

Positioned for the Future

MESSAGE FROM JEAN BLAKE, CEO & BOB HASTINGS, VOLUNTEER PRESIDENT

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In January the release of the Alzheimer Society's *Rising Tide* study confirmed what has long been suspected: the number of people with dementia is growing and people are being diagnosed at a younger age. The population is aging; the tidal wave is coming.

The Society has faced the challenges and felt the impact of the recent economic environment. Despite these challenges, we have spent the year building relationships and providing programs and services to meet the growing need. We are weathering these times by reducing expenditures while maintaining our levels of service and still achieving success. Grassroots support of our events throughout B.C. remains strong.

We are transforming dementia services and strengthening our partnerships with health authorities and health professionals through our stewardship of the *\$1 million Grant to Improve Dementia Care in B.C.* Our two *From Knowledge to Practice* learning forums brought together experts committed to improving the lives of people with dementia. The forums added to a framework that provides the right dementia care, at the right time, in the right place. We are solidly positioned as a leader in dementia care with government, policy makers and families.

By enhancing our volunteer training around the province, we have increased our capacity to provide services that support families. In recognition of the importance of brain health throughout life, our *Healthy Brain* campaign this year included more public education forums including involvement in events in Punjabi and Cantonese.

Research for treatments and a cure remains a priority. In B.C. we fund early diagnosis, treatment, and prevention research through the *Ralph Fisher and Alzheimer Society of B.C. Professorship in Alzheimer's Research* at UBC. Nationally, we continue to contribute to the Alzheimer Society Research Program.

Moving forward, the signing of the federation agreement in the spring linked the strengths and knowledge of Alzheimer Societies across the country, extending our ability to make dementia a national health care priority. We appreciate the contribution made by Rosemary Rawnsley over the last eight years. Following her retirement, Jean Blake, former Executive Director of Canadian Diabetes Association, joined the Society as our new Chief Executive Officer.

We know more challenges are coming, but the Society is poised for deep change. Thanks to the commitment of our donors and the diligence and resourcefulness of our staff and volunteers, we will continue to build on our successes, shared vision, and partnerships.

Cover Photo: Maggie and Martin Cox, the first couple referred to *First Link*, a program connecting people affected by dementia with services after diagnosis. "We were fearful of what we might encounter. What we found was people like us. They talk about the loneliness of the long distance runner. Well, Alzheimer's is a long distance run. You are helping us take back our lives, our dignity." (*First Link* is funded by the *\$1 Million Grant to Improve Dementia Care in B.C.*)