

## WELCOME



Welcome to the Alzheimer Society of York Region's *Hearts Linked by Courage* book, part of the I C Publishing's series highlighting the meaningful work of non-profit organizations.

The purpose of this book is twofold: to share the stories of people impacted by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias (ADOD) and therefore raising awareness of this fatal disease; and to change the stigma associated with a diagnosis.

More than 17,000 York Region residents have ADOD. For each person with dementia, another ten to twelve people are directly impacted. Despite this large number, myths, and misconceptions about the disease and the people affected by it remain.

This book will show you that people are more than their diagnosis, and that they can remain contributing and productive members of our community for a long time if they are given the opportunity and if we make our region dementia friendly. The book will also portray

## HEARTS LINKED BY COURAGE

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what life is like for caregivers of those diagnosed with dementia. Caregivers—spouses, children, friends—are often thrust into a role with no education and little support. As the disease progresses, so too do the hardships on the caregiver.

Yet throughout the dementia journey, there are stories of love and remembrance and finding strength you didn't know possible. While there are always tears and often frustration, there is also laughter and joy and new memories created by those left behind.

By reading these stories, you will learn about the struggles faced by York Region residents impacted by dementia, and their courage, bravery, and love.

Sincerely,

Loren Freid

CEO, Alzheimer Society of York Region