

Alzheimer Society

ALBERTA AND
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Supporting People with Dementia in Their Communities

Community Dementia Ambassador Project (CDAP)

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT | DECEMBER 2022



Executive Summary

The Community Dementia Ambassador Project (CDAP) was developed to create and implement a program coordinated by the Society with activities delivered by volunteers who live in or are familiar with the cultural and social values of Alberta communities. The resulting program is intended to build awareness and understanding of dementia and the Society and its offerings.

The CDAP aimed to support outcomes outlined in the Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan and achieve two of its own outcomes.

COMMUNITY DEMENTIA AMBASSADOR PROJECT OUTCOMES

Outcome 1:

Albertans with dementia and their caregivers and health professionals in rural and isolated communities have knowledge of and access to community-based support

Outcome 2:

Albertans with dementia and their caregivers and health professionals in rural and isolated communities are supported in a culturally appropriate manner respectful of community norms

To guide the successful delivery of the project, a project framework and delivery approach involving fourteen core actions were developed. The framework and actions were intended to achieve the desired project outcomes while also putting building blocks in place for the Society to arrive at a successful, sustainable, scalable Community Dementia Ambassador Program.

By following the project framework and delivery approach, the Society successfully developed, piloted, and refined all the core elements of a comprehensive Community Dementia Ambassador Program and, in the last three quarters of the project, began to collect data on Ambassador activities and their impact and created a Community Dementia Ambassador Program Guide.

The Society's commitment to developing, piloting, and refining each element of its Community Dementia Ambassador Program has resulted in an evidence-informed program that, to date, is demonstrated to:

- Help identify priority communities for Ambassadors.
- Successfully recruit Ambassadors in all four of Society's Alberta regions.
- Successfully onboard and train volunteer Ambassadors, including to meet synchronous and asynchronous learning preferences.
- Successfully deploy trained Ambassadors in their local communities.
- Retain Ambassadors for the Society's desired one-year minimum commitment to the program.

The Society's first three quarters of Ambassador activities have demonstrated that Ambassadors have been empowered to employ in their communities, with Ambassadors reaching more than 1,325 Albertans. Ambassadors have also identified their access to the Society's materials and manuals as a strength of the program – resources that were developed and aggregated to hold the most relevance for rural Albertans connected to the Society through the Ambassador program.

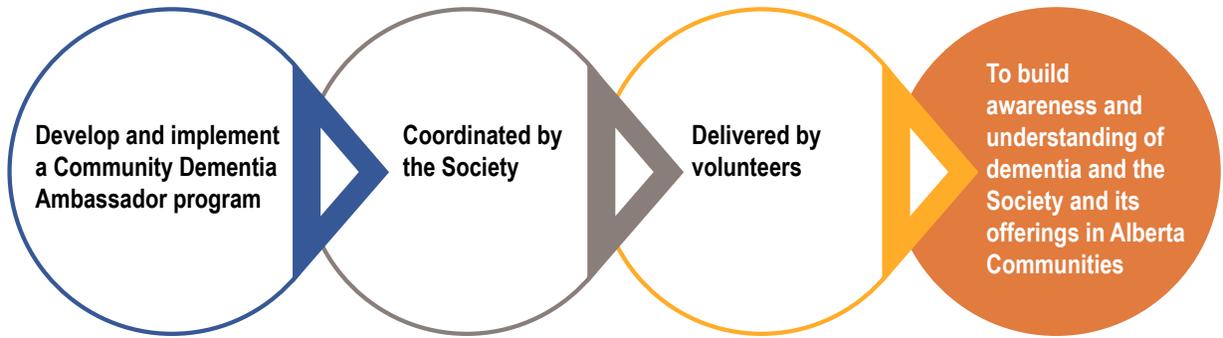
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Strategic Intent

With more than 50,000 Albertans living with dementia as of 2020 and this number expected to double in the next 30 years, the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories (the Society) recognizes the immense benefits of Albertans in communities small and large familiarizing themselves with it, its services, and valuable information related to dementia and dementia-inclusion. At the same time, the Society and its ~25 staff are challenged to have an ongoing presence in all of Alberta’s more than 1,000 municipalities.¹

The Community Dementia Ambassador Project (CDAP) was developed to create and implement a program coordinated by the Society with activities delivered by volunteers who live in or are familiar with the cultural and social values of Alberta communities. The program is intended to build awareness and understanding of dementia and the Society and its offerings.



The project aimed to support three outcomes in the Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan and contribute to their corresponding actions, and achieve two outcomes:

ALIGNMENT TO ALBERTA DEMENTIA STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS		
<p>Outcome 2:</p> <p>Albertans living with dementia and their caregivers are supported in communities</p>	<p>Outcome 3:</p> <p>Albertans living with dementia and their caregivers receive timely recognition, diagnosis and clinical management through primary health care, supported by specialized services</p>	<p>Outcome 4:</p> <p>Albertans living with dementia and their caregivers experience timely, accessible, integrated and high quality care and services</p>
<p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance and expand the variety of health and social support options available, including respite and self-managed care Promote an age- and dementia-friendly Alberta 	<p>ACTION:</p> <p>Identify and share accessible, evidence informed, understandable dementia care information</p>	<p>ACTION:</p> <p>Ensure Albertans have access to programs and a knowledgeable key contact to assist them with navigation across the health and social system continuums</p>

¹ According to the Government of Alberta, Alberta has a total of 1,034 coded municipalities. This drops to 325 when only cities, specialized municipalities, municipal districts, towns, villages, and summer villages are included and improvement districts, special areas, Metis Settlements, hamlets/urban service areas, service commissions, First Nations, Indian Reserves, Local Government Associations, and Emergency Districts are excluded.

COMMUNITY DEMENTIA AMBASSADOR PROJECT OUTCOMES

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Project Approach and Objectives

In order to achieve the CDAP outcomes, a project framework with three areas of focus was developed. The project framework was designed to offer a project delivery model that would lead to the project outcomes while also putting building blocks in place for the Society to arrive at a successful, sustainable, scalable Community Dementia Ambassador Program.

For each area of focus within the framework, specific objectives were established. The objectives identify what the Society saw as necessary to make successful progress on the project outcomes during the life of the project. They also provided an outline for the project delivery approach and evaluation framework.

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify willing communities
- Recruit 18 volunteer Ambassadors (2 in 3 communities each year, for 3 years)

OBJECTIVES:

- Meet with Ambassadors monthly to review progress
- Meet with Ambassadors every six months to plan activities and strategies for success
- Complete quarterly evaluation and reporting
- Complete final report



OBJECTIVES:

- Train the Ambassadors
- Equip Ambassadors with materials and manuals related to the Society's services
- Provide Ambassadors with technology and training on the Society's ASANT Café

Project Delivery Approach

Through the life of the CDAP, fourteen core actions were completed, beginning in Q1 2019 and, through staggered execution, leading all the way to Q4 2022. Given the emphasis on both laying the foundational for an ongoing successful, sustainable, and scalable Community Dementia Ambassador Program and continuous improvement, many of the project activities, including identify communities, recruit volunteers, train volunteers, support Ambassador deployment, and evaluation and reporting are intended to continue beyond the conclusion of the project.

Core Actions	Deliverables	2019				2020				2021				2022			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4												
Establish program goals & objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program goal Program objectives 																
Develop project plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project plan 																
Develop program evaluation framework and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program KPIs and metrics Evaluation framework Data collection tools 																
Establish community & ambassador identification criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community identification criteria Ambassador criteria 																
Identify communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community research 																
Develop recruitment approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambassador role description Recruitment process Promotional materials Recruitment package 																
Develop volunteer onboarding materials & internal processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expression of interest form Interview questions Volunteer enrollment and program forms Volunteer onboarding checklist Program welcome package Provide volunteers relevant technology 																
Recruit volunteers	N/A																
Develop &/or aggregate culturally relevant materials & manuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials and manuals related to the Society's services 																
Develop training materials and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training outcomes Synchronous training, including on technology use and ASANT Café Asynchronous training 																
Train volunteers	N/A																
Support Ambassador deployment through program coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community of Practice Check-in schedules 																
Evaluation & reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reports Final report 																
Knowledge capture and mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Dementia Ambassador Program Guide Refined project deliverables 																

Project Results

To evaluate the results – and therefore success – of the CDAP, three types of evaluation and reporting were managed through the life of the project– project implementation, training satisfaction, and project impacts.

For the first three years of the project (2019 – 2021), project evaluation and reporting primarily focused on progress on the objectives of the project. Once the Ambassadors began to enter program training in 2021, training satisfaction data began to be collected, analyzed, and reported on. Then, in January 2022, the first group of trained Ambassadors were employed in their communities and data related to Ambassador activities – but not yet the impact of their activities for Albertans – began to be collected, analyzed, and reported on. As part of developing the Community Dementia Ambassador Program and, in the last three quarters of 2022, the Community Dementia Ambassador Guide – a guide to developing and implementing an evidence-informed Ambassador program for rural communities – an updated evaluation framework – represented as the following Future Program Evaluation – and set of data collection tools were also created.



Project Implementation Results

OBJECTIVES	RESULTS
Identify willing communities	<p>Focused recruitment took place in 11 communities, with referrals or recommendations coming to the Society from the other five communities. The communities identified for recruitment included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace River, Athabasca, Wainwright (Q4 2020) • Hinton, St. Paul, High Prairie (Q2 2021) • Cold Lake (Q3 2021) • Castor-Coronation and Consort (Q4 2021) • Cardston and Provost (Q2 2022)
Recruit 18 volunteer Ambassadors (2 in 3 communities each year, for 3 years)	<p>A total of 22 Ambassadors from 16 communities were identified between April 1, 2019 and September 30, 2022 – all communities meet the community hub criteria. There are currently active Ambassadors in seven of the communities targeted with recruitment. Between active Ambassadors, those being screened for program entry, and those on a leave from the Community Dementia Ambassador Program, Ambassadors have been recruited for all communities targeted for recruitment.</p> <p>The status of the 22 Ambassadors identified through the project is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 active, trained Community Dementia Ambassadors (Ambassador) from 10 communities. • Three additional Ambassadors from three additional communities are being screened for entry into the program. • One potential Ambassador from one additional community is interested in learning about the volunteer opportunity and program. • Five Ambassadors from two additional communities have left the program or requested leaves of absence.
Train the Ambassadors	<p>Ambassadors screened into the program have the option to complete web-based or asynchronous (i.e., online learning modules) training. Ambassadors during the life of the project completed web-based training; training was delivered to 14 Ambassadors – where 13 are active and one is on medical leave. The asynchronous training was developed based on input from Ambassadors and introduced in Q4 2022.</p>
Equip Ambassadors with materials and manuals related to the Society's services	<p>Active Ambassadors receive a comprehensive welcome package, including materials, manuals, and technology developed specifically to support Ambassadors in rural communities throughout the province, and related to the Society's core services.</p>
Provide Ambassadors with technology and training on the Society's ASANT Café	<p>Active Ambassadors receive both technology and training on the technology to stay connected with the Society, report on their activities, participate in the Society's Community Dementia Ambassador Community of Practice, and access and benefit from the resources within the Society's ASANT Café.</p>
Meet with Ambassadors monthly to review progress	<p>Ambassadors report monthly on their community activities, as well as have the option for a 1:1 meeting with the Society's Community Dementia Ambassador Program Coordinator.</p>
Meet with Ambassadors every six months to plan activities and strategies for success	<p>Given the onset of the pandemic and emerging best practices around hybrid engagement with both staff and volunteers, the Society hosts a bi-monthly Community Dementia Ambassador Program Community of Practice to support ongoing learning, knowledge transfer and mobilization, and activity planning to support Ambassadors' success and comfort in their roles.</p>
Complete quarterly evaluation and reporting	<p>Project updates and data were collected through the life of the project, resulting in 14 quarterly progress reports.</p>
Complete final report	<p>All of the project updates and data were aggregated at the close of the project to culminate in a final view of the project results as well as program impacts from January 1, 2022 to October 31, 2022 – the period of time where Ambassadors were active in their communities.</p>

Training Results

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGET	RESULTS
% of Ambassadors that complete the training evaluation survey	50 per cent (or more) of Ambassadors complete the training evaluation survey	10 Ambassadors have completed training <u>and</u> received the follow up training survey. ² Six of these 10 (60%) have completed the training evaluation survey. One Ambassador went on medical leave after completing training.
% of Ambassadors that either agree or strongly agree with <u>all</u> of the “scale questions” in the training evaluation survey	75 per cent of Ambassadors either agree or strongly agree with <u>all</u> of the “scale questions” in the training evaluation survey	Three of the six Ambassadors (50%) who completed the training survey either agree or strongly agree with all the “scale questions”; a larger sample size will be beneficial to support continuous improvement of the training.

Project Impacts

After working through both the development and implementation of the Community Dementia Ambassador Program, trained Ambassadors were first deployed in their communities in January 2022. During this time, the Society began to collect data related to Ambassador activities as a means to benchmark Ambassadors’ impact and set annual performance targets for the ongoing implementation of the Community Dementia Ambassador Program.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RESULTS
Feedback on what is working well from Ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability and relevance of the available materials and manuals to share with Albertans • Support from the Community Dementia Ambassador Coordinator • Peer-to-peer learning through the Community of Practice • Virtual training and support (i.e., online) • Opportunity to volunteer and make a difference locally
Feedback on what can be improved and opportunities to enhance the program from Ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to asynchronous training opportunities³ • Additions to Ambassadors’ resources, including name tags, prizes to help engage Albertans, and certificate to recognize completion of training and deployment as an Ambassador⁴
Number of Albertans engaged by Ambassadors each year	The nine Ambassadors active between January 1 and September 30, 2022 engaged more than 1,325 Albertans in the same timeframe. Their interactions included brochure distribution, community meetings, presentations, and information sharing booths in the community. The Ambassadors are also doing media outreach, such as meeting with a local reporter to do a write up in the local reporter. These types of broadcast activities will reach beyond the 1,325 directly engaged.

2 10 Ambassadors completed training as of September 30, 2022, which was the end date for project data collection leading into the final report. This is the data reflected for the training results. 14 Ambassadors completed training as of December 31, 2022, which was the end date for the project and project evaluation.

3 This feedback was acted upon and asynchronous training is now available for Ambassadors.

4 This feedback was acted upon and these additions were made to the Ambassadors’ resources.

Future Program Evaluation

By assessing its results through the life of the project, the Society also refined its program-focused evaluation to include key performance indicators related to recruitment and to refine and add to the key performance indicators and targets for training and program impacts. The resulting future-focused evaluation emphasizes:

RECRUITMENT	
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGETS
Recruitment success for different engagement tactics (e.g., web posting, word of mouth, organizational partnership, radio advertising, community poster) used to identify and recruit Community Dementia Ambassadors.	N/A
Recruitment success for different engagement tactics by community.	N/A

TRAINING	
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGETS
Overall number of Ambassadors who complete training	100% of Ambassadors complete training.
Level of satisfaction with CDAP Ambassador training	At least 70% of Ambassadors who complete their training agree, at minimum, that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the role of the Community Dementia Ambassador. Feel prepared to share information about the Society and its services. Believe the Society will help them succeed in their role as a Community Dementia Ambassador.
Level of satisfaction with CDAP support at the end of each fiscal year	At least 70% of Ambassadors agree, at minimum, that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They feel comfortable representing the Society to Albertans. They have the information they need to effectively represent the Society. They have the tools required to share information with Albertans. The Society is committed to helping them succeed in their role as a Community Dementia Ambassador. The Society is responsive to any questions or concerns they have about CDAP.



PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACTS

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGETS
Feedback on what is working well from Ambassadors	N/A
Feedback on what can be improved and opportunities to enhance the program from Ambassadors	N/A
Number of unique activities each year	5 x the # Ambassador
Number of Albertans engaged by Ambassadors each year	20 x the # of Ambassadors active in the program
Level of satisfaction with Community Dementia Ambassador engagement	<p>At least 70% of Albertans who complete a survey after engaging with a Community Dementia Ambassador, at minimum, agree that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the role of the Society. • Are familiar with the services available from the Society. • Know how to connect with the Society. • Know where to find information about the Society. • Found their interaction with the Community Dementia Ambassador informative. • Found their Community Dementia Ambassador courteous.
Open opportunity for feedback from Albertans (i.e., with request for feedback on what added value or what could improve their experience with a Community Dementia Ambassador)	N/A

Conclusions

The purpose of the CDAP was to develop and implement a program coordinated by the Society with activities delivered by volunteers who live in or are familiar with the cultural and social values of Alberta communities to build awareness and understanding of dementia and the Society and its offerings. Through its implementation, the project aimed to help ensure:

COMMUNITY DEMENTIA AMBASSADOR PROJECT OUTCOMES	
<p>Outcome 1:</p> <p>Albertans with dementia and their caregivers and health professionals in rural and isolated communities have knowledge of and access to community-based support</p>	<p>Outcome 2:</p> <p>Albertans with dementia and their caregivers and health professionals in rural and isolated communities are supported in a culturally appropriate manner respectful of community norms</p>

Through the project, the Society developed, piloted, and refined all the core elements of a comprehensive Community Dementia Ambassador Program and, in the last three quarters of the project, began to collect data on Ambassador activities and their impact and created a Community Dementia Ambassador Program Guide. The Society’s commitment to developing, piloting, and refining each element of its Community Dementia Ambassador Program has resulted in an evidence-informed program that, to date, is demonstrated to:

- Help identify priority communities for Ambassadors.
- Successfully recruit Ambassadors in all four of Society’s Alberta regions.
- Successfully onboard and train volunteer Ambassadors, including to meet synchronous and asynchronous learning preferences.
- Successfully deploy trained Ambassadors in their local communities.
- Retain Ambassadors for the Society’s desired one-year minimum commitment to the program.

Ambassadors by Region

Northern Region	Edmonton Region	Red Deer Region	Southern Region
High Prairie/Lakeshore (x2)	Athabasca	Consort (x2)	Cardston
Manning (x2)	Cold Lake	Coronation/Castor	Coleman
Peace River (x2)	Hinton (x2)	Lacombe	
	Smokey Lake (x2)	Provost	
	St. Paul	Wainwright	
	Westlock		

Deployed Ambassadors Active in their Communities

Northern Region	Edmonton Region	Red Deer Region	Southern Region
Manning (x2)	Athabasca	Consort	N/A
Peace River (x2)	Cold Lake	Provost	
	Hinton (x2)		
	Smokey Lake		
	St. Paul		
	Westlock		

The Society’s first three quarters of Ambassador activities have demonstrated that Ambassadors have been empowered to deploy in their communities, with Ambassadors reaching more than 1,325 Albertans. Ambassadors have also identified their access to the Society’s materials and manuals as a strength of the program – resources that were developed and aggregated to hold the most relevance for rural Albertans connected to the Society through the Ambassador program.

Insights and Recommendations

Among the core insights garnered through the implementation of the CDAP are:

- Electing to develop, pilot, and refine each element of the Community Dementia Ambassador Program before it was finalized and reflected in the Community Dementia Ambassador Program Guide was a critical means to help ensure that Albertans in rural communities, including Albertans with dementia, their caregivers, and health professionals, are supported in a culturally appropriate manner respectful of community norms. Piloting each element of the program allowed the Society and, at key milestones, Ambassadors (e.g., deployment of Ambassadors with materials and manuals) to solicit meaningful, helpful, and valuable feedback to tailor the program to meet the needs and support the worldviews and perspectives of rural Albertans.
- The project, which depended heavily on the Society's ability to recruit Ambassadors, focused its recruitment on 11 communities. While the project provided enough time and data to solicit Ambassadors' perspectives on whether they are able to support Albertans in a culturally appropriate manner respectful of community norms, it did not provide enough time and data to solicit input from a statistically relevant sample of Albertans to determine if they are satisfied with their interactions with and support from Community Dementia Ambassadors. This evaluation work has been defined and the data collection tools developed, presenting a future opportunity for the Society.
- Ensuring the success, scalability, and sustainability of the Community Dementia Ambassador Program beyond the life of the project presents an opportunity for the Society, which has a strategic aim to expand the number, geographic area, and diversity of people it serves. With limited staff and resources, a successful and now fully developed volunteer program has the potential to be a cost effective, locally impactful way for the Society to build awareness within rural communities and connect Albertans to its services.
- Given the provincial-scale and multi-community focus of the Community Dementia Ambassador Program, it is imperative to have at least one dedicated resource coordinating the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the program. When a distributed approach (i.e., different staff leading the program in their own region) is applied to the project, it is challenging to align program-level objectives, community criteria, role descriptions, onboarding and training, and data collection, analysis, and reporting. This being said, the dedicated resource(s) must be in a position to leverage the knowledge, relationships, and work contributions of their region-based colleagues to most effectively and efficiently recruit, support, and deploy Ambassadors.
- Of the active Community Dementia Ambassadors, just under half (i.e., 6 of 14 Ambassadors) are representatives of Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), which is an important trend to recognize as part of recruitment. This can be an opportunity to solicit support in other communities with FCSS representatives and an encouragement to expand outside FCSS.



Based on the results of the CDAP and insights garnered through design, delivery, and evaluation of the project, it is recommended the Society:

- Continue to support the success of the program with, at minimum, one dedicated resource to lead the implementation and coordination of the Community Dementia Ambassador Program.
- Continue to take an evidence-informed approach to identifying priority communities to recruit Ambassadors.
- Implement the enhanced evaluation framework and commitment to reviewing the data collected on a quarterly and annual basis to support continuous improvement and identify the role of the program in supporting the Society's strategic and operational priorities.
- Recognize the success of partnering with local community agencies (e.g., Family and Community Support Services) to recruit Ambassadors and research opportunities to connect with additional agencies, including their staff and volunteer bases, in rural Alberta.
- Seek opportunities to mobilize the Society's knowledge and experience developing the Community Dementia Ambassador Program, including by promoting and sharing the project and the resulting Community Dementia Ambassador Program Guide with societies in other jurisdictions.

Alzheimer *Society*

ALBERTA AND
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