
Report of the Partnerships in Dementia Care (PiDC) Alliance Appreciative Inquiry Retreat

10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Friday April 19, 2013
Matrix and Atlas Rooms, Communitech Offices, Tannery Building
Suite 100 – 151 Charles Street West, Kitchener, ON N2G 1H6

Introduction:

On April 19th, 2013, 33 members of the Partnerships in Dementia Care (PiDC) Alliance met for a day-long retreat. Participants included members of the, [Huron County](#), [Yee Hong](#) and Bloomington Cove [Partnering Together for Change](#) Culture Change Coalitions (CCCs), the [Reaching for New Heights](#) Village Advisory Team (VAT) at The Village of Wentworth Heights, and the PiDC Alliance [Research Management Team](#).

Our objectives were fourfold:

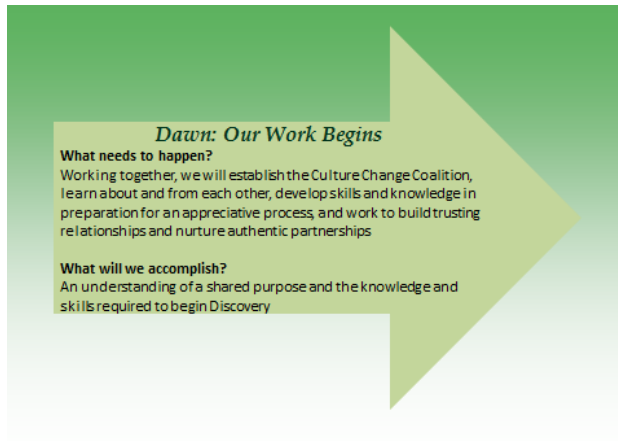
- 1) To share and learn from others' culture change experiences
- 2) To re-visit the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process by conducting an AI Summit focused on the PiDC Alliance
- 3) To identify and document the positive core of the culture change process to date
- 4) To plan a way forward for the remainder of the project

Together, those in attendance at the retreat moved through four of the five [Appreciative Inquiry](#) phases (Dawn→Design), worked to create aspiration statements regarding their visions for the future of the PiDC Alliance, and collaborated to begin to identify specific strategies and actions to make the shared vision a reality. These Design plans focussed in part on:

- ❖ developing methods to continue to share our stories;
- ❖ giving positive feedback within the project and in our Long Term Care (LTC) and Community Care settings;
- ❖ acknowledging and reflecting on existing boundaries inside and outside of the project;
- ❖ encouraging non-hierarchical decision making including multiple voices;
- ❖ embracing front line staff as strong champions of culture change;
- ❖ nurturing positive relationships; and
- ❖ celebrating our progress.

In the following pages, you'll see a discussion of each phase of the Appreciative Inquiry Process during the retreat, including summaries of key points and discussions from the day.

Dawn – Laying the foundation



In keeping with the principles of the first Phase of [Appreciative Inquiry--Dawn](#)- the group:

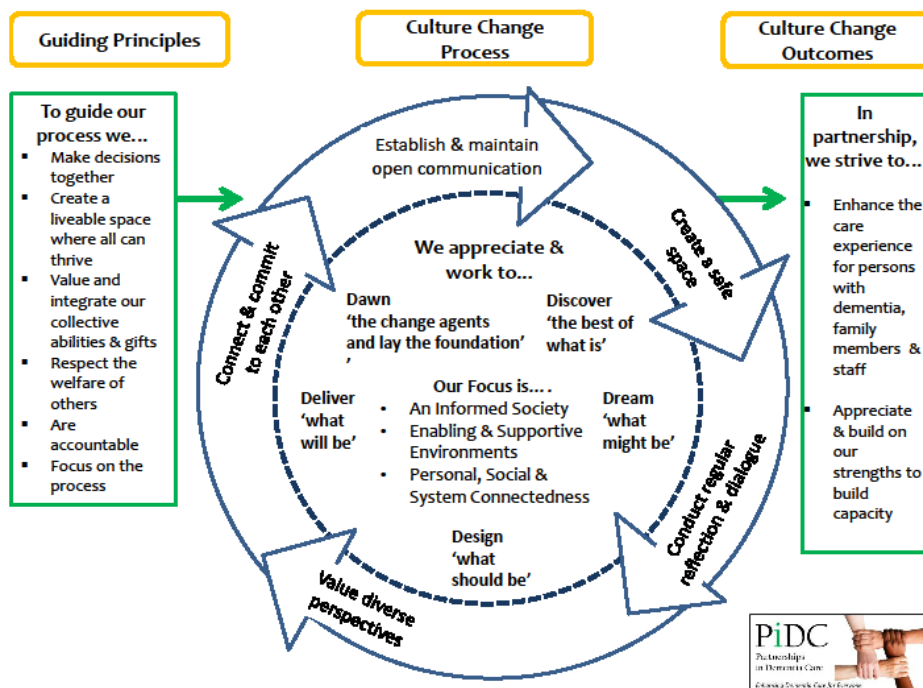
1. Received a refresher on the goals and objectives of the PiDC Alliance project and the theoretical frameworks guiding the work
2. Introduced themselves to one another so that a sense of community and shared purpose could be felt and trusting relationships could be developed and nurtured
3. Collaborated to create 'guiding principles' for our retreat day



Dr. Ken Le Clair of the Research Management Team introduces himself to the group.

Guiding Principles:

- 1) The retreat is a non-judgmental space.
- 2) The retreat is a place where every voice is respected and valued.
- 3) We will listen to one another.
- 4) We will work with a sense of humour!
- 5) We work with a sense of common purpose.
- 6) We work with a need to/willingness to learn from one another.



The Partnerships in Dementia Care Alliance Integrated Theoretical Framework

This incorporates our three philosophical models: [Appreciative Inquiry](#), [Authentic Partnerships](#) and the [Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias Framework](#) and is used to visualize and guide the Culture Change process.

Guest Speaker Annette Simmons – The Story Factor

Author storyteller Annette Simmons <http://www.annettesimmons.com/> gave a short talk called 'The Story Factor'. Annette reminded the group of the value of telling stories and the ways in which a powerful story can work to effect culture change. Annette discussed the ways in which subjectivity and subjective truths can illuminate objective truths and facilitate powerful change.



Annette Simmons begins her talk.

Are you connected to your colleagues at the PiDC Alliance?

We're online: <https://uwaterloo.ca/PiDC/>

We Blog: <https://uwaterloo.ca/partnerships-in-dementia-care/blog>

We tweet: <https://twitter.com/pidcalliance>

'Like' us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PartnershipsInDementiaCareAlliance>

Discovery – Collaborate to discover the best of what is!

Discovery: Appreciating the Best of What is

What needs to happen? We will plan for, gather, and share positive stories of 'high point' experiences, ensuring that diverse voices are heard.

What will we accomplish? The identification of the 'positive core' or what is 'life giving' about the site, organization, or community.



Participants share stories during Discovery

During [Discovery](#), participants had a goal of identifying what has already been working well within the PiDC Alliance culture change process.

Participants were asked to work in pairs and conduct short Appreciative Interviews with each other using the following questions:

Describe a high point that you have experienced (or, what you have liked best) in this or another culture change process you have participated in? What made the experience positive?

In small groups, partners shared what they had learned from one another, and collaborated to create 'positive core' posters which reflected the best of the culture change process so far.

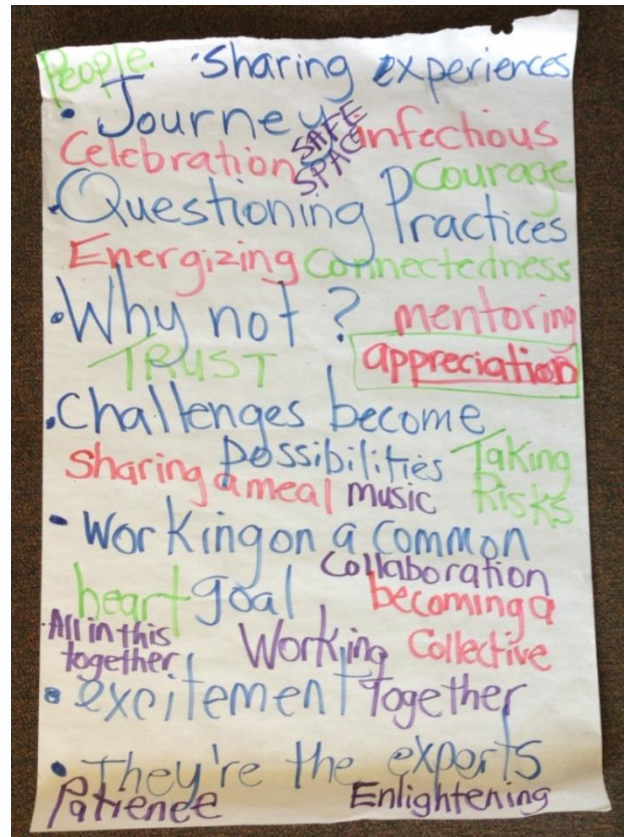
Discovery Data Results! – Messages about what we do best from our Positive Core Posters

- ❖ We have the involvement of *everyone* with the aim of working together.
- ❖ We have already seen some results. We are tempered by patience and encouraged by small gains.
- ❖ We have measures to collect feedback from residents, families, and staff.
- ❖ We have strong external relationships between researchers and the rest of the network.
- ❖ More than residents or clients—we serve people.
- ❖ Culture Change is a journey that we are all a part of.
- ❖ We are witnessing and fostering transformation.
- ❖ We have seen a mind-shift—we have a positive focus.
- ❖ Our culture change process is strong because we work with Two-Way

Appreciation. We appreciate each other, who we are, what we do and why we do it.

- ❖ Our Culture Change Process is strong because it is Connected. We share experiences and stories, we are open and listening.
- ❖ Our culture change process is strong because there is Trust. We trust enough to take risks, to be vulnerable and to see the strength in vulnerability.
- ❖ We listen, ask, understand and act together.
- ❖ We collaborate in a spirit of constant curiosity, demonstrating respect and valuing all as contributors.
- ❖ We value celebration and have aspirations.
- ❖ We have successfully created a safe space in which comfort, shared experiences, open communication and common goals are shared.
- ❖ Our enthusiasm is contagious.

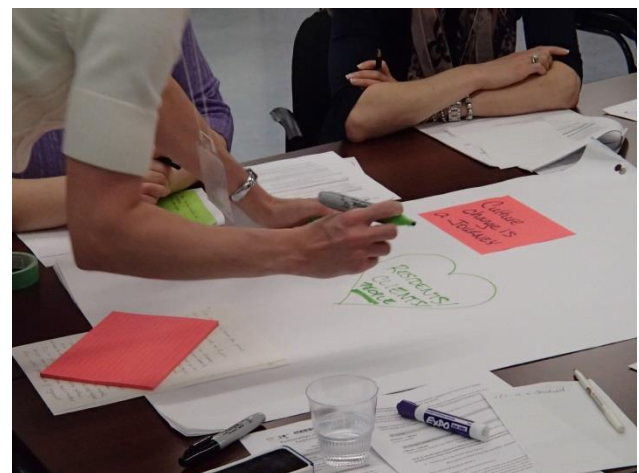
We know that this project is bigger than us. We are in this together.



Phrases and ideas which emerged from talking about our Positive Core Posters.

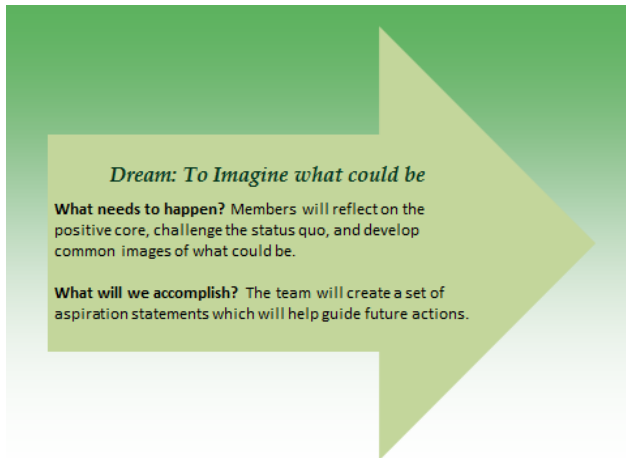


Reaching for New Heights' Tiffany Van Someren presents her group's 'Positive Core' poster.



A group constructs their 'Positive Core' poster.

Dream – ‘What might be’



In [Dream phase](#), we reflected on our strengths identified in the Discovery phase.

Building on these attributes, we encouraged ourselves to imagine a future uninhibited by the day to day challenges caused by financial strains, bureaucracy and other systemic and logistical factors.

Our ‘Dream’ Scenario:

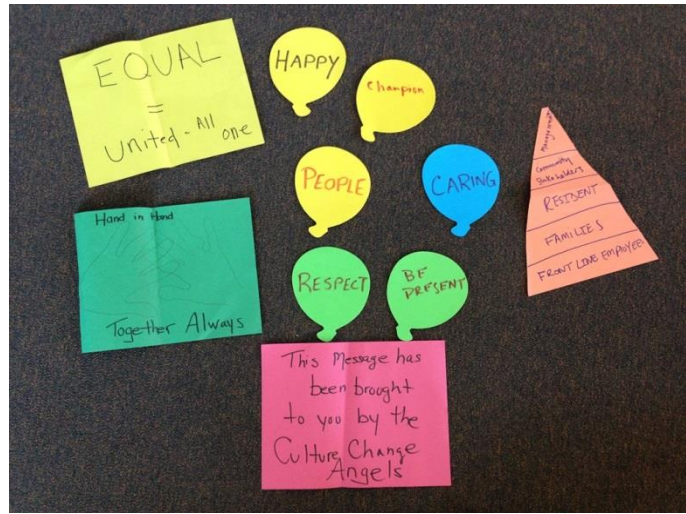
Imagine that it is 2016. People are very aware of the work of the Partnerships in Dementia Care Alliance and anxious to learn from your experience in the project. You have been asked to help facilitate a culture change process in another dementia care setting.

Given what we have ‘Discovered’ about the strengths of our project so far, **what would you share with them?**

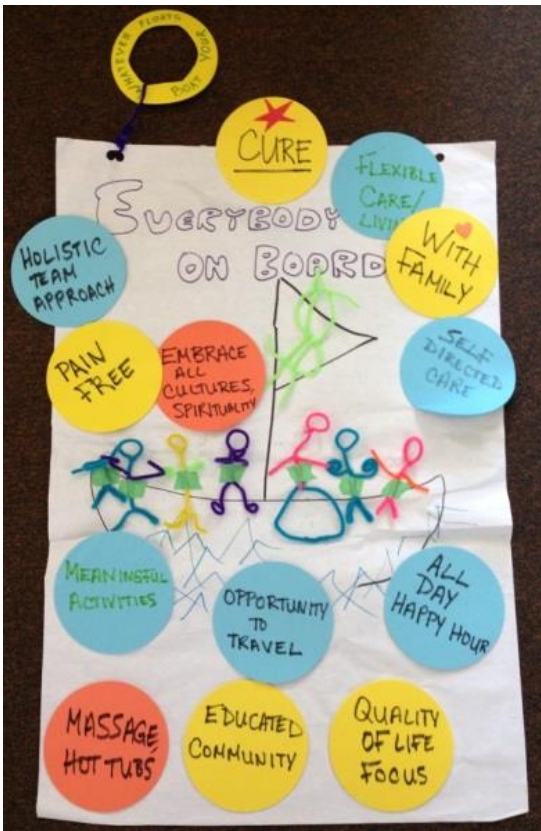
The group talked about their visions for this scenario and then in small groups, reflected on the following questions:

- a. What does the ideal culture change process look like? When the culture change process is working at its best, what is happening?
- b. What are the outcomes of such a process? What has changed because of the process?
- c. What needs to be in place for these outcomes to be realised?

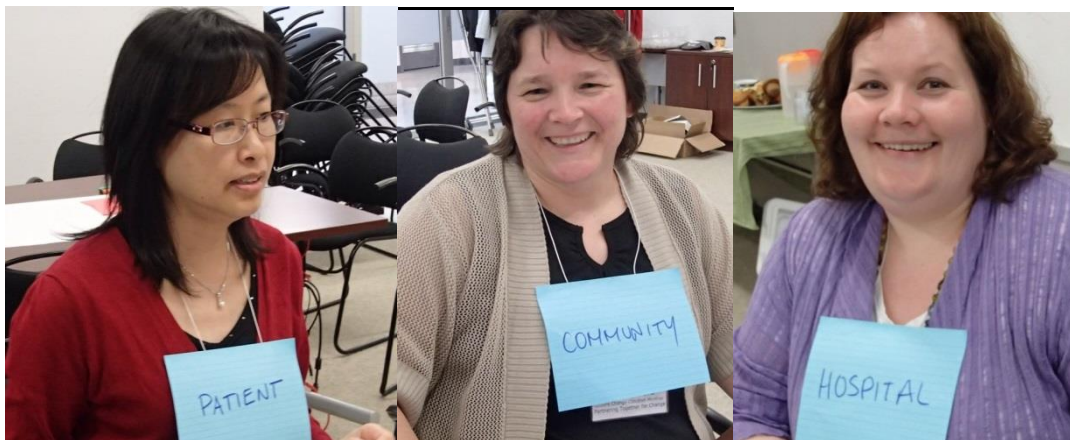
We demonstrated our Dreams through art and performance!



The 'Culture Change Angels' share their visions for an ideal care future.



(L) The Dream Poster produced by one group. (R) Another small group uses the metaphor of Metamorphosis to inspire their aspirations.



Serena Tin, Gail Kitamura and Kristie Wiedenfeld wear signs representing their roles in their Dream skit.

Common Themes Emerging From Dream Presentations:

After the small group presentations, the larger group identified a number of common themes reflective of an ideal culture change process.

- ❖ Individuality/person centered care
- ❖ Acceptance of dementia/educated community
- ❖ Equal voices in culture change process—no hierarchy
- ❖ We are all in it together—team approach (this means socially too!)
- ❖ Learning, sharing, improving,
- ❖ Flexibility is key!
- ❖ Positive energy!
- ❖ Culture change is a journey, not a destination.
- ❖ Fun! Happiness!
- ❖ Creativity is important.
- ❖ Freedom/blurring of boundaries between roles, between LTC and wider communities, between care partner/person with dementia
- ❖ Embracing living!

Four Aspiration Statements for the PiDC Alliance Culture Change Process

After reflecting on their visions of an ideal future, and the themes which came from those visions, each group worked to create an Aspiration Statement that was provocative, grounded, desired, affirmative, unconditionally positive and bold.

Aspiration statements are meant to inspire culture change, and serve to guide future actions in the Design phase.

The following are the created statements:

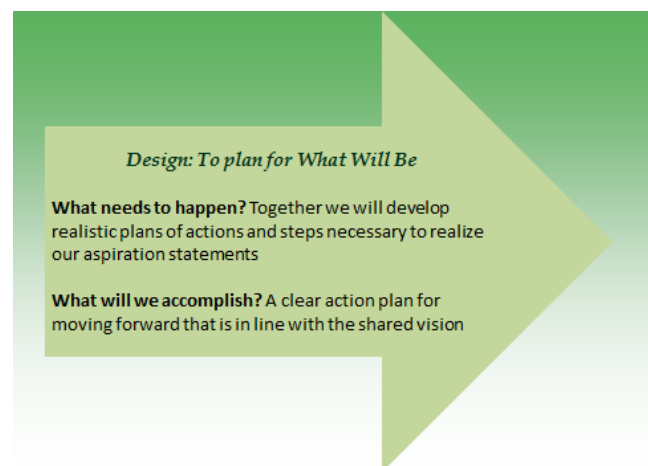
- 1) By valuing all voices and appreciating our strengths, we can achieve more!
 - Flexibility and openness
 - All voices are heard equally
 - Collective wisdom
- 2) We are all in this culture change journey together and we're dancing toward a provision of care for residents, staff, family and community that fosters growth, celebration, and embraces living freely.
- 3) WE are breaking through boundaries to promote meaningful relationships.
- 4) E-Everyone
M-Meaningful
B-Boundary free
R-Relationships
A-Acceptance
C- Choices
I-Individuality
N-Nurturing
G-Growing

Design - 'What should be'

In the fourth, Design phase of the Appreciative Inquiry process, the group came together to design a plan by which we can make each Aspiration statement a reality. The groups worked to identify the possibilities for action and positive impacts of those actions.



Kristie, Gail and Janet work in 'Design' phase.



Designing the Way Forward - Small Group Design Plan Results

Aspiration Statement #1: By valuing all voices and appreciating our strengths, we can achieve more.

WHAT elements of the aspiration statement do you find important or exciting?	How might we make this element a reality? What are the opportunities and possibilities for action?	What will this accomplish? What are the potential positive impacts of the action?
Valuing <u>all</u> voices, appreciating our strengths.	Giving positive feedback. Collecting stories.	Developing relationships is the only way to value all voices and appreciate our strengths.
Collective Wisdom	Support and facility advisory teams Conversation cafes -“Cove’s Corner” open forum	Openness Less turnover
	Creative ways to express individuality	Happy residents, family and team members.
	Appreciation box (like a fortune cookie) --the group should open it together! Recognition programs --kudos board	Awareness
	To achieve more, we need to feel like a family	
	Celebrations! I.e. Strawberry social, Walk for Memories	

Aspiration Statement #2: We are all in this culture change journey together and we’re dancing toward a provision of care for residents, staff, family and community that fosters growth, celebration and embraces living freely

WHAT elements of the aspiration statement do you find important or exciting?	How might we make this element a reality? What are the opportunities and possibilities for action?	What will this accomplish? What are the potential positive impacts of the action?
Celebration	There are <u>always</u> opportunities to celebrate.	Listening gives people a feeling of self-worth.

Living freely	<u>Anything</u> can be a celebration!	Front line staff as champions breaks down hierarchy, improves feelings of self-esteem, and builds a sense of ownership.
In it together	Invite suggestions and <u>listen</u> and then <u>follow up</u> .	Strengthened sense of community.
Fosters growth	Enhance communication by sharing stories by front line workers	Positive plans with more people on board, we will be in a better position to influence management, changes within other organizations and the community.
All inclusive	Team communication	
Fun (dancing)	Front line staff as champions.	

Aspiration Statement #3: WE are breaking through the boundaries to promote meaningful relationships.

WHAT elements of the aspiration statement do you find important or exciting?	How might we make this element a reality? What are the opportunities and possibilities for action?	What will this accomplish? What are the potential positive impacts of the action?
Breaking through the boundaries and promoting meaningful relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -acknowledging boundaries -reflective dialogue on where boundaries came from -reflecting on assumptions - ensure there are multiple decision makers involved in these dialogue. -talk to people to understand the types of relationships that they want. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -valuing of activities that nurture relationships -shift the way that we think about what staff do in their jobs -people are rewarded for building/nurturing relationships.
WE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social opportunities -Dedicated/consistency in care staff -Making and taking the time to develop relationships -Critically reflect on core plan, practices, policies, union rules -Need to work <u>WITH</u> unions. 	These will improve everyone's quality of life!

Delivery - 'What will be'



We ended our day by discussing what will come in the final, delivery stage of the Appreciative Inquiry Process.

What happens now?

One of the great strengths of the Appreciative Inquiry process is that it is iterative. This means that we reflect on and learn from our experiences and incorporate our learnings into future work.

In that spirit and after reflecting on the data collected, what stands out most clearly are the strong similarities in the sorts of experiences shared during the day. It is not surprising that the aspiration statements and designs which emerged from these statements also shared many common themes.

We are in early stages yet, but looking at the inspiring planning actions and stories which have emerged from the day, there are several things we can begin to do now and focus on in the coming months to ensure that we build on our strengths:

- ❖ Work to provide more virtual and in person connections between and within Culture Change Coalitions/Village Advisory team, Research Management team, and researchers including providing a means for everyone involved in the Partnerships in Dementia Care Alliance to share their stories.
 - What might this look like?
 - More authors contributing to our newsletters, creation of new social media outlets (twitter, facebook, youtube), dedicated Knowledge Translation Specialist time at each CCC/VAT meeting to update everyone on what is happening at our sister sites.

- ❖ Create and innovate activities within our culture change processes which demonstrate the value of celebration and sharing stories.
- ❖ Continue to reinforce the value of strong authentic partnerships which do not shy away from boundaries or hierarchies but which acknowledge and critically reflect on them.
 - What might this look like?
 - CCC/VAT members taking a leadership/chair role in CCC meetings, provide feedback on agenda development as well as providing real time feedback to researchers about the process. Creation of an anonymous comment/kudos system in which individuals can provide feedback.
- ❖ Create tools that are accessible and useable by front line staff so that they can act confidently as culture change champions!
- ❖ Use our resources to invest in the sorts of activities we would like to see reflected in the broader culture change process.
 - What might this look like?
 - This means rewarding people for living the goals of culture change—celebrating individuals who go ‘above and beyond’. We must make every effort to acknowledge and appreciate those who model the shared ideal future in the present!
- ❖ Share our stories, freely and confidently, so that we can engage our wider audiences within long term care, community care and policy settings.
 - What might this look like?
 - We can do this through effective use of video, writing and communications and by contributing to the development of a national culture change conference. The conference will be held March 31st-April 1st 2014 in Toronto, Ontario. More information to follow.

Is there anything you would like to see added to this list? If you have any additional suggestions about this report, our day, the Appreciative Inquiry Process or the Partnerships in Dementia Care Alliance, please contact Sacha Geer at sgeer@uwaterloo.ca, or give her a call at 519-888-4567 ext. 35280.

We thank you for your participation in this inspiring day!

Get Connected!

We tweet [@pidcalliance](https://twitter.com/pidcalliance)

We're online: www.uwaterloo.ca/pidc

We blog! <https://uwaterloo.ca/partnerships-in-dementia-care/blog>

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