

THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION OF ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

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Founder / President

THE ASSOCIATION: SUCCESSES CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES

- ◉ The Alzheimer's Association of St Kitts and Nevis was founded in July 2014.
- ◉ The Founding members of the Association were drawn from: the Moravian Senior Club and The Ripple Institute .
- ◉ The Moravian Senior's Club is the first inter-denominational Club for Seniors on the Island. It was founded in 2012 while The Ripple Institute is an organization which seeks to highlight issues concerning vulnerable young people and other vulnerable groups in the society.
- ◉ Our Alzheimer's "Founding Group"; those who attended the first meeting was 15 persons.

MONTHLY AND EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

- ◉ Since that time we have had monthly support group meetings and quarterly Executive Meetings of the Association.

Our Executive:

- ◉ President
- ◉ First and Second Vice Presidents
- ◉ Secretary and Assistant Secretary
- ◉ Treasurer and Assistant Secretary
- ◉ Public Relations Officer
- ◉ Fund raising officer
- ◉ Other members without portfolio x3

THE ASSOCIATION AND ADI

- The Association became affiliated with ADI as soon as we were formed and became members of its Development Programme. (ADI is the International Federation of Alzheimer's Associations worldwide).
- Two (2) of our members attended the Alzheimer's University in London in 2015, and others of the group have attended ADI meetings and (Alzheimer University presentations at regional and international meetings, over the years.
- Two(2) persons attended regional meeting in Barbados in 2016 and (2) also attended the 2017 regional meeting in Trinidad). This regional group is the AAC
- In 2019 Alzheimer's Association of St Kitts and Nevis became a full member of ADI.

OUR MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

- The stated Mission of the Association is “to improve the quality of life of persons affected by Alzheimer’s disease and other dementia and to provide support to their care givers”.
- The Association seeks to raise awareness about the disease; and in so doing has established a national family/care-giver support group; to educate family, patients and caregivers and the society about the disease and to encourage government to implement policies to improve the lives: of persons with dementia, their families and caregivers.

MEETINGS

- Monthly meetings are held at the Girl Guides Headquarters, Taylor's Range, Basseterre.
- Members are advised of meetings by email, WhatsApp and by phone.
- Members of the general public are invited monthly by a message on the Community Diary Radio Programme (WINN FM 98.9.)

SOME TOPICS WHICH HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED OVER THE YEARS

We try to use each meeting as an educational opportunity for members and caregivers.

We made use of videos, films and regular presentations. We also distribute literature.

Some topics discussed recently were:

- “What is Dementia? Can we reduce the Risk?”
- The Role of the caregiver
- Reducing the risk of Caregiver “burn- out”
- Dental Care in Alzheimer’s patients
- “Wandering and safe return of the dementia patient”
- “Experiences of a Family Caregiver”

OTHER TOPICS

- ◉ On being the best caregiver
- ◉ Dementia, family and caregiving: some tips for the festive season
- ◉ Dementia: Some of the main issues
- ◉ Depression and Suicide in older persons
- ◉ Review Article "Hope and frustration: living with dementia"
- ◉ Alzheimer's Association of the Caribbean (AAC), Alzheimer's disease international (ADI) and the World Alzheimer's Report 2018

WORLD ALZHEIMER'S MONTH

- ◉ Each year since our inception, we have commemorated World Alzheimer's Month and World Alzheimer's Day.
- ◉ Our main activities have been:
- ◉ Awareness creation seminars and panel discussions
- ◉ Radio and T.V presentations
- ◉ Talks to community group and Service Clubs
- ◉ Fund Raisers e.g.Brunches and Tea parties and
- ◉ A Fun Morning for Caregiver which we have successfully presented for the past 3 years.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Meetings with Ministry of Health Officials to inform them of the work of the Association and to discuss with them the ADI/ PAHO recent deliberations about the need for countries to develop a National Dementia Plan.
- Frequent communication with the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Social Services, which is the ministry under which many of the relevant issues fall.
- Some communication also with personnel from the Ministry of health.

SUCCESSSES

- ◉ We have been able to seriously impact the awareness and real understanding about Alzheimer's disease through: our regular educational spots, in our monthly meetings and through out talks to the community and other awareness creation situations.
- ◉ The media: Radio, TV and print media have been good to us and have afforded us many opportunities to spread our message.
- ◉ They have been especially helpful during World Alzheimer's month and this year (2019) was the best ever. One TV station (ZIZ) featured our Association and activities on 4 consecutive afternoons and in their highly watched Evening News

SUCCESSSES CONT'D

- ◉ Many local organizations have publicly commended our work and the difference it has made to the society
- ◉ One organization (KARE Nursing Agency) honoured us with a plaque and a bouquet of flowers at their Annual “Day of the Older Person” Conference on 1st Oct 2019).
- ◉ We have raised some Funds which has allowed us to Launch our Respite Grant.
- ◉ We were able to influence our colleagues in the sister island, Nevis to operate an Alzheimer’s Support Group.
- ◉ The growth of our “Speaker’s Bureau”

CHALLENGES

- ◉ Most of our members are senior citizens; therefore we would like to be able to recruit members from a wider age range and members with varied skills and energy.
- ◉ We have been unable to sufficiently impact some of the important policy makers in our effort to develop a National Dementia Plan.
- ◉ We have worked at Fund-Raising but there are many challenges e.g. small size of population and the “potential donors” receiving many requests from other groups.

BEST PRACTICES

- ◉ We encourage family members to attend the support group meetings regularly, in order to learn more about the condition.
- ◉ We encourage caregivers to obtain additional caregiver training.
- ◉ We create opportunities and respond to opportunities to improve the population's knowledge about Alzheimer's and the care of the persons living with dementia.
- ◉ We allow support group members to speak of what works best for them with regard to the health and safety of those they care and how they protect their own health as caregivers.

CONCLUSION

- ◉ Our successes have been more than our challenges.
- ◉ We have created awareness where there was little, and in some places where there was none.
- ◉ We are well respected and appreciated by the society.
- ◉ We would like for our proposed National Dementia Plan to become a Reality.
- ◉ We
- ◉ need more willing volunteers.