

# In the LOOP

WINTER 2025

*Société*  
**Alzheimer**  
*Society*

NOVA SCOTIA



## In this issue:

- New Year, New Programs
- January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month
- How to Be a Dementia Friendly Ally

...and more!

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**Questions about  
dementia?  
We are here to help.**

**Our province-wide Dementia  
Helpline is a confidential  
service provided by our team of  
knowledgeable and caring staff.**

**Dementia Helpline  
1-800-611-6345**

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## Message from John Britton, CEO

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It's hard to believe that 2024 has already come to an end! As we move into a new year, we have so many new things to share with you. And we're starting off strong with one of our busiest months of the year – Alzheimer's Awareness Month in January.

This awareness month we're getting the word out about 10 evidence-based steps you can take to reduce your risk of dementia. And, back by popular demand, is our annual Awareness Month education event coming up on January 28 – find out all about it on pages 8-9.

I'm really excited to see how packed this issue of In the Loop is, especially highlights on TWO innovative new programs at the Society - DELIGHT, a fitness and lifestyle program, and our new grief support program launching next month. You can read about these programs on pages 5 and 10.

Another wonderful new initiative is the Promising Practices Hub, presented by Shannex. This Hub provides a space for the health care community to learn from each other to improve the lives of people living with dementia. Learn more on page 12.

I have so much gratitude for Kailey Durette, a care partner and member of our new Advisory Committee of Lived Experience, who shared her story of caring for her mom with us. Stories like these are so important for busting stigma and helping other care partners feel seen. Flip to page 6 to read.

As we head into the final few months of winter, and look forward to an eventful spring, I hope you'll stay connected with us. I encourage you to check out our website at [www.alzheimer.ca/ns](http://www.alzheimer.ca/ns) or give us a call at 1-800-611-6345.

Thank you, as always, for staying 'In the Loop' on what is happening at the Society and for supporting us as we provide help for today and hope for tomorrow to the thousands of Nova Scotians living with dementia – and the many thousands more who care for and support them.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Britton', with a long, sweeping underline.

**John Britton**  
CEO, Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia



**We would love to hear your feedback! Send us an email at [alzheimer@asns.ca](mailto:alzheimer@asns.ca).**



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- April 2025 -

## Stepping Forward with Dementia

An Event for People  
Living With Dementia

Halifax Region

Stay tuned for details!

**IG** WEALTH  
MANAGEMENT  
**WALK FOR  
ALZHEIMER'S**

*Alzheimer Society*  
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## REGISTER TODAY!

The IG Wealth Management Walk  
for Alzheimer's is back this year,  
bigger and better than ever!

### Saturday, May 24, 2025

- Sheet Harbour
- Truro

### Sunday, May 25, 2025

- Shelburne
- Bridgewater
- Wolfville
- Halifax
- Amherst
- Havre Boucher
- Trenton
- Sydney

**VISIT WALKNS.CA**

[alzheimer.ca/ns](https://alzheimer.ca/ns)

# We're DELIGHTED to Introduce Our New Exercise and Social Engagement Program

This fall we launched a new program for people living with dementia and their care partners – DELIGHT (Dementia Lifestyle Intervention for Getting Healthy Together).

In partnership with the Canada Games Centre, the University of Waterloo and the Shlegel Research Institute for Aging (RIA), this program promotes health and well-being through exercise, healthy eating and strategies to live well with dementia.

Held at the Canada Games Centre, this eight-week program meets twice a week for a 45-minute session of physical activity led by a certified fitness instructor, followed by a 30-minute education and social session facilitated by an Alzheimer Society staff member.



The first series of this program had six participants (three people with dementia and their care partners). On the first day and the last day of the program, each participant completed strength and balance testing to gauge improvement. Each person either maintained or improved their balance score and improved their lower body and grip strength.

Just as important as the physical improvements, participants were socially engaged and made lasting connections with each other.

After this successful pilot, we're excited to continue to offer this program on an ongoing basis and to develop a virtual option to help reach across the province. The next series begins January 28!

Learn more about this program and upcoming dates on our website at [www.alzheimer.ca/ns/delight](http://www.alzheimer.ca/ns/delight) or by calling our Dementia Helpline at 1-800-611-6345.



**"Some people used to tell us to stay at home, to not join things because we might say or do something embarrassing, but this group is nice because I'm around people who are like me."**

– Participant Living with Dementia



# Leaning into Joy - Kailey's Story

Renée Hartleib

Writer and Volunteer

Kailey Durette was only in her mid-twenties when her mother, Stephanie Curry, a Food Service Supervisor in a long-term care home, was diagnosed with younger onset Alzheimer's disease at age 49.

Kailey noticed her Mom struggling with aspects of her job that were once second nature—ordering food and doing the books—in addition to personality changes. But when they consulted her doctor, their concerns were dismissed. "Our family doctor said it was stress and menopause but I knew something else was going on," says Kailey.



At the time, Kailey was an RN, just a few years into her career, and she pushed for her Mom to be seen by the geriatric ambulatory care clinic in Halifax. Stephanie's tests resulted in the Alzheimer diagnosis, and although knowing what was going on was a huge help, Kailey says the news was also devastating.

She and her younger brother Michael immediately took a six-week Caregiver Education Series course offered through the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia. Between the course and regular check-in phone calls with the Dementia Helpline, the siblings felt both supported and accompanied on this new journey. They were also able to pass valuable information on to their Dad, who would be Stephanie's primary caregiver.



Stephanie and the whole family

Over the next ten years, the family was able to keep Stephanie at home, with an excellent quality of life. She has only recently moved into a long-term care facility but not before she spent her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday at Summerville Beach with the whole family.

There was sunshine, Beach Boys music, and toes in the sand. There were smiles, snacks, and dancing. And Stephanie even surprised everyone by running down the beach with her arms wide open. "That is her essence; she's just such an incredibly vibrant person who has always lived life to the fullest," says Kailey. "And it was like she was shouting to the world that this is what it's like being 60 and living with dementia."



This is one of the main things that Kailey, who now works as an educator in dementia care, wants other families to know: A diagnosis is not the end of the story. There is so much living still to be done. And so much potential for joy and gratitude.



"Yes, there are difficult times and challenging days, but we also intentionally create good moments by keeping Mom as active and involved as possible," says Kailey. "We take each day as it comes now and we try and live in the moment, reminding ourselves to be grateful for all the beautiful times we've had together and those still to come."

# January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month

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The number of people living with dementia is rising. By the year 2050, more than 1.7 million people are expected to be living with dementia in Canada, nearly 30,000 in Nova Scotia alone.

**But there is hope.** Together, we can take action to reduce our own dementia risk.

While some risk factors for dementia - like age and genetics - can't be changed, there are many ways you can take action to reduce your overall risk at any age or stage of your life. Those already diagnosed with dementia can also benefit from taking these actions and improving their brain health.

**Did you know that addressing risk factors could reduce the prevalence of dementia by up to 40 per cent? Check out the 10 ways to reduce your risk of dementia:**

- Be physically active each day
- Protect, check and support your hearing
- Stay socially active
- Manage your medical conditions & learn more about them
- Quit or reduce smoking
- Seek support for depression
- Drink less alcohol
- Protect your heart
- Avoid concussion & traumatic brain injury
- Aim to get quality sleep

Throughout Awareness Month, we hope you'll join the conversation – online, on social media, or even just with your friends – and share how everyone can take steps to reduce their risk of dementia. Find more resources at [www.alzheimer.ca/ns/riskreduction](http://www.alzheimer.ca/ns/riskreduction).

We recognize that a number of these actions include consultation with a primary care provider, something that many do not have access to. We encourage you to utilize virtual care or walk in clinics where possible.

Individual circumstances play a major role in one's ability to manage risk factors. Physical, mental and financial wellbeing, access to services, a support system and countless other things can impact our ability to make lifestyle changes to reduce our risk of dementia and other health conditions.

**Our risk is modifiable with the right supports in place. If you're not sure where to start, contact our Dementia Helpline at 1-800-611-6345.**

## ***Did you know?***

We're launching a new  
Research and Advocacy  
Department!

Learn more at  
[alzheimer.ca/ns/newdept](http://alzheimer.ca/ns/newdept)



# HOPE IN *ACTION*

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From Promising Treatments to Actionable  
Steps to Improve Your Quality of Life



**DR. BEVERLEY CASSIDY**  
Founder of  
Memory Café NS



**DR. JASMINE MAH**  
Geriatrician



**KAILEY DURETTE**  
Advisory Committee of Lived  
Experience - Care Partner

## FREE EVENT

Tuesday, January 28  
from 6:00 - 8:00 PM  
Woodlawn Public Library  
with Virtual Livestream

SCAN ME



Register at [alzheimer.ca/ns/panel2025](https://alzheimer.ca/ns/panel2025)

# A New Grief Program to Support Caregivers

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We've heard from our clients that they wish we had more to offer in our programming for continued support after their loved one with dementia has passed away and look to us as their trusted resource.

**With that feedback in mind, we've developed a new grief support program that will launch for the first time this February.**

The program will have a two-hour group session every week for six weeks, offering both support and grief education with a dementia focus. The sessions will be virtual via Zoom, offering support province wide.



Each session is created with evidence-based models and will be facilitated by two of our staff members - Donna Lawrence who is a trained death doula with over 20 years of pastoral care experience and Sandra Hubbard-LeBlanc who is a certified Grief Recovery Specialist with a background in grief counselling.

Caring for someone with dementia is a unique experience, often with ambiguous feelings of loss that may impact the grieving process after their death. Our goal is to provide a safe, welcoming space for people with this shared experience to learn and support each other while they navigate their grief.

This program is open to anyone who has supported a person with dementia who has died and is feeling challenges with navigating their grief. While participants will still be grieving at the end of the program, they will leave with insight and tools to better support them throughout their journey.

"I've heard from a few people that I've supported through grief over the years that connecting with others going through the same thing made them feel seen," says Sandra. "They'd say 'I thought I was going crazy, but now I know I'm normal.' That's the goal for this new program."

**The first series will run from February 25 – April 1, 2025, meeting on Tuesdays from 1:30-3:30 p.m.** If you're interested in participating in this program, please contact our Dementia Helpline at 1-800-611-6345.

# How to Be a Dementia Friendly Ally

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Dementia Friendly Communities support, respect and include people living with dementia and their partners in care, in the places they live, work and play. It's a community that values contribution, opportunity, and choice. It's YOUR Community!

**Creating inclusive and supportive communities takes effort from everyone. As individuals, we contribute to creating a supportive environment in our everyday interactions. Being a dementia friendly ally means:**

- Learning about dementia and the needs of people living with dementia and their care partners.
- Reducing stigma by challenging myths, misconceptions and assumptions about people living with dementia and sharing trustworthy resources.
- Avoiding jokes that might make light of the experience of someone living with dementia.
- Staying in touch with people living with dementia and their partners in care to offer support and social connection, and asking how you can help.
- Participating in learning opportunities and upcoming events.

## **What about at work or in the community?**

Making change at the community level requires working together. Promoting dementia awareness, education and dementia friendly communication helps inspire community members to act with understanding and empathy and to build safe and accessible environments. **You could start by:**

- Forming a Dementia Friendly Community working group or committee.
- Inviting the Alzheimer Society to speak at your next community group meeting or workplace lunch and learn.
- Including people living with dementia on focus groups and committees to hear their perspectives. Their lived experience is important to making sure your communities' priorities and ideas are as impactful as possible.
- Encouraging open discussions about dementia in your workplace or community, sharing resources like tip sheets to spark conversation.

The journey towards dementia friendly communities is ongoing and requires collective dedication. Let's all take steps, big or small, to support, respect and include individuals living with dementia and their care partners. Together, we can create communities where everyone can thrive. Learn more on our website at [www.alzheimer.ca/ns/dfc](http://www.alzheimer.ca/ns/dfc).



# New Promising Practices Hub, Presented by Shannex

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35<sup>th</sup> Annual Dementia Care Conference

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## Promising Practices Showcase

Presented by **Shannex**™

We're pleased to announce Shannex as the sponsor for our new Promising Practices Hub which expands on our annual Promising Practices Showcase during our annual Dementia Care Conference. This new Hub will continue to explore opportunities to provide support and enhance the lives of individuals living with dementia in the province.

Launched in 2022, the Promising Practices Showcase is presented each year at our Annual Dementia Care Conference, inviting professionals working in dementia care in Nova Scotia to bring forward their ideas and efforts. The Showcase provides an opportunity for the sector to learn about new programs, care approaches and tools that have positively impacted the lives of those affected by dementia.

It was established to give those working in dementia care a platform to present their initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for people living with dementia, both in community and care settings. Coming together to share these ideas ensures that valuable resources are accessible throughout the province.

"Each year, we call for nominations of homegrown ideas from across the sector, and our conference committee evaluates these submissions based on transferability, uniqueness, and impact on individuals living with dementia," says John Britton, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia.

"We've seen numerous brilliant and practical ideas, with even more emerging. From a nursery in a closet to a sensory room and family support groups, these innovators show how creative thinking can drive significant positive change."

**Previous Promising Practices Initiatives include:**

- **Sensory Rooms:** A space in a long-term care facility with items for sensory needs.
- **Dementia Friendly Memory Collection:** A collection of dementia friendly books and items to be checked out from a library.
- **Therapeutic Nursery:** A nursery-like space in a long-term care facility to keep and use therapeutic dolls.
- **SenSupport Loan Program:** A curated collection of dementia support items to be loaned out to use at home.

Thanks to the support of Shannex, these ideas will continue to thrive beyond the conference with the creation of the new online Promising Practices Hub. This new digital resource will share the projects featured each year at the conference along with additional resources curated for the dementia care sector, providing healthcare professionals with a space to learn from one another and implement impactful changes for individuals living with dementia.

“Shannex has been a leader in improving living standards for over 36 years. We are excited to be partnering with the Society on this initiative to enhance the quality of life for those affected by dementia,” says Catherine MacPherson, Chief Operating Officer at Shannex.

Explore the Promising Practices Hub to discover more innovative initiatives and resources that are making a difference in the lives of individuals living with dementia! Visit [www.alzheimer.ca/ns/promising-practices-hub](http://www.alzheimer.ca/ns/promising-practices-hub).



This year's Promising Practices Showcase Finalists at our 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Dementia Care Conference held on October 22, 2024.

# Together, Let's Make 2025 a Year of Health, Hope and Connection

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Dear Reader,

A new year often brings a want to focus on making healthier lifestyle choices – choices that can improve your brain health and overall well-being. Being physically active each day is one of the 10 ways you can reduce your risk of dementia, which can be found on page 8.

Daily physical activity is also known to be beneficial to those diagnosed with dementia. It's why we introduced a new program last year, DELIGHT (Dementia Lifestyle Intervention for Getting Healthy Together).

This program promotes health and well-being for people living with dementia and their care partners, focusing on exercise, healthy eating and navigating life with dementia through practical strategies. Read more about it on page 5.

Participants in the pilot program said, "This entire program is wonderful! We all got along so well, and our instructors were fantastic. We really enjoyed it!"

After this successful pilot, we look forward to making DELIGHT a staple program here at the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia.

DELIGHT is just one of our programs that provide support and aim to improve quality of life for people with dementia and their care partners.

All of our programs are fully funded and therefore provided free of charge thanks to our government partners and the support of generous donors like you. Your generosity makes these programs possible.

Please consider using the reply form on the next page to make a donation to the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia. This Awareness Month, you can help us continue providing vital programs and services.

Together, let's make 2025 a year of health, hope and connection.

Sincerely,



**Connie VanBerkel**

**Director of Programs & Services**

**Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia**



# Make a Donation

You can also make your secure donation at [www.alzheimer.ca/ns/donate](http://www.alzheimer.ca/ns/donate) or by filling out the form below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Full mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes!** You can count on me to help ensure that caregivers, family members, and those living with dementia get the support they need.

I would like to support the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia with a **one time** gift of:

☐ \$20    ☐ \$50    ☐ \$100    ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

I would like to support the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia with a **monthly** gift of:

☐ \$10    ☐ \$20    ☐ \$50    ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*You can stop your monthly gift at any time by contacting us by phone or email.*

## PAYMENT INFORMATION:

☐ I have enclosed a cheque payable to the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia

**OR**

☐ Please charge my donation to my:    ☐ Visa    ☐ MasterCard    ☐ AMEX

Cardholder name: \_\_\_\_\_

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CVC: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder signature: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I prefer to receive my official tax receipt by email to help reduce administrative costs.  
My email address is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!** Please return to: **Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia**  
**112-2719 Gladstone St.**  
**Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3K 4W6**

# In the LOOP

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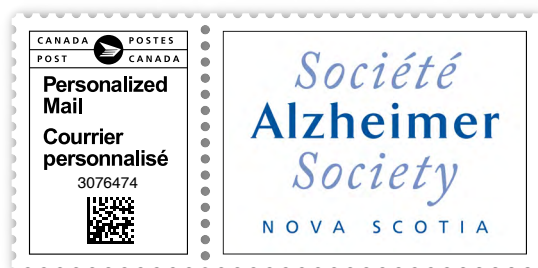


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