



Age and Dementia Friendly Action Plan for the Town of Wilbraham, MA

Originally submitted January 15, 2024

Updated December 3, 2024

Demographics- Wilbraham, MA:

The town of Wilbraham is in Hampden County, Massachusetts. According to the latest census data, the town of Wilbraham has a population of 14,868 with 22.5% of the population being aged 65 and above. The average life expectancy in Wilbraham is 80.8 years. There are also approximately 250 residents living with dementia in the town and hundreds more caregivers.

Age and Dementia Friendly Goal:

To make Wilbraham a more inclusive, accessible, and supportive community for older adults and individuals living with dementia and their loved ones, caregivers, and families. We wish to educate, promote, and work to erase the stigma behind aging and dementia to allow the community as a whole to better understand the needs, making Wilbraham a more welcome and inclusive community.



This work will focus on the 8 Domains of Livability, including transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social interaction, civic participation and engagement, communication and information, community support and health services and outdoor spaces and buildings.



Objectives:

- Increase awareness and understanding of aging and dementia in the community.
- Collaborate with local organizations and healthcare providers to provide educational workshops and resources about dementia to residents.
- Encourage businesses and public spaces to display dementia-friendly signage and provide training to staff on how to interact with individuals living with dementia.
- Develop a public awareness campaign to reduce stigma and promote a more inclusive attitude towards dementia.
- Collaborate with schools to educate children on the effect of dementia in their lives and community.
- Enhance access to healthcare services for older adults and individuals living with dementia.
- Work with local healthcare providers to ensure equitable and quality healthcare services for older adults and individuals living with dementia.
- Potentially partner with transportation services to provide accessible and affordable transportation options for seniors and individuals with mobility issues.

Timeline:

July 2023- Created a committee with local professionals and interested people in the community spearheaded through the East of the River Chamber of Commerce (ERC5)

Members:

Grace Barone- Executive Director- ERC5

Katie Krupka- Director of Placement and Aging Services with Assisted Living Locators- Western MA and Wilbraham resident

Paula Dubord- Director- Wilbraham Senior Center and Wilbraham Resident

Barbara Harrington- Social Services- Wilbraham Senior Center

Tracey Perry- Assistant Vice President, Wilbraham Country Bank

Emily Perkins-Executive Director, Orchard Valley at Wilbraham



August 2023-

-Committee meeting- developed an events calendar, and planned Wilbraham Dementia Friendly Kick-Off Event. Shared the event on social media, local professionals, senior center members, etc.

September 2023-

-Hosted Dementia Friendly Wilbraham Kick-Off Event at the Country Club of Wilbraham on September 27, 2024, 4-6pm. Approx. 40-50 attendees, speakers included Patty Sullivan, MCOA, Becky Basch- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Megan Lemay- Alzheimer's Association. Orchard Valley Assisted Living brought their Virtual Dementia Tour, and we offered information on local resources.

October 2023-

-Orchard Valley at Wilbraham offered the Virtual Dementia Tour at their community on October 14, 2023, from 10am-2pm and 4pm-6pm.

-Some committee members began outreach efforts churches, banks, businesses, groups, etc.

-Created a Wilbraham Age and Dementia Friendly Facebook page to share information and resources.

November 2023-

-Wilbraham Public Library hosted Jennifer Holly from the Hampden County Sheriff's Office and they presented their TRIAD program for seniors in the local community on November 15, 2023, from 12-2pm

December 2023-

- Wilbraham Senior Center hosted local internal medicine physician, Dr. May Awkal. She discussed dementia and spoke about the Hope Study Trial for Dementia treatment on December 12, 2023, from 4-6pm.

January 2024-

-Committee agreed to incorporate Age and Dementia Friendly

-Created an Age and Dementia Friendly Facebook Page and posts on town forums, social media

- Orchard Valley at Wilbraham will offer the Virtual Dementia Tour at the Town Hall for town employees on January 22, 2024, from 10am-3pm



-Committee will create a Local Age and Dementia Resource Guide with professional services and resources in Wilbraham and surrounding towns.

February 2024-

- Country Bank in Wilbraham will host a Community Age and Dementia Friendly Resource Forum. We will share and review the new resource guide and provide time for Q&A, we will also provide File for Life documents and information on Knox Box and other town programs on February 27, 2024, from 5pm-7pm.

-July/August 2024- Katie Krupka and Barbara Harrington were certified Dementia Friends- hosted 2 community Dementia Friends Trainings for at Country Bank in Wilbraham in July and August 2024. Invited many local businesses to join and support the initiative as well as educate themselves and train staff.

-The local Chamber of Commerce interviewed Katie Krupka on their Podcast to discuss Dementia Friendly Wilbraham. The committee will continue to seek opportunities to share our work with local radio stations, TV programs, newspapers, social media

-September 2024-

-- The Wilbraham Senior Center started a monthly Memory Café to support residents living with dementia and their caregivers.

-December 2024-

December 3, 2024 Katie Krupka and Tracey Perry went to Soule Road School to do the Grampa and Lucy Lesson Plan to help children better understand dementia and how it affects those they know and love. 65 children and teachers became “Dementia Friends”

December 3, 2024- Paula Dubord and Katie Krupka presented Action Plan and Pledge to the Wilbraham Town Select Board to sign. This will be submitted for approval to Wilbraham to become a Certified Dementia Friendly Town through Dementia Friendly Massachusetts.

Future goals and beyond:

-Feb/March 2025- Committee hopes to plan a Wilbraham Dementia Friendly Certification celebration event inviting speakers from MCOA, local officials, professionals and members of the Alzheimer's Association to speak. This will be open to all residents in town.



-March/April 2025 and beyond- regularly scheduled Dementia Friend Trainings at Country Bank

-Summer/Fall 2025- Committee is looking into options to host a local fundraiser, walk or bake sale, etc. to raise money for the Memory Cafe

-The committee will review the 8 Domains of Livability and work to focus on at least 2-3 of the most important topics specifically social engagement, community support and health services, buildings and outdoor spaces and respect and social interaction.

- The committee will potentially seek funding to send surveys to a sector of older adults in town for feedback and recommendations about what they would like to see in the community

-The committee will work to coordinate training for the town's first responders including police, firefighters, EMTs, DPW, etc.

-The committee will continue to seek opportunities to share our work with local radio stations, TV programs, newspapers, social media

-The committee will continue to seek out volunteer and sponsorship opportunities

The goal of the committee is for the town to be certified Dementia Friendly by January 2025. The committee and town will continue to educate and spread awareness beyond the certification by continuing many of the actions steps above and continuing to evaluate the progress and make changes and adjustments as things move forward.