

# Mary's Story

***"You get it."***

This is how Mary feels about the Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington (ASWW). When her husband, Randy, was diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) in 2019, **Mary was advised by a friend to call the Alzheimer Society as soon as she was able.**



ASWW receives on average more than 5 inquiries/referrals per day. In Waterloo Region over 16,500 people live with dementia and that number is rising. **When you consider those affected by one person's diagnosis, such as spouses and other family members, that number increases dramatically to 41,500.** As the Baby Boomer generation ages and more people are diagnosed with dementia, those numbers will increase exponentially.

Mary first started noticing subtle differences in Randy's behaviour three years before he was diagnosed. He became more introverted and less interested in socializing with their friends and neighbours. He started showing poor judgement with his decisions. Randy was referred to a memory clinic in 2019 where the initial diagnosis of MCI was made.

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"I've experienced a lot of grief and a lot of loss" Mary said. "We've had a good life together. But I need help. **Whenever I needed to talk to someone, my social worker was always available.** With the ongoing help I've received from ASWW, my life has been made easier."

**The caregiver's role in the lives of those living with dementia is often overlooked.** Like many clients, Randy and Mary shared a long life together. Their two sons are grown and are established with their careers and families away from Waterloo Region. As Randy's health declines and the dementia increases, Mary has become Randy's primary caregiver. Life has changed dramatically for Mary, "Now I have to do everything, cooking and housework as well as taking out the garbage, paying the bills, and driving to appointments.

**ASWW offers important support programs and services for people living with dementia and their caregivers as well.** "When I first came to the Alzheimer's Society, I was introduced to a program being offered at the time called 'Learning the Ropes'. This helped expose me to all that the Alzheimer's Society has to offer and to other people dealing with dementia. **You opened up my world. My advice to anyone just finding out about dementia is to connect with the Alzheimer Society."**

**All of ASWW's programs and services are offered free of charge.** Your help is needed today to keep it that way! Each year ASWW needs to raise over 1 million dollars through donations to help families like Mary and Randy. Mary says, "Working with ASWW makes me feel empowered to make every day a good day for Randy."

**You can help families dealing with dementia by making your donation today.** Your monthly gift of \$20, \$25, \$50 or whatever amount you choose will help people just like Mary and Randy receive support. A one-time gift of \$100 provides a person like Mary an initial consultation with a registered social worker.

Please make your donation online today at [alzheimer.ca/ww](http://alzheimer.ca/ww) or call the office today at 519-742-1422.

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