



NEWS RELEASE  
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## Grateful for the good times

**Surrey, B.C.** - Finding the words to describe the physical reaction to hearing your parent has a fatal disease is difficult at best. But somehow, Karin McMorland describes it simply and eloquently. "It hurts your heart, it's an actual physical pain and you catch a breath. And that's kind of the reminder of what's coming," she says of her father Doug's Alzheimer's disease.

Karin is thankful for her relationship with her father and says the two have learned to appreciate each other even more. "My dad is a pretty amazing guy. He's always been very loving and caring, with a good sense of humour." Despite the few changes he has experienced, Karin affirms he is still the fantastic father he has always been.

"Dementia is not the end of the world," she says, "it can take a lot of different courses, it can be fairly quicker, it can be very slow, but early diagnosis leaves you a lot of time left and there's a lot of personhood left." She assures that even as her father's condition progresses, there are good times to be had. "He is still who he is even though aspects of him change. It's just something to adjust to."

Dona, Karin's mother and Doug's wife, is very proud of her three children, who have been able to manage the challenges they face very well. "They have changed [and adjusted] very gradually," she says. Karin agrees the changes go almost unnoticed. "It's a lot of subtle things you don't think about, you just do. You talk a little slower, you repeat things, you are more patient, and your expectations for what will get done change."

But she also stresses that a fine balance must be kept between helping her father and also allowing him to take ownership of his life.

Doug has been active with the Alzheimer Society of B.C. - attending several lunches, and speaking at several events held by the Society. "That helps his ego a lot. It gives him more of an identity and an ability to give back, as opposed to always receiving support," she says. Participating in programs, connecting with other people in similar situations, and giving back are wonderful opportunities, because as Karin believes, the changes along the Alzheimer's journey "can be quite isolating," and sharing experiences of such changes with others in the same boat can be helpful.

"Initially it was really devastating thinking of all the things that he wouldn't be able to do, and all the losses, like the personality changes or forgetting family. But also where it's going to end up because dementia is terminal ultimately, it is an ugly, ugly disease. For now we're very grateful for the good times we still have," says Karin.

"We probably appreciate each other a bit more too."

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is the only province-wide organization providing support, education, and information about Alzheimer's disease and related dementia through support groups, telephone workshops, education programs, library resources, and the Dementia Helpline (In the lower mainland: 604-682-8651 or Toll-free: 1-800-936-6033). The Society has three resource centres covering the Surrey, White Rock, Delta, Langley and Cloverdale areas - our White Rock / North Delta / Surrey Central

Resource Centre at 102 - 15240 Thrift Avenue in White Rock and can be reached at 604-541-0606, our North Surrey Resource Centre (open Mondays and Wednesdays) at The Czorny Alzheimer Centre in Suite 300 - 16850 - 66th Avenue in Surrey and can be reached at 778-571-2390, and our Langley Resource Centre (open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays) at the Langley Professional Building in Suite 102, 20316 - 56th Avenue in Langley and can be reached at 604-533-5277. All of the three resource centres have support groups for both family caregivers and people with early stage dementia. Learn more about the Alzheimer Society of B.C., at [www.alzheimerbc.org](http://www.alzheimerbc.org).

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