



August, 2023

Dear Culpeper Business,

In partnership with the Culpeper Chamber of Commerce, Aging Together is pleased to introduce an initiative to businesses who are interested in effectively welcoming people living with dementia and their caregivers to their establishments. **Dementia Friendly Culpeper** is part of a national movement designed to ensure that people living with dementia and their caregivers are fully able to participate in their communities.

Roughly 1 in 8 adults 65 and older are living with dementia; and that share rises to about 1 in 2 adults in the fastest growing age group, those 85 and older. These are people who, along with their family caregivers, want to remain active within their communities, but often feel overwhelmed by the prospect of having a meal out, shopping, going to the post office, and other activities that other people may take for granted. Predictably they often become reclusive which maintains the stigma around dementia, can accelerate people's cognitive changes, and which ultimately represents a missed opportunity for everyone in the community.

Dementia Friendly Culpeper entails providing free training to staff covering dementia basics, how it might manifest in a person, and how to comfortably interact with those living with dementia whom they may encounter in their daily work; and then committing to incorporating dementia training into the onboarding of new staff.

#### What are the benefits of being a Dementia Friendly business?

- You will have a competitive advantage as people with memory problems and their caregivers will direct their shopping and errand habits to places that they know are more accessible and understanding. This in turn will encourage a larger demographic of potential business.
- You will be a business that promotes inclusiveness and by doing so will be listed publicly on Aging Together's website and outreach materials as a "Dementia Friendly" business. You will also receive a sticker for your business window indicating the same.
- Create a learning environment where staff becomes more comfortable and confident in their job, and so may remain employed longer. And by doing so you will be serving your community by supporting increased awareness and understanding of dementia and reducing the stigma that so negatively affects families coping with dementia.
- You will learn about possible voluntary changes to your business environment that will encourage a dementia friendly environment through simple measures like easy-to-read menus with uncomplicated language and pictures, or adding a 'dementia friendly' time in a restaurant or business with lower sound levels and brighter lighting. For our aging population, these types of changes may also have a broader appeal.

Please review the enclosed informational materials. We encourage you to participate in becoming a Dementia Friendly Culpeper business. There is **no cost** to you to be a member, but you will receive recognition for your participation, and help with training. We know finding employees is a challenge and time is minimal, so we purposely keep the training as flexible as possible.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact us if you have any questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,

Ellen Phipps  
Executive Director Aging Together

Amy Frazier  
President/CEO, Culpeper Chamber of Commerce