

Connecting by Creating

Midterm

Connecting by Creating is an inter-generational volunteer program at St. Michael's Long Term Care Center in North Edmonton. With a focus on arts-based programming, we aim to improve the well-being of residents living with dementia through autonomy and creative self-expression, while encouraging inter-generational bonds with volunteers, and increasing community understanding and awareness of dementia.

Connecting by Creating includes two programs - St. Michael's Art Club, and St. Michael's Theatre. Volunteers will spend about 1-2 hours each week for six weeks in a creative, failure-free setting, assisting a resident living with dementia to express themselves creatively through abstract art or improvised theatre acting and play.

Midterm Milestones:

1. Began the Life Story Board project within St. Michael's Long Term Care. These boards provide volunteers, staff, and visitors with important information about the residents' lives such as what they like to do, what they did for work, where they grew up, and what brings them joy, among other information that is important to their care.
2. Had the Connecting by Creating Project Coordinator take education courses on both art for individuals living with dementia (OMA), and improvised theatre for individual's living with dementia (Village Improv for Alzheimer's).
3. Developed a simple, yet informative Dementia Education for all new volunteers to better understand the residents they will partner with.
4. Developed pre- and post-project surveys for both resident participants and volunteer participants to measure program success.
5. Communication materials were created and sent to schools in search of student volunteers.
6. Communication materials have been shared on social media (Facebook and Instagram) and volunteer postings have been made on multiple volunteer orientation platforms.
7. Began recruiting volunteers in November 2021.
8. Began first Art Club group in December 2021 with great reactions from residents and volunteers so far.
9. Programs have been put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions within our facility; however, online orientation has been scheduled to continue, preparing new volunteers to enter the program when restrictions are lifted.

December 2022

