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Alzheimer's Society of Alberta and the NWT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to talk about a disease that affects an estimated 280,000 Canadians and can strike adults at any age. It affects one in 13 people over the age of 65, and there is no known cause or cure. The disease I am referring to, Mr. Speaker, is the most common form of dementia, known as Alzheimer's.

This dreaded affliction is a progressive, degenerative disease that affects the brain and, eventually, all aspects of a person's life, from mental abilities, emotions and moods, to behaviour and physical abilities. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to know that there is some help and support for people in the Northwest Territories who may be affected by this disease.

The Alzheimer's Society of Alberta and the Northwest Territories was created in 2002, due mainly to the efforts of Marjorie Sandercock, who is currently the chair of the Yellowknife chapter. Other members I would like to mention include: Krista McLean, Jan Stirling, Linda Henry, Barb Bromley, Esther Braden, Wendy Carter, Lib Lowing and Mabel Collinson.

One of the main aims of the Alzheimer's Society is to develop awareness of this dreaded disease. Last year, the YK chapter partnered with the city library to create an Alzheimer's Disease Research Centre at the Yellowknife Public Library. These resources, which were funded by Health Canada, are available throughout the NWT.

The Yellowknife Alzheimer's chapter has also been part of an annual fundraising event across Canada called Coffee Break. For a few hours during the day, all proceeds from coffee sales at various venues are donated to the Alzheimer's Society. This year, the group has brought in close to \$1300 from coffee breaks at BHP, Diavik, the Gourmet Cup and at the Baker's Centre.

This coming January, the Yellowknife chapter will be promoting a stage play to heighten Alzheimer's awareness. Directed by Chris Foreman, who will also be acting along with Erica Tesar, *Strangers Among Us* is a play about Alzheimer's disease. It will be presented at the Baker Centre, and I encourage everyone to go out and support this worthy group at that time by attending this event.

On a much larger scale of support, Mr. Speaker, I encourage this government to continue to move forward with its plans to build a dementia facility next to the Aven Centre. This is a much needed facility in the Northwest Territories that will specifically cater to those affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementia.

Currently, these people are housed in the hospital or other facilities that do not meet their needs. The dementia centre is a much needed facility not only for the people with these diseases, but for the caregivers who, over time, can face burnout from the constant care and vigilance that is often required. I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time today.

---Applause