



### **OUR MEMORY'S VOICE**

Singing to renew communication with people with dementia

Music and singing are unique tools to increase the quality of life of people with dementia and to stimulate a new communication between them and their families. Singing makes people with dementia more active and approachable and appeals to their capacities in a positive way. Singing helps to bring back memories of people's lives. Singing gives people with dementia their voice back and therefore helps to diminish the stigma that is attached to this illness.

The Flemish Expertise Centre Dementia and Koor&Stem, the Flemish organization for choirs and vocal music, have developed a new project for singing with people with dementia: *Our memory's voice*. This project focuses on new ways of connecting people with dementia, their families and their environment by means of singing in a so-called 'contact choir'. Singing is possible in several settings, such as a day care centre that organizes singing sessions with residents only, the choir of the day care centre and the local amateur choir that sing together, singers that are brought together from several day care centres, a choir that consists of residents and their families, etc. Whatever the setting, a key factor is the involvement of the home environment and local community of the person with dementia: family members, volunteers, health care workers, day care centres, local authorities, amateur choirs and amateur singers, etc.

The Flemish Expertise Centre Dementia and Koor&Stem want to make it possible for everyone to set up a contact choir in their local communities. Therefore, they have developed several tools: a manual with tips & tricks, a song book with songs that are well known to older people, scores that are specially adapted to the needs of older singers, recordings in different tempos and a website where knowledge and experiences can be shared. In the coming year, an additional coaching programme will be developed that will stimulate local singing activities for people with dementia. In this way, we want to make sure that the voice of people with dementia is heard.

For more information:

[www.zingenmetdementie.be](http://www.zingenmetdementie.be) (as from December, 3 2012)

[www.dementie.be](http://www.dementie.be)

[www.koorenstem.be](http://www.koorenstem.be)

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