

LOCALNEWS

ACT on Alzheimer’s to set priorities

ACT REPORT

The greater International Falls area will be a step closer to becoming “dementia-friendly” when community members meet Jan. 27 to begin the fourth and final phase of the ACT on Alzheimer’s initiative.

The public is invited to join ACT team members to learn the results of more than 100 community surveys the team carried out this past summer and fall and then to help the team set priorities for action.

“Surveys were customized in ten different ways to learn about resources that exist or are needed here to make it easier to live with and care for those with Alzheimer’s and other dementias,” said Myrna Meadows, who is facilitating the project.

“We asked caregivers, employers, legal and health services, government leaders and community members and others about their perceptions of the disease and how we can improve our situation as the incidence of dementia accelerates with the aging population,” Meadows explained. “The results were studied by the local team and grouped into several recommendations. We’re asking the public, including those who were surveyed, to join us now in making some decisions.”

The community meeting will be at 7 p.m. Jan. 27 at Rainy River Community College. Local team mem-

bers will anchor discussion topics at the meeting, working toward consensus about how to ACT on Alzheimer’s locally.

Myrna Meadows
Facilitator

According to Meadows, greater International Falls is one of 33 areas in Minnesota working to become a “dementia-friendly community” where safety, respect and appropriate services are available to the person who is diagnosed as well as to their family and friends. It is also an effort to educate everyone about the realities of the disease.

“Our aging population will see a dramatic increase in dementia for in the near future,” said Douglas Skrief, executive director of Koochiching Aging Options and a team member. “One in nine Americans at age 65 will have the disease and that increases to one in three at age 85. The physical and emotional impact, especially in rural communities, will be enormous. We

are working to prepare ourselves locally by identifying and developing resources.”

Possible actions coming out of the public meeting, Meadows suggested, could include planning for one location to handle related questions and referrals, promotion of earlier diagnosis and treatment, peer group support, and increased emergency preparedness as it relates to persons with dementia.

Creating a plan for action is the fourth and final stage of the Act on Alzheimer’s initiative. A plan will be based on the results of the surveys and the vote of community members attending the community meeting. ACT on Alzheimer’s funding may be available for the community to pursue priorities set at the meeting.

Questions about the meeting and ACT on Alzheimer’s may be directed to Meadows at 286-5622.



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Myrna Meadows gives blood Monday with the help of Vincent Cichy, Memorial Blood Centers phlebotomist, inside the centers’ bus at Rainy Lake Medical Center.

Giving the gift of life

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Myrna Meadows donated blood Monday as she read a book inside the Memorial Blood Centers’ bus parked at Rainy Lake Medical Center.

Vincent Cichy, MBC phlebotomist, stood at her side as she completed the donation.

Despite Monday’s well-below-zero temperatures, Meadows was joined by

many others who had turned out to the International Falls Rotary’s call to volunteer. The drive was organized by co-chairs Doug Grindall and Becky Roeder.

Meadows said the simple act of donating is well worth the effort.

“It’s so easy to do something that will do so much good,” Meadows said. “I don’t know why everybody from the age of 16 doesn’t

do it.” Blood donations assist many people in need. One out of three people will need blood in their lifetime, according to the MBC website.

Someone who began donating blood at age 16 and donated every 56 days until age 76 would have donated over 48 gallons of blood, potentially saving more than 1,100 lives, according to the website.

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