



# Ontario Nursing Home Week at Eden House

Every year, the staff and residents of Eden House get together with their families and friends to celebrate Ontario Nursing Home Week, and raise a little money for Alzheimer Research.

Over the past five years, Eden House has raised over \$20,000 and although the tally is not yet complete, it looks like this year's effort is going to beat last year's record-breaking total of \$4,500.

The money is important. Alzheimer's research is not well funded — and every nickel counts in the fight against this disease which afflicts primarily the elderly and robs them of their memory.

But what's equally important is the fight — and raising awareness. A couple of years ago, Gail Bouwmeester, who with her husband John owns and operates Eden House, said that the home places a great deal of emphasis on Alzheimers because this is something that everyone at Eden House knows and can do something about. Even a patient with advanced Alzheimers who sits in his wheelchair while a relative wheels him around and around the grounds has made a significant contribution, and she felt it was important to create opportunities for people to help wherever they can.

Eden House has over the years worked hard to make the fight one that includes everyone. This year, the annual baseball game between the staff and the volunteers was a good excuse for families to visit on the front lawn with their elderly relatives, while taking in the excitement of the game. (Final score was Volunteers 9, Staff 4).

Young and old enjoyed traditional baseball fare of hot dogs, pop and ice cream, all of which were donated by local merchants. Refreshments alone netted \$320.

The walk-wheel-a-thon gets families and residents and staff all involved as people sign up sponsors, and then come out to do the laps with residents. A few residents even did some of the laps on their own.

The events of Ontario Nursing Home Week are not all Alzheimers related — some just raise awareness of the special needs of the elderly and celebrate special events in people's lives.

J. Gordon Rolston, well known to Acton residents as the driving force behind Acton Wood Products until the late 1960, was costume judge at the baseball game between the staff and the volunteers. Mr. Rolston now lives in an apartment in the resthome, while his wife Edna lives down the hall in the nursing home. He says that he has enjoyed all the activities and participated wherever he could. "It's all for a good cause," he said.

But he also summed up what was most important message about Nursing Home Week. "You need loving care when you get old," he said. "What I find most important is that people put their arms around me at night and give me a squeeze. That goes a long way with old people."

**HONOURING THE BEST:** McKenzie-Smith Grade 6 students Bailey Galimanas, left, Liz Preletz, middle, and Stephanie McKay were all smiles on Friday as they received their Honours certificates at the school's Honours and Progress awards assembly. (Doug Harrison photo)

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**Tips to avoid alcohol problems**  
If you drink, don't drive. As a sober driver you know that this is your only safe option. Alcohol is a drug that impairs reaction time and other vital driving abilities. It makes good sense to arrange for a designated driver who has not had anything to drink.  
Even when you're not driving, there are choices you can make to prevent alcohol problems and their effects on your health, family, friends and job. Consider the following tips:  
1. **Decide how much is enough**  
Research suggests that by having no more than 12 drinks a week and no more than four drinks a day (men) or three drinks (women) you can lower your risk of problems. The less you drink, the lower your risk.  
2. **Start slow**  
It takes 30 minutes or more to feel the full effects of your first drink. Give yourself at least this time before having another.  
3. **Give yourself time off**  
Drinking every day of the week — even one or two drinks a day — increases your risk of problems. A good rule of thumb is to limit your drinking to three days or less. For example, give yourself time off at sports events and on Sundays.  
4. **Think light**  
Drink less by drinking lighter. For example, choose light beer, a wine spritzer or a drink with less than one ounce of spirits.  
5. **Separate your drinking from your problems**  
Alcohol is a depressant drug, not a problem-solver. Instead talk to someone you trust or consult your employee assistance program at work for help.

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