessons Learned

We have multiple avenues to share our project within the Albertan Public Library sphere, so the avenue that we choose will be dependent on what the calls for submission look like. Every fall there is a virtual Albertan library conference where people can share projects they've been working on.

There are also professional journals that we could submit to, as well as multiple informal meet-ups or coffee circles for those in the industry. There are also local organizations such as the Interagency Meeting, where we meet with other organizations that fall under the education, recreation and social service umbrella where we can share what we have learned and discuss our resources and project.

We will likely submit an article to a professional publication once we have slightly more information about how our items are circulating.

The lessons learned from this project would be applicable to many types of organizations, including libraries.

- Any organizations that fall under the broad social services identity would be able to learn something from at least one aspect of this project.
- Any organization that has the means to create or publish online content (blogs, podcasts, newsletters for Caregivers) could learn from us. This might be groups that provide respite services, recreational options for those with Alzheimers, service options for seniors (many Caregivers are older individuals themselves), churches or other faith groups, support groups, etc.
- Any organizations that can disseminate paper leaflets could put out the Mind Masters newsletter, which gives those with dementia something to do.
- Any organization that shares therapy aids could take some lessons from the items we added to our collection (Hi Lo books, simple touch radios, dementia kits, Tales and Travels with sensory components).
- Any organization that can run a Cycling Without Age program (requires initial start-up funds, storage space, ability to train volunteers and maintain the bike) would be able to talk to us about this as well. Even though we could not run it this year due to the pandemic, we have run it in the past and have learned some things. This would be good for service options for seniors, retirement homes, some community leagues, maybe even cycling clubs, maybe churches.
- And clearly public libraries; programming that specifically addresses Dementia and Caregiver needs is not found in a lot of libraries, and that is a gap in the industry.

## Sustainability

The largest barrier to sustainability is funding. The library does not have the means to employ someone who is dedicated to dementia programming, services, and resources now that the grant is over.

We have been able to hire someone to run the Life Cycle most summers through summer employment grants, and our regular programmers will be able to keep the Mind Masters Newsletter going, and source speakers in the future, but we will likely not be able to sustain the creation of online content without someone dedicated to this project.

As for the items in our collection, we should be able to incorporate these types of items into our Library of Things collection plan, so this will likely remain sustainable, so long as the producers stay in business and the prices do not skyrocket. We partner with our key contributors frequently through our other programming, so those relationships will remain close.

We have created promotional materials for our Dementia services and collection items, and these materials will be shared with our partners at all future collaborations. Our staff are now well versed in our offerings as well and are now able to incorporate them into reference interviews, where we match peoples needs with information.