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Community Corner

Orland Fire District Recognizes Needs Of Those With Dementia

The Orland Fire Protection District launched the first combined Community Outreach Program on Dementia Awareness, Thursday, April 27, 2017.



Newsmakers Inc., Community Contributor
Posted Fri, Jan 22, 2021 at 3:45 pm CT

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Aishling Dalton Kelly, Owner of Aishling Companion Home Care and the Aishling Care Academy of Orland Park, Fire Chief Michael Schofield, and Betsy Dine, Fire & Life Safety Education Coordinator (Photo Courtesy of the OFPD)

The Orland Fire Protection District launched the first combined Community Outreach Program on Dementia Awareness on Thursday, April 27, 2017, to recognize the challenges that face those individuals who suffer from Dementia.

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In partnership with Aishling Companion Home Care, the OFPD introduced the District's New Coffee & Conversation Community Outreach Program in 2017 to help inform and educate residents on the many free educational meetings that impact the lives of the Orland Residents including Dementia.

As a result of the professional educational and informational campaign, the Fire District has pursued recognition as a Dementia Friendly Community providing a wide array of information and resources to support those in need.

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"We want to open a dialogue with residents to ensure that we are hearing their concerns and also their ideas!" said OFPD Fire Chief Michael Schofield.

"It's purely an effort to strengthen our contacts with the community and improve the lives of those who face a wide array of health issues, including Dementia."

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The only public contact those with dementia have are with the Fire District when paramedics or fire EMS officials respond when there is a health emergency involving a fire, vehicle accident or emergency health need.

Schofield said the program is under the direction of Betsy Dine, in collaboration with Aishling Dalton Kelly, and is frequently coordinated with the OFPD Senior Advisory Board (SAC) and its members.

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"We are now beginning our 5th year of Coffee & Conversation and going strong. We have a group of 30-50 persons coming to fill their brains with as much free education as possible," Dine said noting she works with a professional who has experience in dealing with Dementia and obtaining top-class speakers with very relevant and timely topics Aishling Dalton Kelly.

"Aishling and I want to make a difference in the Orland Fire Protection District Community, one day at a time! Our group efforts didn't come to a halt when Coffee & Conversation came to life. This is when our goals and dreams came to life! Since that time, we have worked diligently and communicated weekly over the years. We have been inspired by our seniors who attend Coffee and conversations in addition to realizing that more education is needed in our community!"

Aishling Dalton Kelly is the owner of Aishling Companion Home Care and the Aishling Care Academy in Orland Park. Her credentials are extensive and include being a Certified Dementia Practitioner (CDP), a Certified Alzheimer's Disease Dementia Care Trainer (CADDCT), and a Certified First Responder Trainer (CFRDT), and a CECM (Certified Elder Care Manager).

Dine said that she and Aishling both come from large families of 10 children and they understand how to engage issues in a large group and in a team spirit. Aishling's mother, Dine said, had also suffered from dementia for more than seven years before her passing and from this experience has inspired Aishling to raise awareness and further educate on this topic to the forefront in the community.

"We are both determined to make a difference! After years of working together and a ton of conversation, we are now on a mission to promote bigger and better things for our families with a loved one who suffers from a form of dementia, here in Orland Park," Dine said.

Dine said that they conferred with OFPD EMS Supervisor Mark Duke who noted that dementia calls were rising in the district.

"We began by offering an educational week by training all of our Firefighters in Orland Park to experience and recognize the 'Inside Out Dementia Experience' that is a common pattern," Dine explained.

Basically, the program helps EMS personnel, firefighters and paramedics to understand firsthand what the dementia experience is about so they can enhance their own services and skill set in dealing with the mentally debilitating condition.

"We take the firefighter through the experience of having dementia so they can better identify and understand dementia and provide the care that the patient needs," Dine said.

In talks with Senator Cunningham and Representative Fran Hurley it was suggested by Sen. Cunningham that obtaining a resolution first would certainly signify the intent for future endeavors for a dementia-friendly Orland park. Due to COVID, the resolution is still pending but Dine and Kelly are hopeful the resolution will be adopted in the Spring.

We now have a full Task Force with local businesses on board.

Aishling, Certified by NCCDP as a national first responder dementia trainer has trained all of our Firefighters (113) as CFR-DT's Certified, First Responders-Dementia Trained. We are incredibly proud of this certification and Our mission for a "Dementia Friendly Orland Park" is to continue to raise awareness, dignity, and respect in addition to enriching the lives of those suffering and living with this disease in our community.

"Orland Park: a dignified, respectful, dementia friendly, place to live."

We have two Caregiver Support Groups coming to the Orland Fire Protection District starting January 2021 on the second Monday monthly and once monthly on Thursday

afternoons following conversations and coffee. We will also be offering a Powerful Tools for Caregiver Class at the beginning of 2021.

If you're a family caregiver, you understand both the rewards and challenges of caregiving. Powerful Tools for Caregivers can help!

You may not even think of yourself as a caregiver - you're simply helping someone you love. But when the stresses and difficulties that often come with caregiving become overwhelming, it's important to take care of yourself too. That's where Powerful Tools for Caregivers © (PTC) comes in.

In just six weeks, Powerful Tools for Caregivers can help you identify and manage the physical, emotional and financial challenges that family caregiving can present and connects you with other caregivers who are facing some of the same feelings and problems you may be facing. This training will be coming to the district in February 2021.

We are hopeful that other Fire Departments/Districts will join us in making Illinois Dementia Friendly.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/DementiaFriendlyOrlandParkIL>

<http://www.orlandfire.org>

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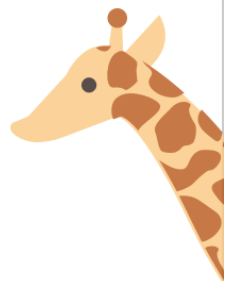
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