

# Help for Today and

## *Hope for Tomorrow...*



### COMMUNITY REPORT

August 1, 2020 - July 31, 2021

*Alzheimer Society*

ALBERTA AND  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

## OUR VISION

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

## OUR MISSION

The Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories brings awareness to Alzheimer's disease and other dementias; helps alleviate the personal and social consequences of the disease; provides education and support programs; and, promotes and funds research into the cause, prevention and cure.

## OUR VALUES

Our values are "CARE: Collaboration, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence."



# *President and CEO Report*

It has been a year of both challenges and opportunities for the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories. A year where we remained under public health restrictions due to Covid-19, where our team continued to work remotely, and where access to in-person programs and services were unavailable. This created challenges in serving the people living with dementia who need our help more than ever.

Despite these challenges, our team committed to be available to those who rely on us for support. We began hosting virtual support groups and our First Link® program continued to provide a connection for all our clients. We quickly turned to technology and increased our webinar offerings and resources on ASANT Café and found innovative ways to offer programs like Minds in Motion®.

While we are proud of the virtual support and services we can now provide, and how it has positioned us well to enhance our service delivery model, the loss of in-person programming created undeniable challenges for so many people in Alberta and the Northwest Territories living with dementia and their families and friends and we recognize our need to find more solutions. We are planning how we can safely reintroduce in-person programs and services within the current and anticipated environment to better serve those in need of support.

Throughout the year, we continued to support the Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan through our commitment to expand and enhance our outreach to rural communities. We remained invested in developing a Community Dementia Ambassador Program to help connect

rural Albertans living with dementia to our Society, and we continued our work to develop a resource for Alberta employers and employees to help foster dementia-inclusive workplaces.

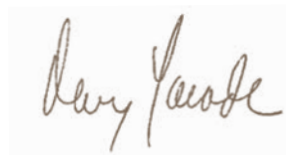
Our ability to raise funds has also been impacted. For the second year in a row, our Alzheimer's Face Off Pro-Am Hockey Tournament presented by Christenson Communities Ltd., our largest fundraising event was cancelled, and our IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's was virtual. That said, we are pleased that most of the teams and sponsors of our hockey tournament have committed to participate as we look forward to hosting the event again in 2022 and the number of people choosing to support us through the walk has grown. We are grateful for our many donors and sponsors who have continued to support us this past year and made us their charity of choice.



**George Andrews**  
Chief Executive Officer

This year also marked the end of our very successful partnership with the Alberta Prion Research Institute. Since 2012 the Prion Institute matched AS AB/NT contributions resulting in over \$5 million to 31 world class Alberta-based research projects. In addition, with the Prion Institute administrative support, we were able to fund \$1 million towards research through the Hope for Tomorrow grants. We are now exploring new partnerships and exciting research opportunities in the coming year while remaining committed to supporting the Alzheimer Society of Canada Research program.

We could not have accomplished all we have this year without the dedication of our Board of Directors, our staff, volunteers, and donors. We are grateful for your commitment to support our clients and all those living with dementia during these difficult times – thank you.



**Darcy Yamada**  
Board President





# *Supporting*

## **THOSE LIVING WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND OTHER DEMENTIAS**

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are as unpredictable as they are relentless. Ask anyone who has watched someone lose their memories, their independence and eventually their lives, and they will tell you the diagnosis can leave diagnosed individuals and their care partners feeling bewildered, alone, and afraid. Often, people are uncertain where to turn or what questions to ask. That's where the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories (AS AB/NT) can help.

We exist to make sure no one has to navigate the journey alone. We work to help people

understand what Alzheimer's disease and dementia are so that people know what to expect and how to plan for the future. We offer coping strategies, programs and supports that ease isolation and fear, while educating people about symptoms and strategies to manage them. And we fund research into the cause, prevention, and hope for an eventual cure.

Everything we do is focused on ensuring people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias – and those who care for them – have the resources they need to live each day fully.

# *Understanding* **ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND OTHER DEMENTIAS**

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are serious progressive neurologic disorders that cause physical changes to the brain. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, a term for memory loss, confusion, and other cognitive impairments that can affect a person's ability to live independently. It is characterized by increasingly severe symptoms, that eventually creates difficulties in movement, that can affect speech, swallowing, and

walking, before leading to complications that will eventually result in death.

Dementia is not a normal part of aging. Each year, more than 75,000 Canadians receive a diagnosis that will change the trajectory of their lives and the lives of those who care for them. AS AB/NT is here to support people living with that diagnosis and to work towards a future where dementia is part of the past.



# *A Growing Problem*

Right now, over 49,000 Albertans are living with dementia – roughly 1% of the total population. This means one in three people in Alberta and the Northwest Territories are directly or indirectly impacted by the disease. By 2043 as many as 225,000, or almost 3.5% of the population, could be diagnosed with dementia. Many more may live with dementia without a diagnosis. Globally, the estimated rate of undetected dementia is more than 60%.

Nationally, the statistics are equally alarming. The number of seniors living with dementia increased 83% between 2002 and 2013. Over the next 20 years, it is estimated that the

number of Canadians living with dementia will increase by up to 68% due to an aging population and population growth. By 2038, 1,125,200 Canadians will have dementia, a total of 2.8% of the national population. The cumulative economic burden will be \$872B and the demand for long-term care will increase tenfold.

Beyond the economic and health care burdens, the disease will rob millions of Canadians of their memories, their independence, and their lives. And it will leave many more grieving the loss of the person they loved.





## *What We Do*

The Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories works to alleviate the personal and social consequences of the disease; provide education and support programs; and promote and fund research into the cause, prevention, and eventual cure.

AS AB/NT is working to increase the understanding of dementia and improve the quality of life for those with the disease. Through seven regional centres and a provincial office, AS AB/NT offers a network

of educational and support services for people diagnosed with dementia and their care partners. In addition, we build partnerships with health professionals and the community, and advance research into effective treatments and finding a cure for this devastating disease.

We know that the diagnosis can be daunting, but we also know with your support there is reason for hope and a promise for earlier diagnosis, increased supports and – someday soon – a cure.





# Our Services



## FIRST LINK®

Connects people with dementia and their families to information, support services, and education following the diagnosis and throughout the progression of the disease.

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Provides an opportunity for people to ask our staff questions related to their situation and get connected to services available in their community.

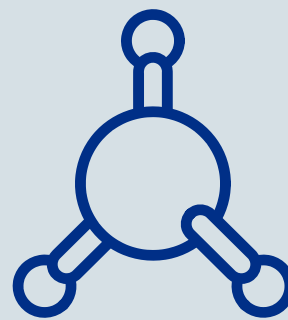


## SUPPORT GROUPS

Individuals and care partners receive support, connection, and understanding, either in-person or via live video conferences, with others impacted by dementia.

## EDUCATION

Provides individuals and care partners evidence based dementia information that builds confidence, increases knowledge and identifies better strategies for coping with dementia.



## RESEARCH

Funds research focused on finding treatments, causes, and a cure, and improving quality of life.

## AWARENESS

Ensures that people are aware of the warning signs, learn ways to reduce the risk of dementia, and know where to turn for help.





## PROVIDING HELP FOR TODAY

AS AB/NT's first priority is helping people living with Alzheimer's and other dementias and their care partners access the support they need to live life as fully as possible. This provides opportunities to develop meaningful community supports, throughout the continuum of the disease.

## FIRST LINK®

**First Link®** is a flagship program for AS AB/NT. It is a support and referral program that supports and connects individuals that are newly diagnosed their families, and care partners to services and learning resources.

This early intervention program connects people living with dementia and their care partners directly to AS AB/NT, who in turn helps them access services and support throughout every stage of the disease – from navigating through diagnosis, to daily living assistance and respite options, and eventually end-of-life. We work to make sure no one has to walk this journey alone.

### Navigating Systems and Finding Communities

One of the most significant client needs is navigating complex systems, including understanding the diagnostic process, securing appropriate and safe housing, managing behaviours, accessing day programs, managing stress and grief, and self-care strategies for care partners. The supports we provide are tailored to each person's specific needs and provided free of charge. First Link® helps people understand how to live with dementia.

The ASANT Café offers an online community for people living with dementia and their care partners – an information system where members can post, comment on discussions, give advice, and collaborate. This helps people learn from others and develop a strong network of both formal and informal community supports. Monthly interactive educational webinars help people learn about the disease, what to expect, and where to turn to for support.

AS AB/NT offers specialized programming for those living with dementia, including a variety of tailored support groups for women, men, care partners and those diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's.

Our Minds In Motion® program provides cognitive and physical activities for people living with dementia, offering a two-hour weekly program that runs for eight weeks on-site in a community recreation centre. Each session consists of 45 minutes of fitness, led by a certified fitness instructor that focuses on cardiovascular, strength and balance, as well as social activities that focus on cognitive and mental stimulation. The program normalizes fitness and recreation, while improving balance, mobility, flexibility, and alertness, increasing confidence, and reducing depression.

## Improving Care Outcomes

We have known for many years how important the supports offered through our First Link® program are, based on the feedback we receive from patients and their care partners. Several research studies have also confirmed exactly how impactful these types of programs can be in improving outcomes for patients, especially in relation to placement in long-term care.

One study conducted at New York University demonstrated that interventions like those offered by First Link® both improve the quality of life for patients and their care partners, while delaying the time before long-term care is required by almost a year and a half. These supports help care partners continue to care for patients in their own homes longer, postponing the need for people to leave familiar surroundings. When these clients do go to long-term care, they report better outcomes with the transition being less stressful for both the patient and the care partner. This has important implications for both improving the quality of life for patients and care partners, as well as for reducing health care costs.

## Assisting Health Providers

Research indicates only 41% of family doctors feel prepared to care for someone with dementia due to reasons such as the complexities of dementia, difficulties in diagnosing, lack of access to specialists, and an insufficient knowledge of community resources. That is why First Link® is an important resource for healthcare professionals. Referrals through First Link®, allow primary care teams and other health and community service providers to proactively connect their patients and clients to AS AB/NT and their regional office. This makes it easier for people to access support early on and better manage the disease.

In 2020, AS AB/NT received over 2,000 referrals to First Link® and assisted almost 8,000 clients from over 400 communities across Alberta and the Northwest Territories. We know the need will continue to grow, as the number of people living with dementia is expected to rise significantly over the next decade. AS AB/NT must expand its services now so we have the capacity to provide the essential information and support we know people will require.

First Link® was initially envisioned as a three-year pilot project. As the pilot funding comes to an end, AS AB/NT is aiming to raise the millions required to continue funding the program. We know we are a critical resource for clients, their families and care partners, and we are determined to be there when people need us.





## ADVANCING EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

We know this work makes a difference.

**Dr. Jasneet Parmar** is a care of the elderly physician working in Edmonton, as well as an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Alberta. A well-known researcher and medical educator, Dr. Parmar explains how the Alzheimer Society helps to educate others:

“I have learned so much from the Seeds of Hope Program. I was a guest speaker and I was teaching content to care partners, but I was learning too – from their experience and from the Alzheimer Society staff. I was so moved! As healthcare professionals we have a responsibility to learn about

dementia and how it impacts our clients, their families, and our community. We must learn about community support systems and collaborate with others so that we can provide wholistic care and support well-being. That’s what I appreciate about the Alzheimer Society. They are very responsive and always available to help educate medical students and healthcare professionals. They help us understand dementia and how we can do better at patient and family centred care which we know often leads to better outcomes and higher quality of life. It makes a world of difference.”

## COMMUNITY DEMENTIA AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

AS AB/NT will expand the Community Dementia Ambassador Program, which aims to help improve the lives of those affected by Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias through information, support, and advocacy. Currently in the pilot phase the program will be expanded to provide resources in rural and isolated communities where few formal supports are available. Volunteers are recruited and trained to help others access the resources available in their community.

Community Dementia Ambassadors connect locally with neighbours, medical providers, community clubs, local businesses, and even schools. They listen, make referrals to available resources and presentations, and may participate in local committees and working groups. Most importantly, they let people know the Alzheimer Society is here and ready to offer support.



## RESEARCH

Right now, there is no cure for Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias or any way to prevent it. But there is *hope for tomorrow* – hope that rests on the innovation, ingenuity, and inspiration of dementia researchers who are relentlessly pursuing radical new ideas.

Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia are one of the biggest public health challenges in Canada – as big as cancer, heart disease, and stroke. Globally, dementia is being called an “epidemic.” World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan said she could “think of no other disease where innovation, including breakthrough discoveries to develop a cure, is so badly needed.”



## ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH FUNDING GAP

The Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories has been raising the alarm for the need for increased research funding for many years. The gap between existing funding and the urgent need to research the causes, onset, treatment, possible cures, and quality of life for people living with dementia and their care partners is staggering.

Despite the increasing incidence of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias diagnosis, research continues to be woefully underfunded. In 2018, dementia received the lowest research funding at \$5 per capita. In comparison, heart disease and stroke research received \$12 per capita; multiple sclerosis research received \$194 per capita; and ALS research received \$700 per capita.

Earlier diagnosis and better treatments that slow the disease's progression will improve

the quality of life for those living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Finding a cure will save lives. But, in order to realize these goals, we need increased, sustained funding to accelerate revolutionary research that can fuel hope for tomorrow.

## PROVINCIAL RESEARCH PROGRAM

AS AB/NT already supports world-class research at both the provincial and national levels. Over the past 10 years, AS AB/NT has provided almost \$4M for world-class research projects in Alberta. The 2018 Hope for Tomorrow Catalyst Grant provided an additional \$1M to fund research projects at the University of Lethbridge led by Dr. Robert Sutherland as well as the SynAD team at the University of Alberta under the direction of Dr. Roger Dixon. Funding from AS AB/NT was further leveraged to secure matching dollars for each of the projects, which meant donor dollars were matched and even tripled.





## *You Can Provide Help for Today and Hope for Tomorrow*

Your gift will make a tangible difference in the lives of those living with dementia and those who care for them.

With your help, we can continue providing information, resources, and interventions that will improve the quality of life for people

living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias here and now. Your support will also drive critically important research so we can understand the causes, allow for earlier detection, and advance strategies and treatments that will help people with dementia live longer and enjoy a better quality of life.



# WAYS TO GIVE

## PHILANTHROPIC GIFTS

Cash, multi-year pledges, or gifts of stocks and securities:

- Provide charitable donation to support a specific area or program
- Make an undesignated gift to the area of greatest need
- Opportunities for naming recognition are available

## CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

One-time or multi-year pledges:

- Provide financial support in exchange for benefits such as corporate naming and brand visibility
- Engage in multi-year partnerships to match your corporate strategy

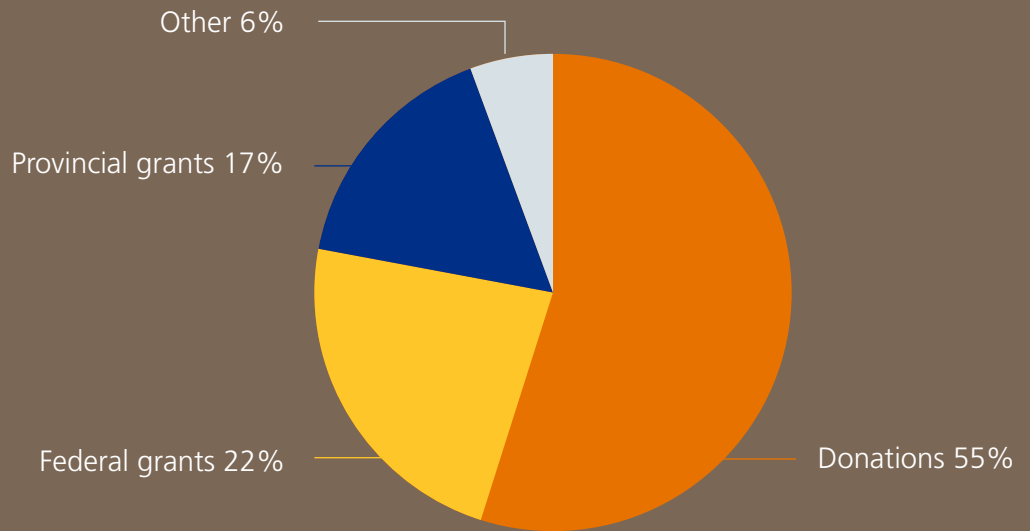
## LEGACY GIFTS

Wills, trusts, bequests, life insurance, and stocks & securities:

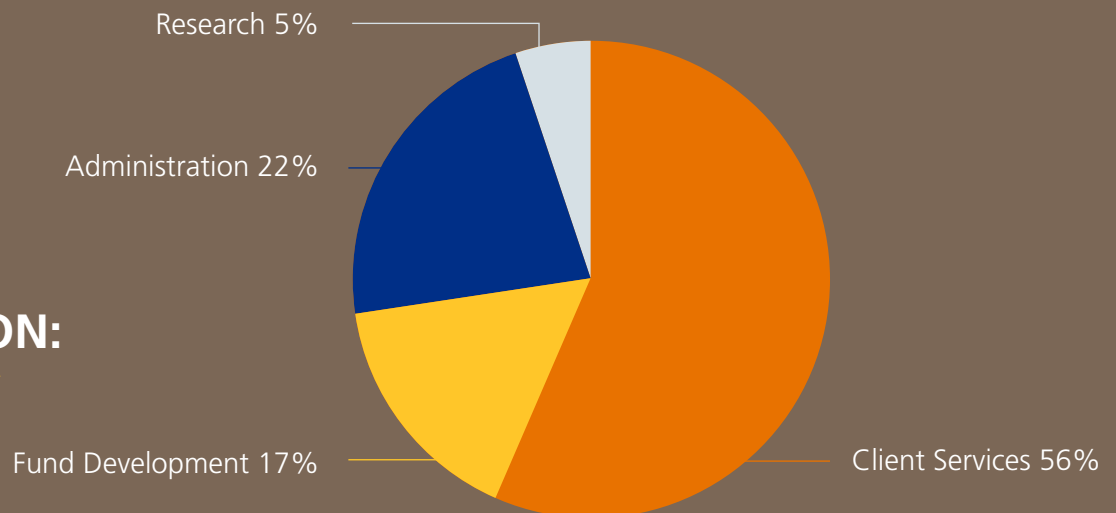
- Including the Alzheimer Society in your estate plan allows you to make a difference in the lives of those touched by dementia while still supporting those you love.

# Financials

**HOW WE RECEIVED OUR FUNDS:**  
**\$4,355,156\***



**HOW WE INVESTED FUNDS IN OUR MISSION:**  
**\$2,774,654\***



1,580,502 represents an increase in net assets.

\*Visit [www.alzheimer.ab.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ab.ca) to see the full audited financial statements.

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# Alzheimer *Society*

ALBERTA AND  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

For more information about how you can support this critically important work, please contact:

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