



THE SOCIETY FOR THE ARTS IN DEMENTIA CARE

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2012 CECD Mini-conference @ UBC

Summary Report

The Society for the Arts in Dementia Care held a one day mini-conference on August 31, 2012 at the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS), a new building at the University of British Columbia. The event was free and sponsored by the Society. Many thanks to UBC for letting us use their space free of charge as well. The event attracted about 24 participants that arrived from a wide range of backgrounds; nursing, art therapy, recreation facilitators, facilities' administrators, academic students and faculty. A second mini-conference is taking place on September 6, 2012 at the University of Worcester, in the UK to replace the full conference we had to cancel due to harsh economic times.

We had six presentations from: Dr. Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka, Chair of the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care, Jeanne Sommerfield, CECD Board Member, Lysiane Goulet Gervais, BA, Award Winner of the Alzheimer Society of Canada competition, from Concordia University in Quebec, Megan Morrison, Award Winner as well, from Memorial University of Newfoundland, Paddy Bruce, Art Therapist, Victoria, BC, Dr. Peter Graf, Psychology Professor at the University of British Columbia and Shelly Klammer, Expressive Art Facilitator and RCC, from George Derby Centre in Burnaby.

It was a pleasure to host and hear the presentations of Megan and Lysiane. Details of their award presentations are described on the program posted on the Society's website. It was comforting to know that there were younger people interested in contributing to the psychosocial approach in dementia care and its caregivers alike. Megan and Lysiane demonstrated the kind of sensitivity to dementia care our Society is professing for; dignify the person inside this condition. We wish them all the best in the future.

Jeanne gave a compassionate presentation on the utilization of the spoken and written word in creative writing. With her gentle encouragement everyone has an opportunity to become a poem writer, or at least take part in poem writing in a group situation.

Paddy touched us to tears with her presentation on the "Dignity Quilt" produced by residents with dementia for a final trip as residents pass away. She raised a sensitive question whether residents on their final trip should leave the facility from the back doors in a quiet way, or from the front door to honor their lives and give an opportunity to their friends and staff to part from them in a dignified way? According to Paddy, this was the wish of the residents who worked on the project to be accompanied on their last journey through the front doors.

Shelley dazzled us with colors and images, whether directed or produced spontaneously by people with dementia in her facility at George Derby. Watching her presentation, you cannot help but



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wonder about the missed opportunities residents in some other facilities face daily. Not only were the products very artistic and pleasing, the fun, pride, ownership and feeling of usefulness were evident and proved to us that we must push for more programs like it.

Peter and Dalia presented their work on the Creative Expressive Abilities Assessment tool, its reliability and on-going validation at the Miami University in Ohio, under the leadership of Dr. Elizabeth Lokon. Peter and Dalia also presented data collected on creative expression programs in the world and specifically in British Columbia in about 120 adult care facilities. Details on their findings are included in a separate section of the Society's website posting some of the presentations at the mini-conference at UBC.

Through the meeting, participants had an opportunity to express and share their thoughts. Sometimes a small gathering lends itself better to active participation and opportunity for future collaboration, which the Society encourages.

Although researchers and practitioners in this field are small in numbers, based on what we know already through research and practice, it is evident that being engaged in creative expression programs is beneficial to people with dementia. It reduces agitation and sadness, increases socializing and self-esteem, which give more reasons to continue the work that the Society is advocating for.

See you all at our next event.

Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka, PhD
Chair, the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care

