National Lottery funding expands outdoor activity for people with dementia

Tuesday 11 July, 2017

Award-winning charity Dementia Adventure has received nearly half a million pounds from the **Big Lottery Fund** to help people living with dementia get outdoors and retain a sense of adventure in their lives.

Dementia Adventure delivers short breaks and holidays, training, support and research to improve the lives of people living with dementia and their carers. This new grant will be used to grow the scale of their work, encouraging other organisations across the UK to adopt this in their communities.

Each group will be equipped with practical skills and confidence to deliver enjoyable outdoor activities for more people with dementia including animal assisted therapy, gardening and nature and park walks. Research has shown this to be beneficial in reducing feelings of isolation and an unnecessary decline in well-being.[1]

Maureen Pike, who cares for her husband, went on a supported Dementia Adventure holiday and recognises the difference outdoor activities can make. She said: “The biggest change in Mike since his diagnosis is in how active he is. He used to be very active and now he stays indoors much more, particularly as he can get confused in our own garden. When we get out it gives us a sense of achievement and it relieves boredom by keeping our minds active. This holiday definitely benefited us. We find Mike is more relaxed when we’re away and his memory improves too. He remembers parts of his holidays in a way he doesn’t remember other things”.

Neil Mapes, **Chief Executive Officer** at **Dementia Adventure** said: “We know that people living with dementia can benefit emotionally, socially and physically from activity outdoors. Engaging with nature can improve quality of life, build confidence and help lessen the impact of the dementia. Our research has also identified the barriers to nature-based interventions, such as fears, safety concerns and practical support. This grant will enable us to start delivering the solutions to these barriers on a bigger scale than we have been able to before now.”

Joe Ferns, UK Portfolio Director at the **Big Lottery Fund** said: “It’s great to see National Lottery funding helping Dementia Adventure to share their ideas and what they've learnt with organisations across the U.K. so they can help improve the lives of even more people.”

Over the next three years, Dementia Adventure will work in partnership with The Abbeyfield Society, Care Farming UK, the Conservation Volunteers, Methodist Homes for the Aged (MHA) and Provide CIC. Together they will create and sustain outdoor activities for people with dementia as well as making their existing activities more inclusive.

April Dobson, **Head of Dementia Innovation**, **The Abbeyfield Society** said: “Abbeyfield is delighted to have this opportunity to work with Dementia Adventure. We know that being able to get outdoors has such a positive effect on the lives of people living with dementia and that is why it’s a key element of our approach to dementia care and the reason for developing our Breath of Fresh Air programme. Support from Dementia Adventure and the Big Lottery Fund will help us to grow our programme over the coming years and explore new and exciting ways of helping people with dementia (and everyone else) make connections with the outdoors and nature.”

The project will also be independently evaluated by respected teams at the University of Worcester and the University of Essex. **Dr Simon Evans**, **Head of Research, The Association for Dementia Studies**, **University of Worcester** said: “There is a growing body of evidence that suggests people living with dementia can benefit enormously from getting outdoors and accessing the natural world. Our research aims to shed a light on how training and supporting other organisations to deliver outdoor adventure activities locally could extend the benefits to a greater number of people living with dementia across the UK.”

ENDS

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Media:



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[1] 'Is it nice outside? - Consulting people living with dementia and carers about engaging with the natural environment' – published in March 2016 and commissioned by Natural England.

Notes to Editors

Big Lottery Fund

- The Big Lottery Fund is the largest funder of community activity in the UK. It puts people in the lead to improve their lives and communities, often through small, local projects.
- It is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised by National Lottery players for good causes. Last year it awarded £583 million and supported around 12,000 projects across the UK for health, education, environment and charitable purposes.
- Since June 2004 it has awarded over £8 billion to projects that change the lives of millions of people.

Dementia Adventure

- Dementia Adventure is an award-winning evidence-led registered charity committed to helping people living with dementia get outdoors, connect with nature, themselves and their community, and retain a sense of adventure in their lives. www.dementiaadventure.co.uk
- Through training, research, and consultancy services it enables care providers and organisations to take advantage of the natural resources on their doorstep to enhance the lives of people living with dementia and the people who care for them.
- The organisation is currently expanding the benefits of its nature-based, positive-risk taking approach with local and national partners through its social licence product Dementia Adventure in a Box in order to increase the choices of outdoor activities available for people with dementia. Its legacy will be to create an ever-growing network of dedicated, experienced and knowledgeable individuals and organisations, all receiving in-depth support from the Dementia Adventure team.
- Dementia Adventure also designs, plans and delivers bespoke, small-group holidays and short-breaks for people living with dementia and their carers to enjoy together. It supports people with trained staff and volunteers, and offers this as an alternative to traditional respite.
- You can also find out what impact Dementia Adventure is having on the lives of people living with dementia by reading its latest Impact Measurement report. This report is further supported by several films which highlight the benefits and outcomes of the charity's work. Find them at www.youtube.com/dementiaadventure.

Social Licence partners

Abbeyfield Society

www.abbeyfield.com

Care Farming UK

www.carefarminguk.org

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)

www.tcv.org.uk

Methodist Homes for the Aged (MHA)

www.mha.org.uk

Provide CIC

www.provide.org.uk

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