

## **ACT on Alzheimer's – Preparing Becker**

Do you know someone with Alzheimer's or dementia? Most of us do. In fact, every 67 seconds someone in the U.S. develops Alzheimer's and currently, there are over 89,000 Minnesotans over age 65 living with this disease. It is the 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death and the only one in the top ten that cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed.

Why is this important? Because as the senior population increases, there will be more and more people affected by this disease and fewer people to take care of them. Minnesota is leading the way and has developed an initiative called ACT on Alzheimer's. There are 33 communities in Minnesota that have signed on to this initiative working toward becoming a dementia-friendly community. A dementia-friendly community is informed, safe and respectful of individuals with the disease, their families and caregivers and provides supportive options that foster quality of life.

A group of business and organization leaders came together to ACT on Alzheimer's in the City of Becker. Last fall the group convened and had diverse representation from all aspects of the Becker community including health care, senior services, government, faith, service clubs, education, and concerned community members. These individuals formed the Action Team. Over the winter we assessed the community by conducting surveys of those same diverse groups. We analyzed the results of the survey and identified strengths and gaps in meeting the needs that result from Alzheimer's disease.

On March 10<sup>th</sup> ACT hosted a community event where we invited the public to review and understand the data collected and to assist us in determining our next steps. There were more than 50 community members present. Valuable information and ideas were gathered to help us move forward with conducting two projects before the end of this year.

This project was made possible by grant funding provided by the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging, Medica and Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Our local Council on Aging has provided invaluable support and guidance in helping us through this process.

We are looking for community members to join our action team in helping Becker to become a dementia-friendly community. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Tami Kolbinger at 762-267-8806