

Effingham is now designated a Dementia Friendly Community!

By Shannon Nosbisch, CDP, DCS

Effingham has been designated a Dementia Friendly Community by the Illinois Cognitive Resources Network (ICRN), the overseer of the Illinois dementia friendly program!! There are now 22 communities in Illinois that are dementia friendly.

According to ICRN, Dementia Friendly Illinois is about working with persons with dementia and their support systems. All too often, persons living with or at risk for dementia feel alone and unheard. They feel left out from the activities in their community that promote well-being. Dementia Friendly Illinois is about reversing the narrative. Communities, big and small, can see the value in making their communities more dementia friendly. Dementia Friendly Illinois is about improving the journey of persons with dementia and their support systems.

Midland Area Agency on Aging and Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness are working together to continue making Effingham dementia friendly. Along with the Dementia Friendly Task Force made up of caregivers, community leaders, faith communities, business and organization members, Midland and EAAA have helped numerous businesses become dementia friendly. Gotcha By The Hair, Culver's, Effingham County Chamber of Commerce, Effingham Prompt Care, Effingham Public Library, Washington Savings Bank, Bank of Hillsboro, Teutopolis State Bank, Sigel Community Bank, Heartland Senior Living, Lavender Ridge Memory Care, Effingham County Committee on Aging, Effingham Family Mental Health Support Group in Effingham are among the first dementia friendly community members.

Becoming dementia friendly is an ongoing process. There will always be businesses, agencies, organizations and community members to train and educate about Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

The training for a business to become dementia friendly is 30 minutes long and can be done at any time convenient for the business or agency. There is no fee for this training. The person doing the training will provide everything needed. The

training can be done more than one time to accommodate the business that has quite a few employees. It can also be done virtually. Each business or agency will receive window stickers that state it is a dementia friendly community member to put up at their place of business and each participant will receive a smaller sticker for their vehicle, if desired.

The training consists of education about the most common types of dementia, recognizing signs of dementia, ways to communicate with someone living with dementia, and ways your business can make their premises more dementia friendly (lighting, flooring, signage, etc.) This training can also help each business or agency understand what an employee may be going through if they have a loved one with dementia they are caring for.

If your business, organization, agency, etc. would like to become dementia friendly, please contact Shannon Nosbisch of Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness at 217-663-0010 or Nancy or Judy at Midland Area Agency on Aging at 618-532-1853 to schedule a training session. The training session is only 30 minutes long and is free.

Please help us make all of Effingham a dementia friendly community!!!!!!

Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness (EAAA) is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organization founded to provide education and support to all families, caregivers, and people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia in Effingham County and the surrounding area. For more information about Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness, check out the website at www.effinghamalz.org. If you are a caregiver & have specific questions or situations you would like information on, please feel free to call Shannon Nosbisch at 217-663-0010 or Amy Sobrino at 618-363-8372.