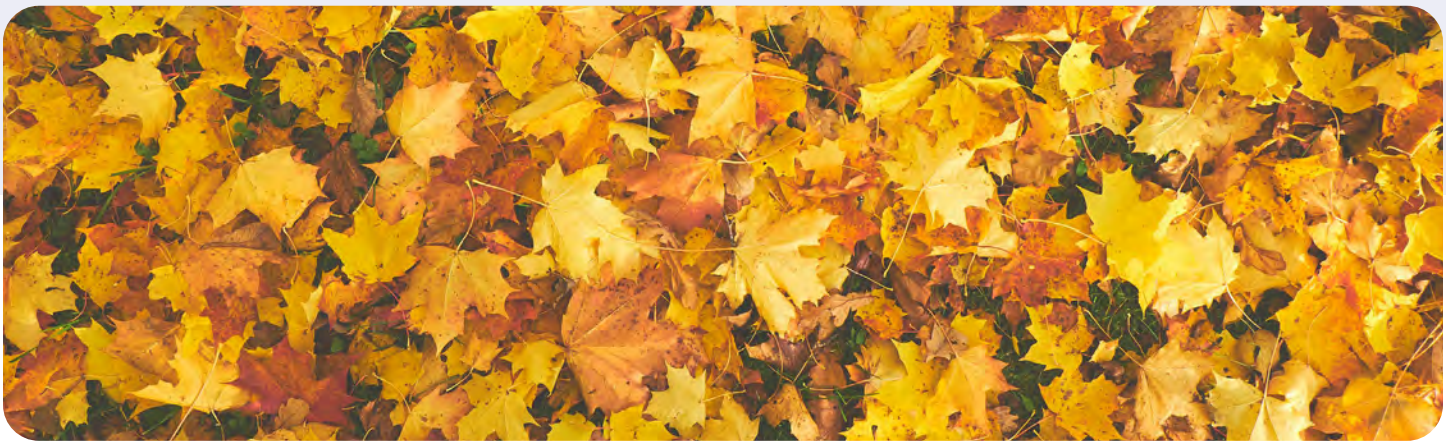
Alzheimer Society BRITISH COLUMBIA

Fall 2024

Connections

Linking a community of dementia support



Relying on a supportive community

Autumn is a season of change when many caregivers face the challenge of finding balance as the days grow shorter and routines begin to shift. Having and relying on a support network becomes even more crucial.

Part of your support network is the Alzheimer Society of B.C. We believe that nobody should have to navigate the dementia journey on their own. We provide programs, services and tools to help people living with dementia and caregivers at every stage. By staying informed and using these resources, you and your family can be better prepared for and navigate unpredictable situations.

Whether living with dementia or caring for someone who is, people need help. Lean on the people around you for support and strength to face these transitions with resilience. You are not alone.

Ask for help when you need it

The First Link® Dementia Helpline is available during challenging times – or if you have questions about dementia. Helpline staff will give people the support they need, when they need it. Learn more at **alzbc.org/FLDHL**.

In this issue

Greetings Page 2
Lived experience Page 3
Resources Page 5
Research Page 6
Volunteer recruitment Page 8

Empowering dementia care: Advocacy, community and education

September 21 marked World Alzheimer's Day and the official announcement of the provincial election to be held on October 19. This is your opportunity to speak up! Connect with candidates and tell them you want to see a fully funded dementia strategy, one that breaks down stigma and social isolation, improves the diagnosis experience and ensures people get the right support at the right time.

In this edition of *Connections*, we recognize the remarkable contributions of caregivers, volunteers and advocates tirelessly working to build a dementia-friendly community. We're celebrating our final *Climb for Alzheimer's* at Grouse Mountain, acknowledging the dedication of everyone who has contributed over the past 14 years. We're also thankful for the unwavering commitment of our volunteer Committee Chairs at the 2024 *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's*, presented by Go Auto. Keep reading to find out how you can get involved in the 2025 *Walk*!

This issue, you can also learn about new ways to engage with our community, including how you can get involved in the upcoming election and take part in upcoming events and education. We'll introduce you to eight members of the Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP). We're also thrilled to launch our new online campus. On it, you'll find great resources to help you better understand and support people living with the disease, which you can access any time because we know caregiving doesn't happen on a schedule.

With the final *Connections* for the year, I'd like to share some exciting news about what you can look forward to next year. We asked for your thoughts on how we can improve our newsletters and were excited to hear the response. With our 2025 winter edition of *Connections*, we'll be keeping in touch with monthly digital editions featuring upcoming events, the latest research and more. Our print edition will still be available on a quarterly basis. If you don't already receive our quarterly digital editions and wish to receive upcoming monthly ones, email **newsletter@alzheimerbc.org** or visit **alzbc.org/email-subscribe**.

Thank you for your support and dedication. Together, we are making a difference.



Jennifer Lyle
Chief Executive Officer
Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Questions or concerns about dementia or memory loss?

First Link® Dementia Helpline

English (9 a.m. to 8 p.m.)	**1-800-936-6033**
Cantonese and Mandarin (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)	**1-833-674-5007**
Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)	**1-833-674-5003**

To learn more: alzbc.org/FLDHL

Stolen Cars: An art project



Out of the driver's seat, by Geoffrey Bird (left). From the passenger seat, by Erin Bird (right)

The Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s Lived Experience Partner Program provides opportunities for caregivers and people living with dementia to share their experience and insights to ensure what matters most to them is reflected in all that we do. Our "Artists in residence" opportunity provides a platform for lived experience partners to share their experience through artwork, writing and music. Geoffrey Bird, a lived experience partner, shares his story with us.

Geoffrey is a Vancouver-based photographer, writer and educator who was inspired to undertake the photography project, *Stolen Cars*, after his wife Erin was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease at the age of 55. She was advised by her physician to surrender her driver's license shortly after purchasing a new Honda CR-V. This was a dramatic early indicator that the disease was going to have a major impact on their lives.

The Honda CR-V is one of the most stolen vehicles in Canada. Although Erin's car wasn't sold for parts, her ability to drive was taken by the progression of the disease. Driving a vehicle is a complex activity that requires the use of several skills and abilities. While it can be safe for many people in the early stages of dementia to continue driving, as the disease progresses it will bring changes to a person's abilities, such as their level of concentration, judgement, orientation, perception and reaction time. As a result, even the most experienced drivers can be at a higher risk of having a collision.

The loss of a driver's license can be a devastating experience that is deeply tied to our sense of self and personal freedom. To cope with this loss, Geoffrey and Erin captured the transition from driver to passenger through a series of photographs. For the project, some photos were taken by Erin using a Fuji Instax camera. The images contrast greatly with the precision, control and detail used in the staged portraits Geoffrey took with a high-resolution digital camera.

Geoffrey and Erin hope their project brings awareness to the impact that Alzheimer's disease and other dementias have on families. We invite you to visit **stolencars.ca** to view the full series of touching and thought-provoking photographs.

Artist in residence opportunity

Would you like to tell your dementia story through art? Learn more about how you can become an artist in residence through the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s Lived Experience Partner Program by emailing **livedexperience@alzheimerbc.org**.

To learn more about driving and dementia, visit: **alzbc.org/driving-dementia**.

Final summit: Celebrating the remarkable success of the Climb for Alzheimer's!



Sunday, September 22 was an unforgettable day as we celebrated the 14th and final year of the *Climb for Alzheimer's* at Grouse Mountain in North Vancouver. This iconic event has been a highlight for many over the years that brought together a spirited crowd from the North Shore and across the Lower Mainland for an exhilarating challenge – all in support of raising vital funds to support people affected by dementia.

The North Shore location holds special meaning for the Alzheimer Society of B.C. It's where we were founded in 1981, right in the living room of a dedicated North Shore resident who was a caregiver. It's more than just a location; it was a nod to our roots and a celebration of the incredible community that has supported us throughout the years.

Whether hiking the Grouse Grind® or walking the more accessible Summit Stroll atop Grouse Mountain, hundreds of participants have come together over the years to form a community of courage, raising awareness and funds to support people across B.C. who have been affected by dementia. In its 14 years, many stories have been shared and an incredible cast of characters have joined – from grandchildren climbing for grandparents to local television stars climbing for their parents. While we say goodbye to the *Climb* at Grouse Mountain, we are grateful for the many relationships forged over the years and know they will remain strong.

"Knowing that this was the last year for the *Climb* was bittersweet. While we're sad to see it end, we're so grateful to the dedicated volunteers and donors who started it and joined us over the years, raising more than $2 million dollars for a great cause," says Cathryn France, Chief Development Officer.

Thank you to everyone who joined our community of courage and climbed with us. It was an amazing 14-year run – rather, climb – and we are thankful to all the participants, donors, volunteers and sponsors who have been a part of this event's remarkable legacy.

You can still build a community of courage!

The *Climb* website will remain open until Sunday, October 6. If you would like to make a donation or learn more about the event, please visit **climbforalzheimers.ca**.

If you attended *Climb* over the past 14-years, we would still love to read your stories! Share on your social profile(s), tag **@AlzheimerBC** and use the hashtag **#ClimbForAlzheimers**.

What's coming up



Sunday, October 20
8:30 p.m.

For more information:
alzbc.org/telethon2024



For more information and to register, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline:

Punjabi: 1-833-674-5003
English: 1-800-936-6033

Telethon for Alzheimer's

Produced in partnership with Fairchild Television, the 5th annual *Telethon for Alzheimer's* will broadcast nationwide, reaching more than 252,000 Chinese-Canadian households across Canada.

This 80-minute Cantonese program features doctors sharing the latest knowledge and research updates on dementia, as well as caregivers and volunteers sharing their experiences.

Tune in to learn more about dementia – and call to donate. Thanks to "Friends of the Society" – a group of generous, anonymous donors – the first $50,000 in donations made from now until Sunday, October 20 will be matched one-to-one, doubling the impact of each donation.

New! Minds in Motion® programs in Fraser region

Minds in Motion® is a fun and engaging fitness and social program designed for people living with early-stage dementia and their care partners, to stimulate both the mind and body. We're currently offering sessions in Punjabi to communities in Abbotsford and Surrey, an opportunity to socialize and share feelings in your language of choice.

Reach out to candidates and speak up this election



In the lead-up to the provincial election on October 19, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is asking people across the province to speak up about dementia. We're asking candidates to commit to a fully funded dementia strategy that prioritizes breaking down stigma and social isolation, improving the diagnosis experience and ensuring access to the right support at the right time.

Now is the time to connect with candidates in your riding to let them know why they should prioritize dementia this election. To get you started, we have added a simple tool to our webpage to help you to write your candidate and share your story. By sharing your story, you can raise awareness about the disease, its impact and change the stigma associated with a diagnosis.

Join us and raise your voice! To learn more about our policy recommendations and other ways you can get involved, visit: **BCVotesDementia.ca**.

2024 Alzheimer Society Research Program recipients announced



Congratulations to the 2024 Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP) Recipients in B.C.

The Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP) is a collaborative initiative between the provincial Alzheimer Societies, the Alzheimer Society of Canada, other partners and our donors. Since 1989, the ASRP has funded over $78 million in grants and awards nationally to encourage researchers to explore new ways of advancing knowledge on dementia.

To date, 102 projects in British Columbia have received over $10 million of funding. This year, eight researchers in B.C. were awarded ASRP funding for a variety of biomedical or quality-of-life research projects.

Andre Smith, University of Victoria
- Proof of Concept Grant: A critical examination of family caregivers' views on and experiences with medical assistance in dying.

Andrew Snow, University of British Columbia
- Doctoral Award: Investigating the role of amyloid precursor protein signalling in synapse formation and function.

Juanita-Dawne Bacsu, Thompson Rivers University
- New Investigator Grant: Improving rural cognitive healthcare through lived experience: Care priorities, programs and service needs.

Mark Cembrowski, University of British Columbia
- New Investigator Grant: A "tipping point" neuron type driving Alzheimer's Disease progression.

Jolene Phelps, University of Victoria
- Postdoctoral Award: Optimization of extracellular vesicle-based treatments in a 3D bioprinted model of Alzheimer's disease.

Oi Yee Wong, University of British Columbia
- Doctoral Award: Co-creating culturally relevant virtual reality programs with community-dwelling older adults living with dementia: A patient-oriented research project.

Joanne Matsubara, University of British Columbia
- Proof of Concept Grant: MicroRNA biomarkers: Using Tears to Assess Alzheimer's Disease.

Robert Britton, Simon Fraser University
- Proof of Concept Award: Novel nucleotides for next-generation antisense oligonucleotides aimed at Alzheimer's disease.

Stay tuned for interviews with ASRP-funded researchers and project updates. We're looking forward to supporting their projects through every step of the research journey.

Want to learn more? Join our regular research webinar series, *Research connects*, to stay informed about the latest advancements and insights into dementia research, including presentations by ASRP-supported researchers: **alzbc.org/ondemand**.

Explore our research webpages

To learn about the innovative work of the researchers we support and access valuable information on dementia research in British Columbia, visit: **alzbc.org/research**.

Discover our new online campus: A resource for the community

We are excited to introduce our new online campus, an engaging platform designed to support care partners, health-care professionals and the public in understanding and supporting people living with dementia. This initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to enhance the quality of life for people living with dementia and their care partners through innovative education and resources.

The online campus features a variety of courses that cover essential topics such as dementia care strategies, communication techniques and stress management. These e-courses are designed to equip care partners with the knowledge and skills needed to provide compassionate and effective care.

Accessing the online campus can be done anytime and anywhere you have access to an electronic device and internet connection. E-courses, similar to an online workshop, where participants learn about dementia through videos, readings and interactive activities, can be completed at your own pace, because we understand that caregiving doesn't happen on a schedule.

Featured courses

Dementia and communication: An overview | Learn effective communication strategies tailored to different stages of dementia.

Dementia and communication: Understanding the brain | Gain insights into the neurological changes that impact communication in dementia.

Communication strategies: Part one | Discover practical techniques for enhancing communication and fostering connection.

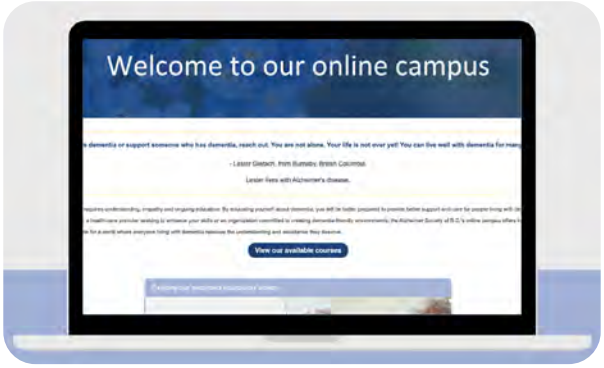
Communication strategies: Part two | Explore advanced strategies for managing complex communication challenges.

Communication resilience: Coping and adapting to changes | Develop resilience and adaptability in your communication approach.

Dementia and culture | Gain insights into the intersection between culture and dementia.

Help us spread the word

We encourage everyone to spread the word about our online campus. Share this resource with your network and encourage others to sign up. Together, we can make a significant impact on the lives of people affected by dementia.



Signing up for the online campus is simple.

Visit our website and follow the instructions to register for an account. Within a week, you'll receive an email to log in and start exploring available courses. Visit our website today: **alzbc.org/onlinecampus**.

Celebrating our *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's* Committee Chairs



Committee members brave the rain at the 2024 *Walk* in Burnaby

The *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's,* presented by Go Auto, is Canada's largest fundraiser for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Here in B.C., the *Walk* could not happen without the more than 300 volunteers who are led by *Walk* Committee Chairs. Chairs work with volunteer committees to engage their communities to support the event through participation, fundraising and sponsorship. This is an important role that can have a tremendous impact on the lives of people affected by the disease.

One of the incredible people volunteering as a *Walk* Chair is Marisa Gagne, who co-chaired this year's *Walk* in Burnaby.

"One of the things that I like most about my role is getting the chance to introduce people to the organization," Marisa says. "People want to give. They want to help people affected by dementia."

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is incredibly grateful for everything *Walk* Chairs do to make the event a success and create strong, dementia-friendly communities across the province. With seven communities in need of *Walk* chairs around the province, we need more volunteers like Marisa.

"Don't be scared," Marisa says. "I felt supported by volunteers, staff and the community to put on an important event for people affected by dementia. People are generous and grateful for the opportunity to help. I carry the positivity I felt as a *Walk* Chair with me in my day-to-day life, year-round."

If you are interested in becoming a *Walk* Chair or joining a committee in your community, please email Nick Dunn at **ndunn@alzheimerbc.org**.

About Connections

Connections **is a quarterly print and digital publication produced by the Alzheimer Society of B.C. Articles cannot be reproduced without written permission.**

Contact us to contribute content or to subscribe to receive *Connections* regularly.

- **Online** at **alzbc.org/connections-newsletter**
- **Email** newsletter@alzheimerbc.org
- **Call** 604-681-6530; 1-800-667-3742 (toll-free)
- **Mail** to the Alzheimer Society of B.C.
  300-828 West 8th Avenue,
  Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1E2

Help us reduce costs by subscribing to *Connections* by email.

Are you a person living with dementia?

We also publish *Insight*, a publication for people living with dementia or cognitive impairment. For more information, visit **alzbc.org/insight-newsletter**.

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