



Sarah Blake

International Travel Award 2017

Sarah Blake, a senior occupational therapist working for The Health & Social Services department in Jersey, Channel Islands was thrilled to receive one of the 2017 International Travel Awards to attend and present a poster to the 32nd Alzheimer's Disease International Conference (ADI), *Dementia: Together towards a new era*, at Kyoto International Conference Centre. Holding the conference in Japan, clearly recognised the significant contribution this country has made to policies designed to improve the quality of dementia care.

The conference was attended by 3000 delegates from over 70 countries and 1000 members of the public who visited the conference exhibition which included viewing the posters. Topics included building a dementia friendly society, through the use of education, empowerment and advocating to spark change. A key message throughout the conference was that every government has a responsibility to prepare for the historic adoption of a global plan on dementia by the World Health Organization. ADI estimate that 46.8 million people worldwide were living with dementia in 2015 and this number will double every 20 years reaching 74.4 million in 2030 (World Alzheimer Report 2015).

Sarah presented a poster on the award winning social swimming group Splashchat which is run by occupational therapists, Jersey Alzheimer's Association volunteers and AquaSplash. Clients with dementia and their carers meet on a weekly basis to swim for 30 minutes and then socialise afterwards. Splashchat is an example of an innovative, cost effective project which has diverse partnership working at its core. In 2016, Splashchat entered the States of Jersey 'Quality Health Improvement Award', which recognises initiatives that deliver significant health improvements. Splashchat won two awards including the category of 'Innovation in Practice' and also the title of 'Overall Winner'. Winning these awards resulted in local media publicity which included television footage on BBC1 and ITV news channels reaching an audience of 150,000 and over 10,000 views on Facebook. This publicity has resulted in Splashchat becoming a well known group in Jersey and continues to support the agenda for creating a dementia friendly society.

Sarah was able to share her knowledge and experience of Splashchat with delegates from all over the world, many of which felt this was a unique and fascinating group with potential for development in their own countries. Additionally, Sarah was able to promote the importance of the occupational therapists in facilitating the group and ensuring that all attendees including both individuals with dementia and their carers were able to benefit.

Sarah attended many of the conference presentations and networked extensively. After returning from Japan, Sarah and JAA were able to continue to work with the media locally which included giving a live interview about the conference with BBC Radio Jersey. Sarah was particularly struck by the Japanese culture and how this manifested itself in dementia care innovations from simple ideas to the most advanced technological ones. Sarah intends to present her personal reflections on the Japanese culture, their approach to dementia care and the links with occupational therapy in 2018.

World Alzheimer Report 2015 – full report can be downloaded from ADI website

www.alz.co.uk/worldreport2015