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Dementia Friendly Community Project at Orcas Senior Center

Orcas Senior Center (OSC) has undertaken a project organized through Dementia Friendly America (www.dfamerica.org) called Dementia Friendly Communities. OSC is joining a national network of communities, organizations, and individuals seeking to ensure that communities across the U.S. are equipped to support people living with dementia and their caregivers.

Dementia Friendly Orcas, a work group of 10 volunteers, hopes to engage all sectors of our community in understanding the scope and impact of memory loss and dementia on Orcas Island. The group will assess our community's current ability to support people with cognitive difficulties and memory loss. As we identify needs for improvement, we will plan for providing the education, community support, and resources that people living with dementia, their families, and caregivers need to live fully and safely.

A Dementia Friendly Community is a village, town, city, or county that is informed, safe and respectful of individuals living with dementia, their families, and caregivers. It provides supportive options that foster quality of life. Joining Dementia Friendly America means our community is engaging in a process to become more dementia friendly.

This start-up process is expected to take at least a year. We will be reaching out to community organizations to inform and engage our neighbors in finding solutions. Little things like recognizing when someone is having difficulty counting change in a check-out line or needs help finding their parked car can be very helpful. They can keep a situation from escalating into an unsafe one. Opening a "Memory Café" where caregivers and people with cognitive difficulties can relax and be social is one resource we might create.

If you would like to know more about the project or join the effort, please see www.orcasseniors.org/dementia-friendly.

Orcas Senior Center is a nonprofit 501(c)3 and a member of the National Council on Aging.