



*Worthy Grand Matron's  
Special Project*  
Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan Inc.

[alzheimer.ca/sk/](http://alzheimer.ca/sk/)

The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan is the province's leading dementia care and research charity.

If you or someone you know is living with Alzheimer's or related dementia please don't hesitate to reach out to Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan to find support.

In February of 1982, the Alzheimer Society was created by a group of people who believed that those caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease should not have to make that journey alone.

The first step in creating services for people who were caring for someone with dementia began with the development of the Saskatchewan Alzheimer's and Related Diseases Association Inc. (SARDA). The primary purpose of this group was to establish support groups for caregivers and to increase the awareness of the disease in the community. In 1989, SARDA became affiliated with the Alzheimer Society of Canada and became the Alzheimer Association of Saskatchewan (AAS). AAS received a three-year grant from the federal government that allowed the Society to hire a professional staff member and the organization continued to network throughout the province to support family care providers.

The early nineties brought important breakthroughs in research that were providing hope for people with the disease that there would be a medical treatment for Alzheimer's disease on the horizon. In 1997 the Alzheimer Association of Saskatchewan was re-named the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan Inc. (ASOS) to promote a unified name across the country.

In the year 2000, the first drugs to treat the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease were approved by Health Canada. With medical treatments available to people in the early stages of the disease, the focus began to shift from the caregiver to the person with the disease. Those being diagnosed earlier in the disease process were demanding information, education and support services for themselves – not just their caregivers. Early memory loss support groups began to form across the country and the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan developed early memory loss support groups for people with dementia and their care partners in Regina and Saskatoon.

Finding the cause and a cure by funding research emerged as a strategic priority for the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan and the Society began to fund research provincially in 2003. In partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Canada, the Society funds the Young Investigator's Grant and a Post-Doctoral Fellowship Award. In April of 2010, the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation announced a partnership to co-fund a \$1 million Research Chair in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias. Dr. Darrell Mousseau, a University of Saskatchewan Researcher was awarded the grant to study a link between Alzheimer's disease and depression. Funding Saskatchewan-based research remains a priority.

The Alzheimer Society made changes to the guiding statements in September 2004. The vision, "A world without Alzheimer disease and related disorders," and the mission statement, "To alleviate the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer disease and related disorders and to promote the search for a cause and a cure," were expanded to include the phrase "related disorders." The phrase was added to reflect that the Alzheimer Society provides services not only to people with Alzheimer's disease but also to people living with

other forms of dementia. This includes, but is not limited to Vascular Dementia, Frontotemporal Dementia, Lewy Body Dementia and Mixed Dementia.

In 2011, Baby Boomers began turning 65 years of age, and in the following 30 years, the number of people affected by dementia is expected to double. Today over 18,000 people in Saskatchewan have Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. In 30 years, over 28,099 Saskatchewan residents will be living with dementia, accounting for 2.3% of the population. In 2012, the cost of dementia in the province was over \$957 million per year. By 2038, the economic cost of dementia will reach \$6.2 billion per year. The Alzheimer Society will be challenged to meet this need and funding research to find a cure, or ways to delay the onset will be critical.

In 2013, the provincial government provided an additional \$350,000 to fund the expansion of the First Link® program outside the current delivery area of Regina and Saskatoon. Four new resource centres were established in the health regions of Sun Country, Cypress, Prairie North and Prince Albert Parkland. First Link is a referral program to help physicians, health and community service providers link people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their families to the Alzheimer Society for services and support. Individuals and their families are linked to education, services and support as early as possible in the disease process.

The Alzheimer Society currently has 21 full and part-time staff dedicated to fulfilling the mission of providing support, education, awareness, advocacy and research. Our organization consists of eleven provincial staff and nine First Link Coordinators working in Alzheimer Society Resource Centres.