
In the Loop

WINTER 2022

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Alzheimer
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NOVA SCOTIA

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WINTER 2022

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Have your voice heard about the future of ASNS: Community Consultations

Connie VanBerkel, Manager, Community Development

We're looking toward the future – and we are asking questions. How many Nova Scotians will be living with dementia five years from now? How many family members, friends and neighbours will be supporting someone on the dementia journey? What supports and services will need to be in place to help them navigate that journey? What can ASNS do to be part of those supports and services? To help us answer these questions, we want to hear from you!

We are reviewing and updating our strategic directions to help identify and guide our priorities in the coming years. In addition to asking ourselves questions, we want to ask you: what gaps do you see in dementia care, and what role do you see ASNS playing to help address those gaps? We invite you to have your say through a public forum meeting for your community.

Meetings will take place via Zoom and will be community specific so that we can address unique needs:

- Cape Breton: February 2 from 7:00-8:30 p.m.
- Antigonish, Guysborough & Pictou: February 3 from 7:00-8:30 p.m.
- Annapolis Valley: February 7 from 2:00-3:30 p.m.
- South Shore: February 8 from 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- Tri-County: February 9 from 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- Cumberland, Colchester & East Hants: February 10 from 2:00-3:30 p.m.
- Halifax: February 15 from 7:00-8:30 p.m.
- African Nova Scotian Communities: February 16 from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

If you are interested in sharing your voice with us, we would love to have you.

Please feel free to register for your session on our website at www.alzheimer.ca/ns/communityconsults.

Early Stage Forum

Our 12th annual Early Stage Forum will be happening virtually via Zoom for Healthcare this spring! Stay tuned for further details.

This event is for persons with early stage dementia and their care partners to hear tips and strategies on how to live well from others who are living with dementia. For more information, visit www.alzheimer.ca/ns or call 1-800-611-6345.



New team member dedicated to working with African Nova Scotian communities

Kirstie Creighton, Manager, Program Development

Chelsea Slawter Wright recently joined the ASNS team in November 2021. She has entered the new role of Education & Engagement Coordinator for African Nova Scotian Communities.

Chelsea was born and raised in Halifax, NS with family roots in East Preston and Beechville. As a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, Chelsea prides herself in helping others and being able to use their personal interests to reach their goals.

Through her previous work experience with Nova Scotia Health, she supported clients through their health journey by providing a variety of interventions and resources to improve their mental, physical and social health. Chelsea has supported several people living with dementia and their families.



Chelsea Slawter Wright

ASNS has grown cultural competence across the province by working with African Nova Scotian communities in ways that address specific cultural needs and meet their specific dementia education and care needs. Chelsea is eager to continue this engagement with the African Nova Scotian community.

“I am very excited to remain involved with my community and support families through their dementia journey,” says Chelsea.

In her role, Chelsea will raise awareness and knowledge of dementia within African Nova Scotian communities, and she will be reaching out to community members to host community engagement sessions. These offerings will include information about ASNS programs and services, dementia education, and supportive programming for caregivers and people living with dementia.

Previous work with African Nova Scotian Communities at ASNS

In March 2019, ASNS began an ongoing collaboration with the Health Association of African Canadians (HAAC). Together we developed a project through which we were able to hire Project Coordinator, Charisma Grace. Charisma worked with our Regional Coordinators and community members identified by HAAC to

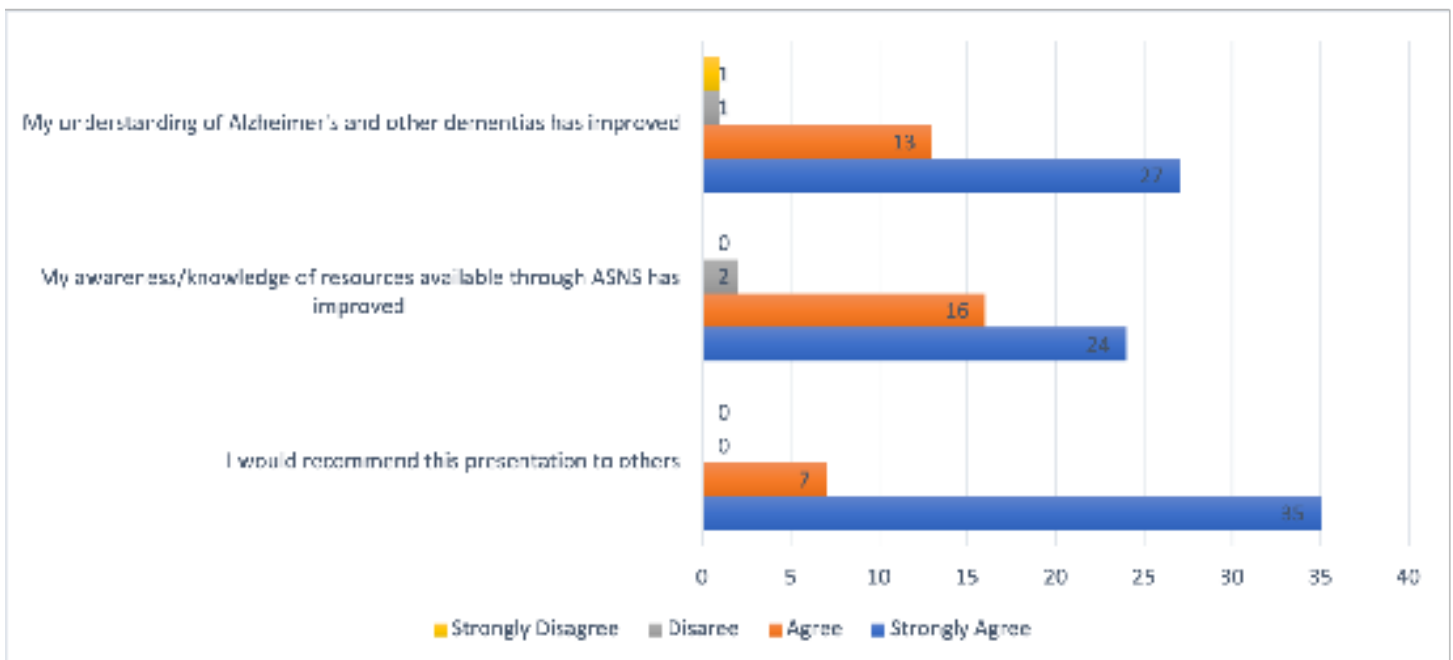
deliver dementia education in several African Nova Scotian communities around the province.

Education and engagement sessions were held in the following African Nova Scotian communities:

- Whitney Pier, Cape Breton
- Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute
- Beechville
- Upper Hammonds Plains
- Upper Big Tracadie
- Antigonish
- Truro
- New Glasgow
- Yarmouth
- Birchtown
- Lucasville

A total of 81 members of the African Nova Scotian community were engaged through presentations, facilitated discussions and questions and answers. Evaluations were completed by 42 attendees.

Feedback from evaluations:



Are you part of the African Nova Scotian community and interested in providing feedback or input on our services? We have a community consultation session scheduled for February 16. Flip back to page 3 for more details!

Help improve dementia care in Nova Scotia

Dr. Paula McLaughlin, Neuropsychologist, Nova Scotia Health
Lindsey Puddicombe, Research Assistant, Nova Scotia Health

In Nova Scotia there are an estimated 17,000 individuals currently living with dementia. This number is expected to grow in the coming years as our population continues to age. The availability of healthcare services and social supports for persons with dementia vary by community and change over time. Because of this, examination of the current needs across regions is important for monitoring and improving care for persons with dementia in Nova Scotia.

In collaboration with the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia (ASNS), our research team is working to identify and understand the current needs of persons with dementia in the province. We are also exploring people's experience with telehealth services (care provided remotely using the telephone or videoconferencing) to see whether telehealth can improve access to care for those living with dementia.



Marilyn Taylor



Sandra Britten

Marilyn Taylor and Sandra Britten are two key members of our research team. They have provided invaluable insight into dementia care in Nova Scotia. Their thoughtful feedback, enthusiasm, and openness in sharing their experiences with dementia has allowed us to produce a unique research survey to help us better understand the current gaps in dementia care. We are very grateful for Marilyn and Sandra's commitment to this project and for helping us move towards improving care for all Nova Scotians living with dementia!

The Identifying and Understanding Gaps in Dementia Care Survey is open to Nova Scotians with dementia who are living in the community, as well as their family members, care partners, and caregivers. Healthcare professionals who provide dementia care within Nova Scotia Health

(NSH) and ASNS program and services staff members are also being asked to complete the survey.

To participate or learn more about the Identifying and Understanding Gaps in Dementia Care Survey, contact Lindsey Puddicombe, research coordinator at 902-473-4263 or via e-mail at Lindsey.Puddicombe@nshealth.ca

Or complete our survey using the links below:

For persons with dementia: <https://research-study.nshealth.ca/surveys/?s=98T8H9J7RN>

For family, caregivers, care partners: <https://research-study.nshealth.ca/surveys/?s=9DJ73JER3W7HR9YX>

For NSH healthcare professionals: <https://research-study.nshealth.ca/surveys/?s=94XEFW3DXXYYCHXH>

ASNS program & services staff members: <https://research-study.nshealth.ca/surveys/?s=PX3X8KTNL44XNRAM>

This project is led by Dr. Paula McLaughlin (Neuropsychologist in the NSH Seniors' Health Program) and is funded by Research Nova Scotia and the QEII Health Sciences Centre Foundation.

InfoLine | 1-800-611-6345



We are here to help

The province-wide InfoLine is a confidential service provided by a team of knowledgeable and caring staff.

Passing the Programs & Services torch

Linda Bird, Director, Programs & Services

I joined the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia in 2004 on a short-term contract to help with the provincial conference and here I am now, making plans to retire on March 31.

It has been a rewarding 18 years to be part of a committed organization that truly wants to make a difference in the lives of people with dementia and their families and friends. I have always appreciated the willingness of individuals and organizations throughout Nova Scotia and beyond to collaborate on, contribute to and support our work, and to get behind new initiatives. We couldn't make the impact that we do without the volunteers, community partners, guest speakers, sponsors and donors who all contribute to our work.



Sacha Nadeau & Linda Bird

There have been lots of changes over the last two decades, and I am going to focus on two that show how ASNS continues to adapt to meet growing needs.

Ten years ago, we attended the first International Changing Melody forum in Toronto held by the Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program, University of Waterloo. This forum embraced the involvement of people with dementia as part of the planning process and a space to share their experience of living with dementia. The following year, we held our first *Early Stage Forum* for people living with early-stage dementia and their care partners and have continued to expand our learning and support programs to involve people with dementia, to support them and to learn from their perspective. I now can't imagine our Society without programs for people living with dementia and engaging their voices in everything we do including research, program development and events.

The other change has been technology. An easy example is going from paper charts to electronic databases to make our work more effective and efficient. When pandemic restrictions were introduced in March of 2020, it provided the urgency, time and priority to modify our existing First Link[®] programs of education and support to be delivered virtually. This opened access to Nova Scotians from anywhere in the province to attend an education series, support group or a lecture on a specific topic, from their own home. While we hope in-person programming resumes soon, we will always continue some virtual programming so that everyone has access to the education and support they need in a timely fashion.

ASNS has been building our scope and implementing a range of programming over the years, supported by our professional, passionate, and dedicated staff. **And with pleasure, I would like to introduce one of those staff, Sacha Nadeau, as our new Director of Programs & Services.**

Sacha has been with the Society for nearly three years and has worked in the dementia field for 10 years. She brings a unique set of skills and talents in research, knowledge translation and conference organization to the role.

“It is such an exciting time to be stepping into this role, maintaining our momentum and steering our dynamic team into the next chapter of ASNS,” says Sacha. “I look forward to continuing to work with staff and community partners to meet the changing and growing needs of people with dementia and their care partners.”

It makes it is easier to leave a job that I have loved when there is a shining light ready to carry the torch.

Let's spread the love this Valentine's Day...

Here is a note to Caregivers from one of our generous donors:

Dear Caregiver,

You are an inspiration. I cannot convey enough the difference you make. Good days and tough ones, you are always there. Resilient and kind, you do the work that would break a weaker heart. Please know you are loved. Thank you.

Alexa McDonough: Immeasurable impact and a towering legacy

John Britton, CEO



Alexa McDonough

To our Alzheimer Society community, family, and friends:

The death of Dr. Alexa McDonough marks the passing of a standout leader, feminist, philanthropist and, most importantly, a cherished heart and brilliant mind. Our communities have suffered a loss that is felt from the most intimate of circles to the biggest of nationwide stages. To Alexa's family and friends, our Society - and indeed our entire country - grieves with you.

Though many of us know Alexa through her political work, she's been a force

for change since her teens when she led her youth group to fight the deplorable conditions in Africville. She has been a social worker, reporter, teacher and, of course, a ground-breaking politician. She fought for worker health and safety improvements, human rights protections and pay equity, and has been a champion of international development and peace advocacy. Anyone who met her felt the dynamic pulse of philanthropy and advocacy running through every fibre of her being.

Alexa's philanthropy was reflective of how she spent her career - fighting for equity and improved lives across communities through feminist initiatives, activism, and a dedication to social justice. In 2013, Mount Saint Vincent University's Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice was re-named the Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice (or AMI) as a way to acknowledge her incredible dedication and impact.

Alexa's connection to the Alzheimer Society began many years ago, and the McDonough family remain among our most treasured friends. Having two parents on the dementia journey and parenting two children herself, Alexa aligned with the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia and quickly became a valuable member of our Board of Directors. Her sons, Justin and Travis (and indeed, their entire extended families), have been constant supporters of ASNS - especially our annual Walk for Alzheimer's. Alexa's influence is clear. Her grandchildren were participating in the Walk before they could even take their first steps, and Justin began as a door-to-door volunteer for ASNS in his teens, eventually going on to offer his expertise and commitment as our Board Chair! Alzheimer's disease and dementia were close to

Alexa's heart. Should you wish to make a donation to the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia in Alexa's memory, you can do so at alzheimer.ca/ns/donate.

Alexa's family has requested that all condolences, memories and thoughts be shared in the online book of condolences so that they can be preserved in one central place. This is a wonderful opportunity to collectively celebrate Alexa's impact and respect the family request for no cards or flowers. Should you wish to read Alexa's obituary or contribute to the book of condolences, you can do so at www.dignitymemorial.com/en-ca/obituaries/halifax-ns/alexa-mcdonough-10529124.

Alexa's bright light will never fade, and we hold her incredible warmth, courage, and commitment to making the world a better place deeply in our hearts. And indeed, as a challenge to continue this incredible legacy in the work we continue to do to ensure ALL Nova Scotians are supported on their dementia journey.

Family Caregiver Education Series



Do you have a friend or family member newly diagnosed with dementia?

Our Family Caregiver Education Series has moved online and spaces are available in upcoming sessions. For more information, visit www.alzheimer.ca/ns/fces or call Heather at 902-422-7961 ext. 243.

Finding support with ASNS

**Catherine Shepherd, Regional Coordinator, Education & Outreach
Cape Breton** *Originally published in the Cape Breton Post*

Learning that you or someone you care for has been diagnosed with dementia can be frightening. Even if you haven't received a diagnosis but have your suspicions, it's a lot to process. That's why I encourage folks to reach out to us at the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia when you have questions or concerns - we can help you.



Wendy & Roddie

We see all the time what a difference it can make when people have support on their dementia journey. Someone who comes to mind for me is Wendy, who lives in Baddeck with her husband Roddie. Roddie was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia in 2019. Common symptoms of Lewy body dementia can be cognitive and memory changes but also hallucinations.

“To watch the man you love, unable to distinguish between what is real and what is not, still takes my breath away,” says Wendy. “An intelligent, kind, thoughtful, caring human, who always took care of the people he loved, was now struggling beyond my capacity as his wife to help him. I needed help.”

The Geriatric Clinic in Sydney recommended that Wendy get in touch with us for support. She reached out to me, and I was happy to support her and her husband.

“With that one phone call, I felt I was immediately a part of the ASNS family,” says Wendy. “I was sent a package of information that allowed Roddie and I to educate ourselves and find the resources we needed, right here at home.”

I'm glad that Wendy and Roddie know they can reach out to me any time that they need support.

“I can now pick up the phone and call the ASNS Regional Coordinator for Cape Breton, who is now a trusted resource and faithful ally for anything that may arise on Roddie's dementia journey,” says Wendy. “And they call me! ‘How is Roddie coming along?’ And ‘how are you?’ This is a blessing beyond words.”

Whether you live in Port Hawkesbury, Sydney or anywhere in between, if you need support, the Alzheimer Society is there for you with one of our many programs.

One of those programs is our caregiver support groups, which have been running virtually throughout the pandemic. There are eight support groups across the province and Wendy was able to attend one from her home.

“Finally having somewhere to share thoughts and fears and opening up with people who speak the same language and understand,” says Wendy reflecting on the benefits of attending the support group.

For Wendy, the support group offered a safe place to ask questions, and to learn more about dementia and the medical system. And just like Wendy, any person caring for someone living with dementia can be part of a support group.

We also offer several other programs that provide information, resources, education and support.

A great first step is to give us a call and we can find a program or resources to fit your needs, at any stage of the dementia journey. We know how important it is to get the proper support as soon as possible, and Wendy and Roddie are a great example of this.

If you or someone you know need support from the Alzheimer Society, please don't hesitate to contact us. You can reach us toll-free at 1-800-611-6345 or by email at alzheimer@asns.ca.

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GOOD LUCK!

Make your giving easy and join our Memory Maker Circle

Our Memory Maker Circle monthly giving plan is an easy way to spread your generosity over the entire year! And, your support will help us alleviate the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and promote the search for causes, treatments and a cure.

Did you know that giving monthly...

- Is affordable and flexible to fit in your budget;
- Puts more of your money to work and helps reduce administrative costs because you receive fewer mailings or emails;
- Saves you time because you won't have to write a cheque or search for a stamp;
- Provides steady, dependable monthly income which helps the Society plan more effectively and be more efficient.

Signing up early in the year will maximize your gift and your tax credit when you file your 2022 return in 2023.

YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK!

The ongoing support of monthly donors makes a huge impact on the lives of Nova Scotians living with dementia, their family, friends and caregivers.

As our CEO shared in his recent letter, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in more than 1,000 new caregivers turning to us for help.

We were so grateful that friends like you were there to ensure we had the resources needed to help those caregivers. It's thanks to our donors that we will be able to continue providing them with much-needed assistance in the weeks and months to come.

Being a caregiver for someone living with dementia can be challenging. But, as our team here at Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia knows all too well, those challenges were undeniably amplified during the pandemic.

Donor generosity and support helped ensure those with nowhere else to



turn could count on us during their most difficult days. For that, our team here at the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia will be forever thankful.

And, it's ongoing monthly support that will make this happen even more.

To join our Memory Maker Circle monthly giving plan, simply fill out the form below and the amount you choose will be automatically withdrawn from your bank account or charged to your credit card each month.

You can cancel or adjust your monthly gift at any time by calling us at (902) 422-7961.

Yes! I would like to help those living with dementia all year long and join the Memory Maker Circle by becoming a monthly donor.

Every month, I agree to contribute:

\$25 \$35 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$ _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

Please charge my donation to my credit card:

Visa MasterCard AMEX

Cardholder name: _____

Card number: _____

Expiry: ___/___ CVC: _____

Cardholder signature: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

OR

Please withdraw from my bank account monthly:

I authorize the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia to withdraw these monthly contributions from my bank account. My sample cheque marked "VOID" is enclosed.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you! You will receive your official tax receipt in early February 2023 for all of your monthly gifts in 2022.

Please return this form to 112-2719 Gladstone St, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 4W6. You can also sign up to become a monthly donor online at www.alzheimer.ca/ns/donate.

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902-422-7961 or 1-800-611-6345 (toll free within NS)

No one should face dementia alone.

*Read how you make that possible in
our latest newsletter.*

