

Remembering Ian with forget-me-nots

With the Ontario election now under our belt, and our congratulations and regrets to those who won and lost, we find the letter on this page today equally deserving of the spotlight.

While the election campaign may have transported us to a larger-than-life stage, its issues and discussions and purpose are about improving what affects each of us in our daily lives.

Throughout this election campaign, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario and its teams of volunteers were on the campaign trail to let candidates know how important the society believes it is to have a Dementia Plan.

According to Gale Carey, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, a Dementia Plan would include:

- Health promotion and awareness to reduce stigma and risk
- Support and education for unpaid caregivers and increasing caregiver control through self-directed care options
- Support for people with dementia, regardless of where they live in Ontario

Carey said it was promising that the major parties had a dementia plan and caregiver support in their platforms.

It was not so heartening to note healthcare issues were not a highlight of the campaign's televised leaders' debate or top fodder throughout the election.

Today, 210,000 Ontarians have dementia and that number will be skyrocketing by close to 30 per cent in 15 years.

Dementia will have a significant impact in every community, and every household across Ontario, according to Carey.

We see that in the letter on this page.

While Ian Dutton's family is coping with the reality of dementia in a loved one, the disease has also reached out to touch Ian's friends and neighbours — and those who don't know him, writes friend and Oakville resident Margaret Foley.

Little did the local man realize what the fates had in store as he was enjoying the gift of life — gardening at home and walking through our town's trails, scattering seeds from his garden for the future.

Ian may or may not have ever considered that, as he sowed the seeds of the tiny and cheerful forget-me-nots, they are the delicate symbol of the Alzheimer Society.

Nor would he likely have pondered that his actions would foreshadow his own future.

The flowers now flourish, bringing beauty and a smile to those who meander past.

Ian is not among those people, however, as the ravages of dementia have claimed his ability to similarly enjoy a walk through the River Oaks trails.

The cruel irony of that fate, and the fond memories of a good person and a good friend, is not lost on Foley.

"I will never forget Ian," she writes in her letter to the editor.

"I would love to have a piece of the trail named in honour of Ian so that we remember, and forget him not."

And so another seed has been sown....

Letter to the Editor



Margaret Foley and her dog, The Madness, stop to appreciate the forget-me-not flowers in Margot Street Park — reminders of her neighbour and friend Ian Dutton, who dropped the seeds there for years. Dutton is now in the final stage of dementia, but scattered the seeds — the symbol of the Alzheimer Society — years prior to his diagnosis. | photo by Franki Ikeman — Oakville Beaver (Follow on Twitter @halton_photog or facebook.com/HaltonPhotog)

Foley hopes we won't forget friend Ian

I have lived in River Oaks now for almost 25 years.

I have always enjoyed walking the surrounding town trails with my dog.

I had a dear friend and neighbour who loved the trails as well who also lived on my street.

Every year, for many, many years Ian (Dutton) would take the seed heads from his garden flowers and bring them on his dog walks and throw the seeds off trail into the bush. The Munn's Creek trails and Margot Park trails are now covered in forget-me-not flowers that Ian spread over the years.

The tiny blue or white flowers clearly provide colour and bring joy to anyone on these trails.

Sadly, this dear man was diagnosed with dementia and is in his final stage of the disease. Imagine all these flowers started by a chap who had not yet been diagnosed

with dementia and here he was spreading these seeds — the symbol of the Alzheimer Society.

Ian was always so proud of seeing the flowers spread each and every year, knowing he had been the one to start the plants.

I know he had asked for an interview with *The Oakville Beaver* to share his story of the forget-me-nots — shortly before he was placed in care some four years ago now.

I will never forget Ian.

The folks of River Oaks enjoy the colourful, dainty, little flowers and honour our neighbour Ian, who always did his best to enhance the environment of the town and our River Oaks.

I would love to have a piece of the trail named in honour of Ian so that we remember and forget him not.

Margaret Foley, Oakville

The *Oakville Beaver* welcomes letters from its readers. Letters will be edited for clarity, length, legal considerations and grammar. In order to be published all letters must contain the name, address and phone number of the author. Letters should be addressed to: **The Editor, Oakville Beaver**, 5040 Mainway, Burlington ON L7L 7G5 or via e-mail to: ablackburn@oakvillebeaver.com. The *Beaver* reserves the right to refuse to publish a letter.

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