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time, the family is finding ways to keep the 83-year-old busy - and safe - at home.

Since Horsten found comfort in a baby doll that he borrowed from his day program, Rion put the call out in a Georgetown Facebook group to source him a lifelike doll of his own. She received offers from several local mothers who were eager to donate one.

"He likes singing to a baby doll - it's very comforting for him," she said. "It's so childlike and innocent. You wonder, how does your mind go from someone who can build airplanes from scratch to this?"

Such is the mysterious and often misunderstood way that Alzheimer's works - a complex condition that the Alzheimer Society of Canada is working to raise awareness about.

To coincide with Alzheimer's Awareness Month, the organization is once again running its campaign

"You wonder, how does your mind go from someone who can build airplanes from scratch to this?"

- Louise Rion

entitled, "I live with dementia. Let me help you understand" to spark conversations and encourage others to see dementia differently as stigma on the topic persist.

"The number of Canadians with dementia is soaring, so this is an extremely important campaign to pause and think about our attitudes and perceptions, and build a more accepting and inclusive society for individuals and families living with dementia," said Pauline Tardif, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

Rion said she thinks there's a misperception out there that people living with Alzheimer's can't do any-

thing and will be happy to just sit and watch TV all day.

"My dad is able to do stuff. He loves looking through pictures of family and friends. It helps keep his mind occupied," she said. "They (people with Alzheimer's) want to experience life and be a part of everyday things, even little things like folding laundry. It's important to keep them busy and challenge them.

They deserve a good quality of life."

She encouraged caregivers to reach out for support and not be ashamed to talk about what's happening to their loved ones as the disease is increasingly common. Over 500,000 Canadians are now living with dementia, says the Alzheimer Society of Canada, and that number is expected to climb closer to a million within the next 12 years.

For more information, visit ilivewithdementia.ca.

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: In honour of Alzheimer's Awareness Month, we turned to social media to search for a local family that's been impacted by the disease and tell their story.

MORE ONLINE

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By Cory Soal
R.H.A.D.

... Lend Me Your Ears

CUSTOMER SERVICE IS A PRODUCT SLOWLY BECOMING EXTINCT.

My definition of quality customer service and goal is to provide continued, effective hearing for the patient. There are many issues and parts of this task - please do not think I am saying that I have succeeded in creating an A+ practice. It takes a lot of work, dedication and time to achieve excellence. Regardless of business, it all boils down to customer service. The product purchased - and this can relate to any device - needs to be serviced regularly, the patient needs to understand and use their product properly. Wherever you shop, ask yourself this: Can I follow up with the same person who sold and serviced my product when I need them? Does the person who serviced you remember your name and needs? Will that person be there for me in the future?

As a local business person and proud lifelong resident of this community, I wish to thank all who have allowed me to serve the community since 1992.

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