



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Summertime support for local residents on the dementia journey

Burnaby, New Westminster, Tri-Cities, and Maple Ridge, B.C. - With summer finally here, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is encouraging Burnaby, New Westminster, Tri-Cities, and Maple Ridge 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. The Coquitlam location has been overwhelmingly popular with local residents since its inception in March.

"We have received a fantastic response," says Kate Cowell, who coordinates the Minds in Motion™ program in Coquitlam. "They really value the exercise portion because it is something they don't necessarily have access to through other channels."

"It is an opportunity for caregivers and people with dementia to attend together, whereas other programs separate them. People are making connections with each other and that's the most important part of the program."

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.

Katherine Guilbride, the First Link® coordinator for the Alzheimer Society of B.C. Burnaby – North Fraser area, says "Most of the time people are interested in hearing what services we have. Some people are a little hesitant, but the more time we spend talking to them on the phone, the more they are comfortable about sharing a little bit about their situation, which helps us to know how our services might fit in and be helpful."

"People appreciate being able to talk about dementia somewhere they can be open and feel comfortable. The way we communicate on the phone, and in *Shaping the Journey: living with dementia*™, helps to model the way in which people can communicate with others about their journey

These programs have expanded in Burnaby 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 Burnaby, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge, New Westminister, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam, and Port Moody residents at our Burnaby – North Fraser Resource Centre, found at 103-5623 Imperial Street in Burnaby and can be reached at 604-298-0780. 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.

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