



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 23, 2015

Whistler residents urged to make their community more dementia friendly

Whistler, B.C. — Whistler residents will have an opportunity to learn how they can make their community a more dementia friendly place with education from the Alzheimer Society of B.C. The event, which is co-presented by the Whistler Public Library and is open to the public, takes place Wednesday, April 29, from 2:00-3:30 p.m. at the library, 4329 Main Street.

“We are working with municipalities, professionals, corporations and volunteers to better support people with dementia through our Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative, and we are thrilled to be able to work with the community in Whistler,” says Maria Howard, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

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. The Dementia Friends education and training offered by the Alzheimer Society of B.C. will help everyone to take part in creating accessible, inclusive spaces for people with dementia. To attend the event, RSVP in person at the library front desks or by calling 604-935-8435.

Society representatives will also be meeting with Whistler city council to discuss dementia-friendly communities, as well as to emphasize the work of two Whistler community members, Erika Durlacher and Pierre Marc Jette, who are fundraising to support the Society through *Ascent for Alzheimer's* and *Anything for Alzheimer's*, respectively.

For more information

- on dementia-friendly communities: alzbc.org/dementia-friendly-communities
- on *Ascent for Alzheimer's*: ascentbc.ca
- on *Anything for Alzheimer's*: anythingforalzheimers.ca

Interviews and photos available upon request.

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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.



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