

YEAR OF THE BRAIN 2015 KICKS-OFF IN SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

LONDON, ON (January 28, 2015) ... Seventeen brain-related organizations kicked-off Year of the Brain 2015 in Southwestern Ontario today. A year-long series of activities is planned with the aim of increasing awareness of the critical role the brain plays to our health and well-being, and to address the urgent need for improved support services for those affected by a brain condition, their families and caregivers.

“Brain-related illnesses and disorders are increasing with an ageing population and changing lifestyles,” said Donna Thomson, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of London and Region. “Caring for our brains and improving services for those with a brain condition will go a long way to improving community health.”

Approximately one in three Canadians suffers from a brain condition. The impact is even greater when the financial and emotional costs to families and caregivers are considered. Anyone can be affected by a brain condition at any time, no matter what age, gender or cultural background.

Brain conditions include both neurological disorders (e.g. Alzheimer’s, stroke, brain injury, brain tumours, epilepsy, Parkinson’s, Huntington’s) and mental illnesses (e.g. depression, addiction).

Activities planned for Year of the Brain 2015 include:

- a Brain Fair on April 1 at the London Children’s Museum
- a monthly ‘Brain Health’ webinar series starting in February
- an online calendar listing all brain-related events in the region
- a central, online resource with information about various brain conditions
- the establishment of a Southwestern Ontario brain health network

“Working together gives organizations a stronger voice in advocating on behalf of those who need assistance,” said Carl Cadogan, CEO, Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. “Identifying common needs, developing shared programs and pursuing funding for new services will be critical to the successful outcome of the Year of the Brain initiative.”

“I applaud the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada, and its partners, for providing employment training opportunities as part of its strategy to mark the Year of the Brain 2015,” said Reza Moridi, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. “By connecting Ontarians with businesses and employers that need their expertise, this initiative will disseminate important information on the brain, while creating a stronger economy and more prosperous Ontario.”

Year of the Brain 2015 was initiated by three organizations: Brain Injury Association of London & Region, Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada and Dale Brain Injury Services. This Employment Ontario project, is funded in part by the Government of Canada.

Other partner organizations include: Addiction Services of Thames Valley, Alzheimer Society London and Middlesex, Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, CMHA Middlesex, Epilepsy Support Centre, Heart and Stroke Foundation - London Office, Huntington Society of Canada – Southwestern Ontario, London-Middlesex Suicide Prevention Council, March of Dimes Canada, Ontario Brain Injury Association, Parkinson Society Southwestern Ontario, St. Joseph’s Health Care London, Southwestern Ontario Stroke Network, VON Middlesex-Elgin.

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<http://YearOfTheBrain2015.com/> (website launching January 28th, 2015)