

Notes for March 18, 2024.

It's really getting lighter later, isn't it? Yahoo!

We have been talking about dementia friendly programming for awhile so here we go! Programming is starting.

I guess the first item is to address the question regarding what this is...

Dementia Friendly is a grassroots movement designed to change the environment in our community to be more welcoming and supportive of people with dementia and their care partners. Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning that impacts the ability to complete everyday tasks, often requiring care provided by family members, friends, or other care partners. Over 14% of people in Massachusetts over the age of 65 experience dementia, with the number of people affected by dementia expected to increase as the general population ages. In response, over 160 communities across the Commonwealth are participating in this critical movement.

Williamstown is a Dementia Friendly community having received the official designation in September 2023. The Williamstown Council on Aging will be working with the Milne Public Library, the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and community members to create programming which is supportive and inclusive. Educational programs like Dementia Friends informational sessions help people throughout the community understand how to engage their neighbors with memory loss respectfully. Systems such as support groups provide emotional relief to care partners. Speakers with expertise in the area will be engaged to provide pertinent helpful advice and resources. Environmental and cultural shifts in the public space encourage residents with dementia and their care partners to thrive.

Everyone in Williamstown, residents, restaurants, shops, students -everyone can play an essential role in creating a dementia-friendly community. Representatives from these sectors can advocate for real change in their industries by promoting dementia awareness and through workplace training.

Dementia-friendly communities share one thing: the mission to make their neighborhoods inclusive, welcoming those touched by dementia to continue to be active, contributing citizens. We can do this, right Williamstown?

So, here we go! Corrine Case, a veteran support group leader who leads our Loss Support group here at Harper will lead a support group for caregivers who are caring for folks with dementia. This group will be meeting monthly on the first Wednesday from 11:00 to 12:30 at the Milne Library starting April 3<sup>rd</sup>, registration is not required for this group. We're scheduling this activity to continue through December...we don't want to think about December now though, do we?

We have plans to work with Milne on other activities as well. Kira Williams, Adult Services Librarian is in the process of acquiring books and audio/visual materials on this

topic, including a selection for children. We'll have a full list for you soon, regarding this and other activities.

Remedy Hall is hosting an outreach event on March 29th from 2 to 4 pm at 330 Cole Ave, Williamstown. This is a community wide event and will be held in their Community Room in the cube Check it out!