



**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, March 20, 2015

**UBC students can all play a role in creating dementia-friendly communities**

**Vancouver, B.C.** —UBC's Project PATHS (Parkinson's and Alzheimer's Targeted Hope and Support) will next week hold its annual Speaker's Night – and students will receive dementia-friendly education from the Alzheimer Society of B.C. as part of the program. The event, which is open to the public, takes place Monday, March 23, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Abdul Ladha Science Student Centre, 2055 East Mall.

"We are working with student groups, municipalities, professionals, corporations and volunteers to help their communities become more dementia friendly, and we are thrilled to have this student engagement at UBC," says Barbara Lindsay, Director of Advocacy & Education at the Alzheimer Society of B.C., "Dementia cuts across generations."

Sixty per cent of people with dementia live in the community by themselves or with a caregiver. Although many people with dementia live well in the community for quite a long time, staying engaged in the activities a person once enjoyed can become more difficult as their cognitive abilities change. Meanwhile, stigma, as well as social and physical barriers, can make it harder for people with dementia to feel supported and remain involved in their communities.

People with dementia often face challenges when going shopping, doing their banking, eating out at a restaurant or going to their local post office. They may also have difficulties using transportation, going on holidays, maintaining social contact or enjoying hobbies out in the community. However, with information, compassion and community engagement, there is an opportunity to change this. Everyone can take part in creating accessible, inclusive spaces for people with dementia.

"UBC Projects PATHS is delighted to host an event to enlighten the bright young minds of today, and the leaders of tomorrow about the neurodegenerative diseases that will profoundly affect our society as the population continues to age," say the group's co-presidents Lindsay Richter and Delane Espinueva.

Project PATHS is a network of students that aims to engage UBC students in philanthropic initiatives, to enrich the lives affected by Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, and to explore the paths of research towards a cure. Proceeds from events they hold throughout the year are directly donated to the Parkinson Society British Columbia and the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Interviews and photos available upon request.

### **Media Contact**

Paula Brill

Coordinator, Marketing & Communications, Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Direct: 604-742-4940

Cell: 604-365-9269

Email: [pbrill@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:pbrill@alzheimerbc.org)

Website: [www.alzheimerbc.org](http://www.alzheimerbc.org)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/AlzheimerBCnews](http://www.twitter.com/AlzheimerBCnews)

### **About Dementia**

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 of B.C.**

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides a provincial network of support and education for families impacted by dementia and people concerned about memory loss. Communities across the province count on the Society for support services, information and education programs, advocacy to improve dementia care in B.C. and to fund research to find the causes and cures. As part of a national federation, the Society is a leading authority on the disease in Canada.



ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF B.C.

#300 - 828 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1E2

PHONE: 604-681-6530 FAX: 604-669-6907 TOLL FREE: 1-800-667-3742

WEBSITE: [www.alzheimerbc.org](http://www.alzheimerbc.org) E-MAIL: [info@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:info@alzheimerbc.org)

TWITTER: @AlzheimerBC FACEBOOK: AlzheimerBC YOUTUBE: AlzheimerBC

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