

ADVISORY SPOTLIGHT **ADRIAN GORDON**

We have been shining a spotlight on the individuals who make up our wonderful Advisory Group who use their lived experiences with dementia or cognitive change to shape the work we do at the Alzheimer Society. Please enjoy getting to know Adrian!

Adrian has been part of the Alzheimer Society Niagara Region community for just over a year. He and his wife Frenda first got involved with the Early Stage Programs through the Beyond Words Learning Series where they connected with a group of peers who supported each other through the changes and challenges of living with and caring for someone with memory change. Shortly after, Adrian joined the Advisory Group and has brought an invaluable voice to the group along with a vast amount of support and experience in advocacy.

In the 60s and 70s, Adrian served with a Gurkha regiment in the British army where he was stationed in Hong Kong. His time with the Gurkhas took him all around the world including Nepal which continues to be a special place to him. Over the years, Adrian has returned to Nepal many times. He has trekked over 3000 miles across the Himalayan foothills and was a member of two expeditions to Mt. Everest in 1975 and 1982.

Following his time with the Gurkhas, Adrian worked for the British government and helped ex-servicemen and their families settle into their new lives in their Himalayan homeland. It is an experience that changed his life. In 1976 Adrian returned to Hong Kong where he met his wife, Frenda. They had their first date in April and were married in October. They moved to Canada in 1989 and Adrian continued his advocacy work by working with the Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness where he ran the annual World Conference on Disaster Management.

Adrian first started to notice changes with his cognition about 15 years ago. He was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment shortly after. Since his diagnosis, Adrian has focused on living well and has found that staying active and meditation are two of the things that have helped him the most. Adrian goes to the gym daily and enjoys a mix of activity including cardio, strength and walking. He also practices calming his mind through meditation and mindfulness every

day which is something that he has practiced for many years.

Adrian's advice to someone diagnosed with dementia or cognitive change is to be open with the people around you. Adrian explains that he tells people "I have MCI so bear with me. I am still human. I can still laugh and tell jokes. But if my memory fails me in the middle of the joke, you'll know why!". Adrian also shares that he is grateful to have an amazing partner in his wife, Frenda, who keeps an eye on his changes.

Adrian also advises people to utilize the support and services available through the Alzheimer Society and other community organizations that can help. Adrian explains that "When somebody can't walk, you get them crutches to help them be mobile. That's what the Alzheimer Society does for people with memory concerns. They give people the confidence and support to deal with their challenges."

We are so appreciative of Adrian for sharing some of his story with us. He has so much more to share (it was hard to fit his story in this small space!) and we hope you have the pleasure of getting to know him more.