



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JULY 20, 2011

## **Summertime support for Prince George residents on the dementia journey**

**Prince George, B.C.** - With summer finally here, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is encouraging Prince George 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 First Link<sup>®</sup> and Minds in Motion<sup>™</sup>.

First Link<sup>®</sup> is an early intervention service designed to connect individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease or another 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.

"Generally First Link Clients are glad to know someone is checking on them and that they have someone to call for guidance, says Laurie De Croos, the First Link<sup>®</sup> and Minds in Motion<sup>™</sup> coordinator for the Alzheimer Society of B.C. in the Prince George resource centre. "Sometimes they don't need us right away, but they appreciate us following up with them and checking in to see how they are doing."

"Sometimes they want validation that they are allowed to feel the way they are feeling. They need somebody to talk to, even if it's just to talk about what's going on and to have someone on the other end just listen," Laurie adds. "When they see that there are other people who are in the same position as them, they feel more connected and not alone." Those connections are something she also sees in her Minds in Motion<sup>™</sup> group.

Minds in Motion<sup>™</sup> 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 Prince George location has been overwhelmingly popular with local residents since its inception in February.

"The caregivers are connecting with each other. The program gives an opportunity for the person diagnosed with dementia to be themselves and also connect with others diagnosed with dementia. The level of stress of the caregivers seems to decrease in this comfortable environment, as opposed to the stress they may feel out in the public," said Laurie.

"It's something they can both look forward to together," she says, adding that for some participants it's about the social and others, the best part is the exercise itself. "Someone diagnosed with dementia may not feel comfortable at a senior centre or seniors exercise program because of their ability to quickly process instruction or comfort issues."

This program has expanded in Prince George 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 Prince George residents at 202 - 575 Quebec Street and can be reached at 250-564-7533. In addition to First Link<sup>®</sup> and Minds in Motion<sup>™</sup>, 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.alzheimerbc.org) E-MAIL: [info@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:info@alzheimerbc.org)  
CHARITABLE REGISTRATION BN #11878 4891 RR0001