

NSCAD Students Keep an Open Mind About Alzheimer's

By Amanda Gore, ASNS staff member

“These young, creative minds are helping us see dementia and create dementia friendly communities in a whole new light,” says ASNS Director of Programs and Services, Linda Bird. “They have come up with some very innovative strategies and solutions!”

Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Professor Glen Hougan and the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia have formed a collaborative partnership, resulting in 13 students embarking on their own dementia journey. After months of work, the students presented their ideas to ASNS staff, media and various community organizations on December 15.

The students worked in three groups and each represented one of the three stages of dementia: Early, mid and late stage. They learned about the needs of people living in the various stages by interviewing people living with dementia and professionals in the field. They paired this research with their creative abilities and came up with viable solutions and products that could be implemented in the community to help improve the lives of Nova Scotians with dementia.

Designing for Dementia

Access Halifax - Early Stage Group

The Early Stage Group examined the fact that people with dementia have a difficult time navigating Halifax. They believe this issue can be addressed by having better wayfinding and directional signage positioned around the city.

Wayfinding: Signs, maps, and other graphic or audible methods used to convey location and directions to travelers.



Example of work by NSCAD design students to create a more dementia friendly city, using improved transit signage.

Improving wayfinding and directional signage include: Upgrading transit signage and installing maps around the city. To upgrade transit signage the students propose changing bus signs so that they are larger, have better contrast and are lit at night, via solar energy. The other suggestion was to include midway signs for pedestrians that indicate walking distances measured in time to nearby points of reference and attractions.

Wayfinding booths would also be installed in heavy traffic areas around the city that include a map of the area with a "You are here" indicator. It is their theory that installing these tools will help reduce stigma of people living with dementia and help modernize our great city.

This project is currently being explored further by Dalhousie Masters of Planning Students.

"The proposed changes would not just create a more dementia friendly community, but rather just friendlier communities," ASNS Executive Director, Lloyd Brown.

Designing for Dignity – Mid Stage Group

The Mid Stage Group aimed to create a dignified experience. Through their research, the students found that people living in the mid stage of dementia needed support in creation of meaningful downtime, thus they created the sensor bag.

The bag, which looks like any other messenger bag, is made out of and stores a variety of different sensory materials that the user can touch and work with. The purpose of the bag is to give the individual a dignified past time, with comforting sensations that is engaging.

The concept of a sensory bag is not a new idea. They have been manufactured before but often

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use childlike colours and shapes and are undignified for an adult. This solution is mutually benefitting of both the person living with dementia and their partner in care. While the bag has a classic look and a practical purpose, it can also double as a regular storage bag so that the caregiver isn't carrying around the other's belongings. When the Sensor Bag is in use at home, it also gives the partner in care a chance for a little down time.

Helping Saint Vincent Grow – Late Stage Group

The Late Stage Group worked closely with the Saint Vincent Nursing Home to design plans for a greenhouse on their property. The idea of a greenhouse came from the desire to have more opportunity for natural sunlight and green space within the facility.

Not only would a greenhouse accomplish this, but it would also create an enjoyable space for both residents and staff to relax. With happier and more relaxed residents, in turn the staff also becomes happier and more relaxed.

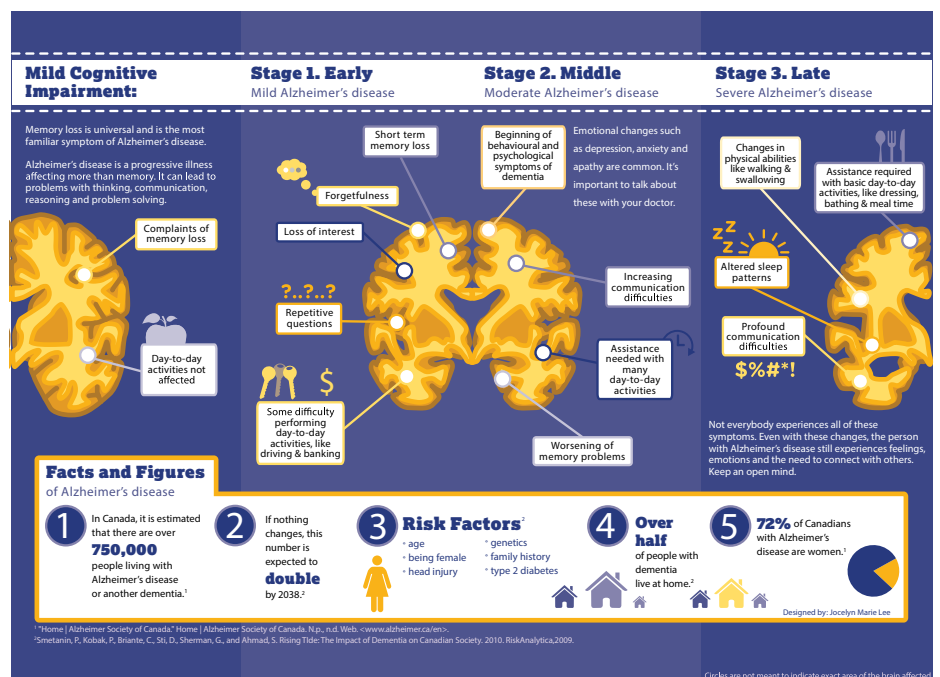
Along with their plans for the actual greenhouse, the students created a capital campaign to make the project possible.

Work by NSCAD students was also presented at the annual Provincial Conference in October, where they created infographics and brochures explaining the different stages of Alzheimer's disease and the ten warning signs. One student, Jocelyn Lee, created a beautiful brochure that was adapted by ASNS and can now be found by visiting www.alzheimer.ca/ns or by stopping in at our Halifax office.



Keep an Open Mind About Alzheimer's

NSCAD Student Jocelyn Lee's Keep an Open Mind About Alzheimer's logo and brochure were presented at the Annual Provincial Conference and were chosen to be used by ASNS



Team Bubby's Buddies Walks for Alzheimer's

By David Keefe, ASNS supporter

In 2015 David and Colina Keefe participated in the [Walk for Alzheimer's](#) for the first time with their team Bubby's Buddies. Bubby is their family dog and he is quite a character. This team quickly turned into one of our top teams of 2015. What brought them to become involved in the Walk? David explains their connection to the event and the Alzheimer Society.

It was fall of 2010 and Colina and I were living in the Middle East. She was teaching English to adults and started to have some difficulties in word finding and writing. We made an appointment with a neurologist. At the end of 2010 we knew it was dementia.

The diagnosis impacted our family in a number of ways. One of which was that we were forced to learn how to cope with a disease that we had no experience with.



Walk for Alzheimer's Bubby's Buddies team leaders Colina & David Keefe

We also had to understand that the things Colina did on a daily basis were becoming more difficult for her. This meant that we had to provide support with things that Colina normally did for herself, and for everyone else.

In mid 2013, we decided to retire and subsequently returned to Halifax. At that time we started to educate ourselves on the disease and find whatever support was available to us. This led us to call the Alzheimer Society and set up a meeting. It was then that we started to understand the full impact of the disease and what we could do to continue to live normally without allowing this disease to take over.

Shortly after that, we saw the notice for the walk and Colina's niece asked if we wanted to start a team and raise money to support the Alzheimer Society. We agreed, and soon, without much recruitment, we had a team of volunteers and the donations started rolling in. Some of our team members had experience with the disease either through a family member or friend that had been afflicted.

Our family is just like many others we have met on this journey. We are scared, hopeful and supportive which is about all you can be. We didn't anticipate this disease

coming into our lives, but every day we work towards ensuring that it doesn't take away from us doing the things we planned to do in our lives; travel and spend time with friends and family. That's what we do.

Our lives have definitely changed. We try to make sure everything is as normal as possible but that's not to say it hasn't come with challenges. As mentioned before, Colina now has difficulty doing things she used to do with ease. Needing help to put on her coat or tie up her shoes is a drastic difference from the woman who just a few years ago completed her Master's Degree in Adult Education.

Luckily, we have a strong support system of friends and family who have stepped up and continue to make our lives easier, and happier. Some call regularly, some take Colina shopping, to the movies, or invite her to their home. Like other families we've also experienced the opposite but we don't dwell on the negative. Instead we choose to move forward and are thankful for those that do provide us with immense support. You can never receive too much support.

Our advice to anyone in a similar situation is to keep things as normal as they were pre-diagnosis; staying in a routine, and continuing to never allow dementia to stop you from doing the things you want to do. Being patient and taking time for yourself to recharge is also important for successfully giving care to someone who is suffering from such a disease. And never be afraid to ask for help from your support system.

Life absolutely doesn't end when Alzheimer's begins and that is exactly what families who have been diagnosed, or will be in the future, should remember each and every day.

Colina is so proud to take part in this year's Walk for Alzheimer's and we were thrilled to be asked to be the poster family for 2016.

She feels very proud that there is something we can do to help.

See you on May 1.



Bubby's Buddies team mascot: Bubby!

The Alzheimer InfoLine: What is it?

By Kaija Whittam, ASNS Staff

We're here to help

[The Alzheimer InfoLine](#) is a confidential service provided by a team of knowledgeable and caring staff. It is available Monday-Thursday 8:30-4 p.m., Friday 8:30-3:30 p.m.. You can access the Alzheimer Infoline by calling the toll-free number 1-800-611-6345, or 902-422-7961 in the Halifax area. You can also make an appointment or drop in to speak to someone in the Halifax office. There is no cost to the service and is available to all Nova Scotians.

Talk to someone who understands

Call the Alzheimer InfoLine for information, support, education, and referral on a variety of topics ranging from early diagnosis, defining Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, a variety of caregiving situations, and the progression of the disease. If you are wondering about your own memory loss, have a diagnosis of dementia, you are a family member or friend of someone living with dementia, you are a caregiver, or you are a health professional in the field, then the InfoLine is here for you. The staff will answer your questions and can provide you with information about community supports that are available.

"It felt like a friend on the other end. The calls were a lifeline to me as I cared for my husband living with dementia". – InfoLine client

Meet the staff

The Alzheimer Infoline is staffed with professional individuals with a variety of post-secondary backgrounds and experiences. They have personal and professional experience with dementia and caregiving and can offer a wide range of tips and information. They are thoughtful and will listen to your concerns and speak with you about your concerns in a non-judgmental manner.



From left: InfoLine staff Wenda MacDonald, Linda Bird, Kaija Whittam, Kara Gouthro-Murgatroyd and Donna McLean

Living a Healthy Lifestyle

Being good to your brain is an important part of your overall health. Some ways you can do that is by eating well or learning new things, like a new recipe! This issue of In the Loop features a recipe that we thought was perfect winter comfort food. So be good to your brain and try something new!

Dill Pickle Soup - Different and Delicious

Recipe from Halifax Food Blog www.sarahsmellstheroses.com

Ingredients

1 large onion, minced
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tbsp. pepper
1 tbsp. minced garlic
1 large carrot, grated
6 potatoes, peeled and diced
4 cups of stock (Either chicken or vegetable!
I used my homemade turkey stock)
6 large pickles, chopped
2 cups of pickle juice from the jar
1 1/2 cups of shredded mozzarella cheese (or
Swiss for a less healthy option)
2 cups of light sour cream



Steps

Step 1 Sautee onions and garlic in olive oil in the bottom of your pot on medium heat

Step 2 Add salt and pepper, carrot, potatoes, pickles, juice and stock. Cook until potatoes are done

Step 3 Take off the stove, add sour cream, and using a hand blender, start blending the mixture (I had to do this in two batches because it was too much for my pot). You want a creamy consistency, but you don't want to lose the chopped pickle!

Step 4 Add the cheese, stirring it into the mixture

Each issue of In the Loop will feature a new way YOU can be good to your brain!

Meet Janet and Jack

Both living well on their dementia journey

By Sarah Lyon, ASNS staff member

You may recognize Janet and Jack Rowe from Alzheimer's Awareness Month where they were featured prominently in our **Keep an Open Mind About Alzheimer's** campaign. They were featured on our **Life Doesn't End When Alzheimer's Begins** poster, the subject of news stories and participate in our programs.

This is their story:

Janet and Jack's story started decades ago right here in Nova Scotia. On a summer's day in August, 1959, they got married in front of hundreds of guests in the beautiful and historic St. Paul's. The bride wore a dress made by her mother and the groom "clowned around," says Janet, for the camera.

From this day on, they maintained the hobbies they had formed together during courtship: swimming, hiking and traveling.

Oh how they traveled. From Dartmouth they visited the Caribbean, Europe and lived in Asia. During this time they expanded their family times three and settled back in Nova Scotia, in the City of Lakes, Dartmouth.

They continued to raise a family and live their lives. Jack maintained his membership with the Rotary and became President of the YMCA Dartmouth. Janet became a volunteer with the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia.

And then in 2011, their story started a new chapter: Jack was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia.

"We are very frank with people about Jack's diagnosis," says Janet. "We told friends right away and asked them, 'for god's sake, don't drop us,' because I had seen through my volunteer work, the isolation that comes with this disease."

"We all have something, some condition. Arthritis, MS, like those, Alzheimer's is a condition I live with, like any other," says Jack. "People knowing helps build a support network but also makes the disease become more normal. And if you act normal,



Janet and Jack enjoying their cake on their wedding day in 1959

other people will too.”

Fifty-seven years after they said “I do,” Janet and Jack continue to live their lives the way it started: they swim every day at the local recreation center; they walk the trails around their community and they volunteer.



Janet and Jack enjoying cake 4 years after Jack's diagnosis in 2015

Every second week they volunteer at a local Nursing Home.

“We pick up kittens from Bide Awhile Animal Shelter and take them visiting with residents,” says Janet Rowe. “It’s a very popular program. Every time we visit it is about more than cats, it’s a social visit.”

Their life didn’t end when Jack was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, it continues.

At the wedding reception of his daughter, Jack offered this advice: More important than looking into each others eyes, is looking together in the same direction.

And together, Janet and Jack go forward.



RUN FOR ALZHEIMER'S

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**Join Team Alzheimer's
Scotiabank Charity Challenge**

May 20-22, 2016

For more information, email
dawn.boudrot@asns.ca

www.bluenosemarathon.com/charity-challenge

Creating Dementia Friendly Communities at the Alzheimer Research Breakfasts

By Beth Jackson, ASNS Staff Member

It was an exciting start to Alzheimer Awareness Month this January: hundreds of guests attended the annual Alzheimer Research Breakfasts in Sydney, Halifax and Bridgewater.

Teepa Snow, International Dementia Expert was the guest speaker at all three breakfasts. Teepa has worked as an Occupational Therapist for over 30 years. Her experience has led her to develop Positive Approach™ to Care techniques and training models that now are used by families and professionals working or living with dementia.

In Sydney, Teepa presented on the topic of Creating a Dementia Friendly Community. Deanna Harvey-Green shared a heartfelt caregiver's story and talked about the journey of caring for her mom who had Alzheimer's disease. Chris Robertson, President of Home Instead Senior Care in Sydney spoke briefly on what local organizations are doing to contribute to a more dementia friendly community.



Catherine Shepherd, Teepa Snow Deanna Harvey-Green and Chris Robertson

"It was a great event," says Sean Burke, Board Member, Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia. "Teepa is quite a presenter - I can't remember being that entertained while learning at the same time."

In Halifax, the Honourable Leo Glavine, minister of health for Nova Scotia, spent most of the breakfast on stage with Teepa. Minister Glavine participated in role playing with Teepa demonstrating ways to communicate better with people who are living with dementia. Teepa's interactive presentation gave the audience practical tips and strategies they can use at work, home and out in the community.

While all three events were hugely successful, it was a sellout event in Bridgewater with 300 people in attendance. The event brought people from Yarmouth, the Valley and communities in between. Guests gathered in the gym of the new Bridgewater Baptist Church to network, learn communication strategies from Teepa and raise funds for dementia research.

"I am extremely proud of the efforts of so many people, young and the young at heart, who each played their role in ensuring that this event was the giant success that it was," says Mayor of Bridgewater, David Walker. "It is wonderful to hear the positive comments from our partners and guests and hear their interest in being part of our next event."



From left: Jennifer Briand, Teepa Snow, Joan Parks-Hubley and Bernice Theriault.

All three breakfasts brought together politicians, healthcare professionals, local businesses, community members, students, persons living with dementia and their families.

The breakfasts would not be a success without the support from the community volunteers and partners. Thank you to the breakfast planning committees in Sydney and Bridgewater. A big thanks to the community partners: Membertou Trade & Convention Centre, Lawtons Drugs, Credit Union, The Cunard Centre, Ridgewood Assisted Living and Stay at Home Care. Sincere thanks to everyone who attended the breakfasts.

To download a copy of Teepa Snow's presentations, visit alzheimer.ca/ns. To learn more about Teepa Snow, visit www.TeepaSnow.com.

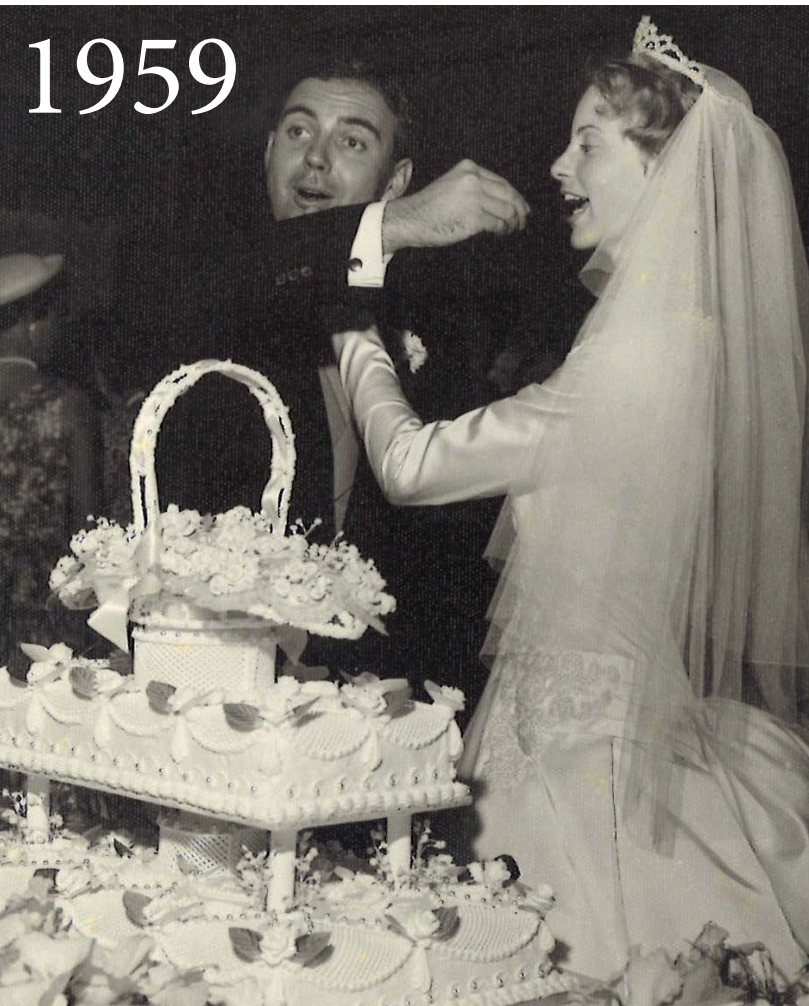
ASNS staff with Teepa Snow (middle) at the Halifax Breakfast



Life Doesn't End When Dementia Begins

Early Stage Forum 2016

1959



2015



Photo Credit: Jen Gregory

Over 38 years ago, Jack and Janet got married. They enjoyed swimming, volunteering & walking.

In 2011, Jack was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. They still enjoy swimming, volunteering & walking.

Join fellow Nova Scotians with early stage dementia to share experiences and learn strategies for living well.

This event is supported by the Marion & Dugger McNeil Fund.

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NOVA SCOTIA

**Saturday, April 16, 2016
9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

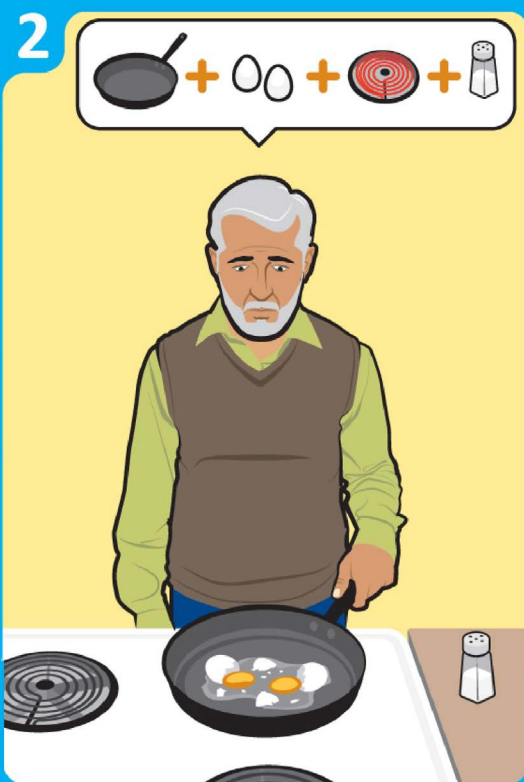
**Bethune Building Ballroom
QEII, Victoria General Site
1276 South Park Street**

There is no cost but
registration is required

For more information:
902-422-7961/alzheimer@asns.ca

Ten Signs of Dementia: Two of Ten

2



DIFFICULTY PERFORMING FAMILIAR TASKS

Forgetting how to do something you've been doing your whole life, such as preparing a meal or getting dressed.

Alzheimer Society

There are ten common signs of dementia. Difficulty performing familiar tasks is one of them.

Forgetting how to do something that you have been doing your whole life is a warning sign of dementia. A person with Alzheimer's disease may have trouble completing familiar tasks, such as preparing a meal or playing a game.

The important thing to keep in mind is just because you exhibit this sign, does not necessarily mean you have dementia! If you have concerns, please call our confidential phone service at 1-800-611-6345 or talk to your doctor.

Read our next issues of *In the Loop* for the next sign or visit alzheimer.ca/ns to learn all ten.

Your Money at Work

What difference does your donation make?

The Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia Caregiver Support Groups offer a safe environment where you can learn, share and help each other through this disease. Those caring for people with dementia share a unique experience, thus it is important for these people to have support as they navigate their care journey.

There are 32 support groups across the province. To find a support group in your area, please visit www.alzheimer.ca/ns or call 1-800-611-6345.

To see more ways your donations make a difference, please visit alzheimer.ca/en/ns/We-can-help.

Everything You Do Matters

By ASNS staff member

Recently, ASNS Community Coordinator Catherine Shepherd had the opportunity to present a public education session in her home community. The audience in attendance spanned all ages and backgrounds and came together to learn and find community support resources surrounding Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. The main thing participants came away understanding though is what a crucial role they play as a care provider.

Being a care provider is a challenging responsibility that requires time, energy, patience and so much more. In order to be effective in caring, you must also take care of yourself. That may not always seem like an easy task or like it should be at the top of your priority list.

During the session, one care provider shared a very eloquent message. She said that every night, as she ends her day, she thinks of something that made her heart sing. Whether it was a moment of joy with her husband as they work together to better understand this disease, laughter with her daughter or comfort with her friends, she thrives on these positive and tries to reflect on them. And so, in remembering this, it allows her to end her day with peace in her heart. This beautiful statement can make you stop and think:

What a wonderful way to end each day and so start each morning on an encouraging note. What a gift to give and allow ourselves to have.

So, with this thought, it is important to remember as we start a New Year that we have to take care of and celebrate the little things, ourselves and each other.

Everything you do matters, everything you do makes a difference. Every act of kindness counts. On behalf of everyone you support we say thank you. On days that are filled with challenges, give yourself permission to laugh or cry. Some days it may be harder to find what makes your heart sing, but think about each little thing that you did that day that made a difference in someone's life. Things that may seem simple to you – a warm embrace, a good cup of tea or a clean shirt, make a positive difference for someone.

If you or someone you know are providing care for a person living with dementia and would like to speak to someone, please call our confidential telephone service, InfoLine at 1-800-611-6345. Our professional staff are both informational and supportive. ASNS also offers Caregiver support groups. To find one in your area, please visit our website at www.alzheimer.ca/ns.

People of ASNS

Joe Robinson

Why do you volunteer with ASNS?

Having recently retired from the Royal Canadian Air Force I had some spare time on my hands and when I learned ASNS was looking for volunteers I quickly jumped on board. Around the same time my mother was diagnosed with dementia so for me it made it more personal.

What is your favourite colour, and what does it say about you?

Blue. And all shades of blue. It's the colour of the sky. It says I am loyal.

When not volunteering at ASNS, what do you do with your time?

I do a lot of walking and I enjoy running. I like to cook and recently found baking to be quite fun. Watching the Halifax Mooseheads play at the Scotiabank Centre makes for a great evening out. Being with friends is the greatest thing.



Kara Gouthro-Murgatroyd



What is your favourite part of working at ASNS?

I love connecting with people in the community. I've learned that people will perceive dementia quite differently depending upon their experience with the disease. Whether you are a person living with dementia or supporting a family member, everyone's journey is unique. It's important for me to help change the narrative around dementia and to dispel the stereotypes which exist with this disease.

Favourite meal to cook at home?

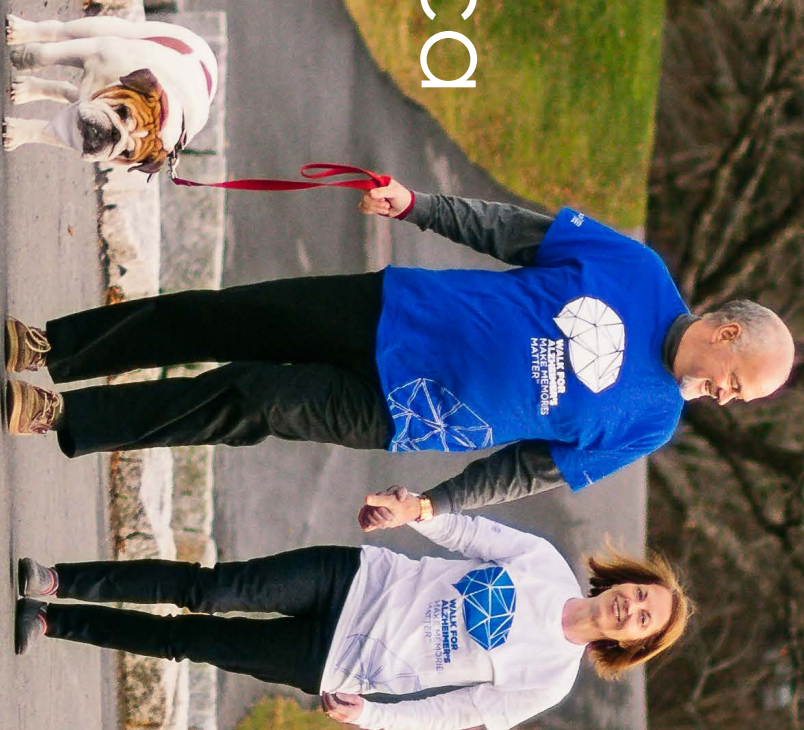
Hands down that would be Maple Glazed Chicken with Curry Cream Sauce and Penne. It's scrumptious and of course calories don't count in this recipe.

Best vacation you've ever been on?

The first time we took our son to Disney World. I'm not sure who was more excited my son, my husband or myself. My son was a big fan of Winnie the Pooh at the time so when we entered the Hundred Acre Wood he was practically vibrating! To see the excitement register across his face was unforgettable.

REGISTER TODAY

[Walkforalzheimers.ca](http://WalkforAlzheimers.ca)



WALK FOR
ALZHEIMER'S
MAKE MEMORIES
MATTER
NOVA SCOTIA

Sunday, May 1, 2016
Halifax, Cunnard Centre
Sydney, Centre 200
Wolfville, Waterfront Park

Presented by:

SHANNEX

Leading
the way to
better
living.

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