

RESEARCH *Matters*

EDUCATION

Support for those living with memory loss: A success story

The Cowan Foundation and RIA set leading example in community support
Written by Kristian Partington

Issues related to memory and aging can be simplified by making a distinction, says 89-year-old Urie Bender, a participant in the RIA's Memory and Aging program.

"Everybody loses their keys," he says, "but most people, when they find them, know what to do with them."

Misplacing your keys is typical of the normal aging process but not knowing what to do with them suggests a deeper challenge is at play. Not long ago, people were waiting upwards of a year to see a specialist but, thanks in large part to a partnership between the RIA, The Cowan Foundation and the Centre for Family Medicine Memory Clinic, they are getting answers sooner.

Enhancing Life

The Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging aims to enhance the quality of life and care of older adults through partnerships in research, education and practice. Twelve Schlegel Villages provide "living research environments" and "living classrooms" where innovations are developed, tested, and then shared to benefit older adults everywhere.



Guests gather at the Village of Winston Park to celebrate the success of both the Memory and Aging program and the Memory Clinic, both made possible with the support of The Cowan Foundation.

On Jan. 31 at the Village of Winston Park, the success of the Memory Clinic and the Memory and Aging Education Program was celebrated. Urie was on hand as a participant of the education program and he says attending the eight sessions reassured him that his memory quirks are perfectly normal.

For those with deeper memory loss challenges, the clinic team consisting of a family doctor, nurse, social worker and pharmacist who are closely linked with a specialist has been a welcomed solution. Since opening last

Continued on next page...

... Continued from previous page

June, 56 people ranging in age from 32-93 have accessed services through the clinic at Winston Park.

“We’ve been able to demonstrate that this model works in the retirement home setting,” says clinic director Dr. Linda Lee. “The numbers of persons that have been seen and the number of referrals that we have received would suggest that the physicians in our community are very happy with the availability of this service.”

“It’s about using the limited resources we have proactively, but also efficiently,” Linda adds. “It’s the way of the future.”

Since the clinic began operations last summer, Linda has had ample opportunity to speak with clients and their loved ones about their experience, and the satisfaction level has been overwhelmingly positive, she says.

“The initial impact was really good,” explains Claire Bartlett, whose mother Beth attends the clinic. “They worked together to stabilize mom’s medications because she was on a number of them and who knows what the negative effect was.”

Claire says there is comfort in knowing that a strong team is considering the best way to help manage the effects of her mother’s memory loss.

“The idea that there was such a gap in service is what prompted The Cowan Foundation to provide the clinic with \$100,000 in operational funding,” says Heather McLachlin, President of Cowan Insurance Group.

“If there’s a proactive approach where we can step in and make a difference early in the game for those affected by memory loss and their families, then it takes the pressure off the social and health systems.”

“Another attractive reason to nurture the partnership is so the RIA can access the tangible efficacy of the clinic,” Heather added. “The information that the clinic and the RIA can provide will help ensure future clinics being established across the province will be organized for success.”



Follow us on Twitter:
[@SchlegelUW_RIA](https://twitter.com/SchlegelUW_RIA)



Like us on Facebook:
Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging



Write Us:
info@the-ria.ca
325 Max Becker Drive,
Suite 202,
Kitchener, ON, N2E 4H5



Check us out Online:
www.the-ria.ca

