



2019-20

ANNUAL REPORT

Alzheimer*Society*
BRITISH COLUMBIA

What does a dementia-friendly society look like?

In 2019-20, together we grew our community of care by:

Bringing the voices of people affected by dementia in B.C. to the Dementia-Friendly Canada project to help shape national programs.

Connecting decision-makers, people affected by dementia and community members at B.C.'s Legislature for our annual Dementia-Friendly Luncheon event.

Extending the hours of English-language support on the First Link® Dementia Helpline into the evening, while offering support on Mandarin, Cantonese and Punjabi helplines.

Partnering with 615 care providers who referred 2,551 new families to our support services.

Uniting more than 8,500 British Columbians through special events, including 7,000 participants in IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's events in 21 communities.

Investing almost \$1 million in quality-of-life and biomedical research.

Igniting meaningful discussions by sharing the voices of people affected by dementia on local and national media platforms.

Working alongside dedicated volunteers who gave 14,975 hours of their time in direct support of programs and services for people affected by dementia.



Creating change

As the world moves through this unprecedented time of change, we remain committed to all the ways we're creating change with your support:



Changing the conversation about dementia



Changing the experience of people affected by dementia



Changing the practice of working with and caring for people affected by dementia



Changing the policy related to dementia



Changing the future for people affected by dementia

CEO and Volunteer Board Chair message

Sudden change can be an opportunity to gain new perspectives, build partnerships and find creative solutions to shared challenges. While we all adjust to the challenges caused by COVID-19, affecting the ways we're able to work together, we'll never lose sight of why: to show British Columbians affected by dementia that they're not alone.

Our work has never been more important.

Last year marked the second year of a three-year strategic plan to chart a course towards significant changes for people affected by dementia in our province through community engagement, financial sustainability, operational excellence and our engaged team. This report reflects actions taken from April 2019 through March 2020, a period almost entirely unaffected by COVID-19, with the pandemic declared just two weeks before the end of our fiscal year. We're proud of the progress made on the long-term goals to address stigma, increase support and education, shape policy and advance research, but more than that, we're grateful for those who joined us because they want to help people facing the disease in their communities today. You are helping us build inclusive and caring communities around people affected by dementia in B.C.

To our families, volunteers, donors, fundraisers and community partners: thank you for making our successes possible and ensuring support remains available through uncertain times. No one knows what challenges lie ahead: we do know we can only navigate them together.



Maria Howard
Chief Executive Officer



Robert Piasentin
Volunteer Board Chair



Changing the conversation: Adding momentum to the movement



“When people treat dementia as a death knell, it takes away the opportunities that are around us all the time. I want people to know that with Alzheimer’s disease, we can have rich lives – it just takes preparation.”

– Ken Walker, member of the Society’s advisory group of people living with dementia and 2019 volunteer award recipient

“[People] waste a lot of bandwidth trying to disguise that they have dementia. Something we know from being gay is that shame can undermine relationships.”

– Mark Demers, Ken’s husband, activist and advocate for people affected by dementia

As we connect more families in all corners of the province with vital programs and services, we deepen our understanding of their experiences to provide the resources they need. To truly transform the future for people affected by dementia, we need to understand public perceptions of the disease and spark the discussions needed to create widespread change.

In 2019-20, we learned more about attitudes towards dementia and developed strategies to inspire support for people facing dementia. People affected by dementia shared their personal stories on a variety of media platforms, as well as with leaders and decision-makers to build awareness, reduce stigma and empower all British Columbians with the knowledge and confidence to speak up and take action.

Guided by people living with dementia and their caregivers, this past year, we changed the conversation about dementia by:



Changing attitudes through sharing the voices of people living with dementia: The stories we told attracted media coverage and inspired public discourse on local and national platforms during our January [Alzheimer's Awareness Month campaign](#).



Inviting the public into our community of care: We hosted open houses at our resource centres in Abbotsford, the North Shore and Nanaimo, and engaged the public in learning more about dementia and the Society's work through public outreach, including Seniors' Day at the Pacific National Exhibition in August.



Leading local, national and international discussions on [dementia-friendly research](#): We shared our vision and knowledge of meaningful inclusion of people affected by dementia in research at conferences throughout Canada and around the world.



Understanding public perceptions about dementia: By engaging in market research, we're gaining a better understanding of attitudes towards dementia within the general public, as well as within Chinese and South Asian communities, and finding more ways to break down stigma and support the unique needs of more British Columbians affected by dementia.



Uniting across borders

In July 2019, we had the privilege of participating in the first-annual [Dementia Without Borders](#) celebration at the Peace Arch Provincial Park on the border of B.C. and Washington State, where Canadians and Americans affected by dementia had a picnic lunch, practised tai chi and shared their experiences through music, poetry and art.

The event, co-organized by the University of British Columbia's Centre for Research on Personhood in Dementia and the University of Washington's Memory and Brain Wellness Center, celebrated the creativity, advocacy and social citizenship of people living with the disease on both sides of the border.



Changing the experience: Reaching more people with the right support and education

“Through this resource, as a family, we better understand what dementia is and how we can support and communicate with our loving bibi.”

– Caregiver connected through the South Asian First Link® Dementia Helpline



We continued to build strong relationships with health-care providers to reach more people, including 615 care providers who referred 2,551 new clients to our First Link® dementia support services. We saw a 71 per cent increase in referrals to our services from health-care providers in South Asian and Chinese communities over last year.

This year we found new ways to meet the unique needs of people affected by dementia across the province. We continued our work with researchers at the University of British Columbia on our First Link® evaluation survey to assess the strengths of our programs and services and identify areas of improvement. We expanded our language- and culturally-specific supports and remain committed to finding new ways of reaching people affected by dementia with programs and services to help them live the best lives possible.

People facing dementia can access the programs and services that work best for them by connecting with First Link® dementia support through a health-care provider referral, over the phone via the First Link® Dementia Helpline, at one of our resource centres or online.

With your support, in 2019-20, we:



Delivered 683 dementia education sessions in 93 communities across B.C.



Responded to 2,156 calls on the [First Link® Dementia Helpline](#), a province-wide phone line providing information and support in English, Cantonese, Mandarin and Punjabi.



With the help of 168 volunteer facilitators, welcomed 1,800 people to 111 caregiver and early stage [support groups](#) in 52 communities.



Stayed active and had fun with 1,367 people in 42 [Minds in Motion®](#) programs, a 20 per cent increase over last year. The social and fitness program for people living with dementia and care partners is made possible thanks to 136 volunteers.



Building new pathways to connect along the dementia journey

We made outgoing First Link® support calls to 9,247 people affected by dementia around the province, up more than 10 per cent over last year, including to clients in remote areas. [Granville and Birgit \(pictured above\), live in the northern community of Sinclair Mills and stay connected through these calls.](#) In March 2020, we extended the hours of our English language First Link® Dementia Helpline, providing support into the evenings. We took quick action to start increasing the frequency of our [webinars](#) as it became more important than ever to share relevant resources with clients located anywhere in the province. This year also saw the expansion of [South Asian resources](#), including dementia education sessions offered in Punjabi, work that we are pleased to continue in the year ahead.



"Speaking my language made me comfortable sharing my concerns and my fear and anxiety have lessened with increased knowledge and support. It's like a friend keeping me company during this journey."

– Person living with cognitive changes, connected to the [First Link® Chinese Dementia Helpline](#)



Changing practice and policy: Helping British Columbians respond to the needs of people affected by dementia



Members of our Leadership Groups of People Living with Dementia and Caregivers met with MLAs from across the province at the B.C. Legislature for a **non-partisan luncheon co-hosted by the B.C. Ministry of Health and the Alzheimer Society of B.C.** The annual event is an opportunity to talk about the importance of building inclusive communities that support people affected by dementia. Group members who are people living with dementia (not all pictured) are: Chris Kensit, Craig Burns, Geoff Atkins, Jim Mann, Ken Walker, Lynn Jackson, Mario Gregorio and Myrna Norman. Group members who are caregivers (not all pictured) are: Ellen Allen, Geri Hinton, Katrina Prescott, Naomi Mison, Patrick Tham and Paul Blanchet.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. was started in 1981 by a small community of caregivers. It began as a peer support group and expanded to provide programs and services, invest in research and create more supportive and inclusive communities for people affected by dementia. Four decades later, we remain guided by the experiences and insights of people living with the disease and their care partners.

This year, with support from partners across B.C. and nationally, we brought the voices of people affected by dementia to a wide spectrum of projects that have a direct impact on daily life for people affected by dementia. We work with many people living with dementia and caregivers who are instrumental to our vision of a more dementia-friendly society. We are incredibly grateful for the support of our valued advisors, advocates and tireless champions for everyone affected by dementia.

In 2019-20, we helped ensure our province is responsive to the needs of people living with dementia, and that their voices are heard and respected in the communities that wrap around them, through:



Facilitating Leadership Groups of people living with dementia and caregivers: We are committed to ensuring the voices of people affected by dementia help shape our key events, decisions and programs. We champion their voices outside our organization.



Dementia-Friendly Canada: We supported focus groups across the country to ensure that this new national initiative was directed by the voices of people with lived experience.



Collaborating with the continuing care sector: With our partners, we engaged in an initiative to define the concept of a “dementia-friendly care home,” and ensured that people living with dementia and caregivers were involved in shaping a [report outlining best practices in dementia care](#).



Supporting people living with dementia to know and exercise their decision-making rights, including partnering with the Canadian Centre for Elder Law on [projects such as Conversations about care: The law and practice of health-care consent for people living with dementia in British Columbia](#).



Dedicated advocates push for change

We are grateful for our ongoing work with two advisory groups, one of people living with dementia, the other of caregivers. Members of these Leadership Groups provide invaluable expertise and accountability to our work and their impact is felt far beyond the Society. Whether through grassroots initiatives within their own communities or collaboration with partners across the country, these passionate advocates are changing the lives of so many people facing dementia. Members helped shape the first-ever Canadian Charter of Rights for People With Dementia and National Dementia Strategy. They're at the centre of national awareness campaigns. They're not only participating in research, but co-authoring studies to strengthen the research community. They're creating change for others on the dementia journey and for all those who will one day walk the same path.



Changing the future: Making lives better today, transforming tomorrow

"Most of us go into medicine trying to have a positive influence on something that matters, and this is an area where there's still a lot of work to be done."

– Dr. Alexandre Henri-Bhargava, Medical Director of the Neil and Susan Manning Cognitive Health Initiative and supervisor of the Alzheimer Society of B.C. Clinical Fellowship in Cognitive Health

In 2019-20, you grew our community of care by enabling us to invest in innovative dementia research, partner with researchers and organizations leading the way in dementia research and share what we learn with British Columbians. We're proud of our support of the Ralph Fisher and Alzheimer Society of B.C. Professorship in Alzheimer Disease Research, a partnership with the University of British Columbia, as well as our role as advisors and knowledge translators working to bridge research and the community. We connected more people affected by dementia to researchers, promoted dementia-friendly research on the international stage and made significant long-term investments in dementia research to change the future for people affected by the disease.

We're proud of the progress we made together this year through **diverse activities and partnerships**, including:



An investment of more than \$600,000 in 2019-20 into the [Alzheimer Society Research Program](#) (ASRP), a partnership with Alzheimer Societies across Canada. Since 1989, the ASRP has funded over \$64 million in grants and awards within the field of dementia research across Canada.



The creation of a new Alzheimer Society of B.C. Clinical Fellowship in Cognitive Health at the University of Victoria, a partnership with UVic's Division of Medical Sciences and UBC's Faculty of Medicine. Fellowships provide local physicians with an opportunity to gain experience and help to increase the number of specialists available to diagnose and treat people living with dementia in B.C.



Supporting local projects such as [Voices in Motion](#), an intergenerational choir for people affected by dementia and high school students, the benefits and cognitive impacts of which are being studied by Dr. Debra Sheets at the University of Victoria.

Your support allowed us to invest almost \$1 million in dementia research in 2019-20 through these partnerships and initiatives.



Supporting research, sharing knowledge

This year, Alzheimer Society Research Program-funded researchers in B.C. continued their work in biomedical and quality-of-life research. They included Gordon Francis, recipient of a biomedical investigator award at UBC, [Nathan Lewis](#), recipient of a quality-of-life doctoral award for his research into the protective effects of cognitive engagement at UVic and Ashleigh Parker, a UVic-based researcher studying early biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease. In March 2020, we partnered with Ashleigh (pictured here), [delivering a webinar to share the findings of her research](#) and connecting more people to exciting research happening here in B.C. Contributions made to the ASRP in 2019-20 helped fund [awards for four additional researchers based in B.C.](#) whose work we look forward to sharing in the year ahead.



Changing the future: Raising vital funds for people affected by dementia

Last year, community members came together to create change for people affected by dementia as event volunteers, participants, donors and champions of our mission to provide vital programs and services for people affected by dementia.

Our network of supporters around the province made our flagship fundraiser, the *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's*, another huge success with more than 600 volunteers and 7,000 participants in 21 locations around

the province. Together we raised more than \$1 million in support of our mission. In Kelowna, business and community leaders stepped up to launch the city's first-ever *Breakfast to Remember*, joining our long-standing breakfast events in Vancouver and Victoria. In addition to funds we received from events, our community donors, including individuals, corporations, foundations and legacy donors, provided over \$8,617,000 towards our mission.

We are so proud of the momentum gained in 2019-20 and grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with committed communities as we face a changing landscape in special events.



More than 8,500 participants at our events generated over \$2,474,000 to support people affected by dementia.



More than \$258,000 was raised through independently-organized events.

*IG Wealth Management
Walk for Alzheimer's*



*Climb for
Alzheimer's*



*Forget Me Not
Golf Tournament*





Supporting neighbours and sparking change at the *Charity Dinner for Alzheimer's*

Last year, members of the Chinese community in the Lower Mainland assembled to host the second-annual *Charity Dinner for Alzheimer's*. The dinner was a source of information and celebration, as well as an opportunity to break down the stigma associated with dementia.

The event included a presentation from dementia researcher Dr. Robin Hsiung and underlined the importance of culturally-specific support for the Chinese community. Led by dedicated volunteer organizers, including Tony Yue, founding Co-Chair of the Chinese Advisory Committee and former member of the Society's Board of Directors, and Maze Fairweather (both pictured), the dinner demonstrated passion from within the community to change the conversation about dementia and invest in critical research.

*Scotiabank
Half-Marathon & 5k*



*Breakfast to
Remember*



*Charity Dinner
for Alzheimer's*

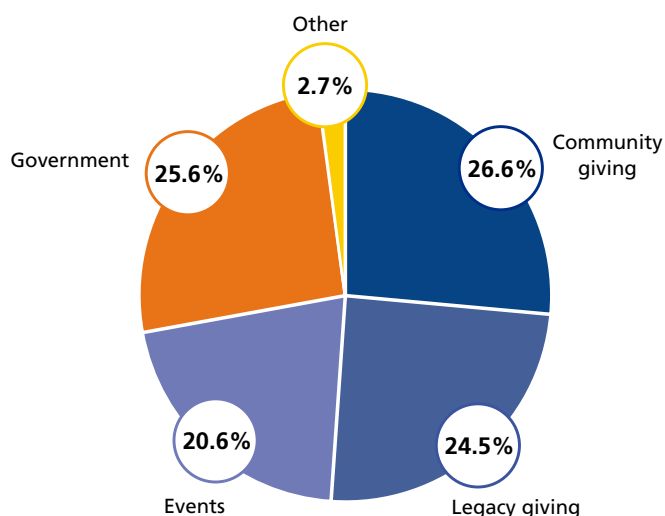


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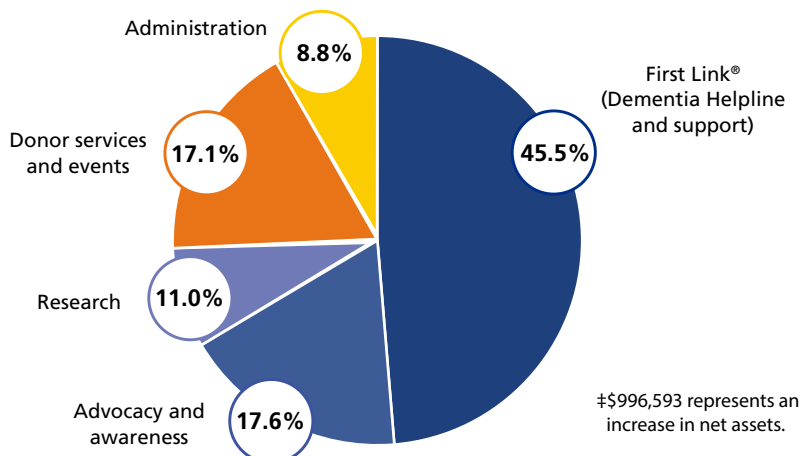
In 2019-20, we received more than \$8,617,000 in support from the community, including through events, major gifts and legacy giving.

When you support the Alzheimer Society of B.C., you are supporting the only provincial charity dedicated to helping anyone concerned with or facing dementia have the confidence and skills to maintain quality of life. Your generous support in 2019-20 not only provided vital programs and services and enabled research throughout the year, it positioned us well to develop new ways of supporting people affected by dementia following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a process that we will continue as we adapt to our changing reality together.

How we received our funds – \$12,006,242



How we invested our funds to support our mission – \$11,009,649[‡]



[‡]\$996,593 represents an increase in net assets.

Visit www.alzheimerbc.org to see the full, audited financial statements.

2019-20 Board of Directors

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"We need to propel efforts to one day end dementia and to provide supports for people who live with the disease. I see the Alzheimer Society of B.C. as a leader in both areas."

– Sandie Braid, donor and Circle of Hope member

Building a Circle of Hope around people affected by dementia

Circle of Hope members are donors like Sandie who see how critical it is to support people facing dementia and have made an investment in the future of dementia care by leaving a gift in their will or other type of planned gift to the Alzheimer Society of B.C. As the need for support and education rises along with the prevalence of dementia in B.C., Circle of Hope donors create lifelines for families by ensuring that support will be there for years to come. We are so grateful for these gifts.

"I've seen the effects of dementia on my family firsthand," Sandie says. "I don't have family close by and I know that I too may develop dementia. If this happens, having the Society here in B.C. will help me find the care I'll need."

If you have left a donation to the Alzheimer Society of B.C. in your will, or you would like to learn more about becoming a Circle of Hope member, please call us at 604-742-4926.

First Link® Dementia Helpline

English	1-800-936-6033
Cantonese or Mandarin	1-833-674-5007
Punjabi	1-833-674-5003

Toll-free and open Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. in English, and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Cantonese, Mandarin and Punjabi

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