In the Loop

FALL 2021

Société
Alzheimer
Society
NOVA SCOTIA

THANK YOU TO OUR PHILANTHROPISTS!

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Contributors

ANNE BELLIVEAU, Admin & Human Resources Assistant

ELAINE MOODY, PhD, RN, Dalhousie University

MELISSA RAY, Coordinator, Client Services

CALANDRA KANDZIORA, Coordinator, Client Services

JOHN BRITTON, CEO

Meet our new regional staff!

Sandra Hubbard-LeBlanc recently joined ASNS in the role of Regional Coordinator of Education & Outreach for Tri-County.

A life-long resident of Tri-County, Sandra has long been an active member of her community, supporting residents in the area for over 25 years. As a certified counsellor, she has led support groups for caregivers of people living with dementia as well as grief support groups. Through her former work with VON Adult Day Programs, Sandra directly supported caregivers and people living with dementia. In 1995, she help to establish Alstrom Syndrome International as co-founder, and continues her involvement with the organization today.

Sandra is driven by a passion for helping others. As she says, "it feeds my soul." In her new role she will be working to help increase awareness of dementia, and promote ASNS resources and support for those on the journey.

Sandra can be reached at sandra.hubbard-leblanc@asns.ca or 902-867-7683.

Donna Lawrence joined ASNS in July 2021, accepting the role of Regional Coordinator of Education & Outreach for the Northern Region. She will be serving communities in Cumberland, Colchester and East Hants.

Donna provides the ASNS team with a strong background in community. She worked in pastoral care and support for 19 years. She has extensive experience working with people living with dementia as well as their caregivers, helping them to navigate their personal journeys. Trained as an end-of-life doula, Donna has experience in the areas of gerontology and palliative care.

Donna is a life-long learner who is a familiar face to many at the Colchester East Hants Public Library where she also works as an on-call Library Clerk. She is currently working toward her Library Studies and Information Technology Diploma at NSCC.

Donna has always gravitated toward work that provides an opportunity to help others. In her role with ASNS, she will help raise awareness of dementia and the supports and resources available to caregivers and people with dementia.

Donna can be reached at donna.lawrence@asns.ca or 902-422-7961.

ASNS ANNUAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE
Supporting Dementia in all its Diversity
OCTOBER 28, 2021

Dementia has many faces.
Beyond a unique diagnosis, people hold diverse identities. Let's talk about making dementia care more inclusive for all.

Annual Provincial Conference

Our shared global experience during the pandemic has been, for many, a human experience like nothing before. We have seen, and continue to see, huge shifts in attitudes and structures both formal and informal, political, and social. It's an experience that will be shared for generations, because at heart it's a story of unity. Very rarely do we, as a species, experience something with such commonality.

At ASNS, we have chosen to craft a narrative of silver linings, lessons learned, and opportunities. We had no choice but to face this disaster head-on, and it forced our hand in many ways. It forced us to focus on essentials, ensure basic access to support, and get creative in ways to bring folks together at a time when connection is more important than ever. It forced us to be bold in our approach to fundraising and ensuring the sustainability of our work. Most importantly, it forced us to acknowledge that the already delicate balance of care for those that need it the most cannot be jeopardized.

As the pandemic unfolded, the last 18 months were defined by shocking events that mobilized global movements; the death of George Floyd, the ongoing discoveries at former Canadian Residential School sites. These instances pointed to issues already known, but with a tangible shift in awareness of and intolerance for systemic injustice.

In 2018, ASNS was instrumental in developing the Charter of Rights for People with Dementia. This highlighted both the rights and personhood of those with a dementia diagnosis and forms the cornerstone of our person-centred approach in everything that we do. But, we know that we are not delivering on one key aspect of our mission: to be there for all Nova Scotians on the dementia journey.

ALL Nova Scotians on the Dementia Journey. Everyone.

In 2021, the challenges of COVID-19 have only served to drive our commitment to a more inclusive Nova Scotia. People with dementia continue to be excluded in almost every aspect of daily life – from community engagement to getting a diagnosis. Those exclusions only get worse when considered through the lens of diversity. The incredible aspects of identity that make us who we are – our races, ages, gender and sexual identities and expressions, beliefs and religions, physical abilities and a myriad more – are also, sadly, barriers to equity and inclusion. They are barriers to receiving essential care and support. We all must do better.

This is what led to the theme of this year's provincial conference: Supporting Dementia in all its Diversity. We were thrilled to launch our intentions toward equity, diversity, and inclusion in the work we do through this innovative event.

On October 28, we looked at diversity in the dementia world. From dementia inclusive communities to Indigenous perspectives on dementia, to supporting rare or complex forms of the disease, our amazing lineup of presenters shared their expertise and knowledge. They helped open our eyes and hearts a little more to all those around us.

We welcomed over 350 participants from across the dementia care sector in Nova Scotia (and beyond!) to the conference on an interactive and engaging platform.

A huge thank you goes out the speakers for sharing their expertise, attendees for joining us, and to our staff for working so hard to pull this event off!

A special thank you to our conference sponsors for helping us to make this day a reality: Dementia Understanding the Journey, Northwood Intouch, Nycum & Associates, True North Memory Clinic, Parkland Retirement Living and Home Instead.

Thank you to our Embrace Sponsor!

Dementia: Understanding the Journey

Education Makes a Difference

Person-centred education by people who *care*.

www.dementiaedu.ca

Hospital care for people with dementia

Anne Belliveau, Admin & Human Resources Assistant
Elaine Moody, PhD, RN, Dalhousie University

Lois was in the middle stages of dementia when she was admitted to a Nova Scotia hospital with undiagnosed bowel cancer. Despite having caring staff who wanted to understand the implications of her dementia on her care, the hospital setting was not always a good fit for her needs. Lois' daughter Anne, along with other family members, were constant advocates for her care. After a month-long stay in the hospital, Lois was discharged in a much-weakened state both mentally and physically.


Lois & Anne

Since her mother's hospital stay, Anne has become an advocate for more dementia friendly hospital environments, including more resources and training so staff can better respond to the needs of people with dementia. In a letter to the editor of the Chronicle Herald, Anne wrote,

"At each turn of Mom's hospital stay, there was an explanation to be given, a hurdle to jump through, or a possible difficulty to mitigate due to lack of communication, resources or education for staff when it comes to patients with dementia."

In 2019, Anne met Dr. Elaine Moody at an Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia Annual Conference where Elaine, a Registered Nurse and Assistant Professor at Dalhousie University, presented on dementia care in the hospital. Anne was very interested in Elaine's work and recognized the potential for nurses to lead change in how care is provided to people with dementia in hospital settings. Since the conference, Anne and Elaine have been working together on research with the aim to improve hospital care for people with dementia.

Currently, they are recruiting people with dementia who have been in the hospital and/or their caregivers, to participate in interviews to learn about their care experiences. The findings from the interviews will be used to identify ways that nurses can better respond to the needs of people with dementia and their caregivers.

This research is funded by the Alzheimer's Society of Canada through a New Health Investigator grant titled


Elaine Moody

“Understanding the Context of Nursing Care for People with Dementia in Hospital: Enabling Adoption of Interventions to Improve Care.”

Would you like to see changes to hospital care for people with dementia?

Are you a person with dementia who has experienced a hospital stay in the past two years?

Are you a caregiver who has supported a person with dementia throughout a hospital stay?

If so, please contact:

Elaine Moody, PhD, RN
Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, Dalhousie University
Phone: 902.580.4432
Email: elaine.moody@dal.ca

InfoLine | 1-800-611-6345

We’re here to help

The Alzheimer InfoLine is a confidential phone service provided by our team of knowledgeable and caring staff.

We provide information, support, and referral for persons with dementia, families, caregivers, and professionals.

NATIONAL PHIL

Philanthropy (noun)
phi·lan·thro·py | /fə’lanTHrəpē/
The practice of giving money and time to help make life better for other people.
Goodwill to fellow members of the human race.

National Philanthropy Day is November 15, 2021, and we’d like to take the opportunity to thank our philanthropists, the people who help us do what we do. They give us their time as volunteers and money as donors and we appreciate every minute and every dollar. **THANK YOU!**

Read on to learn about a few of our philanthropists.

Sean Burke has been a volunteer board member here at ASNS for 7 years and lives in Cape Breton. He joined the board because of his personal connection to the cause – his mother lived with Alzheimer’s disease. He had a friend call him one day to see if he knew anyone who would be interested in joining the board, but it turned out he was interested himself. He’s been with us ever since.

When asked what philanthropy means to him, Sean said that it’s about giving, that if someone can contribute to an organization with their knowledge and experience and add value, it can be the same as a financial contribution.

“It doesn’t matter what you give to be a philanthropist, it’s just about giving.”

Marjorie Sullivan has been a volunteer with us here at the Alzheimer Society for 10 years. She first joined our board in 2011, and was then asked to be the Nova Scotia representative on the national board at the Alzheimer Society of Canada (ASC) where she served for six years.

She volunteers with ASNS because she considers it an important cause, and it’s close to her personally – her mother lived with Alzheimer’s and her brother does as well. Through her work with us and with ASC, she’s also had the opportunity to get to know other people living with dementia, and is so impressed with how they continue to contribute and advocate for themselves and others.

When asked what philanthropy means to her, Marjorie said it’s giving back and giving time – to know that there’s a cause more important than ourselves.

LANTHROPY DAY

Kathy Bethune has been a nurse for over 30 years and recently became a real estate agent. Working as a nurse, along with her family history, gave her an understanding of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Kathy recently made a generous donation to ASNS through one of her many passions, baking. She decided to turn her passion into a fundraiser and has raised an incredible $1,000 by baking and selling cakes, after being encouraged by one of her coworkers. One of the reasons she chose ASNS is because she sees dementia all around her, especially when many of her client's and their parents are on the dementia journey.

"When you're passionate about something you can turn it into something that is going to be useful for everybody and spread it around," says Kathy.

We're grateful to have people like Kathy, who are passionate about our cause and who like to support people financially and emotionally.

Cindy Dobbelsteyn has been a volunteer with us for two years and hopes to make a lasting impact at ASNS. Cindy was introduced to dementia through her long family history, and her mother who lived with Alzheimer's.

One of her favourite volunteer opportunities is fundraising for the IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's. Her fundraising goal for the Walk this year was originally $2,000 but when she reached it, she was motivated to continue fundraising, eventually reaching $4,000! She found out that over 80% of the people she contacted gave donations and noted how important it is to make the extra effort to give thanks to everyone!

Cindy never thought of philanthropy as volunteering. She considered it was someone who donated a lot of money to charities like Bill Gates. Although Cindy and her husband have always contributed to charities and supported valuable causes; she never thought that they were philanthropists. After discovering the diverse meaning of philanthropy, she personally describes philanthropy as not only providing monetary support, but volunteering time, and sharing any experience and skills that you have that might benefit others.

Activities benefit our physical & mental health

Melissa Ray, Coordinator, Client Services

Taking part in activities, including everyday tasks, can have powerful benefits for the physical and mental wellbeing of a person living with dementia. Activities help us to stay active and independent. They can also help someone express their feelings, retain their skills and self-esteem, and stay motivated.

Finding things to do indoors can be challenging over the coming winter months, but just because it's too cold to go outside doesn't mean there isn't plenty to do at home.

Here are a few ideas to try this winter, with tips for making the activities easier and more enjoyable for people living with dementia.

Cooking, baking and preserving. Pull out an old family favorite and reminisce or try something new - *check out the fudge recipe on the next page!*

Tips:
- Set out ingredients beforehand
- Pre-measure ingredients to help reduce frustration
- Use recipes with fewer steps or ingredients

Music connects us to meaningful moments. Everyone has a song that takes them back to a special place or time. Use music to create the mood. Tranquil music can help create a calm environment, while a fast-paced song may boost spirit.

Tips:
- Avoid sensory overload – eliminate competing sounds, turn off TV, close windows
- Encourage movement to add to the enjoyment
- Try creating playlist of songs from the past

Performing familiar, everyday activities. Things such as folding laundry, sorting items, watering plants or doing the dishes can help a person living with dementia feel useful and provides a sense of independence.

Tips:
- Work on tasks together, ask for help
- Set the stage – leave the laundry basket out, so it can be easily accessed if the person is becoming restless

Get crafty! Art projects create a sense of accomplishment and purpose. Painting or drawing is calming, and helps people express themselves in ways that many other things can't. You could try scrapbooking, or putting together collages with old photos and cut-outs from old magazines or calendars you have lying around.

Tips:
- No experience necessary!
- Plan ahead and have a box of cut out photos and pictures ready to use

Exercise your green thumb. Indoor gardening can be very rewarding. Try growing something new or plant from a seed – winter is the perfect time!

Tips:
- For easy clean up, cover the surface of a table with paper or garbage bags
- Set out tools, pots, etc. beforehand to have a visual prompt

Travel the world from the comfort of home. Sit back and get comfortable, watch old home movies of past trips or select a destination and watch a video together. Have a conversation about the places you always wanted to visit and do it virtually!

Tips:
- Try watching a few shorter videos rather than a long one
- Prepare a snack – something connected to the place you're 'traveling' to

Reminisce. Helping someone recall past times can be a fulfilling way to spend some time. Listen to music, look at pictures in an album or watch an old movie together.

As you reminisce, try not to ask for specifics because it may become frustrating. Instead, ask questions like "can you tell me more about that?" or "how did that make you feel?"

And when you find things that bring back memories, hold onto them. Create a memory box filled with keepsakes, souvenirs, photos and anything that will help stimulate reminiscence.

Whatever activity you decide to do, focus on creating meaningful moments and enjoying time together.

Final tips:
- Choose the right time of day. Whatever you decide to do, it will be more enjoyable when the person living with dementia feels most alert
- If an activity is not working, try again another day
- Break activities down into smaller steps
- Find something you can do **with** the person, rather than for them

Looking for a simple treat to make? Sometimes less is more (and easier to follow). We've found a delicious fudge recipe with just three ingredients - chocolate chips, sweetened condensed milk, and butter. See the full recipe and instructions online: www.livewellbakeoften.com/easy-fudge-recipe

Shaping the Journey: A first-voice perspective

Calandra Kandziora, Coordinator, Client Services

Ann Sheree Reynolds

ASNS is proud to offer the program Shaping the Journey in partnership with Nova Scotia Health, with the program currently being offered through Zoom for Healthcare. The program is designed for people with a recent diagnosis of early-stage dementia and a care partner to attend together. Shaping the Journey provides participants with evidence-based education from knowledgeable, professional staff in a supportive environment. This program also provides an opportunity for people with dementia and care partners to receive separate facilitated peer support.

Ann Sheree Reynolds is a care partner who recently attended a virtual Shaping the Journey program. She has provided us with a first-voice perspective of her experience as a care partner in the program.

Ann Sheree says that she first became aware of Shaping the Journey from a care provider after her husband was diagnosed with dementia. She describes the program as “a bit like a life preserver” and shared it provided her with the practical information she and her husband needed in a supportive environment.

She shared that a benefit of the virtual platform was an added level of anonymity, while still receiving much needed support.

“Would I have liked to have spoken in person and see their faces and shake their hands? I think so,” says Ann Sheree. “But on the other hand, there was a certain level of freedom that you had if your eyes were welling up with tears, you didn’t have to speak and no one had to know. But people were still quick to reassure if our voice was cracking.”

When asked about her experience of receiving facilitated peer support in the program, Ann Sheree expressed that it made her feel that she wasn’t alone.

“There’s something about a shared experience that makes you feel less isolated and less fearful,” she says. “The group we had was very affirming and supportive of one another, and I think that went a long way in assuring me that I could do this, even in times that I felt like I couldn’t.”

She adds that she has kept in touch by email with another care partner in the program to continue the support she gained from attending Shaping the Journey.

Participants who choose to share their email with each other often continue to connect long after the program ends.

Ann Sheree encourages care partners and people diagnosed with early stage dementia to reach out for support in a timely manner following diagnosis. ASNS Manager of Client Services, Kaija Whittam, echoes this.

“Please reach out to our InfoLine when you are ready at any point of the journey, says Kaija. “The earlier you reach out, the earlier we can connect you with supports.”

Ann Sheree concluded her interview by sharing “it was encouraging to hear people that were really on board to embrace what they could do for their partner. The other thing that I found encouraging was they had such a great attitude and that was contagious to some degree.”

The value of accessing facilitated peer support in a timely manner is so evident throughout Ann Sheree’s interview, and her words are inspiring to those on the dementia journey.

For more information on Shaping the Journey and to find out if it will suit your current needs, call our Infoline: 1-800-611-6345.

Dear Friend,

The past 18 months have been difficult for all Nova Scotians. COVID-19 restrictions meant many of us felt more isolated and disconnected from our friends, colleagues, and regular routines.

Just imagine the impact of the pandemic on a person who cares for someone who has Alzheimer's disease, or another type or dementia.

Before the pandemic, they carried a heavy load. They are often a loving family member with work and community obligations. In addition, they provided understanding care to those they support, keeping them safe as the diseased progressed.

Until the COVID pandemic, caregivers relied on programs and support from the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia to rest, restore and re-energize. When the pandemic hit, those resources were impacted with all our support services moving online.

Those few hours set aside for self care were replaced with additional demands like working from home, assisting children with their virtual school, and navigating the maze of pandemic restrictions.

There is absolutely no doubt that care partners are true heroes.

At the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia, part of our mission is to help those caring for a person living with dementia solve problems, gain greater understanding of the disease, and provide more effective, affectionate care.

Did you know that when the pandemic prevented all our in-person programs from being held in person, it took us less than four weeks to get virtual programs up and running? I am proud of the dedicated and knowledgeable staff at the society for taking on this challenge with such grace and professionalism.

Our Alzheimer InfoLine program was by far the program caregivers used most often during the pandemic. Throughout the last 18 months, staff provided vital support to **1,086 new clients through the InfoLine**.

Going forward, we want to support those 1,086 new clients and our pre-existing clients with the best information we can and connect them with the appropriate resources. That's why it is essential to expand the InfoLine service that was a crucial lifeline to so many during the pandemic.

Note for Caregiver

You have the power to provide that kind of encouragement and peace of mind at your fingertips. Please return your notecard to me today. I will make sure it’s only a matter of days before your inspiring words are in the hands of a worthy caregiver. What a wonderful gift!

Sincerely,

John B

John Britton, CEO
Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia

P.S. It only takes a couple of minutes and a few words to let a care partner know the work they do is appreciated. Please return your completed notecard and a gift of $100, $50, or even $20 to me as soon as you can. Your generosity could make all the difference in the world!

Name: ______________________________

Full mailing address: ____

____

Yes! I would love to support the InfoLine and provide encouragement to a caregiver.

I’d like to make a one-time tax-deductible contribution of:

☐ $20 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ $ __________

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

☐ Please charge my donation to my:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX

Cardholder name: ________________________________

Card number: ___________________________________

Expiry: ___/___ CVC: _____

Cardholder signature: _____________________________

OR

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

Thank you! Please return to 112-2719 Gladstone St, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 4W6. You can also make your secure donation at **www.alzheimer.ca/ns/donate.**

Interested in learning about becoming a monthly donor or planning a legacy gift? Contact Denise at 902-229-6093 or denise.collier@asns.ca.

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No one should face dementia alone.

Read how you make that possible in our latest newsletter.

Forget Me Not
Ne m'oubliez pas