

The Dale Association's **Memory Minders Program** is an early memory loss, social day program for people with mild to mid-stage memory/cognitive impairment. Beginning in 2008 with seed money from the Brookdale National Group Respite Program, Memory Minders has consistently provided supports for participants and their caregivers.

For sixteen years, Memory Minders has stayed true to the Brookdale model for Early Memory Loss, while changing components of the program to meet unique needs of participants and their families. The program has an excellent Leader who is tuned into their needs. Memory Minders has evolved and matured to provide an excellent and engaging program.

All participants enjoy educational activities, multi-sensory virtual travel, reminiscing and interactive game which all promote stimulation and socialization. Daily themes are introduced for continuity.

Another aspect of the program is community interaction. Field trips to the library, the Buffalo Zoo, Erie Canal Cruises, outdoor garden walks, and even visits to our local ice cream shop are just some of the highlights our participants enjoy while at Memory Minders. Additionally, guest presenters bring the field trip to the participants: Aquarium petting, Bee Keeper, petting zoo, all with follow-up discussions.

From 2008-2023, the program ran on Mondays and Fridays from 10 am – 2 pm. Memory Minders now operates 3 days per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) from 10 am – 2pm. In the event that a participant cannot physically attend a session, the room is equipped with the technological supports to bring Memory Minders to them, remotely. Lunch and transportation are provided. The program offers unique curriculum each day for participants who attend multiple days, and operates out of the Dale Association's Senior Centre. The Centre offers a continuum of services for adults, including a Senior Advisor/Advocate, Vision and Hearing impairment, CARE, social and wellness programs/events, and much more.

Many of our Memory Minders attend our bi-weekly Memory Café (another Dale program). The Memory Café provides our participants and their caregivers an opportunity to join the community in a full hour of musical stimulation and a delicious meal. There's even some dancing too!

In addition to the services provided to the participant, Memory Minders serves as respite for their caregiver(s). Participants spend 4 hours immersed in activities that stimulate their minds, while their caregiver receives 4 hours of respite. Our Staff and mighty, trained, volunteer corps take over for the caregiver and develop a special bond with each participant. We have approximately 20 volunteers who regularly and consistently volunteer. We regularly have a 1:1 ratio.

The Dale Association is committed to the Memory Minders program as evidenced by years of programming growth. The program is a part of our core services, and receives annual funding from the Niagara County Office for the Aging, and benefits from financial sustainability. Our commitment to people with early memory loss and their families is constant. Our Senior Centre offers a wide variety of programming for all.

If The Dale Association were to receive this award, we would implement enhanced caregiver training program. A more complete training program would benefit our caregivers and volunteers alike.

Thank you for this opportunity.