



In this Issue:

1 Executive Director's Message Staff Profile

2 Elizabeth's Concert of Hope Upcoming Events

2006 Hike 4 ALS

Building Awareness

- Lilac Festival
- Tuesdays With Morrie
- March of Faces

3 Resources

- Support Groups
- Compassionate Care
- New Drug Testing for ALS

Equipment Program News Condolences

4 Celebrations

Betty's Run

Alberta's Walks for ALS

- Edmonton
- Red Deer & Central Alberta
- Cold Lake

5 Alberta's Walks for ALS ...continued

- Medicine Hat
- Lethbridge
- Manning
- Lloydminster

Third Party Fundraisers

- CHARITEE Golf Tournament
- Endiang Fishing Derby
- Linda Graham's Marathon
- Harvest Friends Quilt

6 Third Party Fundraisers ...continued

- School Cheque Presentation
- U of C Chili Cookoff
- Bo's Bar & Grill

We welcome articles and contributions from the public.

To contribute to Prairie to Peak, please submit your written articles by e-mail to the Editor, Wayne Steer, at wayne@alsab.ca. If you do not have email access, please contact Wayne Steer at (403) 228-3857.

Due to limited space articles may not be printed in their entirety. Additional articles may be published online at www.alsab.ca.

Special thanks to our new volunteer Assistant Editor, Kimberley Vanderleer for her valuable contribution of time.

Executive Director's Message

June is ALS Awareness month and what a month it was.

➤ On June 10th Walks for ALS were held across the province from Medicine Hat to Manning and several points in between. Spring showers drenched Walkers in some places (Lloydminster, Medicine Hat, and Lethbridge) and others walked in sun, but by all accounts everyone had a wonderful – and most successful – event, bringing in close to \$225,000.

➤ On June 11th the Betty's Run for ALS celebrated their 10th Anniversary by raising in excess of \$400,000!

➤ And on June 19th the annual Charitee Golf Tournament put on by Corporate Calgary CHARITEE Society for the ALS Society of Alberta will add an additional \$100,000 to the coffers for equipment.

Our dual message of care and research is being heard and supported by each and every one who participated by walking, running, golfing, volunteering and pledging.

Thank you. Your support will allow the ALS Society of Alberta to continue the work of "...making everyday the best possible day for people with ALS..."

Staff Profile

This year we are very pleased to welcome back two summer students from 2005. Yulia Eskin is covering the Provincial Office Coordinator position and Lindsay Cashin is once again helping out in the North Region office. It is very nice to have you both back. Also, this summer it is my pleasure to introduce Carly Barnett and Carol Ferguson who are doing the data entry required to produce receipts for all of the above noted money. Carly is a recent science graduate from UBC and will be heading to U of A School of Medicine this fall. Carol is currently an English major at Nazarene University College in Calgary.

Between the Walks and Run and International ALS Day (June 21) Mary, Lauren and Patricia participated in ALS workshops in Montreal, hosted by the Canadian Congress of Neurological Sciences and ALS Canada. These events encouraged the exchange of information, best practices and an opportunity to get to know colleagues from across the country.

Mary Hatcher, Executive Director

Walk, Run, Golf 2006 Celebrations!!

See Pages 4 and 5 for details.

ALS Society of Alberta Mission Statement

"The Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Society of Alberta is dedicated to making everyday the best possible day for people with ALS by providing support, facilitating the provision of care, promoting awareness, and helping find a cure."

Tickets Now Available for ALS Alberta Gala Concert

On Sunday, September 17, the ALS Society of Alberta will host its inaugural presentation of "Elizabeth's Concert of Hope" at Calgary's Jack Singer Concert Hall, a gala event designed to celebrate creativity, strength and optimism of the human spirit.

Prime tickets are now available through the ALS Alberta Office at a cost of \$95 per person. Among the featured Canadian artists performing will be Murray McLauchlan, Ian Thomas, Cindy Church, Marc Jordan and Alfie Zappacosta.

Concert founder Elizabeth Grandbois has organized seven concerts in southern Ontario and raised almost \$2 million for national research, support services and desperately needed assistive equipment.

Elizabeth, a nurse and former Calgarian, lives with ALS. Her efforts to raise awareness and change the face of ALS have been recognized and supported by the Governor General of Canada, former Prime Minister Paul Martin, numerous Canadian corporations and some of the royalty of the Canadian Music industry.

Elizabeth's wish is to share the joy of creating this legacy and pass the torch to provincial ALS units.

The Alberta Elizabeth's Concert of Hope organizing committee is extremely excited about this new opportunity and thrilled to welcome ENMAX as its lead sponsor for the 2006 gala presentation.

The Calgary concert will begin at 7 pm. The doors will open at 6 pm for a fun and unique fundraising initiative called "POP! TO STOP ALS" where balloons valued at \$60, \$100, \$200 and \$500 will be sold before the concert begins. Each balloon will contain a prize of greater value than its price!

Anyone wishing to purchase tickets to this gala evening of music and festivity is encouraged to contact the ALS Society of Alberta office to reserve seats (contact: Yulia at 403-228-3857 (x101), info@alsab.ca subject "Tickets" or visit www.alsab.ca and click on Elizabeth's Concert of Hope Logo) or through TicketMaster at 403-777-0000.



Upcoming Events

Hike 4 ALS - (September 30, 2006)

The 2006 Hike 4 ALS is likely to be conducted as a satellite or virtual hike this year. Discussions are ongoing with ALS Canada to design it to be a self-run event with minimal ALS staff involvement. This would require a greater focus on relying on participants to build personal websites. We will also focus on enabling people who have an interest in ALS to connect and arrange to hike in smaller, self-organized groups. Visit <http://www.alsab.ca/events/hikeforals.aspx> for details.

Building Awareness

Lilac Festival

On May 28, volunteers were on hand at this year's 4th Street Lilac Festival to raise the profile of the ALS Society of Alberta and two of the events that support the Society - the 10th Annual Betty's Run for ALS which was on June 11 and the Elizabeth's Concert of Hope which will be held on September 17. The soggy, chilly weather meant that the festival was not as well attended as it normally is, but many Calgarians did brave the elements to come to the festival. The volunteers who represented the Society handed out cornflowers, accepted donations and provided event information to festival attendees.

Tuesdays with Morrie

Have you read the book 'Tuesdays with Morrie'? It is a story about a former college professor who is diagnosed with ALS and the journey he shares with one of his former students. Two amazingly talented Calgary actors perform this play, which can be presented in a lunch, tea or dinner-hour format.

Richard Michelle-Pentelbury and Jay Newman do not want any financial compensation for their efforts. The play is free, although donations to the ALS Society of Alberta are welcome. It has been designed so that it can be presented anywhere - churches, schools, gymnasiums, community halls or even your family living room. Contact Jane Rivest at 403-714-8211, if you would be interested in hosting a showing of the play to raise awareness and donations among your friends, neighbours and family.

March of Faces

March of Faces is a tool to raise awareness about the devastating effects of ALS. Each March of Faces banner contains 20 full colour portraits of people living with ALS and those who have died from ALS in each province.

We invite you to add a picture to the project. The ALS Society of Alberta requires 15 more portraits for our fifth banner. We use these banners to increase awareness of ALS at advocacy, social and fundraising events. For more information about March of Faces, contact Jane Rivest (403-714-4211) or Patricia Ordyniec (780-487-0754).

Resources

Support Groups

Many people have been asking about the support group/information sessions in Southern Alberta. They will be starting again in the fall in Calgary, Red Deer and Medicine Hat. Please watch your mail for notices letting you know where and when they will be occurring. If you have any questions, please call Jane at 403-228-3857 ext. 102.

Compassionate Care Benefit Expanded by Canada's New Government

The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, has announced that Canada's new Government has implemented regulatory changes that will immediately increase the number of people who can access the Employment Insurance (EI) Compassionate Care Benefit. As a result of regulatory changes, those who provide care to a relative, foster parent, ward, guardian or a gravely ill person who considers the claimant to be like a family member, are able to claim the benefit. The benefit remains available to those caring for a parent, child or spouse. Visit <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/> or call 1-800-206-7218 for more information.

Twenty Drugs Show Promise for ALS

Roberta Friedman, Ph.D., ALSA Research Department Information Coordinator

An article published in *Neurology* discusses compounds that show promise for treating ALS. The consensus that these potential treatments for the disease are appropriate to enter clinical testing in ALS came from collaborative discussion among ALS experts and the ALS community. The process will inform future selection of new therapies for accelerated clinical testing in ALS to speed discovery of effective treatment for this inevitably fatal disease. For further information, visit the following websites:

<http://www.alsa.org/research/article.cfm?id=678>
and <http://www.alsa.org/patient/drug.cfm>.

Equipment Program News

Over the past seven years, the ALS Society of Alberta's (ALSAB) equipment program has grown to maintain approximately 1,200 pieces of equipment to loan to people with ALS. Much of the equipment consists of items not available through the government-funding sources such as Alberta Aids to Daily Living. All of our funding comes from the wonderful donations and events like the Walks, Betty's Run and CHARITEE Golf. This funding has allowed us to provide power wheelchairs, hospital beds, communication devices and many smaller items for people with ALS. Here are some important things to note and consider:

- Homecare occupational therapists (OTs) are a very good resource for any equipment suggestions or home modifications that may be needed. If you do not have an OT helping out, you may complete a referral to Homecare or contact your ALS Client Coordinator or your ALS clinic for a referral.
- **Porch lifts:** It is best to consider installation during the warmer months of the year. To determine if a porch lift will be appropriate for your home, a vendor can do a site inspection and make recommendations for your situation. Porch lifts require a level base of concrete and an electrical outlet nearby. If pouring concrete is not an option, cement blocks may be used for the base.
- **Power Wheelchairs and Hospital beds:** Many individuals have private health care benefits that may provide equipment such as power wheelchairs and hospital beds. ALSAB may be able to cost-share with your insurance company to provide some of these much needed pieces of equipment. If you think that your insurance plan may cover equipment, please let your OT and ALSAB know and we can help with the process.

ALSAB is always grateful for donations of used equipment to add to our equipment bank. If you have any equipment that you would like to donate, please call Lauren at (403) 228-3857 (x104).

Condolences

Our sincerest condolences go out to the families of the following people who have recently passed away:

Thomas Anderson	Qi He*	Leona MacDonald	Gordon Rogers
Vicky (Victoria) Andrews	Daniel Hein	Robert McDonald	Russell Savage
David Balla*	Bruno Hildebrandt*	Cheryl McKay*	David Scott*
Jerry (Gerald) Braun*	George Huxley*	Bob (Robert) Marshall	Maurice Smith
Noreen Clavelle*	Stanley Kobluk*	John Middleton*	Sandy Sutton*
Robert Devey	Patricia Lawrence	Brenda Mikado	Allan White
Douglas Engel*	Mark LeBlanc*	Jakob Nussbaum*	Farid Yawari*
Irene Fox*	Fong Lim	Syamalamba Patnaiknai*	Lori Zimmerman
Norman Greidanus*	Ross Lovell*	Dave Reykdal*	

A special thanks goes out to all those who kindly sent donations to the ALS Society of Alberta in memory of friends and loved ones affected by ALS. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.

* Indicates people whose passing was reported in the Spring 2006 Newsletter. Some people did not receive the last issue due to distribution challenges. The Spring Edition of the *Prairie to Peak* Newsletter can be found on the ALS Alberta website at www.alsab.ca/newsletters.aspx

Celebrations

10th Annual Betty's Run Shatters Records

Thank You to everyone who contributed to making the 10th Annual Betty's Run for ALS such an outstanding year financially - \$407,500! WOW!!! What

was very special was how many families who have been affected by ALS were there for the first time.

What a wonderful way to honour loved ones – by raising awareness, raising money so those who now live with ALS in Alberta can live each day to the fullest and raising money for research so that one day this dreadful disease can be beaten. What a special tribute.

We have a wonderful community of individuals who care deeply for people and families of those living with ALS - volunteers, the ALS clinic team, Homecare, vendors and the ALS Society of Alberta. All members of the community were well represented at this event attended by 1,300 participants.

Thank you to everybody – we could not do this without you.

Jane Rivest – Member, Betty's Run Committee



2006 Betty's Run for ALS co-ambassadors Dwain Pitre and Hank Geerlof (seated L to R) are joined by Gemini award winning actress Wendy Crewson (long time Patron of Betty's Run – far left), Jane Rivest (Client Services Coordinator – standing to R of Hank) and Ian White (CTV Calgary – far R)

Walks for ALS Throughout Alberta

Edmonton

The 6th Annual Walk for ALS in Edmonton was again a great success as over 800 people enjoyed a beautiful day at Hawrelak Park raising close to \$114,927 to date with pledges still coming in.

The success of the walk can be

attributed to one thing - Team Work. The committee, walk day volunteers, sponsors and of course the Honorable Norman Kwong, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta and Her Honour Mary Kwong, all pulled together to make sure that June 10th was a memorable day for all who came.



Shelly Mrkonjic (seated), Frank Mrkonjic and Mrs. Mary Kwong watch as the Honourable Norman Kwong and Tyler Mrkonjic cut the official ribbon.

Of course, the walk wouldn't exist without the dozens of teams who come out to enjoy the day, celebrate and show support for those who are and have been affected by ALS. This year saw 72 family teams, ranging from 2 to 200, and together we formed one big community of kindness and support that is unmatched.

Thanks to everyone who made the day such a huge success, in every way. Till next year...

The 2006 Edmonton Walk for ALS Planning Committee

Red Deer & Central Alberta

Once again the Red Deer Walk team, under the direction of Phillis Edwards and close friend Iris Powell, produced amazing results in making the 2006 Walk for ALS the biggest and best ever!

Many people who participated in the 2005 Rocky Mountain House Walk came to Red Deer to celebrate with their friends, relatives and neighbors. This teamwork translated into some 300 plus participants raising almost \$ 60,000 for ALS. Awesome Job!!!

Cold Lake; Assistance Comes Out of the Blue



Wayne Steer (CL) and Michelle Feduniak (Centre) present Master Sergeant Gary Kulaszewski of the US Air Force (CR) & seven willing volunteers under his command with a Certificate of Appreciation for their assistance with the 2006 Walk for ALS in Cold Lake.

Sometimes help comes in unexpected ways; this was the case for Michelle Feduniak, (Walk for ALS Coordinator in Cold Lake) when she returned home on May 31st to find an unusual message on her voicemail.

It was from a man with a deep, exceedingly polite voice and an

unmistakable Southern drawl. The caller explained that he and the men under his charge were among the 5,000 men and women from several nations participating in **Operation Maple Flag**, who saw the posters for the Walk. He asked if Michelle could use the help of some able bodied airmen who wished to do something more productive with their time than the activities offered on the base.

Michelle, not being one to let opportunity slip by, immediately devised a plan to employ her newfound resources. On the morning of June 10th, Master Sergeant Gary Kulaszewski of the United States Air Force and seven of his men were among the first on the scene to help erect the tents and cook hamburgers. They played an integral role in the Walk and steadfastly refused to leave until everything was in order and packed away.

Michelle, her organizing committee and core of volunteers helped to raise considerable awareness of ALS as well as much needed funds to help those living with ALS in Alberta and to conduct research to find a cause and cure.

Medicine Hat

It was the second year in a row that rain visited the Medicine Hat Walk for ALS and the second year that the participants defied the elements making the Walk a memorable celebration of and for people with ALS.

Under the guidance of Peggy Helfrich, not even the rain dampened the spirits of the participants, as the 2006 Medicine Hat Walk for ALS was the most successful ever – raising almost \$26,000, which is an increase of more than 50% over 2005.

Peggy successfully employed several media sources to spread the word about the event and to bring a heightened awareness of ALS to Medicine Hat and surrounding communities.



2006 Medicine Hat Walk for ALS participants defy the elements and celebrate "...what they can do while they still can."

Lethbridge

Like Medicine Hat, the 2006 Walk for ALS in Lethbridge also received its fair share of liquid sunshine on the day of the event. Very special thanks are extended to *Bob Dafoe* for his incredible determination to ensure that the Lethbridge community had the opportunity to be engaged in this fundraising and ALS awareness-building event.

With the help of the ALS Society of Alberta, Bob secured support from *Volunteer Lethbridge*, friends, members of his church and the local media to spread the word and build momentum for the walk.

On the morning of the event, as a rainstorm released a downpour, Bob began to wonder if he was going to be the only one walking. As the registration opened and people started to trickle in, Bob and the other volunteers were heartened by the number of people who braved the elements and came in from places like Claresholm, Fort Macleod and the Crowsnest Pass to participate in the Walk. At the end of the day, Bob's tenacity translated into a positive experience for more than forty people and generated revenue of just over \$8,000.

Manning Walk for ALS

Q: What do you get when you have a small community and an organizer with a huge heart and selective hearing? **A:** Astounding results.

Sandra Dechant coordinated the first ever Walk for ALS in Manning – a small community of some 1,300 people in the Peace River Country. Sandra hears everything - except "no". Many people in the Peace River trading area, including friends and relatives, helped to promote the event including a popular radio morning man from the area.

Sandra was a tireless dynamo and had participation from almost 15% of the town that raised the equivalent of \$10 per person in Manning. On top of that, Sandra's committee set up a treasure hunt for adults and kids to find the 10 facts on ALS through the course of the hunt – in the end everyone knew something about ALS. Now that is impact!

Lloydminster



There is an old saying that "You can't keep a good woman down". If there is anyone who demonstrates this, it is Colleen Christie of Lloydminster. Colleen lives with ALS and has been an active advocate for the ALS Society of Alberta since being diagnosed with the disease.

Colleen and her sorority sisters hold an annual dinner from which a portion of the proceeds go to the ALS Society of Alberta to help others living with the disease. This year Colleen wanted to do something beyond the dinner and coordinated the 2006 Walk for ALS in Lloydminster.

Colleen and her committee were instrumental in doubling the participation level in the Walk this year and raising almost \$7,000 for ALS programs, equipment and research.

Third Party Fundraisers



CHARITEE
CORPORATE CALGARY CHARITY SOCIETY

They do it again for ALS!

CHARITEE Corporate Calgary Charity Society again brought in an **ASTOUNDING** \$100,000 from their

annual golf tournament at the Pinebrook Golf & Country Club on June 19th. Many thanks to organizers and participants for your generosity!!!

Fishing Derby in Endiang - June 4, 2006

The Wasdal Family marked 10th anniversary of their father's passing from ALS with a fishing derby. The family took the \$11,133 proceeds to the Betty's Run for ALS to commemorate the 10th year.

Linda Graham's Marathon - July 9, 2006

Linda completed the Triathlon and equaled her personal best time from 2005; she vows to beat this time at an Olympic distance triathlon September 4th. Linda has currently raised over \$4,400. If you would like to learn more about Linda's commitment and/or help her reach her goal, visit her website at <http://www.als.ca/events/mysite.aspx?fid=575>.

Harvest Friends Raffle Quilt to Mark Betty's 10th

The draw for the lovely Betty's Run Commemorative Quilt (10th Anniversary) was made on June 30th. The lucky winner was Gail Lafonde – (*congratulations*). Harvest Friends (Ellie Denooj and fellow quilting artisans) donated the quilt - this generated an extra \$448 to ALSAB.

Thank you!

The ALS Society of Alberta Contact Information

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Third Party Fundraisers ... continued

School Cheque Presentation

The grade 5 students of Scott Robertson School presented a cheque to Patricia Ordynec (Manager, Alberta North Region) for \$240.00, the proceeds of a Bake Sale, on June 26th. These wonderful children, with support of their teacher and parents organized this successful Bake Sale. Thank you Scott Robertson School.



This is a wonderful example of community caring beginning at a young age. Each of the 15 students received a Certificate of Appreciation from the ALS Society of Alberta recognizing their contribution.

U of C Chili Cookoff

Karen Cook & Carolyn Carr with the faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary (U of C) fed Wayne Steer (Manager, Resource Development) some of their "medicinal" chili at The U of C's 10th Annual President's Chili Lunch. These ladies represented one of 10 faculties that competed to win the net proceeds of the event – determined through the votes of some 2,550 "judges". In the end the faculty of Education won the prize and earned a cheque for \$539.75 to be donated to the *Captain Nichola Goddard Scholarship*. Thanks for making ALS your cause, Ladies! There is always next year.



Bo's Bar & Grill Special Dinner

June was ALS month and like last June – and several months in between – Bo's Bar & Grill in Red Deer held a special dinner to recognize and help those living with ALS throughout Alberta.

As with Bo's previous dinners, participants pay \$75 for their culinary experience and the first \$1,000 is donated to the ALS Society of Alberta to help people living with ALS – now that's easy to digest. For more information call Bo at 403-302-3335.



ALS Society of Alberta Privacy Policy

The ALS Society of Alberta (ALS AB) currently has a policy not to sell, trade or rent the names of people who communicate with or donate to the Society either directly or indirectly through events that are conducted to benefit the ALS Society of Alberta and the people we serve. From time to time ALS AB may undertake to communicate directly with those people on our database in order to thank, inform and/or communicate a specific need for volunteer, financial or other resources.

Anyone who prefers to be contacted by e-mail, please contact us by e-mailing a note to info@alsab.ca with the heading "Contact by E-mail" on the subject line along with your full name in the body of the note.

Anyone wishing not to be included on that list may be removed from that list by either contacting the ALS AB offices at (403) 228-3857 (or toll free at 888-309-1111) or by e-mail at info@alsab.ca with the word "Remove" on the subject line. Please be sure and provide your name and address so that we may comply with your wishes.