



This booklet was developed by the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO), United Generations Ontario (UGO) and the Alzheimer Society of Ontario (ASO) as a guide to setting up an Intergenerational Alzheimer Project in your community.

## What are Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias?

Dementia is not a disease. It is a set of symptoms, including loss of memory, understanding and judgement that accompanies a disease.

Alzheimer Disease is a progressive degenerative disease of the brain that leads to a loss of mental functioning affecting day-to-day activities. One out of every 13 people over the age of 65 has Alzheimer Disease or a related dementia. It is estimated that there are more than 420,000 Canadians living with Alzheimer Disease and related dementias.

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## What is An Intergenerational Alzheimer Project?

In 1999, the province of Ontario developed a *Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias*. The strategy was shaped around 10 strategic directions. One strategy was the *Intergenerational Volunteer Initiative*.

The goals of this initiative were to:

- improve the quality of life for those with Alzheimer Disease and related dementias;

- provide young people with a valuable volunteer experience that will encourage involvement in such activities throughout their lives;

- provide a setting in which well seniors, seniors with Alzheimer Disease and related dementias and young people could be together in mutually satisfying situations.

In the first year, 2000, 27 local, community-based projects were funded across the province. All of them involved people with Alzheimer or other dementias, well seniors and young people. Following this one-time, one year funding, the Ontario Trillium Foundation provided funding to continue the project for an additional three years. As a result, 15 of the original 27 projects were continued and four multicultural projects were added.



## How Local Projects Can Be Chosen

The projects used several approaches for coming up with their chosen activities. These included:

- brainstorming with the young people and well seniors;
- interviews with Alzheimer participants to find out their preferences;
- discussions at Resident Council meetings in long-term care facilities;
- previous experience with “activities that work”;
- reviewing the relevant literature.

## Local Partners

Local partners varied from community to community but all projects had two factors in common:

- 1 One agency played the role of **lead organization** (see the section on *The Ideal Lead Agency* for more detail).
- 2 The local Alzheimer Society chapter provided training for the volunteers (young people and well seniors) prior to the beginning of the project.

## From Where Can the Participants be Recruited?

The three participant groups were recruited from a variety of places, as shown below.

YOUNG PEOPLE	WELL SENIORS	SENIORS WITH DEMENTIA
High Schools	Volunteer Bureau	Adult Day Centre
Grade Schools	Local Churches	Long-Term Care Facility
Colleges	Seniors' Centres	Alzheimer Society
Local Churches	Family Members	Community Groups
Service Clubs	Local Retirees	

## What Are the Ingredients for a Successful Local Project?

### Successful local projects have:

- The Alzheimer education, provided by the local Alzheimer Society chapter, for the young participants and the well seniors at the beginning of each year or each time a new group of volunteers begins.
- The young people keep journals about their experience in the project.
- The young people and well seniors meet for a short time before being joined by the seniors with Alzheimer. (This avoids an atmosphere of uncertainty. Seniors with Alzheimer are highly sensitive to uncertainty.)

A clear structure for each meeting.

Connections with local community knowledge. (For example, retirees from local industries and Native Elders being brought in for reminiscence sessions.)

Short sessions - one and a half hours maximum.

Close partnerships among the key local agencies - e.g. local Alzheimer Society chapter, local seniors' centre, local high school.

'Champions' within each of the participating agencies - e.g. the school principal or a particular teacher, the Executive Director of the local Seniors' Centre.

- The project built into the school curriculum or into the regular activities of local partners (i.e. the project is consistent with the work the agency is already doing.)

- An effective volunteer recruitment and training program in at least one of the participating agencies, preferably the 'lead' agency.
- Constant and predictable activities, meeting times and places.
- A creative, flexible and fun-loving project coordinator.



## What Works

When setting up a local project several challenges may occur. The most frequent challenges faced by projects, and ways in which they can be dealt with, are listed below.



CHALLENGE	APPROACHES THAT WORK
Recruitment of well seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be flexible about age so that it includes younger adults</li> <li>- identify and groom 'champions' in seniors' centres and church congregations, etc.</li> </ul>
Recruitment of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attend the schools' Volunteer Fair</li> <li>- give presentations in classes</li> <li>- identify and groom 'champions' in schools, etc.</li> <li>- go to elementary schools as well as high schools</li> <li>- see churches and service clubs as recruitment centres</li> </ul>
Transportation of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- approach local groups, e.g. service clubs to fund transportation costs</li> <li>- recruit volunteer drivers</li> </ul>
Time of day for activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work out what works best for both young people and for people with dementia, keeping in mind potential problems with increased anxiety or restlessness in the late afternoon.</li> </ul>
The death of Alzheimer participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- build a 'coping with death' component into the training for young people and well seniors</li> <li>- have a plan for adapting the program when a participants' partner dies</li> </ul>
Memory loss of participants with dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ensure there is always some method of reminder for the participant with dementia so that they are likely to attend the activity</li> </ul>

# The Ideal Community

Our experience indicates that there are two community characteristics that are likely to influence the conditions for success. These are:

## Community Support Services



*"I look forward to it all week!"*



*KENDRA*

The geographic proximity of all the program components, e.g. the school, the seniors' centre, the long-term care facility and the Alzheimer Society chapter.

A large volunteer pool of well seniors to draw from. (For example, communities that are popular retirement locations are likely to have such a pool.)



## The Lead Agency

Participating agencies have included local Alzheimer Society chapters, long-term care facilities, adult day centres, seniors' centres, multi-service community centres, community health centres and schools. With the exception of schools, each of these types of agencies has played the lead role in one or more of the local projects to date. The project coordinator most often is based in the lead agency. Successful lead agencies have following kinds of characteristics:

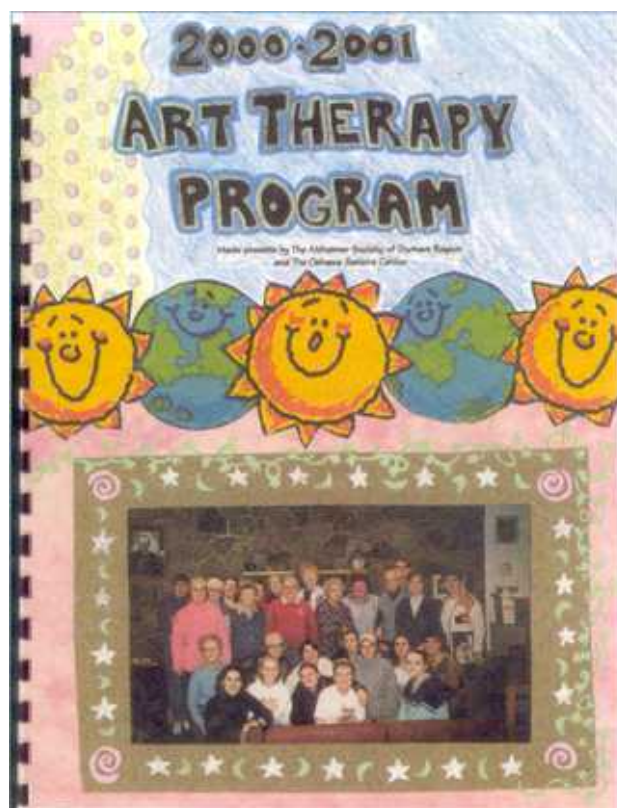
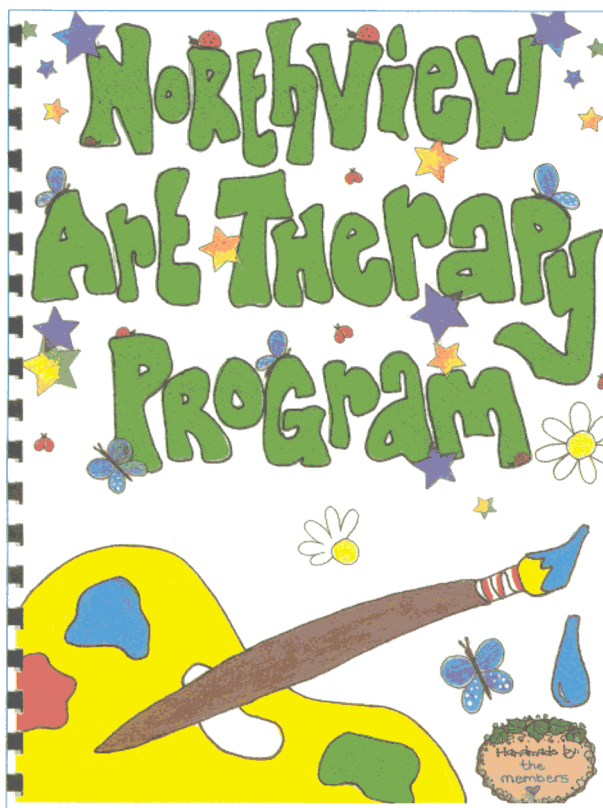
Experience in recruiting, training and supervising volunteers.

A strong commitment towards the program at the upper management levels of the agency.

An understanding of Alzheimer Disease within the agency.

Strong links with the wider community.

A willingness to form strong partnerships with the other participating agencies.





The three Ontario-wide agencies that sponsored the project: the Older Adults Centres' Association of Ontario, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario and United Generations of Ontario can be contacted through their websites:

Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario  
Association des centres pour aînés de l'Ontario



Alzheimer Soc  
OF ONTARIO

UNITED GENERATIONS ONTARIO

OACAO, ASO and UGO gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation. With \$100 million in annual funding from the province's charitable gaming initiative, the Foundation provides grants to eligible charitable and not-for-profit organizations in the arts, culture, sports, recreation, environment and social service sectors.



# What the Local Projects Did

The local projects brought the three groups together through a variety of activities. This chart lists the 19 projects by their location and identifies the kinds of activities they used to bring the three groups together.

ACTIVITY	Art	Crafts	Drama	Drums	Eating	Exercise	Games	Gardening	Knitting	Memory	Outings	Penpals	Pets	Reading	Seasonal Festivals	Singing/Music
<b>PROJECT<sup>1</sup></b>																
Cambridge					•	•	•									
Erin										•						
Gloucester	•	•								•					•	•
Haileybury		•					•	•					•			
Hamilton				•												
Kenora					•	•	•		•	•	•			•	•	•
Maple					•						•	•			•	•
Muskoka					•		•			•				•		•
Northbrook						•		•		•	•					•
Oakville	•	•														
Oshawa	•		•													•
Ottawa					•						•					
Peel	•	•								•						•
Renfrew	•				•			•								•
Sydenham	•															•
Thunder Bay (FC)	•	•		•	•				•		•					•
Thunder Bay (AS)	•															
Windsor											•				•	•
Woodstock						•					•			•		

<sup>1</sup> See overleaf for a listing of contacts for each of the projects.

## Next Steps and Useful Contacts

If you're interested in setting up a local intergenerational Alzheimer project in your community we hope this booklet will be helpful to you. You may wish to make contact with people who have been involved in these projects over the last several years.

<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>CONTACT PERSON</b>	<b>PHONE</b>
Cambridge	Fairview Mennonite Home	Laurie Schneider	519-653-5719
Erin	East Wellington Advisory Group	Heather Lucas	519-833-9696
Gloucester	Gloucester Senior Adults' Centre	Debbie Trickey	613-749-1974
Halleybury	Temiskaming Lodge	Elizabeth Brownlee	705-672-2123
Hamilton	Alzheimer Society of Hamilton and Halton	Anne Swift	905-529-7030 ext. 29
Kenora	Community Support Pinecrest Home	Jane Davidson	807-468-4562
Maple	Maple Health Centre	Suzanne Heideman	905-303-0133 ext. 332
Muskoka	Alzheimer Society of Muskoka	Linda McElroy	705-645-5621
Northbrook	Land O'Lakes Community Services	Susan Andrew Allen	613-336-8934
Oakville	SENECA Seniors Day Program	Norma Wells	905-337-8937
Oshawa	Oshawa Senior Citizens Centres	Debra Prescott	905-576-6712 ext. 2834
Ottawa	Somerset West CHC	HaPhuong Ha Nguyen	613-276-2766
Peel	India Rainbow Community Services	Kiran Rehan	905-507-6099
Renfrew	Bonnechere Manor	Nellie Kingsbury	613-432-4873
Sydenham	Central Frontenac Community Services	Kim McCaugherty	613-376-6477
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre	Kathy Spence	807-345-5840 ext.238
Thunder Bay	Alzheimer Society of Thunder Bay	Tanya Cleland	807-345-9556
Windsor	Multi-Cultural Council Windsor-Essex County	Kathleen Thomas	519-255-1127
Woodstock	Alzheimer Society of Oxford	Dianne Hodges	519-421-2466