

# Connecting by Creating



## **Connecting by Creating, Edmonton**

St. Michael's Long Term Care Centre

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The Connecting by Creating project has two main focuses for meaningful engagement of our residents living with dementia. We are creating two engagement clubs within St. Michael's LTCC: St. Michael's Art Club and St. Michael's Theatre.

The Art Club is designed as a failure-free program to provide opportunities for creative self-expression and social engagement between residents living with dementia and community members. Residents' participation in the Art Club with project volunteers will bring together young and elderly with the mutual goal to create, have fun, empower and connect.

The Theatre is based on improvisation acting which does not require prior preparation or memorization and will enable residents living with dementia to feel in control, as we will play on their strengths: long term memory, humor, music, and spirituality. We will remove generational and cognitive barriers by learning to play, laugh, and enjoy each other's company.

We are planning to partner with middle schools and high schools in our community, as well as college and university students, to have them participate in 6 week programs together with our residents and families. Through creative participation residents and volunteers can connect with each other and continue these valuable and mutually beneficial relationships after the project is completed.

By engaging youth from the community we hope they will learn and share the knowledge with their friends, peers, parents and others about how wise, funny, caring, and creative people living with dementia are.

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