

Executive Summary: Empowering Dementia-Friendly Communities Hamilton, Haldimand

What You Need to Know

The Empowering Dementia-Friendly Communities Hamilton, Haldimand project was designed to empower individuals living with dementia as active participants and leaders in their communities. Co-designed and led by people living with dementia, this initiative promoted strategies for increasing social inclusion and reducing stigma and improved quality of life through education, public awareness, and community-building activities. Led by the Hamilton Council on Aging in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team of organizations, the project successfully piloted and evaluated approaches to fostering dementia-friendly communities in Hamilton and Haldimand County, Ontario, between 2019 and 2023, with Phase 2 from 2023 to 2025.

Program Goals

- Empower individuals living with dementia as leaders and changemakers.
- Challenge stigma and promote social inclusion and active participation for individuals with dementia.
- Increase community awareness of dementia and modifiable risk factors.

Achievements and Impact

From 2019 to 2023, the Empowering Dementia-Friendly Communities Hamilton, Haldimand project engaged people living with dementia and their care partners across Hamilton and Haldimand County, Ontario, to promote inclusion and improve quality of life.

Key Outcomes

- The [Faces of Dementia](#) campaign reached 16 million viewers, fostering a greater understanding of dementia.
- 357 community members participated in dementia-friendly education programs, increasing knowledge and reducing stigma.

- People living with dementia led initiatives such as art festivals, newsletters, and public murals, resulting in 83% of participants reporting increased empowerment and a sense of belonging.
- Care partners and service providers improved their understanding of strategies to combat stigma, promote dementia friendliness, and address social isolation.

Lessons Learned

- Authentic partnerships with people living with dementia helps ensure that an initiative is relevant and impactful.
- Strong organizational support in the form of “backbone” organizations provides governance, resources, and structure, enabling successful community-based actions.
- Engaging partners with shared goals enhances the initiative's reach and effectiveness.
- Dementia-friendly efforts can be supported by building on frameworks in communities with existing Age-Friendly Plans.

Why It Matters

The Empowering Dementia-Friendly Communities Hamilton, Haldimand project underscores the importance of creating inclusive spaces where people living with dementia and their care partners can lead, participate, and thrive. This initiative offers a blueprint for other communities to foster social inclusion, challenge stigma, and enhance the quality of life for people living with dementia through collaborative and community-driven approaches.

Visit the website to learn more:

- [Empowering Dementia-Friendly Communities Hamilton, Haldimand](#)
- Browse other community-based dementia initiatives in the [Dementia Interventions Playbook](#).