



Alzheimer Society
CALGARY 30+
years

Resilient & Steadfast

April 1 2019 – March 31 2020

Alzheimer Society of Calgary | Report to the Community 2020

Welcome

Our fiscal year began on a positive note, with a robust plan to increase awareness about dementia, reduce isolation and expand programming into surrounding rural regions. As the year was coming to an end, we were suddenly and unexpectedly required to shift gears as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we pivoted to meet the changing needs of the community, we were able to draw on a solid foundation of learning and adaptability to rise to the challenges presented by the pandemic and explore new ways to reach a greater number of people.

Before COVID-19, our programming was mostly conducted in person. In mid-March, we were able to quickly shift our programs to online platforms and increase communication with impacted families. Being agile and adaptable during this time was essential to our ability to support local families, already at high risk of social isolation, and who needed our help more than ever.

This is our story from the past year. It highlights the initiatives that brought international thought leaders to Calgary to help us learn from their experiences and expertise; our efforts to raise awareness about dementia and reduce stigma; and the ways in which we built the capacity of the community through education and training.

We are ever thankful to our donors, sponsors and partners including Gordie Howe C.A.R.E.S., United Way of Calgary and Area, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation and Calgary Herald Christmas Fund. As we look ahead to the coming year, we remain steadfast in our work and confident that, together with our community, we will continue progressing toward our vision of an enhanced quality of life for persons with dementia, their families and care partners.



Barb Ferguson, Executive Director



Ryan Jennings, President, Board of Directors



Pivoting to Support our Community During the COVID-19 Pandemic

As Calgary went into lockdown in March, our staff worked diligently and quickly to ensure impacted families could continue to access person-centered support, education and care. Caregivers and people living with dementia, who are among those most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus, were facing an unprecedented time of stress and uncertainty. The loss of essential support and respite programs resulted in families becoming increasingly isolated, and a growing number of caregivers were facing burnout and crisis.



Club 36 Staff helping caregivers during the pandemic.

Understanding the Impacts and Needs of Local Families

To better understand how the pandemic was impacting local families, we partnered with researchers from the University of Calgary to conduct a survey. Preliminary results showed that 69% of caregivers felt more isolated; 55% rated their quality of life as lower since the pandemic began; and more than half reported an increase in responsive behaviours emerging in the person with dementia they care for. This data has been used to inform and enhance our programs and approaches.



A Growing and Urgent Need for Support During COVID-19

During the Spring of 2020, the number and complexity of calls coming into our support lines increased substantially. Caregivers were facing significant mental health concerns and families were noticing an accelerated decline in the cognitive health of their loved ones with dementia. Thanks to a special grant from United Way of Calgary and Area, we bolstered our Support Team with an additional Registered Social Worker to help with the increased demand. As the number of COVID-19 cases in Calgary continued to climb, so too did the strain on our healthcare system. During this time our goal was to support families to remain at home. We extended our operating hours and leveraged digital tools including a 'live chat' feature on our website to help more people access support.

A Voice for Local Families

As COVID-19 cases and deaths in long term care facilities surged and visitation rights were revoked, we worked with an increasing number of caregivers experiencing anxiety, fear and helplessness as a result of not being able to see their loved ones in person. Dementia Network Calgary embarked on advocacy project to help family members regain access into long term care facilities to resume important caregiving activities. A new partnership with Canadian Red Cross and Caregivers Alberta was established to help families prepare to re-enter care settings by providing them with training and personal protective equipment.

Shifting Educational Content to Focus on COVID-19 and Dementia

As we moved our education sessions online, an increase in registrations and feedback from participants prompted us to expand our programs and focus on topics relating to COVID-19 and dementia. Free webinars on Zoom and weekly videos livestreamed on social media quickly gained traction with thousands of people tuning in.

Our foray into virtual programming taught us about the technological capabilities of our staff and about the potential to reach a far greater number of people through digital channels. A grant from Calgary Foundation also helped strengthen our productivity levels as staff continued working from home, by enabling us to upgrade our IT infrastructure.

How we Converted Club 36 into an Outstanding Virtual Adult Day Program

As Adult Day Programs across the city were temporarily closed due to physical distancing measures, we acted fast to convert Club 36 to a virtual Adult Day Program. The process proved to be one of the most innovative, creative and transformational shifts in Club 36's history. Staff's fresh ideas, quick thinking and adaptive approach turned out to be a lifeline for the families who rely on the program.

Grounded in person-centered approaches to care, we proactively connected with Club 36 families each week to perform wellness checks and provide emotional support and practical advice. We also delivered groceries and personal care items to families who were unable to leave their homes. Staff explored new ways of working with families to continue creative, social, physical and cognitive programming, focusing on positive interactions and redirecting attention to what was possible in the short term.

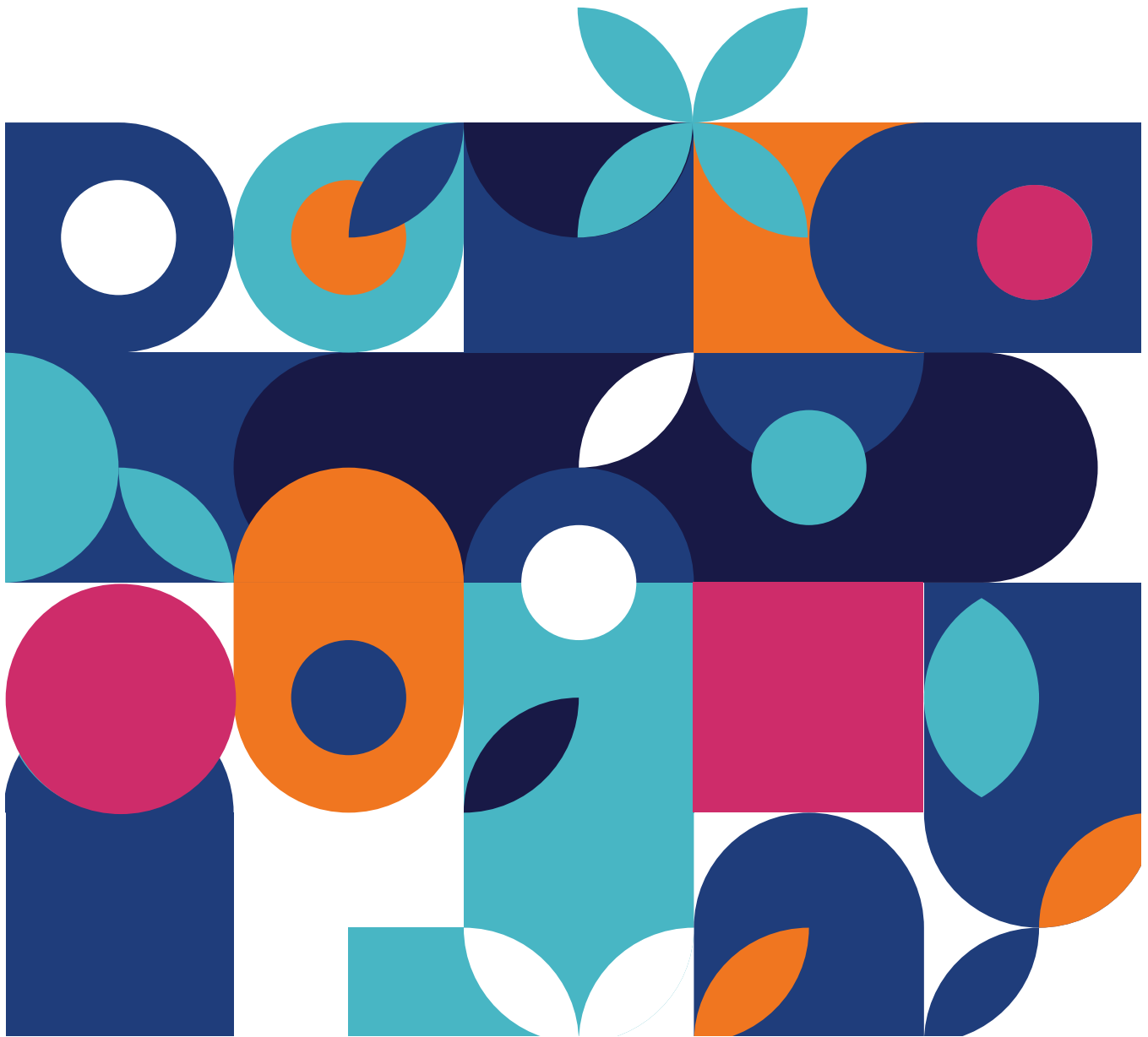
Through our partnership with Alberta Health Services, we were able to begin admitting new members, enabling more local families to benefit from online programming while at home. As the months unfolded and new connections were made via digital platforms, our team began to think about additional possibilities for families.

Alzheimer Calgary staff member, Colleen, leads a virtual baking session with members of Club 36.



An Outstanding Year

Before the pandemic, we gratefully embraced the opportunities and accomplishments that propelled us further toward our goal of improving the lives of local people impacted by dementia. The following stories paint a picture of the partnerships, initiatives and projects that enabled us to make a real difference to local people.



Learning from International Expertise

As a learning organization, we continuously draw from the experiences and practices of thought leaders from around the world. Last year we hosted several events that brought international dementia experts to Calgary to share their insights and learnings.

Dementia Reimagined: Continuing the Conversation

Following the success of the first Dementia Reimagined symposium in 2018, Dementia Network Calgary invited international experts Daniella Greenwood and Dr. Allen Power back to Calgary to discuss new and noteworthy breakthroughs in the field of dementia care. The experts shared evidence of a clear need for a shift to a relational approach to care, ensuring every person with dementia receives quality, person-centered care at all stages of their condition. The event, sponsored by United Active Living and Gordie Howe C.A.R.E.S., culminated with a sense of hope and optimism for the future of dementia care.

Western Canada Movie Premiere

On World Alzheimer Day, September 21, we hosted Western Canada's premiere of the movie 'Cracked: New Light on Dementia' at the Glenbow Museum. The film – an innovative, research-based production based on a play, challenged the stigma associated with dementia and inspired a different way of thinking. Researchers Dr. Pia Kontos and Dr. Sherry Dupuis, who collaborated on the play, traveled to Calgary to introduce the event and held a question and answer session following the screening.

Talking about Dementia with International Expert, Dr. Tia Powell

In October, Alzheimer Calgary brought Dr. Tia Powell – an internationally renowned physician and leading dementia expert from New York – to Calgary for a unique education event. In a fireside chat-style presentation with host Christine Frangou, Dr. Powell discussed her book – 'Dementia Reimagined: Building a Life of Joy and Dignity from Beginning to End', which examines the need to shift the conversation from cure to quality of care for people living with dementia.



Dr. Tia Powell and Christine Frangou at Talking About Dementia in 2019

Building Dementia Awareness

Stigma continues to be one of the biggest barriers preventing families impacted by dementia from accessing the support, information and care they need. Lack of understanding and negative beliefs about the disease result in labeling and stereotyping and cause affected people to experience low self-esteem, isolation, poor mental health and decreased quality of life.

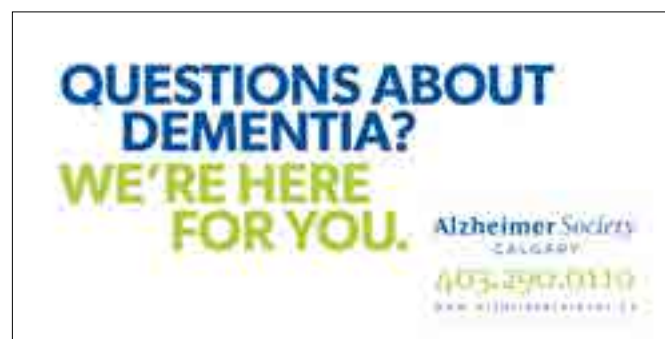
Alzheimer Calgary continued working to combat stigma by engaging the community with a range of awareness initiatives and education events to help strengthen public understanding of the disease and equip individuals, workforces and communities to better support local families.



“We’re Here For You” Public Awareness Campaign

Every January, Alzheimer’s Awareness Month provides opportunities to engage members of the public and raise awareness about dementia. It marks a time when Alzheimer Calgary typically sees an influx of calls from families seeking help and advice, having noticed cognitive changes in their loved ones over the holidays.

This past January, we ran a simple but powerful campaign with the message “We’re Here For You” across billboards, radio stations and other platforms around Calgary, encouraging families to reach out for help. Campaign messaging targeted common questions and conveyed a caring tone to counteract feelings of overwhelm and stress.



Club 36 Art Show

In April 2019 Alzheimer Calgary hosted an intimate art show at cSPACE King Edward, featuring pieces of art created by people living with dementia who attend Club 36. The spectacular works of art featured an array of styles and techniques and exhibited the creative talents of people living with a diagnosis. Guests spent an enjoyable evening admiring and discussing the art and had opportunities to purchase their own pieces, with proceeds reinvested back into creative programming.

Meaningful Learning Opportunities for Corporate Volunteers

In collaboration with United Way of Calgary & Area, we hosted dozens of corporate volunteers at our Adult Day Program, Club 36. The volunteers – from a range of public and private organizations – worked one-on-one with Club members, gaining valuable learnings about people living with dementia. Feedback from participants informed us that the experience was an effective way to raise awareness and reduce stigma around dementia.



Westjet volunteers spend a meaningful day at Club 36

Women and Dementia

With women disproportionately affected by dementia, Alzheimer Calgary delivered a presentation to members of the public in November, discussing the impact of dementia on women, latest gender-specific research, and risk reduction strategies.

“This presentation has given me a lot to think about and I will be contacting my doctor now that I am more knowledgeable on this subject.”

AN ATTENDEE OF WOMEN AND DEMENTIA.



Outcome:

75% education participants reported feeling more supported and connected

Guests enjoying our art show featuring art made by Club 36 members.





Responding to a Rising Demand for Education & Training

A growing thirst for knowledge was demonstrated by the increasing number of family members, caregivers and professionals connecting with us for education and training. In 2019 the Alzheimer Calgary leadership team participated in the Inspire Program with United Way of Calgary and Area and J5. Drawing on the learnings from this experience, we identified and tested out new ways to reach a greater number of people with dementia education.

Digital Education

Over the past year we experimented with delivering education through social media platforms to reach a wider audience. A weekly series of short videos highlighting hot topics such as genetics, latest research and cannabis for dementia, was published on Facebook and YouTube. By the end of the year the videos had reached more than **60,000 viewers**.



Family Education

Increased demand for family education prompted us to double the number of caregiver sessions we provided. Caregivers gained valuable, person-centered knowledge about dementia and honed their skills in communicating and managing behaviours.

Building Community Capacity Through Training

Alzheimer Calgary’s Broadening Impact Model establishes a framework for sharing person-centered, evidence-based best practices to help build the capacity of the community to support people impacted by dementia. Every community with an aging population is impacted by dementia regardless of social, cultural, physical, geographical and environmental factors. Each community requires an individual and empathetic approach to properly understand their needs and preferences and to develop meaningful ways to support their community members with dementia.



The Best Friends™ Approach training program is an example of this capacity building work. We provide training in this person-centered philosophy of dementia care to organizations, communities and groups interacting with people living with dementia, including front line workers, medical professionals, post-secondary students, recreation facilities, disabilities organizations and cultural groups. The Train the Trainer model empowers individuals to train even more people.

Opening Minds through Art (OMA) is another example. In 2018 Alzheimer Calgary became Canada’s first Training Centre for OMA, enabling care centres and community organizations to obtain OMA Certified and bring evidence-based programming back to the individuals living with dementia with whom they worked. Over the past year we trained an additional 19 individuals from across Alberta.

More than 2,500 people were trained including healthcare professionals, post-secondary students, cultural groups, Indigenous groups, disabilities groups and community groups. This represents a 55% increase in the number of individuals trained over 2019.

Outcome:

80% of family education participants reported increased awareness of community resources and supports



Year over year comparisons:

55% increase in the number of professionals and community representatives trained in person-centered approaches to dementia.

Professional and Peer Support

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for the thousands of families that connect with our Support Team each year. Caregivers require help with a range of challenges from adjusting to life after diagnosis to navigating the system and accessing helpful resources. Our Registered Social Workers are uniquely positioned to help families at every stage of their journey. With extensive knowledge about dementia and insight into locally available resources, our team helps families navigate the system to gain the help they need.

Through the **First Link™** referral program we continued to support families before and after diagnosis and expanded our reach to connect with more individuals from rural communities.



Alzheimer Calgary **Support Groups** are led by experienced facilitators who provide valuable comfort, support, connection and resources to help caregivers. In addition, we train external support group facilitators around the city as part of our capacity-building approach.

Conversation Cafés are growing rapidly. The popular format, first introduced to Calgary by Dementia Network Calgary in 2017, provides caregivers and people with dementia with a safe, agenda-free social space to get together. Cafés take place in coffee shops, restaurants and churches in Calgary and surrounding rural neighbourhoods, enabling individuals to form friendships and support networks. Since the first Conversation Café, Dementia Network Calgary has also supported partner organizations across the city to start their own Cafés. As a result, there are now 10 Conversation Cafés in and around Calgary. Conversation Cafés are currently on hold due to the pandemic. We look forward to resuming cafés as soon as possible.



Year over year comparisons:

30% increase in total support contacts

15% increase in number of support group attendees feeling connected and supported

Outcomes

94% Support group participants report increased awareness of community resources and supports

Meaningful Engagement for Individuals Living with Dementia

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

MAYA ANGELOU

This past year has been an exciting one for Club 36 – Alzheimer Calgary’s Adult Day Program. A range of innovative programming provided people living with a diagnosis of dementia with opportunities in creative expression, social engagement and cognitive stimulation. Concurrently, caregivers received essential time off for self-care.

We continued collaborating with nursing students from the University of Calgary to deliver Opening Minds through Art – an evidence-based, intergenerational art program for people living with dementia. Through this initiative students gained practical experience and developed person-centered dementia care skills.

Through our partnership with Inside Out Theatre, a disabilities theatre company in Calgary, individuals living with dementia participated in fun, failure-free improvisation activities that nurtured a sense of belonging and reduced anxiety, stress and isolation.

“I’m so blessed to have Club 36. It gives my husband some independence to meet new people. It gives me time for myself and I know he is well taken care of at Club 36.”

A LOCAL CAREGIVER.



Outcomes

91% of caregivers believe Club 36 makes a difference in their own life

98% of caregivers have experienced respite as a result of Club 36

96% of caregivers feel that Club 36 has allowed them to continue to care for a significant other for a longer period of time.

Alzheimer Calgary staff and Club 36 members enjoying our Adult Day Program



Donors



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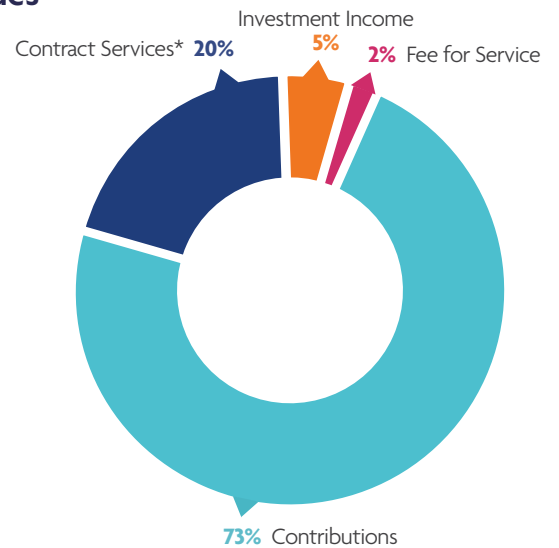
Statement of Operations	2020	2019
Total Revenue	\$ 2,969,868	\$ 2,847,881
Total Expenses	\$ 2,529,929	\$ 2,584,756
Excess (deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses	\$ 439,939	\$ 263,125
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	\$ (495,279)	\$ (61,256)
Excess (deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses	\$ (55,340)	\$ 201,869

Fiscal 2020 was successful and we are pleased to report an operating surplus. This is a result of the generosity of our donors, some extraordinary gifts through bequests and a reduction in expenses achieved through operating efficiencies. As a fiscally responsible organization, we remain committed to securing our long-term financial viability so we can continue to meet the ever-increasing demand for service. This is achieved through a diverse revenue base and careful management and investment of a reserve fund. This fund is guided by an Investment Policy that was carefully developed and continually monitored by the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors. Income from our investments is put back into programs that benefit people impacted by dementia.

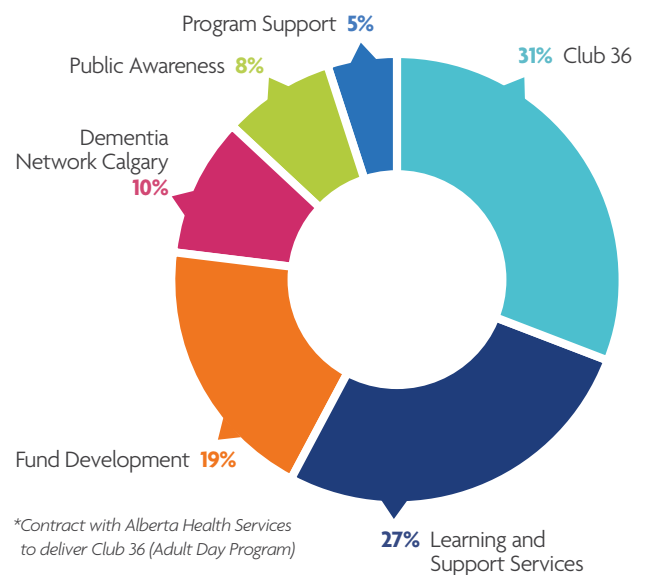
The onset of COVID-19 in early March impacted the global financial markets. Like everyone else, we experienced a significant unrealized loss on our investments. There is no real monetary loss unless we sell the investments. We believe in our investment strategy and fortunately there was not an immediate need for any of these funds so we continued to hold them. As of September, 2020 most of the losses have been recovered.

Please visit alzheimercalgary.ca for full financial statements or call 403.290.0110.

Revenues



Expenses



*Contract with Alberta Health Services to deliver Club 36 (Adult Day Program)

About Us

Mission

To enable local people impacted by dementia to live life well and build the capacity of the community to support and care for them.

Vision

Our vision is a future that will see:

- › Enhanced quality of life for local persons with dementia, their families and care partners
- › Increased capacity of the community to support and care for persons impacted
- › Access to evidence-based best practices in dementia care from disease onset through end of life
- › Greater respect, support, identification and intervention for persons with dementia and their care partners

Guiding Principles

Person-centred

- › Committed to treating persons with dementia and their caregivers with respect, dignity and compassion at all times.

Outcome-driven

- › Committed to evidence-based best practices that deliver results.

Advocates for choice

- › Empowering people with the knowledge that will enable them to make informed choices.

Barrier-free access

- › Striving for accessible services meeting the needs of diverse communities.

Accountable and responsible

- › Committed to efficient practices and effective, sustainable stewardship.

Collaboration and partnerships

- › Working with others to leverage resources.

Capacity-building

- › Increasing our own capacity and the ability of the community to support persons living with dementia and their care partners.



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Alzheimer Calgary Staff connecting via Zoom during the pandemic



Alzheimer Society
CALGARY 30+
years