

SAFELY HOME

One day in early August, a construction worker came to the offices of the Alzheimer Society of Calgary. Outside, she had encountered an elderly woman who was lost, and didn't know her name or the name of the place she lived. A check of her wallet revealed her name as Margaret, but any addressed ID was plainly out-dated. The police were called and we discovered Margaret was a missing person.

“How did you know to come here (the Alzheimer Society)?” the officer asked when he came to take Margaret home. “I just saw someone to talk to.” she responded.

Unfortunately, as many as 60 percent of people with Alzheimer Disease become lost outside their homes, which is why the Alzheimer Society of Canada, in collaboration with the RCMP, Health Canada and the Solicitor General, launched Safely Home™ - Alzheimer Wandering Registry. It is a simple tool to help police quickly find and return missing people with Alzheimer Disease, lessening the risks associated with these incidents.

A person's information is entered into the Safely Home Registry, and can only be accessed by police. Wallet cards and an identification bracelet with a registration number and the words “Memory Loss Call Police” are provided to the person with Alzheimer Disease.

Elizabeth Healy shares her story:

“On one occasion my father was found asleep on the railroad tracks. Another time he was sitting in the park, in the pouring rain. Thankfully, both times he was found by someone passing by who followed the instructions on his (Safely Home) bracelet, and called police.”

In addition to the Safely Home Registry, the Alzheimer Society provides information on understanding and managing this type of behavior, including guidance for approaching and reuniting with a person after they have become lost.

Margaret's memory loss could have many causes. If someone you know may become lost, make sure s/he carries relevant ID, and consider joining the Safely Home registry. For details on managing wandering behaviours or joining the Registry, call the Alzheimer Society of Calgary.

Unless your missing person stops on our doorstep, it's a sure way to ensure s/he gets safely home.

*355 words

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