



# AGE congratulates Alzheimer Society of Windsor & Essex County



(Left to right) GPA Certified Coaches Rosemary Fiss and Rose Russell with award.

## 'With Distinction' AGE Recognition Program



### GPA Leadership Excellence in Person-Centred Care Award

One Saturday during an Adult Day Program at the Alzheimer's Society of Windsor & Essex County (ASWE) one of the participants suddenly got up, left the activities and exited the building. What happened next?

The team's GPA training kicked in!  
*Read the story of Tom, page 2.*



Participants practicing a GPA group escort technique at a GPA Basics education session

## The future of GPA at the Society

The organization has made GPA a core component of its Occupational Health and Safety Plan. Every employee takes GPA at the point of hire and knowledge is refreshed (GPA-Recharged) every two years, maintaining 100% GPA-trained staff. In 2017, 15 new

employees participated in GPA. The ASWE has integrated GPA into all of its programs and services.



The following story of GPA teamwork in action comes from Rosemary Fiss, the Director of Programs at ASWE and a long-time GPA Certified Coach:

### The Story of Tom

“Tom (*name changed*) had been attending our Adult Day

Program weekly for more than three months. He is familiar with the staff and they know his likes, dislikes and emotional triggers. One Saturday afternoon, he suddenly decided he wanted to leave the program and exited the building. A staff person went with him, quickly followed by another staff member. Both have worked at the ASWE for several years, but do not work full time in the Adult Day Program.

### How Did the Team Respond?

The two staff members used the GPA team escort technique, supporting Tom while gently redirecting him away from the street. At that point, unable to redirect him into the building, they were supported by a third staff member, Sue. Sue knows Tom very well; she is one of his regular PSWs. Hearing her voice and seeing her face allowed Tom to relax enough to come back into the building. He was taken to a quiet space where Sue spent some time with him to de-escalate before he re-joined the day’s activities.

### What Did the Team Learn and How Will it Affect Tom’s Future Care?

The team did a great job working together, but there were areas that we could have improved upon. During the incident not everyone was comfortable with the redirection techniques. After the incident, we started taking time to regularly practice the GPA techniques, during the program and in staff meetings. We also revisited what triggered Tom on that day and have switched his routine to reduce his triggers.”



Going beyond its own staff, the organization also feels it is important to acknowledge the impact of student education offered by its GPA Certified Coaches, largely for PSW and nursing students. Offering GPA to students while they are still in the formal education process makes a big difference to the care they provide to older adults now and in the future. It also has a positive impact on their confidence when interacting with persons living with dementia. One nursing student commented that she learned more about dementia in a one-day GPA session than she had in an entire school year. She felt the applications and real life examples in the GPA videos gave her the tools to change her practice to best meet the needs of her clients. The ASWE facilitated 11 GPA Basics education sessions for students in 2017.

Currently, Rosemary Fiss (Director of Programs), Rose Russell and Andy Berthiaume (Education & Support Coordinators) are the organization’s three GPA Certified Coaches. Going forward, the ASWE remains committed to certifying new GPA Coaches as needed to ensure a constant group of coaches are available for education, on-site mentoring and to offset staff turnover and retirements.