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Five Minnesota Communities Receive Grants to Support “Dementia Friendly” Efforts

MINNEAPOLIS (October 11, 2016)— Five communities and their lead organizations have been awarded a grant from ACT on Alzheimer’s to closely consider how best to prepare their communities for the impacts of Alzheimer’s and other dementias and to work toward community-wide support of people touched by the disease.

The communities (and lead organizations) are Hopkins (Augustana Care), Saint Cloud (City of St. Cloud-Aging Services Department), Sibley County (Sibley County), Waseca (Waseca Area Caregiver Services), and Winona (Winona Friendship Center). The new communities join 43 communities across Minnesota striving to become dementia friendly.

The Alzheimer’s Association estimates there are 91,000 Minnesotans age 65 and older living with Alzheimer’s and many thousands more with other dementias.

ACT on Alzheimer’s has developed best practice tools and resources to help communities build awareness of dementia and identify strategies relevant to their specific needs, such as training businesses and health care settings on dementia friendly practices, educating law enforcement, and reaching out to culturally and ethnically diverse communities.

ACT on Alzheimer’s is a statewide, volunteer-driven collaboration seeking large-scale social change and community capacity-building to transform Minnesota’s response to Alzheimer’s disease. Working with communities on dementia readiness is one of ACT’s key strategies.

“As the population of Minnesota ages, it’s important to build awareness and supportive environments for people living with dementia,” said Emily Farah-Miller, executive co-lead for ACT on Alzheimer’s. “Every part of the community plays a role in creating a culture that develops respect and inclusion for people with dementia, makes services and resources available, and promotes meaningful engagement in community life. A dementia-friendly

community supports care partners and can make it possible for people with dementia to extend the time outside of residential care settings. That helps everyone – families and taxpayers who pay for institutional care, employers who have workers trying to balance work and caregiving demands, and most importantly, people living with Alzheimer’s.”

The grant awards are funded through Otto Bremer Trust and administered through Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging. Learn more about the work of ACT on Alzheimer’s at www.actonalz.org

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