First conference in Scotland to be led by dementia friendly communities to mark World Alzheimer's Day

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For the first time in Scotland, a conference about dementia is to be hosted and run by people living with dementia and the communities that support them.

The event takes places on World Alzheimer's Day, 21st September, in the Perth Concert Hall. It will showcase 13 dementia friendly communities from across Scotland, exploring the ground-breaking work they do and how important they are in the lives of people living with dementia and their carers.

From dementia friendly theatre projects and art therapy to walking football and sporting memories, the conference will celebrate the work and achievements of communities built to ensure the inclusion and empowerment of people affected by dementia. It will also provide a platform to share learning and expertise with those attending the conference.

The thirteen communities have been funded by Scottish charity, the Life Changes Trust, and they have been running for just over a year. The conference is being held by the Trust to demonstrate the power and impact already evident from making communities dementia friendly.

Dementia Friendly Communities can be geographical, so they relate to a specific location; or they can be communities of interest, bringing people together because they are interested in similar activities, such as football, art or walking outdoors.

Communities which are dementia friendly support people with dementia - and their carers - to maintain a level of independence. They also help people with dementia to build their confidence, so they can participate actively in their communities and influence decisions that affect their day to day lives.

The Life Changes Trust has invested around £3 million in establishing and supporting a first phase of Dementia Friendly Communities across Scotland, and funding for more projects will be available next year.

The conference will be chaired by Agnes Houston, a campaigner and activist living with dementia and Ann Pascoe, who cares for her husband who has dementia.

Sessions will include:

• Dementia and community development
• How to build a geographical dementia friendly community
• 'Meet the artists' dementia friendly art community

• Dementia in a bi-lingual community
• Musical performance by Centrestage theatre community
• A taste of West Dunbartonshire's dementia friendly allotment
• A dementia friendly communities film

Agnes Houston said "This is a fantastic opportunity for the dementia community to really demonstrate, from first-hand experience, the benefits of creating places that empower and include people who are affected by dementia - both those who are living with the condition and those who care for them. I am encouraged to witness - and be part of - this changing shift in how people think about and approach dementia, showing how we can all help support each other."

Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said: "As a funder, we consider it a privilege to work with all of these dementia friendly communities, whose work is driven by passion, sustained by commitment, and is creating better lives for many people across Scotland. These projects really are examples of community in action."

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EDITORS NOTES:
The Life Changes Trust was established by the Big Lottery in April 2013 with a ten year endowment of £50 million to support transformational improvements in the quality of life, well-being, empowerment and inclusion of people affected by dementia and young people with experience of being in care.

In Scotland:

• It is estimated that around 90,000 people have dementia.
• The number of people with dementia in Scotland is increasing, because the population is getting older. Based on current dementia prevalence rates, the number of people with dementia in Scotland is projected to double by 2038.
• Dementia costs the country more than cancer, heart disease and stroke put together.

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