

**Alzheimer Society of Canada awards \$3.4 million in research
Alzheimer Society Research Program helps Canadian scientists find a cure**

Toronto, ON, July 8, 2012 - Zebrafish are not just tropical fish. They're hope for Alzheimer's disease. With a similar genetic makeup to humans, these common aquarium fish may provide clues to develop new treatments to slow, stop, or reverse Alzheimer's relentless course. That's what Patricia Leighton, a doctoral student in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Alberta, hopes to discover. She's using these fish to study the destructive work of amyloid beta, a protein that piles up inside brain cells and eventually kills them.

Leighton is one of 36 Canadian researchers who have received funding through the 2012 Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP), an annual peer-reviewed competition of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. A collaboration of Alzheimer Societies across Canada and their generous donors, the ASRP supports young and established investigators who are leading promising biomedical and quality-of-life research to find the causes and a cure for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and improve current treatments. This year's awards provides \$3.4 million in funding, bringing the ASRP's total research investment to nearly \$40 million since launching in 1989.

For her work, Leighton received a Biomedical Doctoral Award through the ASRP. Other research recipients are exploring the link between obesity, diabetes and dementia, the benefits of cardiovascular exercise on cognitive reserve, assistive technologies to help those with dementia remain more independent, and the effects of combining ultrasound and MRI technologies to promote neuronal growth.

"Research is at the core of what we do at the Alzheimer Society and Canadian scientists are on the leading edge of unravelling this disease," says Naguib Gouda, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Canada. "With continued research investment, Canada could hold the key to ending or preventing dementia in the next decade."

The ASRP has supported hundreds of scientists who have made tremendous contributions to the growth of Alzheimer's knowledge worldwide. Recently, their work has been particularly influential in the areas of biomarkers, genetics and neuroimaging.

"This program is vital to the training of new researchers who are dedicated to finding the causes and treatments of Alzheimer's disease," says Dr. Serge Gauthier, a leading expert in dementia research at McGill University, Montreal, who is also a Board Member of the Alzheimer Society of Canada and Chair of its Research Policy Committee.

But as scientific advances accumulate, research funding for dementia has not kept pace with its escalating scope and impact. By 2038, dementia will affect 1.1 million Canadians and the hundreds of thousands more who will be caring for them. By the same time, the annual economic costs will balloon to \$153 billion. Dementia is not a normal part of aging, but age remains the biggest risk factor. After 65, the risk doubles every five years. To learn more about the 36 research projects and the Alzheimer Society Research Program, please visit www.alzheimer.ca

About Alzheimer's disease

Dementia is a term that describes a general group of brain disorders. Symptoms include the loss of memory, impaired judgment, and changes in behaviour and personality. Dementia is progressive, degenerative and eventually terminal. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia accounting for almost two thirds of dementias in Canada today.

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society is the leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in more than 150 communities across Canada, the Society offers **Help for Today** through our 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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