



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 20, 2011

Summertime support for Greater Victoria residents on the dementia journey

Greater Victoria, B.C. - With summer finally here, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is encouraging Greater Victoria residents on the dementia journey to stay active and informed when it comes to their health. The Alzheimer Society of B.C. offers many programs to aid in this, including Minds in Motion™ and First Link®.

Minds in Motion™ is a fitness and social program for people experiencing early-stage memory loss due to Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia and their care partners. The program promotes the concept of healthy living and the establishment of support networks early on the dementia journey. There are currently five Minds in Motion™ locations in Greater Victoria, two in Victoria, and one in Sidney, Saanich and Esquimalt. All locations have been overwhelmingly popular with local residents since their inception in January.

Julie Cameron, Office and Volunteer Coordinator in Victoria, runs Minds in Motion™ at the Pearks Recreational Centre. She says the response of participants to the program is amazing. "In the class I facilitate, there is a really large group of friends that have come in for a long time and spend the majority of time in class laughing and making jokes."

"The program has had a very positive effect on participants. It's a nice balance. It gives people with Alzheimer's disease a chance to get out and connect with other people in an environment in which they can feel comfortable in. It also allows the caregivers to have a social experience, so it's a very nice atmosphere overall."

First Link® is an early intervention service designed to connect individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia with services and support as soon as possible after diagnosis. Formal referral from physicians and health professionals allows for proactive contact with individuals and families. "We have seen many positive responses," says Emily Pridham, the First Link® coordinator for the Alzheimer Society of B.C. Victoria resource centre.

"One thing that people really appreciate is knowing that someone is there. They are grateful for the calls and know that we are here to help. Each person's situation is very different but it seems that overall, when they hear from First Link®, they feel connected to the network of information, education and support available in our community."

These programs have expanded in the Greater Victoria area and five other BC communities thanks to a province-wide funding contract with the Ministry of Health Services last September. "It enabled us to enhance the support we are providing to families on the dementia journey," said Jean Blake, CEO, Alzheimer Society of B.C. "It means we're able to proactively reach out to individuals who have recently been diagnosed with the disease, provide support sooner to them and their caregivers, and better prepare and support them through their journey with the disease."

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is the only province-wide organization providing support, education, and information about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias through support groups, telephone workshops, education programs, and the Dementia Helpline toll-free province-wide at 1-800-936-6033. The Society serves Greater Victoria residents at our Victoria Resource Centre, found at 202-306 Burnside Road West and can be reached at 250-382-2052. In addition to Minds in Motion™ and First Link®, the resource centre has support groups and education programs for both family caregivers and people with early stage dementia. Learn more about the Alzheimer Society of B.C., at www.alzheimerbc.org.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Ruby Ng, Director, Marketing & Communications, Alzheimer Society of B.C.
Phone: 604-742-4919 | Cell: 604-828-9516 | E-mail: rng@alzheimerbc.org



ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF B.C.
#300 – 828 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1E2
TEL: 604-681-6530 FAX: 604-669-6907 TOLL FREE: 1-800-667-3742
WEBSITE: www.alzheimerbc.org E-MAIL: info@alzheimerbc.org
CHARITABLE REGISTRATION BN #11878 4891 RR0001