



SteppingStone's Alzheimer's Program Gets Underway



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SteppingStone is always seeking ways to enhance our program of adult day health care (ADHC) and provide additional support to participants. One of the most important projects to provide additional care is now underway: the Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center (ADCRC) which will be operating at our Mission Creek Center. It is already open and providing enhanced care to some clients and will grow substantially in the months ahead. The project is made possible because of support from the SF Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS) in the form of a multiyear contract.

"SteppingStone has always served many people with various levels of dementia and cognitive disabilities, including those with Alzheimer's. Indeed, nearly half of our program participants, well over one hundred people, have some form of dementia. Adult day health care (ADHC) is well structured to serve these clients and does so successfully during the earlier stages. But if the disease worsens participants often need more individualized care, which the Alzheimer's Program is designed to provide." Daniel Gallagher, Executive Director.

The Alzheimer's program is being led by Madeleine (Maddie) Barry, MSW, who was formerly the Social Worker at Mission Creek Center. She describes the program below:



"SteppingStone's Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center is a program that provides enhanced support for clients with dementia that need more personalized care. It is not limited just to people with Alzheimer's, but serves participants with other forms of dementia as well."

"My goal is to keep clients constantly engaged, which requires providing very personalized care, nearly one-to-one care."

Participants can be active, but it's difficult for them to follow instructions and they can be easily distracted. But if they are provided individualized support, they can participate in many activities such as exercise, dancing, crafts, games, etc."
Madeleine Barry, ADCRC Program Coordinator.

The ADCRC program operates Monday through Friday, five hours a day except for Friday, which is a three-hour day. Clients arrive at 9AM, an hour after most Mission Creek Center program participants. They are met by Maddie, other Center staff and the others in program and remain together for the entire day.

As a group they will participate in many activities depending on their interests and what Maddie has planned. Favorite activities include memory games, arts and crafts, bowling, listening to music and going for a walk. Participants will also get health monitoring or receive therapies from the Center staff, which is one of the benefits of the Alzheimer's Program occurring within the larger context of ADHC. This coordination of services between the Alzheimer's Program and the larger Mission Creek Center will increase over time as Jimmy Goh, the Director of the Center explains below.

"The initial cohort for the ADCRC drew from participants who were already receiving services from Day Health programming, so there was not a steep transition period to integrate. In the future I expect to see our activities calendar incorporate scheduled programming that can be shared across all enrolled participants including those enrolled in the ADCRC." Jimmy Goh, RN, MSN-Program Director, Mission Creek Center.

The Alzheimer's Program will also provide support to the caregivers of program participants.

"The program is valued by family members and caregivers, not only because of the care we provide, but because it gives them respite. On the days their loved ones are here they know they are safe and being taken care of, so they go on with other aspects of their lives, or simply take a



break." Madeleine Barry, ADCRC Program Coordinator.

The program provides other support to caregivers including both information and personal support. In addition, an Alzheimer's Program caregiver support group is being formed and will have its first meeting in June.



The program is now a few months into operation and has enrolled a handful of clients. The program is being rolled out slowly so it can be adjusted based on what is most successful. COVID is of course a profound factor, impacting all SteppingStone activities, generating uncertainty and making planning difficult. Masking can be particularly difficult for people with dementia who have difficulty not only in remembering to wear one, but also in being heard.

"There is already a substantial list of current Center participants who have expressed interest in the ADCRC and I feel would benefit from the program. Our intake team has received quite a bit of feedback from potential clients who have expressed their desire to enroll in the ADCRC, and we expect that it will continue to attract potential clients as word of it spreads." Jimmy Goh, RN, MSN-Program Director, Mission Creek Center.

As the program grows it will require increased staff support. There is also a need and opportunity for volunteers to participate in the Alzheimer's Program, so if you would like to volunteer, be trained and gain experience in supporting people with dementia, please let us know. Madeline Barry can be reached at

madeleinebarry@steppingstonehealth.org



"I am excited to help create this program, which is so needed by many of our participants and their caregivers. We are providing enhanced care to people we know well to help them continue to attend the Center, see their friends and join in activities. I look forward to developing new activities and serving many more people in the years ahead." Madeleine Barry, ADCRC Program Coordinator.

Photos:

(Masthead) ADCRC Program participants with staff bowling in the Mission Creek Center courtyard.

(Middle 1) Madeleine Barry, MSW-Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center Program Coordinator.

(Middle 2) Jimmy Goh, RN, MSN-Program Director, Mission Creek Center.

(Middle 3) Daniel Gallagher, M.Ed.-SteppingStone Executive Director.

(Bottom) Jigsaw puzzle of Van Gogh's "Stary Night" used as a memory game and completed by ADCRC participants.

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