2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

Alzheimer Society
BC & YUKON

2025-26 HIGHLIGHTS

This year, 12,493 people were actively connected to First Link® dementia support.

4,388 people took part in our group programs last year, representing a steady annual increase and 15% growth in participants over the course of the 2023-26 strategic plan.

Nearly 2,500 people and more than 250 teams participated in the *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's,* presented by Go Auto in 2025-26, 26% growth over the 2023-26 period.

Nearly 200 volunteers supported our services, a group that's more than doubled in size over the course of our last strategic plan as we've rebuilt our volunteer program following the pandemic.

We launched Chai and Chat, a social group for people living with dementia and caregivers in the South Asian community, a community that saw a 63% increase in new referrals over the previous year.

More than 164,000 users accessed resources and trusted information on our website.

Our vision: A world where people affected by dementia thrive, as hope, community and research unlock new possibilities**.**

Our mission: We work alongside people affected by dementia to change the conversation, change the experience and change the future of living with dementia.

We acknowledge that the Alzheimer Society of BC and Yukon operates on traditional and ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples around the province and territory. Our provincial office is located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), with services on traditional territories in all regions of BC and the Yukon.

A message from our interim CEO and Board Chair

We are at an extraordinary point in our understanding of dementia. Advances in research, diagnosis and treatment are creating genuine reason for hope. At the same time, for people living with dementia today and for the families and friends alongside them, a diagnosis remains life changing. Hope for the future matters enormously. So does having trusted information, connection, support and a community that understands right now.

That is at the heart of why the Alzheimer Society of BC and Yukon exists. Over the past year, we have continued to work in partnership with people affected by dementia to help them navigate the disease and live as well as possible, while also working toward a future in which the experience of dementia is very different. We have deepened our presence in communities across BC and the Yukon, expanded education and support and continued to learn how we can better reach people who have historically faced barriers to accessing dementia information and services. There is much to be proud of – and much more to do.

The year also marked the end of our 2023-26 strategic plan. This is an opportunity to not only consider what we accomplished, but to reflect on the quieter changes that matter: more people finding support when they need it; people living with dementia helping to shape the programs, research and policies that affect their lives; care partners feeling less alone; and communities becoming more informed, inclusive and understanding.

None of this work happens without the creativity, expertise and commitment of our staff. Across our organization, they turn our mission into action – connecting people with support, delivering programs, strengthening relationships, raising awareness and resources and building the systems and operations that make our work possible. We also want to thank Jennifer Lyle for her leadership as CEO and her many contributions, including helping shape our new 2026-29 strategic plan. We wish her every success in her next chapter as we look ahead to the opportunities and challenges of ours.

Our new strategic plan begins at a time of both possibility and complexity. Scientific advances are changing what may be possible for some people affected by dementia, while also raising important questions about equitable access, diagnosis and care. Through all that change our purpose remains constant: to listen to people affected by dementia, respond to what they tell us they need and continue ensuring no one has to face dementia alone.

To the people living with dementia and care partners who share their experiences and help guide our work, and to our volunteers, donors, partners and supporters who make that work possible: thank you. Together, we can change not only the future of dementia, but the experience of living with it today.

Cathryn France
Interim CEO

Valerie Mann
Volunteer Board Chair

Cathryn France
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Valerie Mann
Volunteer Board Chair

Alfredo and Christine found comfort and community in our Minds in Motion® social and fitness program following Alfredo's dementia diagnosis.

Changing the conversation:
Challenging stigma and building understanding across communities

Fear and misunderstanding about dementia continue to stand in the way of people accessing the help they need. Over the past three years, we've explored how dementia is experienced across communities and, by amplifying the voices of people with lived experience within them, reduced stigma and discrimination to connect more people to support.

What this looks like in practice:

- Our Lived Experience Partner Program has broadened our understanding of the dementia experience to create better services, encourage more people to get help and created more opportunities to build public knowledge directly from people affected by dementia. Beyond the program, people living with dementia and care partners remain central to all of our campaigns, including Alzheimer's Awareness Month, holiday giving and the *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's*, presented by Go Auto.
- We continue to build a sustained and trusted presence in the Chinese community, supported by passionate volunteers, special events and ongoing public awareness efforts. We grew awareness and support for dementia research, programs and services within the community though our annual *Telethon for Alzheimer's* and *Charity Dinner for Alzheimer's*. Chinese-language advertising continues to foster awareness in the Chinese community in the Lower Mainland and beyond.

Looking back on the strategic plan

2023-26 Goal: Increase awareness of dementia and its impact among British Columbians.

We worked to bring the disease out into the open, to instil a sense of urgency about the issues and challenge stereotypes and stigma.

- We're strengthening our work alongside Indigenous communities, supported by staff dedicated to Indigenous outreach and collaboration. Our staff have access to ongoing cultural sensitivity learning opportunities while we continue to build important partnerships with Indigenous organizations.

- We're finding new ways to connect with people affected by dementia in rural and remote communities, where distance can make accessing support more difficult. Our team is working to strengthen these connections and better understand local needs. Through our new Dementia Conversations workshops, communities come together to share their strengths and challenges and build relationships.

- We're continuing to learn from and work with South Asian communities to make dementia information and support more culturally relevant and accessible. Our annual South Asian dementia forum, offered free in Punjabi and English in partnership with the City of Surrey, continues to grow – bringing more people together to learn, ask questions and talk openly about dementia. Throughout the year, culturally relevant resources and awareness initiatives help challenge stigma and encourage conversation. A new volunteer ambassador program is extending that work even further, with volunteers sharing information, resources and knowledge about dementia within their own communities.

> "It helps to know I'm not alone."
>
> – Ashley Sharma, who cares for her grandmother

Ashley Sharma balances school, work and caring for her Nani.

> "I love the collaborative process. The way the team engaged everyone and gave everyone an opportunity to have a voice."
>
> – Lived experience partner

Katie Hogan (right), pictured with her friend and care partner Cheryl Milne, accessed support immediately following her diagnosis of younger onset dementia at 42.

- We're working to better understand the experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ people affected by dementia, including barriers they may face in accessing health care and support. Work has included hosting a workshop for all staff members and volunteers dedicated to fostering equity and 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusivity. While our support group for queer caregivers continues, we recognize that a gap remains. Expanded services for the community are needed and we will continue to dedicate resources to take on this important work.

> "What I liked most was meeting others and chatting with them, and learning a lot about how we can help one another."
>
> – Chai and Chat participant

By the numbers: Stigma in BC and the Yukon

Nearly 1 in 2 respondents believe having the disease means the end of a meaningful life.

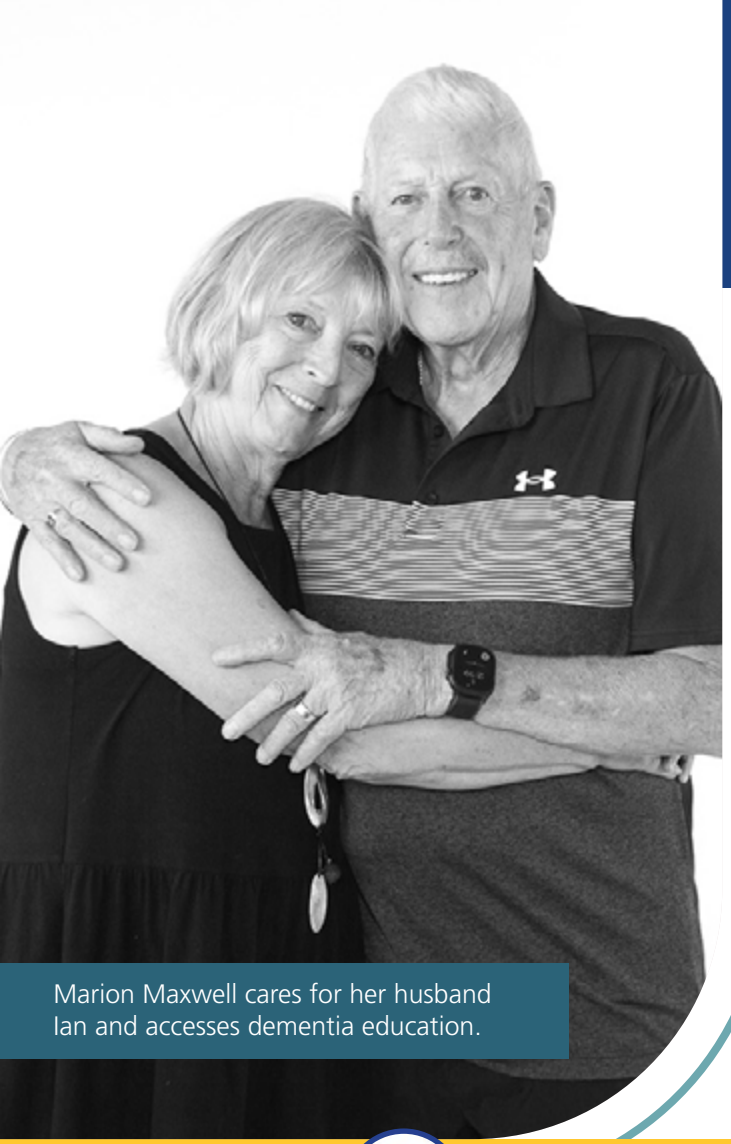
6 out of 10 people are personally concerned with developing dementia, yet 1 in 4 would not want to know if they had the disease.

More than 3 in 10 people fear a diagnosis would mean being treated differently by friends and family. The same amount of people also say they wouldn't know what to do following a diagnosis.

6 out of 10 people already have a personal connection to dementia, whether through their personal or professional life.

Lester and Cindy Gierach have accessed services and shared their story since Lester was diagnosed with dementia.

> “My inspiration is to give other families hope. To show that this is not the end to a journey but the start of something new. I believe this is important because too often people don’t see it like that.”
>
> – Lived experience partner



Marion Maxwell cares for her husband Ian and accesses dementia education.

Changing the experience:
Improving well-being through resources, education and connection

Dementia can be an incredibly isolating disease that no one should have to face on their own. Our First Link® Dementia Helpline is the quickest way to get in contact with someone who understands and who can help lessen the sense of isolation. The Helpline, offered in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu, is for anyone with questions or concerns about dementia – or anyone needing a supportive and confidential ear. Trained staff connect callers to our suite of programming and resources, including regular proactive support calls. No formal referral is needed to access services.

What this looks like in practice:

- Our staff made 16,845 support calls in 2025-26, helping people stay connected and build their knowledge and confidence.
- We answered 4,418 support calls on the First Link® Dementia Helpline in 2025-26, including from 2,254 first-time callers. Over the last three years, more than 7,000 people have reached out for support or information for the first time.
- People referred to our organization receive, on average, approximately 10 hours of support or programming – and many remain connected with us for years. Each year, new people join our community of care while others leave us as the disease progresses. The result is a community that is continually changing, even when the overall number of people we serve remains relatively stable.

Looking back on the strategic plan

2023-26 Goal: Enhance the well-being of people affected by dementia.

We changed the experience of people affected by dementia by connecting them to resources, services and information to have the best possible quality of life at every stage.

Expanding our reach

- In 2025-26, we served people in 392 communities in BC (36 per cent urban; 38 per cent rural; 26 per cent remote).
- We supported libraries – key places of support and connection in many communities – in becoming more inclusive of people affected by dementia through the creation of resources for library professionals, shared with more than 200 branches around the province, where there was particular need.
- We supported more more inclusive workplaces and communities through workplace guides and an awareness campaign we created and shared as project leads on the Dementia-Friendly Canada initiative. The national awareness campaign encouraging simple actions to build inclusive communities, aimed to reach 2 million people – and ended up with an estimated reach of 23.4 million.

- Last year 2,439 people attended a total of 484 education sessions, a part of the 1,598 sessions over the 2023-26 period.
- Of these attendees, 1,491 took part in webinars in 2025-26, up 28% from the previous year.
- We welcomed 1,318 clients to support groups in 2025-26, up 28% from the 1,029 clients who accessed the groups in 2022-23.
- 2025-26 marked the first full year of the U-First!® dementia education program, with 2,365 health-care provider learners trained – 20% ahead of our education delivery goal – by year end.

Harriet, seen here with her granddaughter, stays active and engaged through Minds in Motion ®.

By the numbers: Workshop and webinar impact

96% of participants said they benefited from the sessions.

98% were likely to recommend our education.

93% reported increased confidence to apply learnings.

95% reported increased knowledge.

Eric Li holds a portrait of him and his mother May, who he cared for.

One of the best ways to reduce the risk of dementia is to stay socially engaged. Connection to an understanding community is also essential to living well following a diagnosis. We have created programs to make it easy to maintain social connection, whether you're living with dementia or caring for someone who is.

What this looks like in practice:

- We've made it easier for people affected by dementia to meet new people, engage in social activities and have fun through the launch and growth of Coffee and Chat and Chai and Chat. We welcomed 195 participants to these programs in 2025-26, up 491 per cent since 2022-23.
- We welcomed 1,015 participants to our social and fitness program Minds in Motion® in 2025-26, up 82 per cent since 2022-23.
- We're making activity and education sessions more accessible to South Asian communities. Collaboration with partners contributed to 63 per cent more new referrals last year.
- We provided the Chinese community with more options for support, including by extending Chinese language services to the Fraser region, while our established presence in Vancouver continues to blossom. Partnering with organizations serving a similar population and a strong core of volunteers resulted in modest growth in referrals to Chinese services in 2025-26.
- We began offering First Link® in the Yukon and created connections to help us understand the different needs in the territory. From 2023-26, we offered support to Yukoners via 351 First Link® Dementia Helpline contacts in 11 communities and 15 workshops in five communities.

By the numbers: Social and fitness programming impact

97% of participants said they benefited from the sessions.

98% were likely to recommend our programming.

96% of participants increased peer connection.

Melody Daniels and Dustie Wilson with their mother Kay Wilson, Gitxsan/Heiltsuk Nation. Photo taken in Anspayaxw.

> “The person I talked to was so helpful. She had compassion, she had knowledge, she was understanding and direct with me about what to do. After I talked to her, she mailed me a package that had information about dementia and resources in my area. I just feel blessed to have these resources within my reach.”
>
> – Melody Daniels, caregiver

Pat Hanrath cared for her mother Anna, who lived in long-term care in Whitehorse.

A dementia diagnosis can bring uncertainty, difficult decisions and profound changes to everyday life. Changing the experience means helping people find trusted information to manage what comes next with greater confidence and to stay connected to people who understand. Over the past three years, we have worked to make support easier to find, more responsive to people's needs and available in more communities. We have also changed how we deliver education and support in response to what people affected by dementia tell us they need.

What this looks like in practice:

- Our U-First!® dementia training supported health-care providers in publicly-funded care homes across BC to strengthen person-centred care for people living with dementia.
- In partnership with the First Nations Health Authority, we offered a four-part online education series for nurses working in health centres, building knowledge and capacity to provide person-centred dementia care in Indigenous communities.
- Caregivers received improved education following updates to our cornerstone offering, the Family Caregiver Series, informed by guidance from a group of caregivers in our Lived Experience Partner Program.
- Health-care providers were supported to provide culturally-specific care through our new course on cultural humility. We also created print resources in Hindi, Punjabi and Chinese, alongside on-demand dementia education videos in Punjabi and Hindi.

By the numbers: First Link® dementia support impact

91% of clients reported feeling heard and understood.

91% of clients said First Link® dementia support increased their knowledge of dementia and/or available supports.

95% would recommend accessing First Link®.

93% reported increased connection

Deepening impact

- Over the 2023-26 period, we had 172,303 client service interactions with people in communities across BC and the Yukon.
- In 2025-26, each client connected with us an average of more than 5 times, up from 3.8 in 2022-23 – reflecting deeper engagement with our programs and supports.
- People consistently told us our programs made a difference. Across First Link® program and service evaluations, 86 to 95% of respondents reported positive outcomes – from greater knowledge and confidence to feeling more connected and better able to find the support they need.

Malik Dillon cares for his wife Gerryann (centre) with support from family and fundraises to support others affected by dementia.

> “As my dad’s dementia progresses, I feel like I have support from those in the group who have walked this road before, whose person is maybe farther along. It makes such a difference to be able to draw from their knowledge and experience, and to know they understand a lot of what I am sharing.”
>
> – Support group participant

Anne Petrie, former CBC journalist and author, shared her experience living with dementia at *Breakfast to Remember.*

Changing the future:

Changing research, policy and the dementia-inclusive landscape through the voices of lived experience

Too often, people directly affected by dementia have been left out of making the decisions that impact their future the most. We believe that research and policy must include people with lived experience. We continue to champion the voices of people affected by dementia to effect legislative, policy and programming changes. Guided by their expertise, we explored partnerships to create more dementia-inclusive organizations and worked collaboratively to make dementia research more relevant for people affected by dementia.

What this looks like in practice:

- We connected researchers with people with lived experience for meaningful conversations about supporting research at our annual research luncheons. In 2025-26, we held a first event in Prince George and continued events in Vancouver and Victoria.
- Building on our advocacy during the 2024 provincial election, dementia was included in every major party's platform. Throughout 2025-26, we advanced these commitments with elected officials.
- We brought the perspectives of people living with dementia into the international discussion on emerging disease-modifying drugs. We held focus groups to hear how they felt about the drugs' risks and benefits and presented this research nationally and internationally, including in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Ontario at the 2025 Alzheimer's Association International Conference.

Looking back on the strategic plan

2023-26 Goal: Champion change.

We changed how people affected by dementia are included, supported and engaged within their communities, in research and within the broader policy landscape.

> Sitting at a table with those young researchers gave me an opening to have a really rich conversation with them about understanding what priorities they're trying to figure out in their research.
>
> – Andrew Reid, Lived Experience Partner at the Vancouver Research Luncheon

Lived Experience Partner Mark Breslaw shared his story with BC legislators at the Legislature Luncheon.

- Travelling while living with dementia can be a major source of stress. Through our continued partnership with the Vancouver International Airport, we trained nearly 200 airport volunteers in dementia awareness and communication and provided input on environmental design, including quiet spaces and dementia-inclusive furniture – helping make travel more accessible and less stressful for people affected by dementia. This work has also informed the travel rehearsal program, launched in 2025 to allow travellers to practise navigating the airport before their travel day. We worked closely with the airport and board member Jim Mann, who lives with dementia, to share advice on dementia-friendly air travel through a widely-accessed webinar.

> “Engaging with people with lived experience can be incredibly valuable for students because it helps bridge the gap between science and real life. [It] taught me to ground research into human value, not just scientific outcomes, giving my work a greater sense of purpose.”
>
> – Student researcher at UVic

By the numbers: Dementia in BC and the Yukon

In BC and the Yukon, it’s estimated that more than 85,000 people currently live with dementia.

An estimated 50,400 care partners in BC provide 67.9 million hours per year of unpaid care.

By 2050, the number of Indigenous people living with dementia in BC is projected to increase 286%, far beyond the anticipated increase of 218% in the overall population.

By 2050, 1 in 3 people who live with dementia in BC will be of Asian origin. This is an increase of more than 700% from 2020.

Research investment

- We're helping make biomedical research more inclusive of people affected by dementia. *Collaborative Minds*, a pair of resource guides designed for researchers and people affected by dementia, were created in partnership with Emily Carr University's Health Design Lab, the University of Victoria and an advisory committee of people living with dementia and biomedical researchers.
- We helped advance BC-based research on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias with the launch of a new initiative, alongside funding partners, in November 2025.

- From 2023-26, we invested more than $2 million to support dementia research right here in BC.
- In this same period, there were 14 active BC-based research projects through partnership with Health Research BC and 24 research projects through the Alzheimer Society Research Program.
- Projects and initiatives explored risk reduction, diagnosis, treatment and support at all stages of the dementia experience.

We shared the perspectives of people affected by dementia on disease-modifying therapies at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in Toronto.

> "Biomedical research is a team sport, but we are not taught how to engage with community members."
>
> – Researcher and contributor to *Collaborative Minds*

A participant of this year's *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's,* presented by Go Auto in Vancouver.

Changing the future:
The incredible power of an engaged community

Our work is made possible because thousands of people choose to contribute in different ways – by giving, volunteering, attending our events or sharing their expertise.

That collective effort matters. More than 65 per cent of our funding comes from the community.

This generosity helps ensure people find information and support when they need it, and connect with others who understand and benefit from programs in communities across BC and Yukon. It also helps move research forward and builds hope for a different future.

Our volunteers bring another kind of generosity: their time.

They facilitate support groups and programs, help organize events, serve on our Board and contribute their skills in countless other ways. Many have a connection to dementia and turn that experience into something that can help others.

We see the strength of community when people come together. At events large and small – including the *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's*, presented by Go Auto – people walk, volunteer, fundraise and gather in support of someone they love or in memory of someone they miss.

The sense of community created is equally as important as the funds raised.

Making a difference through community events

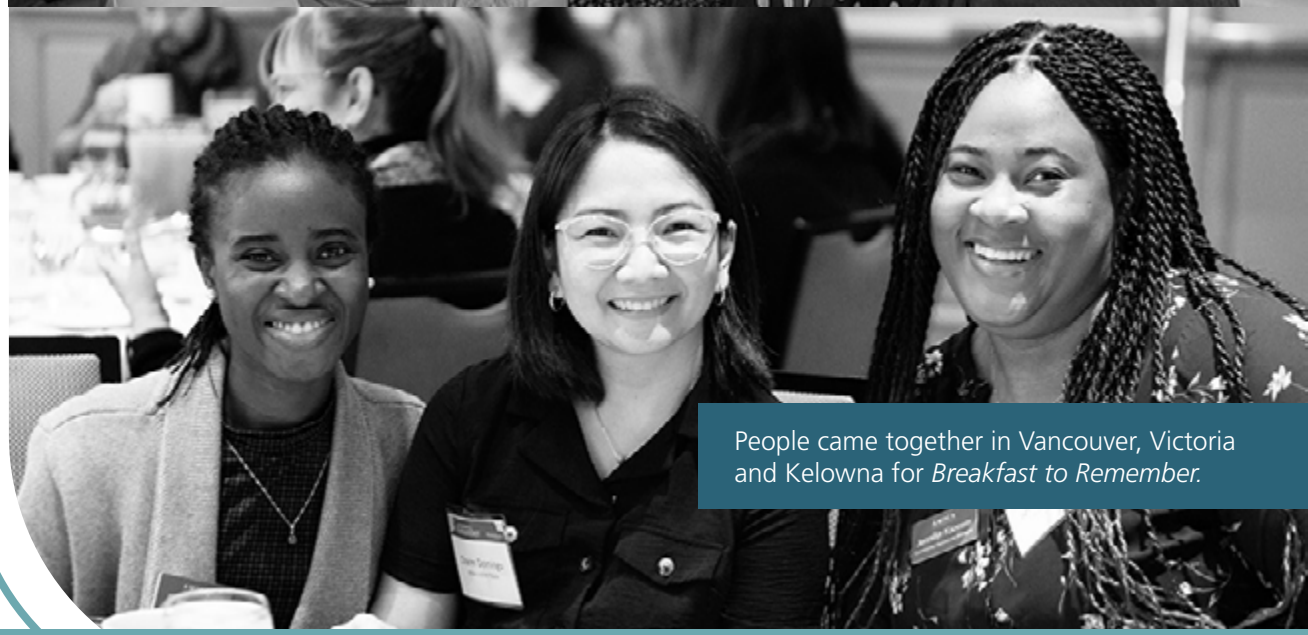
More than 500 volunteers helped bring our special events to life last year. For some participants, an event is their first connection with the Alzheimer Society of BC and Yukon – and the first time they realize there is a whole community here for them.

A legacy for the future:
Planned gifts and long-term sustainability

Some people support our work during their lifetime and decide they want that support to continue beyond it. Gifts left in wills have become an increasingly important part of what makes our work possible. They are deeply personal gifts, often made by people and families who have faced dementia and want something positive to come from that experience.

These gifts allow us to think beyond the year in front of us. They help ensure future generations will have somewhere to turn for support, while contributing to research and to the possibility that living with dementia will one day be very different. In that sense, a legacy gift is exactly that: one generation helping to shape the experience of the next.

Researchers Dr. Lillian Hung (centre) and Joey Wong (right) of UBC's IDEA lab, on the set of the *Telethon for Alzheimer's* with host Lily Poon.



People came together in Vancouver, Victoria and Kelowna for *Breakfast to Remember.*

> "Being able to give back to people through a community that has helped you is extremely rewarding."
>
> - Deb Angell, long-time support group and event volunteer, first connected as a care partner

Board of directors

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Partner, Lawson Lundell LLP

Sandra Kolarcik, Vice Chair
CPA - Retired

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Jim Mann, Director
Dementia advocate, Lived experience partner, person living with dementia

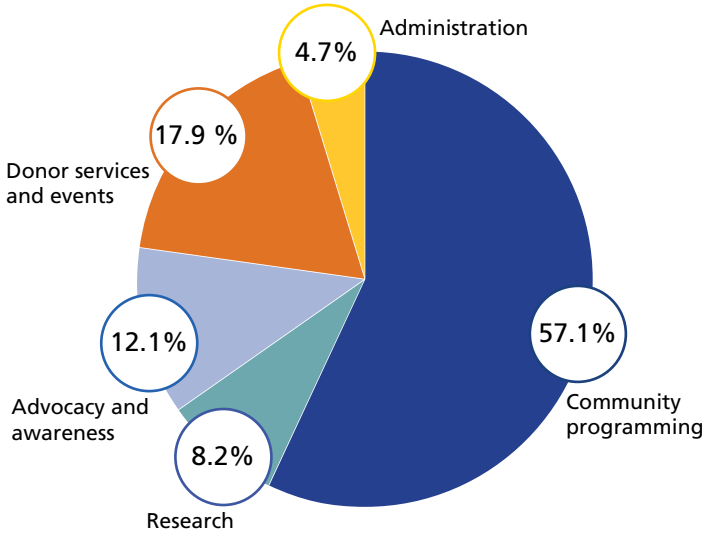
Shauna Olney, Director
Member, UN International Civil Service Commission

Andre Van Ryk, Director
Founder & Owner, H&H Total Care Services

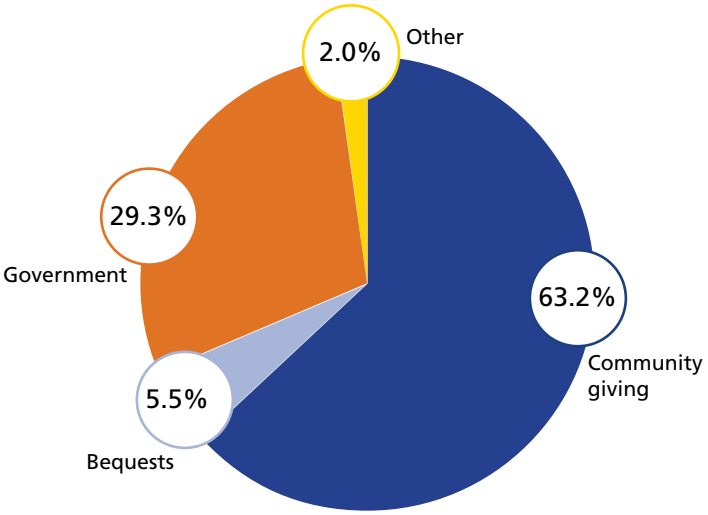
Financial stewardship:

Supporting families now, shaping the future

How we invested funds in our mission



How we received our funds



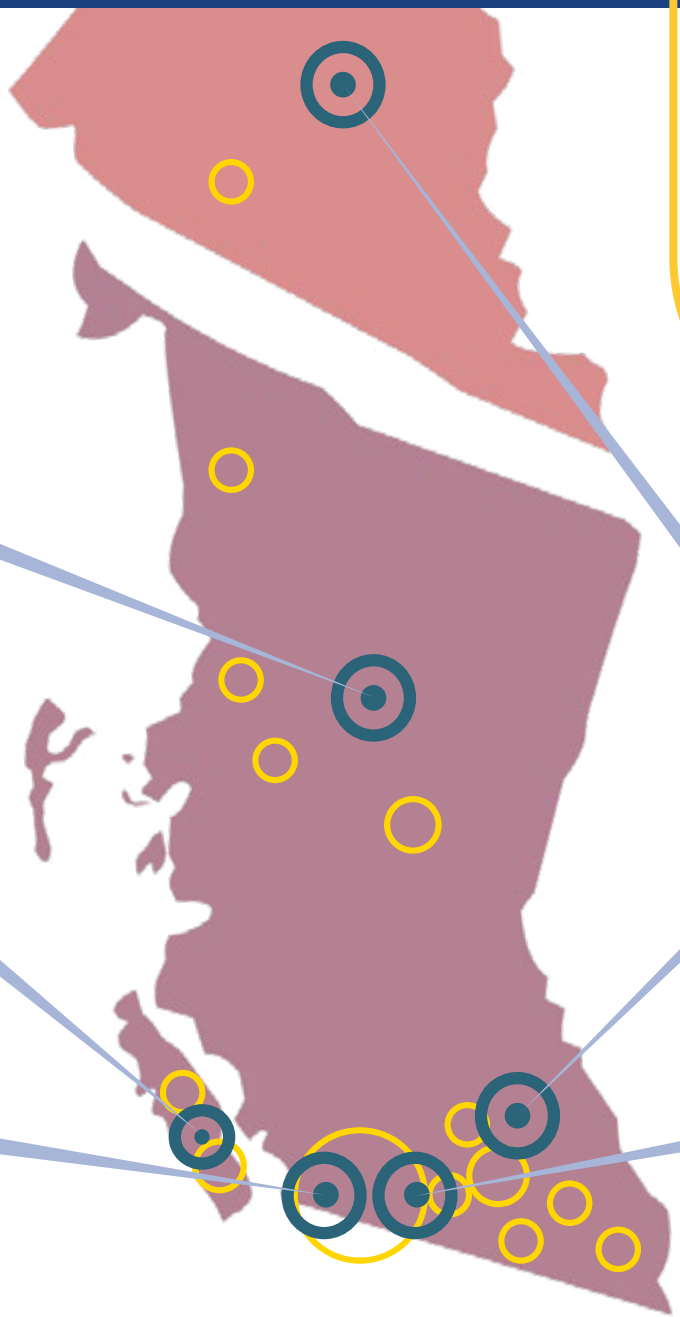
The generosity of our donors comes with trust and a responsibility to use resources thoughtfully. These gifts, together with government funding and other revenue, allow us to provide programs, education and support across BC and the Yukon, while investing in research and new ways to respond to the needs of people affected by dementia.

We need to be there for the person who reaches out for help now, while making choices that will allow us to respond to the growing number of people affected by dementia. As we find new ways to reach people where they are, we're also learning more about why others haven't connected with us due to geography, language, culture or a lack of awareness. Every dollar helps move that work forward. And behind those dollars are people: donors, volunteers, partners and communities who share our belief in a future where people affected by dementia can thrive, as hope, community and research unlock new possibilities.

Changing the experience today:
Regional service highlights in 2025-26

Here is a snapshot of how we supported people facing dementia in 2025-26. A "contact" is each time a client participates in a program or connects with us one-on-one.

Lived experience partners help shape our work, sharing their perspectives and experiences to help us better understand what people need in their communities.



North
453 Clients served | 816 Client contacts

Vancouver Island
2,607 Clients served | 11,583 Client contacts

Vancouver Coastal
2,927 Clients served | 15,369 Client contacts

Yukon
124 Clients served* | 383 Client contacts

Interior
1,993 Clients served | 8,740 Client contacts

Fraser
4,246 Clients served | 21,041 Client contacts

**First Link® Dementia Helpline only.*

Lived experience partners

- Metro Vancouver: 36
- Vancouver Island: 12
- Southern Interior: 9
- Northern BC: 6
- Yukon (Whitehorse): 2

Lived experience partners are located across BC and Yukon, with the greatest representation in more densely populated regions. We're continuing outreach to broaden representation in the North, East Kootenays, Interior and Yukon beyond Whitehorse.

First Link® Dementia Helpline

1-800-936-6033

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

Alzheimer Society
BC & YUKON

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WEBSITE: www.alzheimerbc.org
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Charitable registration number:
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Front cover: Mark Breslaw, who lives with younger onset dementia, and his wife Shonna.

Above: John Smith (centre), a caregiver to his wife Rae, was honoured at the Vancouver *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's*, presented by Go Auto.