



Mary Burnett

# Dementia not a normal part of aging

**16** elderly person meets a dementia diagnosis with relief — since there's now an understanding for why they're having trouble with words or finding their way home — and that more needs to be done to break down the stigma still surrounding the disease.

"It's (dementia) not a normal part of aging," she stressed, adding that a National Dementia Strategy should include more ad campaigns, as well as increased benefits and tax breaks for those who leave their jobs to care for family members with dementia.

"We need to be better aware and sensitive to it. That's why it's so great that politicians in this area are championing the call for more support."

Raitt — whose husband Bruce was recently diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer at age 56 — has long been an advocate for those facing mental health challenges and those who bear the responsibility of being their primary caregivers.

In September she made a statement in the House of Commons marking World Alzheimer Day, while this past spring she hosted an event in Milton — in co-ordination with the Mental Health Commission of Canada — aimed at promoting mental health awareness.



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