



SPRINTNews

A newsletter for SPRINT clients – JULY 2010

Helping People Live at Home Safely

Information Desk: (416) 481-6411

Caregivers share their stories at SPRINT AGM

By Jane Moore, Executive Director

At the SPRINT Annual General Meeting in June, two brave women talked about how their lives have changed since their spouses were diagnosed with dementia. SPRINT board member and geriatric psychiatrist Dr. Carole Cohen facilitated the discussion. Our community room at 140 Merton Street was packed with clients, volunteers and staff. I am sure not a single person left that day without feeling deeply touched by what they heard.

The women shared specific incidents which told them something wasn't right with their husbands. They told us how deeply they missed activities enjoyed for years. And how they yearned for companionship enjoyed through decades of marriage. If you are a caregiver of a person diagnosed with Alzheimer's – you are not alone. Do give SPRINT a call if you have questions or would like to talk. Our social workers will lend a listening ear. They also facilitate excellent support groups for family members who take care of loved ones with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.

I am deeply grateful for the women who shared their journeys with us. Doing so may have made it easier for others to seek the support they need. That's my hope today – jm



Quick checklist helps caregivers recognize stress

The Alzheimer's Society produces excellent resources and many are available free of charge. The society's pamphlet *Reducing caregiver stress* lists 10

warning signs for persons who support a loved one with Alzheimer's disease. Please review the 10 items listed on the reverse side of the page. If many sound

familiar, it's time to talk to somebody. Caregivers need to take care of their own health and well-being. You may wish to visit your doctor. Or you can call the Alzheimer's Society or SPRINT. There is help available.

10 *signs of caregiver stress*

1. Denial ("everyone is overreacting")
2. Anger
3. Withdrawing socially
4. Anxiety
5. Depression
6. Exhaustion
7. Sleeplessness
8. Emotional reactions
9. Lack of concentration
10. Health problems

Dr. Carole Cohen, a geriatric psychiatrist and also a SPRINT board member says, "Learning when to ask for help is one of the most difficult things to learn for caregivers."

A SPRINT social worker can be reached by calling our Information Desk at (416) 481-6411. The Toronto office of the Alzheimer's Society can be reached at (416) 322-6560.

Art show delights audiences at SPRINT Annual General Meeting

During an open house prior to the Annual General Meeting last month, visitors enjoyed watching art made by participants at SPRINT Adult Day Services (ADS). We hope to show you more of this wonderful art work in the future. Adult day services provide safe and secure environments for older adults who live with a cognitive impairment. Frail seniors also attend these programs to participate in social



and recreational activities. Please call us for more information. The painting by Ada featured here is a water colour.

Can you help your North Toronto neighbours continue to live at home safely?

Within resources available, SPRINT has made a commitment to provide subsidies to eligible individuals who are unable to pay for our services. Can you help us make a meaningful difference in the lives of other seniors? Here are some ideas:

- ✓ Make a donation in memory of a loved one.
- ✓ Ask friends and family to make a donation to SPRINT in lieu of gifts for an anniversary or birthday.
- ✓ Specify in your will that memorial donations can be made to SPRINT.
- ✓ Leave a bequest to SPRINT.

For more information, call Nandy Heule at **(416) 481-0669, ext. 248** or Executive Director Jane Moore at ext. 244. We warmly welcome your call.

Please pass on this newsletter to a neighbour or friend who may not know about SPRINT yet. She will be glad you did!