

**For immediate release**

**Alzheimer Society campaign tackles stigma of dementia**

**See me, not my disease. Let's talk about dementia. Toronto, ON, January 2, 2013** – Imagine a close friend tells you she has dementia. Would you avoid her for fear of being embarrassed by what she might say or do? If you answered yes, you're not alone. According to a recent poll by Alzheimer's Disease International, 40 per cent of people with dementia reported they had been avoided or treated differently after diagnosis. It's no surprise, then, that one in four respondents cited stigma as a reason to conceal their diagnosis.

That's why, this January during Alzheimer Awareness Month, the Alzheimer Society is launching a nation-wide campaign called **"See me, not my disease. Let's talk about dementia."** Its goal is to address myths about the disease, shift attitudes and make it easier to talk about dementia. Canadians are also invited to test their attitudes and perceptions in an online quiz at the Society's website, [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca).

Stereotypes and misinformation are what prevent people with dementia from getting the help they need and stop others from taking the disease seriously. Dementia is more than having the occasional 'senior moment' or losing your keys. The truth is it's a progressive degenerative brain disorder that affects each person differently. **It's fatal and there is no cure.**

"Dementia really challenges the values we hold as a society and what it means to be human," says Mary Schulz, Director of Education at the Alzheimer Society of Canada. "We need to stop avoiding this disease and rethink how we interact with people with dementia. Only by understanding the disease and talking more openly about it, can we face our own fears and support individuals and families living with dementia."

Today, 747,000 Canadians have dementia. While dementia can affect people as young as 40 years of age, the risk doubles every five years after 65.

**"A diagnosis of dementia doesn't immediately render a person incapable of working or carrying on with their daily life,"** explains Schulz. **"Many people with this disease tell us they want to continue contributing to their community and remain engaged for as long as possible."** In fact growing evidence shows that involving people with dementia in meaningful activities that speak to their strengths helps to slow the progression of the disease and will improve their well-being. **"Inclusion benefits all of us,"** adds Schulz.

The number of Canadians with dementia is expected to double to 1.4 million in the next 20 years, and Anne Harrison, 60, whose husband has Alzheimer's disease, understands what is at stake. "If people knew more about dementia, they could be more supportive. People aren't ashamed of cancer. So, why should we be ashamed of Alzheimer's?"

To help change the conversation, Canadians can do their part if they

- Learn the facts about dementia. Help to dispel inaccurate information to change **society's attitudes and opinions towards people with the** disease.
- **Stop making jokes about Alzheimer's** which trivialize the condition. **We don't tolerate** racial jokes, yet dementia-related jokes are common.
- Maintain relationships with people with dementia at home, in the community or at work, especially as the disease progresses.

To learn more about the **Let's talk about dementia** campaign, visit [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)

*Proudly supported by the KPMG Foundation*

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### **About the Alzheimer Society**

The Alzheimer Society is Canada's leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities right across Canada, the Society offers help for today through programs and services for people living with dementia and hope for tomorrow by funding research to find the cause and the cure.

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## **ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF CANADA RECEIVES \$1-MILLION BOOST FOR RESEARCH MOTHER PARKERS GIFT HELPS FIND A CURE**

**Toronto, ON, February 13, 2013** – Alzheimer's research received a huge boost today as one of Canada's iconic brands Mother Parkers donated \$1 million to the Alzheimer Society of Canada. The donation represents the single largest contribution to the Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP), a peer-reviewed grant and awards program that supports Canada's top talent in bio-medical and quality-of-life research to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease and improve day-to-day care.

The \$1-million gift is the culmination of ***Mother Parkers Remembers***, a year-long campaign initiated by Co-CEOs Paul Higgins Jr. and Michael Higgins to commemorate the company's 100 year history and to honour the memory of their father, Paul Higgins Sr., who succumbed to Alzheimer's later in life.

"Dad's disease had a significant impact on the whole family and the company," says Paul Higgins Jr., Co-CEO, Mother Parkers. "It made sense that the money go to the Alzheimer Society because of their strong commitment to research. Our father would have been proud to know that this money will provide more opportunities for finding a cure."

Throughout the campaign, donations poured in from Mother Parkers' long-standing customers and suppliers from across Canada, including employees, friends and family. As part of the campaign, the Higgins restored their family's historic 1924 rail car, *The Pacific*, making special trips to and from key Canadian cities to raise funds, with in-kind support from CN, VIA and GO.

"The magnitude of the Higgins's generosity is a significant boost to our research efforts," says Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Canada. "This is a fantastic time in dementia research. This gift will help our best and brightest minds continue to explore exciting avenues in the diagnosis, prevention and a cure for this disease. We're extremely grateful to Mother Parkers and all those who gave generously."

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. Age is the biggest risk factor but it can also occur in people in their 40s. Of the top 10 death-causing diseases today, Alzheimer's remains incurable and will affect 1.4 million Canadians by 2031. The disease is also the least funded but its social and economic impact outstrips that of any other chronic condition, including all cancers combined.

"A million dollars is a powerful gift of hope," adds Lowi-Young. "It could one day lead to the breakthrough we desperately need."

### **About Mother Parkers:**

Mother Parkers Tea & Coffee is a family-owned Canadian company and one of the largest private label coffee and tea manufacturers in North America. The Company also manufactures and markets its own brands under the Higgins & Burke, Mother Parkers, Brown Gold, and Martinson labels and has recently entered the single-serve market with their RealCup brand of hot beverage capsules. Established in 1912, Mother Parkers combines technology and new product innovation with years of experience to deliver a better beverage experience in mainstream and specialty coffee, tea and complimentary beverages. For more information, visit [www.mother-parkers.com](http://www.mother-parkers.com)

### **About the Alzheimer Society of Canada**

The Alzheimer Society of Canada is Canada's leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities right across Canada, the Society offers help for today through programs and services and hope for tomorrow by funding research to find the cause and the cure. To learn more about the disease and how you can support the Alzheimer Society Research Program, visit [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)

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## **ALZHEIMER SOCIETY RESEARCH PROGRAM AWARDS RECORD \$4.5 MILLION IN FUNDING**

### **EXCELLENCE IN CANADIAN RESEARCH COULD HOLD KEY TO CURE AND BETTER TREATMENT**

**Toronto, ON, May 29, 2013** – Canadian researchers pursuing answers to Alzheimer's disease have just been awarded \$4.5 million in funding, including a record \$4 million from the Alzheimer Society of Canada's Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP).

The money will be invested in 38 new research projects from across the country aimed at improving the prevention, diagnosis and treatment, as well as finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

"This is a significant boost for dementia research and further builds the capacity of Canadian researchers and research facilities," says Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO at the Alzheimer Society of Canada. "Canada is home to some of the world's best researchers and the Society is committed to supporting them. Their projects could fundamentally change the lives of people already impacted by this devastating disease and improve the outlook for those at risk."

Dr. Cheryl Wellington, a professor in the Department of Pathology at the University of British Columbia, is among the 38 awardees determined to change the course of dementia. Her work is delving deeper into the heart-brain connection. It is widely known that heart disease increases the risk of Alzheimer's, and that people with it have significant changes in the blood vessels in their brains. Less understood is whether these vascular changes contribute to dementia. Wellington will attempt to unravel this relationship by testing to see if changes in "good cholesterol," which is known to protect from heart disease, may also prevent Alzheimer's.

At the University of Toronto, Pooja Viswanathan is taking her computer science know-how out of the lab and into long-term care settings. Sixty to 80 per cent of residents who have dementia are often denied powered wheelchairs because of safety concerns and some are not strong enough to operate manual chairs. A postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Viswanathan intends to use artificial intelligence to build a 'smart' wheelchair equipped with a small camera and sensors to not only restore mobility and independence to residents but keep them safe as well.

"I never fail to be inspired by the exciting ideas that the researchers put forward and the possibilities for the outcomes of these studies to improve the quality of life," says Dr. Lynn Beattie, Chair of the Alzheimer Society's Research Policy Committee. "Great promise is shown by these doctoral and post-doctoral candidates; they're the foundation for building dementia research."

Breakthroughs in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of dementia are desperately needed while also ensuring research can help people with dementia live well with the condition today. Alzheimer's disease remains incurable. Some drugs may temporarily improve symptoms, but none can slow, stop or reverse the disease. There are 747,000 Canadians living with dementia today. That number is expected to increase to 1.4 million by 2031.

This year's record ASRP funding was made possible by a generous million-dollar donation from Paul Higgins Jr. and Michael Higgins, co-CEOs of Mother Parkers. The money was, raised through the *Mother Parkers Remembers* fundraising campaign to honour their father Paul Sr. who had Alzheimer's disease.

Funding also includes \$450,000 from the Pacific Alzheimer Research Foundation (Vancouver) in support of researchers based in British Columbia, and \$75,000 from the Firefly Foundation (Toronto) to support postdoctoral trainees in Ontario.

"We're tremendously grateful to our partners and to all Canadians who support our work each day," adds Lowi-Young. "Still, we need to invest more money into research. \$4.5 million doesn't compare to the \$33 billion dollars we're spending now on dementia care."

For a complete listing of this year's research recipients and to support the Alzheimer Society Research Program, visit: [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca).

### **About the Alzheimer Society Research Program**

The Alzheimer Society Research Program is an annual peer-reviewed research funding competition of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. The Program is supported by Alzheimer Societies across Canada and their generous donors to fund emerging and established investigators working in the biomedical and quality-of-life fields. The Program was launched in 1989 and has, to date, invested over \$40 million in research.

### **About the Alzheimer Society**

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**Lost... Confused... No Way Home...**

Canadian MedicAlert Foundation and the Alzheimer Society of Canada have joined forces to help bring people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias Safely Home

Summer is a time for vacations and spending more time outdoors, but it's also a time to be extra vigilant if you're caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease or other form of dementia.

The fact is people with dementia can become lost, often without warning, and have no idea how to get home. This can be a frightening experience for the lost person and for their families. For this reason, the Canadian MedicAlert Foundation and the Alzheimer Society of Canada have come together to launch the **MedicAlert® Safely Home®** program. Available nationwide, the program is designed to quickly identify those who are lost and assist in a safe return home.



“This new program is an essential resource for keeping people with dementia safe. Registering with the program is an important step family members can take in supporting people with dementia who are at risk of wandering and becoming lost,” says Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Canada. “By collaborating with Canadian MedicAlert Foundation, we’re answering a need which will become even more critical as our population ages and more Canadians develop this disease.”

MedicAlert Safely Home members select a MedicAlert ID to wear at all times. Through a unique 24/7 emergency hotline, inscribed on the ID, first responders are granted immediate access to that person's complete medical profile, as well as emergency contact information. When a member with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia is found — even if they're unable to answer basic personal questions like where they live — MedicAlert will provide critical information and immediately notify emergency contacts.

“Anyone living with Alzheimer's disease should have a MedicAlert membership,” says Robert Ridge, President and CEO, Canadian MedicAlert Foundation. “In addition to helping ensure that people with dementia can find their way safely home, the sophisticated MedicAlert database stores full medical information including what medications they are taking, information about allergies or conditions and a record of their medical history.”

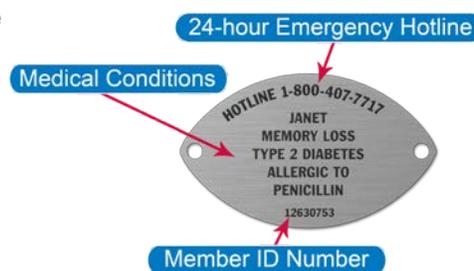
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Ridge adds that, all other reasons aside, registering for the MedicAlert Safely Home program provides families and caregivers with invaluable peace of mind, knowing that those in their care are as safe as possible.

Julie Foley, whose husband Lowell has Alzheimer's disease, couldn't agree more. "There is still no cure for Alzheimer's disease so safety is absolutely essential. It's one of the first things we discussed when my husband was diagnosed. This new program is an easy and subtle support which provides both of us reassurance. Every minute counts."

Anyone registered in the MedicAlert Safely Home program will enjoy all the benefits of a full MedicAlert membership, including:

- Fully customizable lifesaving IDs — a team of MedicAlert medical editing professionals works with the family member to ensure that the information engraved on the back of the ID is as relevant and informative as possible
- The unique 24/7 emergency hotline that gives first responders immediate access to the person's detailed MedicAlert profile
- Immediate family and emergency contact notification



MedicAlert Safely Home membership is \$60 for one year and includes a free MedicAlert 'Blue' ID for first-time registrants that's exclusive to people living with dementia. As a registered charity, MedicAlert also offers alternate payment programs, such as prepaid options and for those who cannot afford a membership, a subsidy program. For immediate registration call 1-855-581-3794.

**About the Canadian MedicAlert Foundation**

Canadian MedicAlert Foundation is the largest membership-based registered charity in Canada and has been the provider of emergency medical information services to more than one million Canadians for more than 50 years.

While there are a number of medical ID devices on the market, only MedicAlert ID is supported by a unique 24/7 emergency hotline service staffed with medical professionals ready to provide information and recognize conflicting treatments and medications that could put your care at risk.

The Foundation's services include electronic health records, a state-of-the-art secure database, a 24-hour emergency hotline for paramedics and first responders, plus customized identification products. Learn more about MedicAlert products and services, how they work, and how you or a loved one can become a member at [MedicAlert.ca](http://MedicAlert.ca) or by calling 1-855-581-3794.

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**About the Alzheimer Society**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Alzheimer Society of Canada calls for “Canadian Alzheimer's disease and dementia partnership”**  
***83 per cent of Canadians want a national dementia strategy***

**Toronto, ON - September 20, 2013** - On the eve of World Alzheimer's Day, the Alzheimer Society of Canada has called on the Federal Government to immediately establish a *Canadian Alzheimer's disease and dementia partnership* to lead and facilitate the development and implementation of a national dementia strategy. The Society made its call to action in a speech delivered by CEO Mimi Lowi-Young at the Economic Club of Canada.

"Dementia is a huge threat to our public health system and to our nation's productivity," says Lowi-Young. "By 2040, Canada will spend \$293 billion a year on this disease alone. We have the best minds and the best of intentions, yet what is missing is a fully coordinated response to curb costs and meet the crushing needs of families and those living with this profoundly life-altering and ultimately, fatal disease."

Modeled after the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Society is asking the Federal Government to bring together a partnership of dementia experts, government officials, health-care providers, researchers and Canadians impacted by the disease to establish and implement an integrated, comprehensive national strategic plan. The Society is recommending that this arms-length, not-for-profit organization be created and funded through the Public Health Agency of Canada, and that the Government provides several million dollars in its start-up phase, followed with a commitment of \$30 million annually, over five years. The mandate of the partnership would be to

- increase investment in research, foster collaboration and improve knowledge exchange and translation
- provide a surveillance system and evidence-based information on all aspects of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias to inform best practices
- enhance the competency and capacity of those delivering dementia care
- increase awareness about dementia risk factors, early diagnosis and timely interventions
- strengthen the integration and coordination of care and service delivery across the health-care continuum
- recognize family caregiver needs and develop supports that provide options and flexibility

As our population ages, Canadians will be at an increased risk of developing dementia or caring for someone with it. "Everyone owns this disease," says Lowi-Young. "The approach we're proposing has worked for cancer and mental health. It can work for dementia and ensure that we get the best return on investment and available resources. We're asking the private, public and voluntary sectors to rise to the challenge."

Dementia is an emerging and urgent global issue, with the number of people affected worldwide expected to rise to 115 million by 2050. Countries such as France, Australia, Denmark, the UK and the United States have already implemented strategies, but Canada trails behind.

"Canada has a real opportunity to position itself as a world leader in dementia. Ignoring the threat of this disease is not an option; addressing it is essential to our economic future," warns Lowi-Young.

In a recent Nanos survey, 83 per cent of Canadians reported they want a national dementia strategy.\* Today, 747,000 Canadians are living with dementia, with this number projected to increase to 1.4 million by 2031. Age remains a primary risk factor, but the disease can also strike before the age of 65. Evidence also shows the disease can begin to develop decades before symptoms appear.

*\*For information on this survey question, visit [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca).*

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### **About the Alzheimer Society of Canada**

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**Alzheimer Society of Canada commends Federal Throne Speech  
Government shows leadership in renewing dementia research**

**Toronto, ON, October 24, 2013** - The Alzheimer Society of Canada welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to renew health research to tackle the growing onset of dementia and related diseases, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

"The Alzheimer Society is pleased that the Government of Canada recognizes dementia as an important issue," says Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Canada. "The Throne Speech also demonstrates their commitment to finding solutions that will benefit Canadians and their families facing this fatal disease."

Close to 750,000 Canadians have dementia today. This number is expected to reach 1.4 million by 2031, with costs rising to \$293 billion per year by 2040. With an aging demographic and with dim prospects for a cure, dementia will continue to drain our economy and stretch our health-care resources.

The Alzheimer Society also applauds the Government's commitment to improve the caregiver tax credit which will help provide relief to caregivers who currently spend up to 444 million unpaid hours per year looking after a family member with dementia.

In September, the Alzheimer Society of Canada called on the Government to establish the Canadian Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Partnership, with a mandate to assemble dementia experts, government officials, health-care providers, researchers and people who are personally impacted by the disease to facilitate and implement a national dementia strategy.

"We know from a recent Nanos survey that 83 per cent of Canadians want a national dementia strategy. Our pledge to Canadians and families living with this disease is to make sure their voices are heard. We will continue to work with our government partners to ensure this happens."

For more information about the Canadian Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Partnership, visit [Alzheimer.ca/alzheimerspartnership](http://Alzheimer.ca/alzheimerspartnership).

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**Alzheimer Society of Canada welcomes commitment of G8 countries to work together to address rising dementia crisis**

**LONDON, ENGLAND (Wednesday, December 11, 2013)** – The Alzheimer Society of Canada applauds the leadership of the Canadian government and participating countries at the G8 Dementia Summit, led by British Prime Minister David Cameron, who today committed to work together to address the growing problem of dementia through increased research, innovation and partnerships.

“We were pleased to have been invited on behalf of Canadians affected by dementia and work alongside the Government of Canada at the G8 Summit,” Mimi-Lowi-Young, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Canada, said Wednesday as the event drew to a close. “This summit provided a historic opportunity to transform dementia research. It will take a concerted and sustained action from world leaders to tackle one of the world’s largest and most expensive public health issues.”

Health Ministers from G8 countries, including Federal Health Minister Rona Ambrose and Alberta Health Minister Fred Horne, gathered in London to discuss how they can better coordinate efforts and formulate an international approach to deal with dementia.

After their day-long discussions, the G8 Ministers released a Declaration, outlining 12 commitments aimed at addressing the significant human and economic toll of dementia-related illnesses.

“This summit represented a new level of international collaboration and commitment when it comes to addressing the health and economic challenges of dementia,” said Minister Ambrose. “I look forward to working with our G8 partners and stakeholders like the Alzheimer Society of Canada to build upon the G8 legacy event Canada will host with France in Ottawa next year. This will enable Canada to continue to take a leadership role and meet our shared commitment of finding a cure by 2025. It will also ensure that our discussions result in better care to help those living with dementia and their families and caregivers.”

Currently, 747,000 Canadians are living with dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease, with this number reaching 1.4 million by 2031. Annual costs to Canada’s economy will increase from \$33 billion today, to \$293 billion by 2040.

To address the growing dementia crisis, the Alzheimer Society of Canada continues to advocate for a Canadian Alzheimer’s disease and dementia partnership, with a mandate to assemble dementia experts, government officials, health-care providers, researchers and people who are personally impacted by the disease to facilitate and implement a national dementia plan.

“We are encouraged by the international approach to dementia demonstrated by the G8 Summit and we will continue to support and work with the Canadian government on next steps here at home,” said Lowi-Young.

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To learn more about the Alzheimer Society and the Canadian Alzheimer's disease and dementia partnership, visit [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)

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