

# ADVISORY SPOTLIGHT WAYNE

*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 Wayne!*

Hello, my name is Wayne. I was born in Thunder Bay and moved to the Niagara Region in 1959. For 35 years, I was a welder fitter, crafting and building with precision. Today, I'm a proud husband, father, stepfather, and grandfather and I take pride in saying that I am living well with mild cognitive impairment (MCI).

My journey continues with resilience and joy, and I'd like to share my story with you.

I first started noticing something was changing when I began making little mistakes at work. I know that even small errors can have significant consequences. I found myself slowing down, needing to measure multiple times to ensure accuracy. One time, I accidentally ran the wrong program on a machine, which could have cost the company thousands of dollars.

Despite reassurances from family and friends that everything was fine, I knew the changes were significant enough to seek help. In September 2022, I reached out to the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region and met with a counsellor who recommended I undergo a cognitive assessment. While awaiting the results, I participated in programs like Learning the Ropes, Minds in Motion, and Qigong Exercise Program, which improved my mobility and balance. I also joined the Client Advisory Committee, and I find it a valuable platform to share my ideas and meet others in similar situations.

The hardest part of my memory loss has been how others treat me. I know I am living well and am not as concerned about how people think or feel about me. My biggest concern was that I would not be able to take care of my wife Barb if she gets sick. Last summer, Barb was hospitalized, and upon her discharge, she needed new medications that I felt unable to manage. Being proactive and having learned to advocate for my needs, I informed the medical staff about my MCI and requested a community nurse to assist at home, to ensure the correct

administration of Barb's medications.

If you or a loved one are experiencing memory loss, I urge you to take action immediately.

Seek help from the Alzheimer Society so you are not working from a deficit, and you can enjoy more things in life. My own journey with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) began over a year before I received a diagnosis.

I firmly believe that reaching out to the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region early on has been crucial to my well-being.

*We are so appreciative of Wayne for sharing some of his story with us. He has so much more to share and we hope you have the pleasure of getting to know him more.*