

The Imagination Network

How do you provide opportunities for people with the lived experience of dementia to have meaningful connections with community members and share their stories? How do you transform people's views about aging and remove the stigma surrounding dementia?



Inspired by TimeSlips - a story creation process that replaces the pressure to remember with the freedom to imagine - *The Imagination Network* brings people with dementia together with artists and community members to co-create powerful and inspiring works of art.

We believe that amplifying the voice of people with dementia, and bringing it to the forefront will transform our perception of, interaction with and relationship to aging. It will foster engagement and provide meaningful connections between people with dementia, caregivers and the broader community.

"Creativity gives people a safe way to share their experience. Expression doesn't have to be just a dry face-to-face dialogue. Thoughts and experiences can be shared creatively through a song, visual art, movement or story creation."

- Bruce Devereux, Recreation Manager, GSS

In 2015, The Art Farm and Good Samaritan Christenson Village (a 140-person Care Home) teamed up to collaborate with people with the lived experience of dementia. They facilitated creative workshops where participants shared their stories through music, visual media, textiles, shadow puppetry, and theatre sports. Youth, children and the broader community were invited to participate.

In 2017, *The Imagination Network* embarked on a multi-year research project, *Raising the Curtain*, that explores the question: "What is the lived experience of dementia?", through the ideas, creativity and perspectives of those living it. This project involves an innovative partnership between health-care professionals, artists and researchers.

Date: 2015 to Ongoing

Partners: Good Samaritan Christenson Village
Douglas College

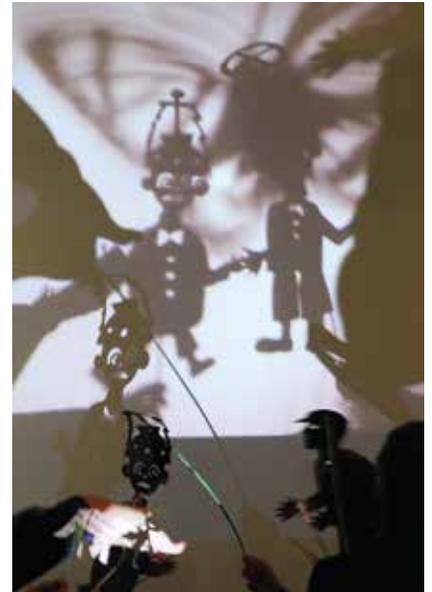


This program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

Pop Up Art Studio

The Art Farm hosted a series of open creative workshops inside a shopping mall and brought together seniors (with the lived experience of dementia) with professional artists and the broader community, particularly youth and children. Together, participants painted a large community mural, created mixed-media art, and performed a shadow puppet show.

While the impact of dementia continues to grow and research accelerates to match this impact, the voices of those individuals - their thoughts, stories, and ideas - fade into the background.



Date: 2017
Participants: 8 Professional Artists
15 Participants with the lived experience of dementia
600 Community Members



Professional artists took over an old restaurant space at a shopping mall and converted it to a community arts studio for a month. People with the lived experience of dementia were driven to the studio so they could participate with other community members. The art pieces were inspired by stories and images created at an earlier "Timeslips" project.

"Bringing the community together to co-create works of art was very powerful. Watching young children, youth and seniors all painting together evoked a profound sense of belonging.

- Sandy Buck, Community Engaged Arts Coordinator

Community Mural

Artists painted the outline of a butterfly mural on the wall, and invited community members, including people with the lived experience of dementia, to paint the insides of the butterfly wings. Parents with children, youth from the local highschool, seniors, and people shopping at the mall all participated.



Mixed Media

Participants combined paint, photography, magazine images and cut-out text to create powerful mixed media art pieces.



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In what ways does the collaborative involvement of older adults (with the lived experience of dementia) in community-engaged arts foster engagement and build social inclusion in a rural community?

Raising the Curtain

This multi-year research project explores the lived experience of dementia through the ideas, creativity, and perspectives of those living with it. It is a partnership between artists (Deer Crossing The Art Farm) health-care professionals (Good Samaritan Christenson Village), and academia (Douglas College), and will culminate in a theatrical production, research paper, and an innovative health-care model.

Creative Workshops

People (with the lived experience of dementia) actively participated in a series of creative workshops, such as sculpture, mixed-media, spoken word, sound and movement. These workshops were transcribed by the research team and the data was analyzed to identify themes surrounding the experience of dementia. The team then reviewed these themes to develop ideas for a theatrical production.



"There is a need in our society to connect with an older generation and understand and value the process of aging - What happens? What could happen? How do our minds and bodies age?"

- Sarah May Redmond, Professional Artist

Date:	2017 to Ongoing
Participants:	11 Participants with the lived experience of dementia 8 Professional Artist 4 Academic Researchers 5 Health-Care Professionals

Theatrical Presentation

In the summer of 2020, participants, professional artists, and community members will co-create a powerful theatrical presentation that explores the lived experience of dementia.

