

Explore Island Lake at 2023 Walk for Alzheimer's

By **Sam Odrowski**

There's a great opportunity for area residents to enjoy the beauty of Island Lake, exercise, and support people living with dementia locally.

The 2023 IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's is returning to the Island Lake Conservation Area May 27, with warm-ups starting at 8 a.m. and the walk happening from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The goal is to raise \$60,000 for the Alzheimer's Society of Dufferin County.

"It's going to be a fun morning," said Carmelina Cicuto, Alzheimer's Society of Dufferin County Executive Director. "It is in-person, so we're encouraging people to come out and walk with us. Even if they don't register online, they can pick up a pledge form here in our office [at 25 Centennial Rd] and raise some funds for us."

To honour the 1,069 people living with dementia in Dufferin, the Society encourages participants to pledge 10,690 steps for their walk. All the money raised through the event will be used to support the Alzheimer's Society of Dufferin County's programs, which focus on caregiver and behavioural support, case management, and education.

"The money that's raised will be used towards expanding our current programs and reaching more people," said Cicuto.

Approximately 100 people are expected to attend the annual event.

"At the end of the day, everyone knows someone who's touched by dementia or Alzheimer's, so this is a good opportunity to come out and support them or even get some education on what we do," Cicuto told the Citizen. "Our team will be there on site."

The need for awareness and support for people with Alzheimer's and dementia is increasingly important, according to Cicuto. Studies show that the number of people living with the disease will rise rapidly over the next few years.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada launched the Landmark Study in 2022, which shows almost 1 million Canadians will have dementia by 2030.

They also launched a study that projects 1.7 million Canadians will live with dementia by 2050.

With the numbers only rising, Cicuto noted the importance of making sure people connect with the Alzheimer's Society of Dufferin County when needed.

"Post-pandemic, there's a need for people to connect with resources in the community, because they've been kind of semi-shut down for the past two and a half years," she explained. "So I think it's important to kind of make those connections."

Cicuto said a decline in the number of isolated seniors her organization supports is concerning, and she fears they may need help but aren't receiving it.

"It's important for us to be out there, and do home visits, and connect with the caregivers, and be here in the office where people can walk in and expect to receive service," she noted.

To register as a team or individual for the Alzheimer's Walk, visit: tinyurl.com/yefkhf8k

"Come out and spend a beautiful Saturday morning at Island Lake," Cicuto said. "Hopefully, the weather will cooperate with us."