

Help for Today.
Hope For Tomorrow.

Alzheimer Society
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Contact

Winter 2005/
Spring 2006

Events Calendar

For the most up-to-date information about these and other upcoming events in your community, including educational events, visit our Events Calendar at www.alzheimerbc.org.

Walk for Memories

Sunday, January 22, 2006
Various locations around the province. Register today! Turn to the back page for more information, or visit www.walkformemories.com.

Forget Me Not Golf Tournament

May 11, 2006
Northview Golf & Country Club, Surrey, B.C. Contact Linda Forrest, 604-681-6530 or 1-800-667-3742.

Ascent for Alzheimer's

Fall 2006
Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, Africa. Sign up now to participate! Contact Linda Forrest, 604-681-6530 or 1-800-667-3742.

Want to donate online?

Go to our Web site at www.alzheimerbc.org and look for the CanadaHelps logo. It's a safe and secure way to donate.



Publication Mail Agreement Number
40065609

The story is changing – 100 years of discovery

Almost 100 years ago, Alzheimer's was identified and named as a disease. On the eve of this anniversary, we have reason for hope and indicators that significant progress is being made to improve people's lives.

So much has changed in the history of the disease, especially in the areas of care and treatment. Thanks to earlier diagnosis and more awareness of how to cope with the disease, British Columbians can live an enjoyable and fulfilling life.

As the story is changing, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. has been a leader in helping to write new chapters in the lives of people impacted by dementia.

To keep you informed, we launched a two-year *Campaign of Hope and Progress* to run January 2005 to December 2006.

The first year of this campaign has focused on informing you why there is hope, and what the Alzheimer Society of B.C. has been doing. Here are the top five reasons why the story is changing, each of which is supported by a feature article inside this issue of *Contact*.

1 Alzheimer's disease is being diagnosed earlier. People are recognizing the signs earlier and doctors have better tools to diagnose the disease.

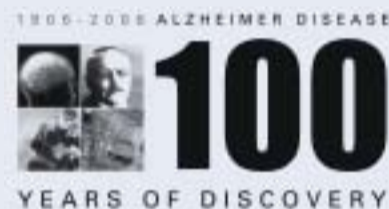
2 Medications are now available that can ease symptoms and improve quality of life. Promising new therapies are being tested.

3 Stigma around Alzheimer's disease is decreasing and many people are seeking help from support groups, such as those offered locally by the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

4 New and updated programs and information offer help and hope to people whose lives are affected by Alzheimer's disease.

5 Thanks to an average of \$3 million invested nationally in research by the Alzheimer Society and its partners, great strides have been made in the search for a cause and cure.

Follow the 100 Years of Discovery campaign as of January 2006 by logging onto our Web site at www.alzheimerbc.org and clicking onto the campaign logo on the home page.



Dr. Alois Alzheimer

100 YEARS OF DISCOVERY

In January 2006, we will launch a year long campaign focusing on research and 100 Years of Discovery.

Though we know the disease has been around for more than 100 years, it was in the year 1906 that German physician Dr. Alois Alzheimer presented the case of a 51-year-old female patient who suffered from a rare brain disorder. His autopsy of her brain identified the plaques and tangles that today characterize Alzheimer's disease.

Throughout 2006, we will show the incredible progress that has been made in the last 100 years in understanding, diagnosing and treating the disease as we search for the causes and a cure.

"We are working hard on many fronts to solve the riddle of this disease," says Dr. Jack Diamond, the Scientific Director of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. "To date, we have gained understanding of the progress of the disease and some of the risk factors involved, but we're still searching for the cure or a way to prevent the disease. Only with more research will we be able to reach our goal of eradicating Alzheimer's disease so we can finally close the book."

Golfing for Alzheimer's

Our utmost appreciation and thanks go to organizers and volunteers of three successful fundraising golf tournaments benefiting the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

The annual **Forget Me Not Golf Tournament** was held on May 12, 2005, at the beautiful Northview Golf & Country Club in Surrey. By the end of the day more than \$420,000 was raised through sponsorship, live and silent auctions, and a raffle. During the past 11 years, this tournament has raised an incredible \$3.4 million to support research and the work of the Alzheimer Society.

Thanks to all our volunteers who join us year after year to create such a successful event, and special thanks to volunteer golf tournament committee members: Martin Gerber (Chair), Russell Lane, Greg Aasen, Hugh Murray, Art Willms, Kyle Harrison, and Bob Hastings. A special thanks as well to M.C. Michael Campbell who entertained and hosted a very spirited live auction.

The **Flora Aasen Memorial Pro-Am Golf Tournament** was held at Westwood Plateau Golf & Country Club in Coquitlam on Aug. 22, 2005. This sell-out event is hosted and organized by John Aasen and the rest of the Aasen family

in memory of family matriarch Flora Aasen who passed away in 2000 due to complications from Alzheimer's disease. This year's tournament raised nearly \$40,000.

Thank you to all who supported this event, especially the Aasen Family.

The **Ralph Robinson Memorial Golf Tournament** was held on Sept. 10, 2005, hosted by Skaha Meadows Golf Course in Penticton. Ralph Robinson was a prominent citizen of Penticton who passed away from Alzheimer's disease in 2003. He started CIGV-FM radio station in 1981 and was named Broadcaster of the Year in 1988.

The event received strong community support and was sold out well in advance of tournament day. Sponsorship, donations and ticket sales helped raise \$15,500!

Thanks to the volunteer committee for their dedication and hard work, and to the staff at Skaha Meadows, especially Gary Kennedy, Head Pro, who worked diligently to ensure the success of this event.



Ascent for Alzheimer's

Two Ascent for Alzheimer's teams comprised of 17 Canadians, including 13 from B.C., participated in the Alzheimer Society's annual fundraising event – Ascent for Alzheimer's – by raising funds locally and then hiking Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa.

Team doctors Scott Markey and Ken Hirst ensured everyone arrived back safe and sound. The Society's guide in Africa, Seamus Brice-Bennett, provided team members with the optimum experience as did his dedicated group of African guides and porters who take such good care of team members year after year.

All the coordination takes place by well-known Canadian guide Sue Oakey, who has provided her expertise since the inception of this event in 1998.

Recruitment has started for 2006. For more information, contact Linda Forrest at lforrest@alzheimerbc.org or 604-681-6530/1-800-667-3742. Read this year's Ascent diary by going to our Web site at www.alzheimerbc.org and clicking on Events then Ascent.



THE STORY IS CHANGING

Alzheimer's disease is being diagnosed earlier. People are recognizing the signs earlier and doctors have better tools to diagnose the disease.

Treatments are now available that can ease symptoms and improve quality of life. Promising new therapies are being tested.

Knowledge provides options

For people with dementia, getting a diagnosis in the early stages of the disease can allow for a better quality of life, a broader range of care options and more effective use of medication.

"Early diagnosis is key for people who have dementia because it helps maximize quality of life through early treatment, and it provides the opportunity to monitor and treat any complications," says Dr. Les Sheldon, who practices geriatric psychiatry at Mount St. Joseph Hospital in Vancouver. "It also gives people the motivation to look after themselves better – we all need a push, it seems."

Dementia is an umbrella term that describes a syndrome consisting of a number of

symptoms. Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, accounting for 64 per cent of all dementia in Canada. Other forms include Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, Vascular Dementia, Pick's Disease and Lewy Body Dementia. While dementia has no known cause or cure, it is possible to

treat some of the symptoms – especially in the early stages of the disease.

For Orvall and Freda Roer of Victoria, getting an early diagnosis provided the opportunity to get more information. "Any knowledge is useful," says 74-year-old Orvall, who was diagnosed with dementia four years ago. "This is a fact of my life. So now I need to find out what I can do, and where I can find help."

DID YOU KNOW...

For more information about different types of dementia, the early stages of the disease, or information about getting a diagnosis, contact your local Alzheimer Resource Centre. Call the toll-free Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 for help.

Orvall went to the doctor after noticing he was having problems with his short-term memory, and was initially diagnosed with "probable Alzheimer's disease," a diagnosis that changed to Vascular Dementia last year.

Vascular Dementia tends to come as a result of single or multiple strokes, even small ones

that often go unnoticed can cause damage to the cortex of the brain – the area associated with learning, memory and language. It shares many similar symptoms with Alzheimer's disease, and it often co-exists with Alzheimer's, a condition called "mixed dementia."

[continued on page 5](#)

DID YOU KNOW...

Your local Alzheimer Society Resource Centre can provide you with information on treatment options that are approved in Canada. We also have information sheets on the different drugs available, and pamphlets and booklets highlighting the latest in research.

Another participant in the clinical trials for this new treatment option is Stan H (last name withheld by request) of North Vancouver. Now retired from the construction industry, the 68-year-old is taking Aricept and has participated in the Alzhemed trials since June 2005.

"Research is a good thing, and I hope that something will come out of this. Maybe it will help find a cure."

Stan says the fact that he has treatment options, in addition to the support he gets from the Alzheimer Society of B.C., helps with his quality of life. "I was devastated when I was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. But with the medications, I'm now holding my own, so it's a good thing. Even if there's no cure in my lifetime, at least I can keep positive about things."

For people like Lou and Stan, "holding steady" equals quality of life, not only [continued on page 5](#)



Freda & Orvall Roer of Victoria: Orvall, 74, has been diagnosed with Vascular Dementia.



Lou and Sharron Culos of Kelowna: Lou, 71, has Alzheimer's disease. He's participating in a clinical trial for a new medication.

Stan and Anne H. of North Vancouver: The couple has much hope that research will help find a cure. Stan, 68, has Alzheimer's disease.

GETTING A DIAGNOSIS*

There is currently no single test that can tell if a person has Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia, so diagnosis is made through a systematic assessment that eliminates other possible causes.

Making the diagnosis can take time, and although the diagnosis can be made in a family doctor's office, your physician may recommend that you see a number of health-care professionals to help make the diagnosis.

The process includes:

- Medical history
- Mental State Exam
- Physical Exam
- Laboratory tests, which may include brain scans
- Psychiatric and psychological evaluation.

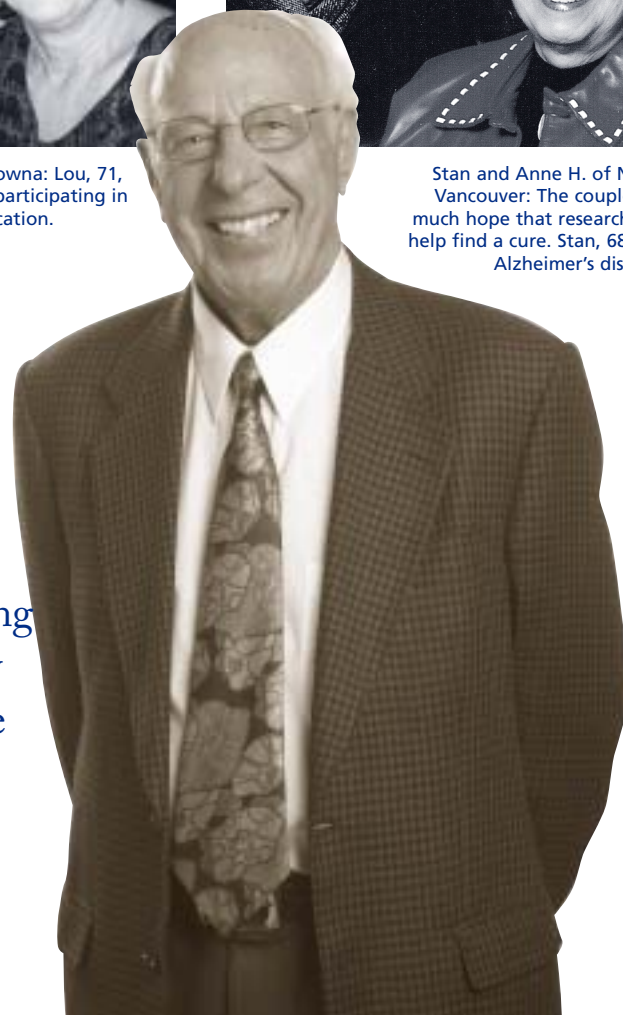
If you suspect you may have Alzheimer's, make an appointment with your doctor. On the day of the appointment, you should be prepared to answer the following questions; writing the information down beforehand can be helpful.

- 1 What symptoms have been noticed?
- 2 When did they first appear?
- 3 How have symptoms changed over time?
- 4 What other medical conditions do you have?
- 5 What medications are currently being taken (both prescription and over-the-counter)?
- 6 Is there a family history of Alzheimer's disease, senility, hardening of the arteries, neurologic or psychiatric conditions?

*Adapted from "Getting a Diagnosis: Finding out if it is Alzheimer Disease", available from the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

"We are working hard on many fronts to solve the riddle of this disease."

Dr. Jack Diamond



BECAUSE...

Stigma around Alzheimer's disease and related dementias is starting to decrease and many people are seeking help from support groups. These groups are lifelines for those affected by the disease.

Support groups become lifelines



Crystal Olund

When Crystal Olund's mother Brenda, now 55, was diagnosed with early stage Alzheimer's disease three years ago, the first thing her daughter Crystal did was seek information on the disease that affects an estimated 61,000 British Columbians and 420,000 Canadians.

"Mom was only 52, so she was aware of what was happening to her, but had a hard time understanding it," Crystal says. "So I was seeking information that would help her understand."

Since the family lives in the Fraser Valley area, Crystal visited the closest Alzheimer Society of B.C. Resource

Centre, which is located in Langley. Crystal found out that Alzheimer's disease, which mainly affects those over 65, can have an early onset on those in their 40s and 50s. It was at the Alzheimer Society that Crystal also came across information on support groups for those with the disease and their caregivers.

"At home, I discussed the support groups with my mom and dad and explained that for their own mental wellness it would be very important, and a necessity, that they go," Crystal says. "I'll admit though, being 22 years old then, I wasn't thinking about myself for a support group, but everyone encouraged that I check one out."

Crystal took the advice and has been actively attending a support group for two years now, while her parents have been attending for three years.

She says the groups have proven to be beneficial for her entire family. "I've gained a lot from my group: understanding, compassion, knowledge, and most of all, a whole new set of friends and people who are like family. Mom and dad have also gained a lot of knowledge, support, and most importantly, friendships."

Mavis Burton, 80, of Vancouver, also says that the friendships she's developed and the information she's learned are the most beneficial things she's gained from participating in an Alzheimer Society of B.C. support group.

Mavis' husband Bill, 78, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's six years ago. The couple learned about the Alzheimer Society's support groups in their community from their doctor who had diagnosed Bill.

"I decided it would be important for Bill to attend a support group because it would help make things easier for him – and he would be around people that were in the same boat."

Eager to learn more about the disease and to educate others, Mavis also later decided to become a volunteer co-facilitator for the West Vancouver support group they attended. "You learn so much from other people's suggestions because some of them have experiences

with the disease that go further than your own."

Laurie Myres, the Support and Education Coordinator for the Alzheimer Society in South Okanagan and Similkameen, says support groups have a lot to offer.

"Those in attendance get to share

their experiences and strategies for coping, they can offer each other support, and it helps them learn more about Alzheimer's." The support groups also help people find out more about community resources available, she adds.

In addition to working for the Alzheimer Society,

Laurie also has a personal connection to the disease. Her mother was diagnosed with early stage Alzheimer's and together they attended a support group.

"I learned about new medications, future planning under B.C. law, applying for the Federal disability tax credit, and many other useful pieces of the caregiving support puzzle," Laurie recalls. "Our support group was our 'safe place', where people really understood what we were living through on our 24/7 journey with Alzheimer's. No person can truly relate until they have been through it or are currently living through it."



Lynn Jackson

When Lynn Jackson was diagnosed with dementia of the Frontotemporal type five years ago, there weren't any support groups in her area.

She ended up finding most of her information on the Internet.

"I felt a bit alone after diagnosis, and didn't really have anywhere to go," says Lynn, now 50.

However, since Lynn's diagnosis, the story has changed and the Alzheimer Society now runs support groups in many areas of the province. Lynn connected with the Alzheimer Society, where she worked with coordinators to help start the first ever early stage support group in Vancouver, and remains an active member and co-facilitator of the group.

"My support group has taught me that there's a life after being diagnosed with dementia," she says.



Laurie Myres

New and updated programs and information offer help and hope to people whose lives are affected by Alzheimer's disease.

Shaping the journey for people with dementia

"I feel almost naked without my memory," says 81-year-old Milton Murrill as he reflects on what it's like living with Alzheimer's disease. "I was an actor and a performer for years; my memory was my tool. When I was a boy, my mom would always tell people to 'Tell Milton' because I would always remember things."

Originally from Arlington, New Jersey where he worked in a hat factory,

Milton found his voice during the Second World War when he was in the U.S. Navy. "I was singing with the navel orchestra," he says. "That's what got me started. I'd always been interested in show business, but that's what started my career."

Milton went on to sing for a time with *Billy Ward & The Dominoes*, a rhythm and blues vocal group in the 1950s, and he appeared in more than 20 television shows, plays and movies, including Clint Eastwood's *Pale Rider* (1985).

He now lives in Vancouver with his wife Ruth – they've been married for 43 years. They have two daughters and three grandchildren.

About two years ago, Milton was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. "I don't actually know when it started, or how long it's been going on. I do remember I got lost on the way to the doctor's once – I haven't driven since."

Milton says it can be frustrating when your mind can't make the right connections. "You know the information is in your mind, but you can't always access it. And you feel alone because you feel like you, and what you're going through, is unique."

However, after he joined an Alzheimer Society of B.C. support group, Milton realized his experiences are not unique, and that help and information are available. "When you explain something that's happened to you and someone else says, 'Yeah, me too', you realize that you aren't alone."

Milton recently completed a new Alzheimer Society of B.C. education series called *Shaping the Journey*, which is aimed directly at those who have recently been diagnosed and are in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.

Betty Sinclair, Director of Programs and Services for the Alzheimer Society of B.C., says there was a clear need for this program. "Earlier diagnosis has really become a factor recently, and there was a huge gap in services for people who were being diagnosed. There was no easy point of access to information and education," she says. "Generally, there could be a long point of time between diagnosis and a point where real

problems would begin – when other services would kick in. *Shaping the Journey* provides information and education that can help people immediately following diagnosis."

Shaping the Journey also helped Milton come to terms with dementia.

"Dementia is a difficult word to hear; it has so many connotations. Understanding what it means helps you understand that you're not crazy, that there's a reason why these things are happening."

Shaping the Journey was launched in 2005, and will be made more widely available in 2006. As the Alzheimer Society expands *Shaping the Journey*, new dates and venues will be posted on the Events Calendar at www.alzheimerbc.org.

DID YOU KNOW...

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides information and connections to support groups in British Columbia for people in the early stages of the disease and for caregivers. Just contact your local Alzheimer Society of B.C. Resource Centre to get information on the closest support group in your community.

DID YOU KNOW...

Every year, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. offers education programs and holds public forums to help inform and educate. Contact your local Alzheimer Resource Centre for more information about our *Family Caregiver Series*, *Making the Connection* and *Shaping the Journey*.

SHAPING THE JOURNEY PROGRAM

The six-week long *Shaping the Journey* program covers:

- Learning about the disease
- Diagnosis day
- Learning about treatments and wellness activities
- Life after diagnosis: My feelings and reactions
- Life after diagnosis: Maintaining me
- Practical tips: What others have found useful
- Other implications of the diagnosis
- Planning ahead: Legal and financial implications.

"You know the information is in your mind, but you can't always access it."

Milton Murrill



For More Information

Contact your local Alzheimer Society of B.C. Resource Centre
 Call our Provincial Office toll-free at 1-800-667-3742
 Call the Dementia Helpline toll-free at 1-800-936-6033
 Visit our Web site at www.alzheimerbc.org



Thanks to approximately \$3 million invested nationally in research by the Alzheimer Society and its partners, great strides have been made in the search for a cause and cure.

Research supports local projects

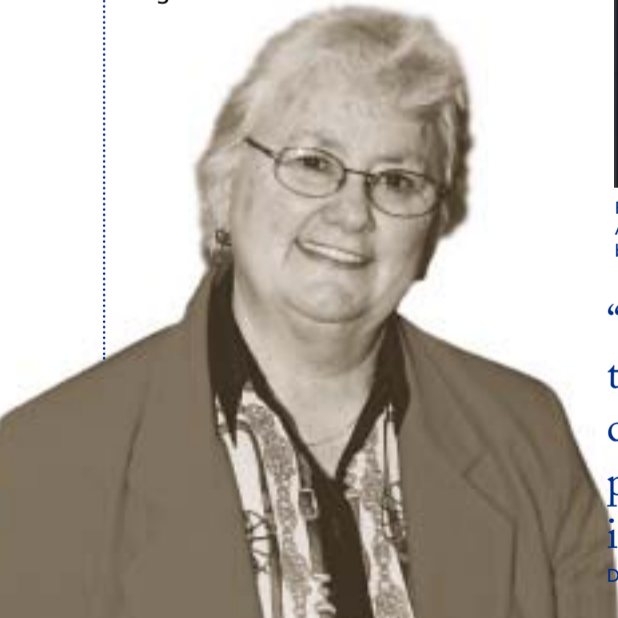
Canadian scientists rank among the top Alzheimer's scientists in the world. Through the Alzheimer Society Research Program, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is a leading funder of Alzheimer research and research training in Canada.

In 2005, the Alzheimer Society awarded grants to two B.C. researchers: Dr. Patrick McGeer and Dr. Deborah O'Connor (see story to the right).

"The Alzheimer Society's research evaluation is done with great integrity," says Dr. Lynn Beattie, the B.C.-based Chair of the national committee that takes into account the pool of funds available and makes final recommendations for research award funding. "B.C. has the people and resources for excellent dementia research through facilities like the UBC Brain Research Centre. Funding research will always be a challenge because there are more good submissions than money."

The Research Program is a collaborative effort between the Alzheimer Society of Canada, its provincial affiliates like the Alzheimer Society of B.C., and other partners and donors. The program provides Research Grants and Training Awards to support Canadian investigators conducting:

1. Biomedical research into causes and a cure for Alzheimer's disease, and,
2. Research into social and psychological aspects of Alzheimer's disease, including caregiving, family support and long-term care.



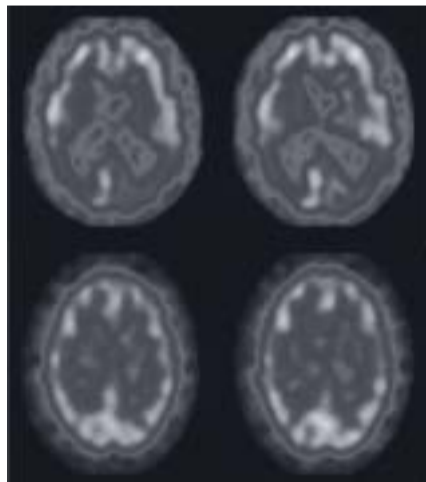
The amount of funding for research changes from year-to-year, but for the 2005-06 research competition, 25 grants and awards were funded totaling over \$2.9 million.

Award recipients are chosen through an extensive peer review process. Applications are reviewed by one of two groups of experts, depending on the nature of the research. International experts who serve as external reviewers

assist both panels when necessary. Award funding is divided equally between the biomedical and the social/psychological fields, but grants are only available for research being done within Canada.

Dr. Beattie says research has changed over the last decade because awareness

of the disease has increased. "If we can understand the disease, we can develop more effective prevention and intervention. The current drugs available for Alzheimer's are symptomatic treatment. Perhaps in the future, we will have immunotherapy (a type of vaccine) which will be one, possibly more effective intervention. And others are being sought."



ECD SPECT scan on the top shows a brain with Alzheimer's disease and the SPECT scan on the bottom shows a healthy brain.

"If we can understand the disease, we can develop more effective prevention and intervention."

Dr. Lynn Beattie

DID YOU KNOW...
 The year 2006 marks Alzheimer's Disease: 100 Years of Discovery. You can find more information about research and the Alzheimer Society of B.C. on our Web site at www.alzheimerbc.org/research.php. A new research brochure and booklet are available from your local Alzheimer Resource Centre.

RESEARCH FUNDING HAS AN IMPACT IN B.C.



Dr. Patrick McGeer, Neuroscientist
 University of British Columbia neuroscientist Dr. Patrick McGeer is a recipient of a

\$132,760 award from the Alzheimer Society of Canada for his research into the development of amyloid inhibitors in Alzheimer's disease.

Dr. McGeer and his wife Edith are recognized around the world as leading researchers on Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases. In September 2004, the Alzheimer's Association in the U.S. recognized him for his career-long contribution to Alzheimer's research.

"We've been working on Alzheimer's disease for some 20 years because it is an important disease with a defined pathology that allows us to target methods of prevention and treatment," Dr. McGeer says.

The Vancouver-based scientist believes there's a great need for research. There's an estimated 75,000 to 97,000 new cases of dementia each year, with an estimated lifetime cost of care of \$173,000 per case. "Yet, to deal with the problem, only a handful of Canadian researchers are funded to look for cures," he laments.

Dr. McGeer's research that is being funded by the Alzheimer Society will investigate the development of amyloid inhibitors in Alzheimer's disease. "The overall objective of our research is to find compounds that will counteract the pathology – the development and progression – of Alzheimer's, and thus be effective treatments."

Drs. Edith and Patrick McGeer have been inducted as Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada by Governor General Adrienne Clarkson.



Dr. Deborah O'Connor, UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies



Dr. Deborah O'Connor, an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work and Family Studies at UBC and Director of the Centre for Research on Personhood in Dementia, received \$101,210 for a project titled *Support Services, Personhood and Dementia Care: Exploring the Interface*.

"I think the biggest and most exciting advance in research has been recognizing the importance of including the person with dementia in research," she says. "Attitudes have changed, in that we are now beginning to recognize that in addition to the undisputed need for biomedical research, we also need to look beyond the disease to see the person."

Dr. O'Connor's research stems from her experience as a social worker, working on a community psychogeriatric team. "I routinely dealt with family members who were extremely distressed, but who were not willing to access or use formal support services that were available. I wanted to learn why."

The doctor describes her Alzheimer Society-funded research as a project that will help broaden the scope for understanding 'service use' by families, by recognizing that the decision and the ability to use support services is much more than just one person's decision. Co-investigators are Alison Phinney, Martha Donnelly and Wendy Hulko.

"It will provide insight into how families make the decision to seek support, and what happens once the decision is made," she says.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

Rae Johnson, Site/Operations Leader at Providence Health Care's Langara Residence in Vancouver, participates in a virtual dementia experience as part of *Making the Connection*, a new Alzheimer Society of B.C. educational program aimed at professional caregivers.

Using the dementia experience to help participants understand what a person with dementia feels, hears, and

sees, the workshop provides professional caregivers with practical help and advice. Ultimately, the program's goal is to cause a change in behaviour.

For more information or to arrange a course in your area, contact Adriaan de Vries, Provincial Coordinator, Education Programs, at 604-681-6530 or 1-800-667-3742. Or e-mail adevries@alzheimerbc.org.

Contact Information

Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Provincial Office

Tel: 604.681.6530
Toll-free: 1.800.667.3742

Abbotsford

Tel: 604.859.3889

Central Interior

Tel: 250.377.8200
Toll-free: 1.800.866.6946

Chilliwack

Tel: 604.702.4603

Chinese Resource Centre (Vancouver)

Tel: 604.687.8299

Greater Victoria

Tel: 250.382.2052

Kootenay, East

Toll-free: 1.800.667.3742

Kootenay, West

Tel: 250.352.9552

Langley / North Surrey

Tel: 604.533.5277
Toll-free: 1.888.251.3111

North & Central Okanagan

Tel: 250.860.0305
Toll-free: 1.800.634.3399

North & Central Vancouver Island

Tel: 250.245.7939
Toll-free: 1.800.462.2833 (V. Island only)

North Fraser

Tel: 604.298.0780

North Shore & Sunshine Coast

Tel: 604.926.8233

Northern Interior

Tel: 250.564.7533
Toll-free: 1.866.564.7533

Peace River

Tel: 250.782.1439
Toll-free: 1.866.782.1439

Richmond / South Delta / Ladner

Tel: 604.279.7120

Skeena

Toll-Free: 1.800.667.3742

South Okanagan & Similkameen

Tel: 250.493.8182
Toll-free: 1.888.318.1122

Surrey / White Rock

Tel: 604.541.0606

Vancouver

Tel: 604.681.8651

You're invited to become a member of *Partners in Giving*

Imagine a world without Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. Envision that you can provide help and hope. Believe that you can make memories matter. All this is possible through *Partners in Giving*, the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s monthly giving program that honours your desire to make an ongoing difference.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. (ASBC) relies on the generosity of individuals like you, service agencies and businesses for financial support to fund our many community-based programs and services, and to help raise funds for research. People who travel the Alzheimer journey require our support year-round, as do their caregivers and family members.

Every year, we need to raise a minimum of \$3.4 million. This money is used to fund support groups, run resource centres, provide education, offer information, promote awareness, advocate, and sponsor research, among other things. And because we don't receive any core funding from government, we need to raise these funds from public and private resources. That's where *Partners in Giving* comes in.

For the last five years, April Rohee of White Rock has supported the ASBC, a cause close to her heart since her father was diagnosed with the disease. One year ago, she decided to consolidate her general donations and become a monthly donor.

"In my experience, there's a huge need to make information and education available, not only to people who need it like family members and professionals, but also to the general public. Being a monthly donor is a way to contribute year-round and to help towards research."

Partners in Giving allows you to set up a plan to make tax-deductible donations in a way that is easy and convenient, and supports the ASBC on an ongoing basis. "It's a win-win situation – you benefit with a tax receipt at the end of the year, and we benefit by knowing we are receiving a steady and ongoing donation that supports our many programs and services," explains Yolanda Bouwman, Major and Planned Gifts Officer.

Here are some things to consider:

- no more cheques to write
- no stamps to lick

- no chance of your donation getting lost in the mail
- no need to worry about reminding yourself to write that cheque or make that donation phone call.

"This disease touches everyone in one way or another," says April, "and I would encourage everyone to support the work of the Alzheimer Society of B.C."

For a *Partners in Giving* brochure, please contact your local Alzheimer Resource Centre or contact Yolanda at 604-681-6530, toll-free 1-800-667-3742 or e-mail her at ybouwman@alzheimerbc.org. Information and an enrollment form are also posted on our Web site at <http://www.alzheimerbc.org/donate5.php>.



Continued from page 2 Knowledge provides options

In diagnosing dementia, and Alzheimer's specifically, a clinical evaluation looks at a number of pieces of information: clinical history, collateral history, a physical examination, cognitive screening or assessment, and carefully selected laboratory tests based on the individual person, explains Dr. Sheldon. In skilled hands, the diagnosis is more than 90 per cent accurate, he says. "The remaining few percent are dementias closely related to Alzheimer's, which are very hard to tell apart in the beginning."

For getting a diagnosis, Dr. Sheldon says accurate information is key. "The best and primary tool that doctors have

is knowledge – better awareness of what constitutes a proper diagnosis," he explains, though he adds that more knowledge and awareness are needed. He also questions the many online diagnostic tests that have shown up on the Internet in recent years. "I have yet to see a new miracle, quick diagnosis scheme actually work."

Orvall, who was a pharmacist for more than 35 years, says his early diagnosis made him strive to get more information about the disease and treatment options. "I'm on medications, and I also joined an Alzheimer Society support group," he says. "The support group has been very helpful and

informative, giving me a better understanding of my condition and the way the disease progresses in others."

Orvall tries to keep his brain active and engaged by doing crossword puzzles, and he credits Freda, his wife of 45 years, for being a big support. "We do a lot of little things to help manage the disease," he says. "We write little notes – for ourselves and for each other."

Dr. Sheldon says the best approach of all is to have a good working relationship with your doctor.

"A good clinical evaluation is the gold standard in diagnosis."

Coffee Break

Coffee Break 2005 was held in homes, offices, restaurants, care facilities and hospitals across the province. Support came from many individuals and businesses, including Thrifty Foods, Marketplace IGA, Zellers, Wal-Mart, A & W and many others who sold coffee cup cut-outs in their stores.

Something new this year was the creation of Memory Blend Coffee out of Kelowna, which was sold throughout the Okanagan and Kamloops areas.

This year's fundraising goal was \$120,000. Visit our Web site at www.alzheimerbc.org (Events/Coffee Break), for the most up-to-date information.



Continued from page 2 Treatments offer new hope

for them but also for their caregiving spouses and children. Stan's wife Anne puts it best when she says: "We feel so lucky to be living in this period of time when there is so much awareness of the disease, rather than in the past when no one talked about it. Research gives us a lot of hope."

Other promising new therapies

One medication that has already been through clinical trials is called Ebixa, also known as memantine. It has been conditionally approved by Health Canada to relieve the symptoms of people with moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease.

Nowadays, scientists are looking at combining medications in treatment. "Combination therapy is becoming an exciting therapeutic approach," says Dr. Jack Diamond, the Scientific Director of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. "Combining cholinesterase inhibitors like Aricept together with memantine seems to greatly improve the outcome, more than predicted from the sum of the effects of either drug alone."

Another promising development is in the area of a vaccination, though scientific human trials of the new generation of vaccines have yet to be conducted on a large scale. "These are pioneering studies, which are very exciting, and give definite hope for eventual vaccination therapy," says Dr. Diamond.

Other leads, which are being followed in the hope they can lead to earlier diagnosis and new treatments, include:

Statins – these are cholesterol-reducing agents that reduce the incidence of vascular disease, which is a risk factor for Alzheimer's.

Anti-inflammatory agents, such as aspirin – there are suggestions that people routinely taking anti-inflammatory agents decrease the risk of Alzheimer's.

Stem cells – researchers are looking into the prospect of replacing lost nerve cells in Alzheimer brains.

Nerve Growth Factor – a process that involves implanting nerve growth factor producing cells into the brain in order to promote brain repair.

Psycho/Social Research

Social and psychological researchers are trying to identify the personal, social and environmental factors that affect quality of life for both the caregiver and the person with the disease.

According to Dr. Diamond, research is being conducted worldwide in many areas including counselling, driving, respite, adult day programs, use of restraints, cognitive rehabilitation, and music.

"We are working hard on many fronts to solve the riddle of this disease," says Dr. Diamond. "To date, we have gained understanding of the progress of the disease and some of the risk factors involved, but we're still searching for the cure or a way to prevent the disease. Only with more research will we be able to reach our goal of eradicating Alzheimer's disease so we can finally close the book."

Walk for Memories is a family affair



Mark your calendars for Sunday, January 22, 2006, lace up your walking shoes, and get ready to get moving as part of Walk for Memories 2006.

Money raised from Walk for Memories goes back into the community in order to ensure that people whose lives are impacted by Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia can connect to information, services and support. Funds raised also support research.

This is the fourth year for the Walk for Memories, an event for all ages. Walks are already confirmed for Chilliwack, Dawson Creek, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Penticton, Vancouver, Vernon, Victoria and White Rock, with more locations to be announced – visit www.walkformemories.com for the most up-to-date list of locations.

Participating is easy. Get all the information you need and register online at www.walkformemories.com. Or, pick up an information brochure and pledge form at your local Alzheimer Society of B.C. Resource Centre and

register. You can then begin collecting pledges and help raise funds.

You can walk in honour or in memory of someone whose life has been affected by Alzheimer's disease or a related



dementia, or simply come out to support our cause.

We're also looking for people to take on the challenge of being a team captain (see related article below). Recruit a group of five or more people – friends, relatives, co-workers or other people you know – and start fundraising. As team captain, you need

to ensure all your team members collect pledges, and that those pledges are submitted together the day of the Walk for Memories. Your team will be eligible to win a prize for the highest pledged team. Plus, there will be other prizes.

Team members are eligible to win individual pledge incentive prizes. Plus, every participant – including team members – gets one entry into the Grand Prize Draw for every \$100 raised!



To register, or for more information, go to www.walkformemories.com.

New Walk logo

We are delighted to introduce our new Walk for Memories logo designed by one of our volunteers, Katie Thibert, a student at Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver.

This new logo has a wonderful sense of movement, representing the fact that activity, like walking, is a key ingredient to good health. The logo also presents the energy and passion needed to fight Alzheimer's disease.

Look for this logo on all items related to Walk for Memories.



January is Alzheimer Awareness Month across Canada. Walk for Memories is one way to raise important funds and help create awareness about this disease. In 2006, we celebrate research and Alzheimer's disease: 100 Years of Discovery.

Teaming up for the Walk

Maureen O'Toole became a team leader during Nanaimo's inaugural Walk for Memories last year as a way to honour her mother Betty, who has been living with Alzheimer's disease for almost 15 years.

While Maureen was ready for all the hard work and dedication it took to make her team's fundraising efforts a success, what she wasn't ready for was the snowstorm that hit on the morning of the Walk for Memories.

"We were shocked when it snowed, but we didn't let the weather stop us," she recalls. As both a team captain and a volunteer event organizer, she was relieved that walkers had the option to move inside. "Everyone was very supportive, and seeing people come out no matter the conditions made the Walk even more special."

Maureen recruited 12 family members and friends to join her in the Walk, forming a team called *O'Tooles and Friends Walking for Memories*. "I wanted to walk as a team because Alzheimer's isn't an illness that affects

just one person; it's an illness that affects the whole family."

She says walking as a team was a memorable experience and the month it took to organize all the details was worth it.

"If I had to give any advice to someone who wants to become a team leader, it would be to start small," Maureen says. "Start with your family members and people touched by the disease. Doing the Walk as a team really brings an overall connection with everybody."

Narinder Bal, team leader for the Valley First Financial Team in last year's Walk for Memories in Vernon, agrees that walking as a group enhances the event.

"Having someone beside you makes the experience all the more inspiring and personally rewarding," she says. Narinder led a team of 23, which was comprised of her colleagues and husband.

Narinder doesn't have a personal connection to Alzheimer's. She decided to get involved because she wanted to



lend a hand in giving exposure to Vernon's first Walk for Memories, and to help build a tradition others will want to follow in the years to come.

"I believe everyone deserves a little bit of your time and energy. That's why it's important to get involved and help in your community with things like the Walk," she says.

Narinder says taking on a role of a team leader may take a bit of extra time and planning, but once you're in the flow of things it's easy to get a team together and execute a successful fundraising endeavour.

"The Alzheimer Society's Walk for Memories was a very positive experience for me, and I would encourage anyone to participate. Man, woman, child – anyone can get involved!"

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. (ASBC) is committed to protecting the privacy of people whose personal information is collected and held by ASBC, and we adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. If at any time you wish to have your name removed from this or another mailing, call us by phone at 604-681-6530 or toll-free 1-800-667-3742, or via e-mail at info@alzheimersbc.org, and we will gladly accommodate your request.

Alzheimer Society
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Provincial Office

300 – 828 West 8th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1E2
604-681-6530
1-800-667-3742
info@alzheimersbc.org
www.alzheimersbc.org

Acknowledgements:

Contact is produced by the Alzheimer Society of B.C. Communications department. Articles can't be reproduced without written permission.

Editor: Ariela Friedmann
Writers: Sabrina Abdul
Ariela Friedmann, Amy Sept Gilchrist.
Proofreader: Allison Connolly

Thank you: To those who were willing to be interviewed and share your stories so that we can help educate and inform.

Design/Production: Hallographix
Printer: Advantage Graphix
Circulation: 13,000

Alzheimer Society
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Yes! I want to help the Alzheimer Society of B.C. provide Help for Today and Hope for Tomorrow.

Provincial Office

300 - 828 West 8th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1E2
Tel: 604-681-6530
or 1-800-667-3742
Fax: 604-669-6907

Charitable Registration
BN#11878 4891 RR0001

Name

Address

City

Province Postal Code

Telephone

E-mail

I would like to donate \$

Enclosed please find my:

Cheque Credit Card Information

Please charge my: VISA MasterCard

Card #

Expiry

Signature

I wish to participate in the Walk for Memories.
Please mail me information and a pledge sheet.

The idea of helping to create a world without Alzheimer's disease or related dementias interests me (see article *Partners in Giving*, page 5). Please mail me an information brochure so I can learn more.

Thank you

A tax receipt will be sent to you for any donation over \$15. Donations made by December 31, 2005 can be used for your 2005 Income Tax Return.