

Alzheimer Society

BRITISH COLUMBIA



2023-24
Annual Report

Expanding services, growing our community and fostering connections

Here are some highlights of our 23-24 year:



We launched our Lived Experience Partner Program, so people living with dementia and caregivers can support, inform and guide our work in a way that recognizes their unique perspectives, experiences and abilities.



The First Link® Dementia Helpline offered support in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu. This year, **3,424** people connected with us, with **5,188** emails and phone calls being received in all languages.



We continued to build relationships within Indigenous and South Asian communities to help understand attitudes as well as how to develop and expand inclusive dementia programming.



Consistent with last year, we received **3,097** new referrals to First Link® dementia support services from **618** health-care providers.



More than **118** volunteers shared their time, energy and skills to support our programs and services and over **400** people from around the province supported our fundraising and community events.



More than **1,900** people from **20** communities raised awareness and vital funds for families affected by dementia at this year's *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's*, presented by Go Auto.

We respectfully acknowledge that the Alzheimer Society of B.C. operates on the unceded and traditional territories of Indigenous peoples around the province. Our provincial office is located on the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Skwx̱ wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, with regional resource centres located on traditional territories in all regions of B.C. Our vision for a dementia-friendly province – where people living with dementia and their caregivers are welcomed, included and supported – will only be possible through ensuring that everyone living on these territories has access to support that is culturally-safe, barrier-free and free from racism.



We welcomed
4,288 in-person
and virtual participants
to our dementia support
programs, a **4%**
increase from the
previous year.

A message from our Board Chair and CEO

This year, we completed the first of our three-year (2023-2026) strategic plan. We have worked closely alongside people with lived experience to build a strong foundation of support for people affected by dementia, no matter who they are or where they live. We have innovated and we have learned. We have affirmed our commitment to ensuring no one has to face dementia alone.

We grew our Lived Experience Partner Program so more people living with dementia and caregivers could share their expertise and co-create with us. By sharing their experience, these community members are finding new ways of challenging stigma. We created places and spaces for connection, connecting people from 421 urban, rural and remote British Columbian communities to First Link® support, including more clients than ever from equity-deserving communities. We continued to build partnerships with leaders in the field of dementia research and advocate for inclusive research practices to ensure research findings are accessible and actionable.

This year's release of the second Landmark study focused on ethnic origins, sex and age in relation to dementia. The report shows just how urgently we need to work together toward better equity, diversity and inclusion in dementia research, prevention and care. By 2050, there is projected to be a 286 per cent increase in Indigenous people living with dementia in B.C., while an estimated one out of three people diagnosed will be of Asian origin. We have made important inroads here, but there is still much left to do.

We wholeheartedly thank every member of our community of care – our clients, donors, lived experience partners, volunteers, sponsors, partners and community supporters – for their unwavering dedication throughout 2023-24. Your generosity and steadfast commitment are the driving force behind our efforts to create meaningful change.



Jen Lyle
Chief Executive Officer



Jennifer Hystad
Volunteer Board Chair

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

Reducing stigma, challenging stereotypes and identifying opportunities to enhance care



We reduced stigma and challenged stereotypes through campaigns and building new relationships with community members. During Alzheimer's Awareness Month, our spokespeople shared ways they've continued to live a meaningful life after receiving a diagnosis.

Pictured: Some of our new lived experience partners, speaking at a panel discussion. The program provides opportunities for people living with dementia and caregivers to purposefully participate in a way that recognizes their unique perspectives and abilities. We rely on their firsthand knowledge of the disease to better understand the experience and ensure what matters most to people living with dementia and caregivers is reflected in all we do.

Here are some of the outcomes of our dementia programming in 2023-24:

Creating places and spaces for connection

People affected by dementia and connected to South Asian communities had an opportunity to discuss specific cultural and linguistic barriers to accessing dementia supports and share their perspectives on ways we could address stigma, gaps in care and opportunities for improvement at our first South Asian Dementia Forum. We've already incorporated some of these insights into our programs and services.



"Thank you for the invitation to today's forum on dementia. I found the information and the discussions with the other people very helpful. Appreciate your time and effort in setting up this event."

– Forum participant



95% of participants reported increased knowledge of dementia as a result of our programming, while **90%** reported increased confidence to apply what they learned to their daily life.



84% of program participants reported feeling improved peer connectedness and/or reduced isolation as a result of their participation.

CHANGING THE EXPERIENCE

Building relationships and expanding support



Society staff and community members

We are committed to building a dementia-friendly province, where people affected by dementia are welcomed, supported and included, including people from equity-deserving communities who face additional barriers to accessing support. We continued to offer Minds in Motion® in Cantonese and Mandarin and launched the program in Punjabi, helping more people with South Asian backgrounds to find community on the dementia journey. We translated print resources into Hindi, Punjabi and Chinese and updated our website with new on-demand education videos in Punjabi and Hindi, making it possible for more people to access valuable information about dementia.

Here are some of the ways people affected by dementia found support and community this year:

Expanding services

In April 2023, we entered into an agreement with the Government of Yukon to pilot dementia support for Yukoners. The pilot year showed us the importance of face-to-face connection and finding new ways to engage with rural and remote communities. We will use these learnings as we continue to deliver dementia support services in the Territory as part of a subsequent three-year agreement.



"I learned there were things I could improve by changing the way I lived and things I could not affect or improve. I'm still learning new things and I'm as curious as I ever was. But now I learn a lot slower."

– Don Cheeseman, Yukon resident and person living with dementia



Minds in Motion®, our social and fitness program, had **810** people from **65** communities participate online and in-person, a **46%** increase in participation over last year.



1,121 participants – both people living with dementia and caregivers – joined **905** in-person and virtual support groups, a **17%** increase over last year.



Participants continued to join us at support groups and Coffee & Chat from **127** communities across B.C.

CHANGING THE FUTURE

Collaborating and advocating to change practice and policy



This year, we strengthened our relationship with the First Nations Health Authority, establishing collaborative, open dialogue and defining a list of potential dementia resources to be co-developed for health-care providers and community audiences.

The Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative continued to educate and support diverse urban, rural and remote municipalities, community organizations and service providers across the province to increase their awareness and understanding of dementia and to bring accessible and dementia-friendly services into practice.

Here's some of what we heard from community members and the health-care providers who take our education:

Taking a stand

We hosted our annual Dementia-Friendly Legislature Luncheon which provides an important opportunity for all MLAs of all parties to hear directly from people affected by dementia, challenge stigma and explore ways to plan for the rising number of people living with dementia in the province.



"I was a caregiver for my mother for 12 years and my journey was marked by inadequate supports for South Asian communities. Though the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is making headway with new language and culturally-specific supports, more in-language resources are needed."

– Baljit Kang, caregiver and advocate, speaking at the Legislature Luncheon



Community dialogues in Prince George and Vernon engaged over **100** people in meaningful discussions about their experiences with dementia.



87% of community dialogue participants agreed that the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is doing the right things to improve dementia care in B.C.



Nearly **100%** of health-care providers in the continuing care sector who received our education expressed increased confidence in supporting people living with dementia and **80%** reported that their knowledge had increased.

CHANGING THE FUTURE

Supporting research and knowledge mobilization



We support research and discovery in B.C. through strategic partnerships with local researchers, participant recruitment and helping people make sense of the latest research. In 2023, we initiated a partnership with Michael Smith Health Research BC, allowing us to grant funding to six outstanding researchers.

We also support quality-of-life and biomedical research across Canada through the Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP). Last year, a record 10 B.C. researchers received funding from the ASRP.

Here's how we created online spaces to connect researchers with community members—and what we heard from our luncheon participants:

Connecting people to research and innovation

We held successful research luncheons in Vancouver, Kelowna and Victoria that brought together researchers, people affected by the disease and other subject matter experts to discuss current gaps in dementia research and how to meaningfully engage people with lived experience to address them.



"I was motivated by the perspectives of several people with lived experience who spoke at the research luncheon. They talked about the challenges of mood and behavioural changes in dementia, and after doing some reading, this seems like something we know little about."

– Dr. Jessica Dennis, researcher and luncheon attendee



We hosted **6** "Research connects" webinars, designed to connect researchers and other knowledge producers with people affected by dementia, policy makers, practitioners and communities.



100% of research luncheon participants across the **3** sessions indicated a benefit to them, demonstrating the value of organizing conversations about dementia research.

CHANGING THE FUTURE

Working alongside our philanthropic community



Our supporters are the heart of our community of care. Through donors, sponsors, funders and investments, \$12,780,925 was generated to help people affected by dementia stay connected, feel informed and have the confidence and courage to face the journey ahead. Dementia supports and services can be a lifeline to people facing new challenges.

Pictured: Over the holiday season, our donors were inspired by our “0% cure, 100% courage” campaign, featuring people like Mollie and Gordon, who shared their touching stories of the hope and resilience of people living with dementia, their families and friends.

Here are some Chinese community awareness and fundraising highlights:

Raising awareness and vital funds for dementia support

Our fundraising events create community while raising awareness and funds for critical information, education and support.

We are grateful to everyone who supported our events, including the *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's*, presented by Go Auto, *Climb for Alzheimer's*, *Breakfast to Remember* events, *Charity Dinner for Alzheimer's*, *Telethon for Alzheimer's*, *Vancouver Half Marathon & 5K* and *Forget Me Not Golf Tournament* – not to mention third-party *Anything for Alzheimer's* events around the province.



"I don't know what I would have done without your support. I had the Helpline number on speed dial in the early years. Thank you for being there during my darkest hours. Thank you for existing."

– First Link® Dementia Helpline caller and caregiver



After a four-year hiatus, the *Charity Dinner for Alzheimer's* returned and raised more than **\$155,000** with more than **450** guests.



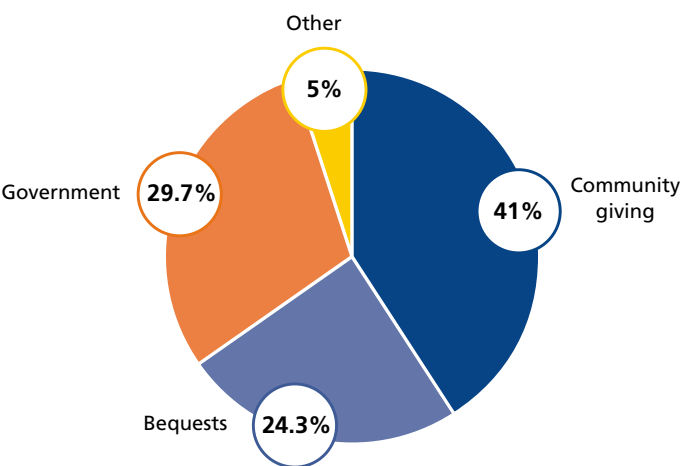
The *Telethon for Alzheimer's* was broadcast nationwide, reaching more than **252,000** households and raising more than **\$141,000**.

Financial

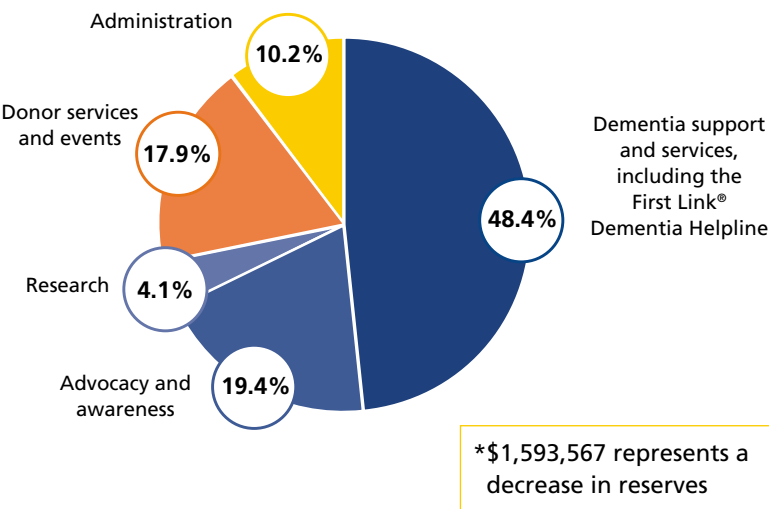
The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is the only provincial charity dedicated to supporting people affected by dementia to live their best lives. We are grateful for the support of the generous donors who have been instrumental in driving our mission forward. This year, they contributed 65 per cent of our funding, across both community and legacy giving.

We extend our gratitude to the compassionate British Columbians who chose to donate, demonstrating their belief in our mission and trust in our financial stewardship. Your contributions have allowed us to expand our community of care, providing vital support in innovative ways. With your support, we help ensure no one faces the dementia journey alone.

How we received our funds – \$12,780,925*



How we invested funds in our mission – \$14,374,492*



Board of Directors

Paul Blanchet – Vice-president, iCompass Technologies (retired), Lived experience partner, Caregiver

Sheri Hundseth – Director of Indigenous Relations & Community Engagement, St. Paul’s Hospital

Jennifer Hystad (Chair) – Partner, The Howe Group

Raman Johal – Partner, Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP

Karen Tanaka (Vice-chair) – COO, Vancouver Chinatown Foundation

Wyman Chin – SVP and Chief Information Officer, Pacific Blue Cross

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

Sauna Olney – Member, UN International Civil Service Commission 2022-2025

Amy McCallion – Corporate Secretary, BC Hydro Board of Directors

Douglas Easton – Secretary/Treasurer and Chair, Finance and Audit Committee

THANK YOU TO DONORS

Create a lasting legacy



Hundreds of donors like Janet Woolgar have made an incredible commitment to the Alzheimer Society of B.C. by not only donating during their lifetime but also by leaving a gift in their will. As the number of people affected by dementia in B.C. continues to rise, our Circle of Hope legacy donors help ensure we will be there to help for years to come. A gift in one's will is often the most significant donation a person will make in their life. Making an investment into the future of dementia support – something that becomes part of a lasting legacy – is easier than you might think. For more information, visit alzbc.org/lasting-legacy or call 604-742-4906 or 604-742-4926.

“Dementia has touched my family, inspiring my commitment to this cause. The Alzheimer Society of B.C. has been an invaluable resource for me, and I’ve been a proud supporter for years. I have the privilege of knowing that during my lifetime, and beyond, I will continue to support this work.”

– Janet Woolgar, Circle of Hope legacy donor

First Link® Dementia Helpline

English 1-800-936-6033

Cantonese or Mandarin 1-833-674-5007

Punjabi, Hindi or Urdu 1-833-674-5003

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 and Urdu.

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Charitable registration
number: #11878 4891 RR0001