



NEWSFLASH

A publication of the ALS Society of Alberta—North Region, 410-11456 Jasper Ave., Edmonton, AB T5K 0M1

July, 2003

ALS AWARENESS MONTH - June, 2003

And what a busy month it has been!

- ◆ May 30th to June 26th - 3 Bridge Banners went up around Edmonton to let people know that June is ALS Awareness Month. Thanks to Peter Fuschhuber and Dave Melnychyn who hung and retrieved the banners.
- ◆ Mayor Bill Smith issued a Proclamation declaring June as ALS Awareness Month. Thank you to Fran Hayes who picked this up. It is hung on the office wall.
- ◆ June 1st - Remembrance Service at Pilgrims Hospice where staff and families gathered to remember those lost to ALS.
- ◆ June 2nd - our display was in Westmount Shopping Centre as part of "Older, Bolder Better", a Seniors

Fair organized by Westend Seniors Activity Centre. Thank you to the 5 volunteers who helped.

- ◆ June 13th & 14th - Cornflower Days in Edmonton. Cornflowers were offered for donations at local area Bay Stores. Thanks to Chris Yates and Fran Hayes for organizing this and to the 25 other volunteers who gave time to this event which raised \$1555.98 towards research into cause and cure of ALS.
- ◆ June 17th - Education Session - "The Many Dimensions of Grief". This was well attended and well received. Thanks to presenter Verna Klimak.
- ◆ June 18th - Edmonton Trappers celebrated Lou Gehrig's 100th Birthday. Staff and 10 volunteers (most had a crash course in "What is ALS?") spread out around Telus

Field dispensing pins and cornflowers. Bryan Morel did a great job of throwing the first pitch, Irene Spelliscy sang the national anthems and Global's Mike Sobel read Lou Gehrig's famous retirement speech. (See below) This was a great opportunity to create awareness and also raised \$681.15. Thank you to all.

- ◆ June 19th - 21st - Cornflower Days in Lloydminster. Many thanks to Patricia Wade and her team of 26 volunteers who also baked and made crafts to sell over the 3 days. They raised \$1044.94 for Research. Good job Lloydminster!

All in all it has been a busy month but we have created AWARENESS of ALS. Thank you to the many volunteers who have helped to make this possible.

"Together we do make a difference."



Joyce Pirnak & Mary Ellen Mattern



Heather Stone & Edie Dixon



Bryan & Clancy Morel

LOU GEHRIG'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

To recognize Lou Gehrig's 100th anniversary, we re-print his famous speech from July 4, 1939, delivered on his retirement from the Yankees. He died in 1941.

"Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of this earth. I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and have never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans. Look at these grand men. Which of you wouldn't consider it the highlight of his career just to associate with them for even one day?"

Sure I'm lucky. Who wouldn't consider it an honor to have known Jacob Ruppert? Also, the builder of baseball's greatest empire, Ed Barrow? To have spent six years with that wonderful little fellow, Miller Huggins? Then to have spent the next nine years with that outstanding leader, that smart student of psychology, the best manager in baseball today, Joe McCarthy? Sure I'm lucky. When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat, and vice versa, sends you a gift - that's something. When everybody down to the groundskeepers and those boys in white coats remember

you with trophies - that's something. When you have a wonderful mother-in-law who takes sides with you in squabbles with her own daughter - that's something. When you have a father and a mother who work all their lives so you can have an education and build your body - it's a blessing. When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed - that's the finest I know. So I close in saying that I may have had a tough break, but I have an awful lot to live for."



ALS Society of Alberta - N. Region

410-11456 Jasper Ave.,

Edmonton, AB T5K 0M1

Phone: 487-0754

Fax: 486-3604

Toll Free: 1-866-447-0754

Email:

Patricia - patricia@alsab.ca

Karen - karen@alsab.ca



Chris Yates drawing raffle tickets at the Business Students Association Beer Garden at the U of A, April 8th. The \$632.00 raised by the raffle were given to the ALS Society.



Heather, Teddy and Chris Yates with Stuart and John Pollock at the ALS Society Annual General Meeting on May 31, 2003 in Calgary.

OFFICE NEWS**Services to Northern Alberta**

Since the last edition of NewsFlash, Client Services staff visited northwest Alberta, including High Prairie, Manning, Fairview, and Grande Prairie. Several presentations about ALS were made to 90+ health professionals, and client visits were made in these areas. It is anticipated that ALS Society connections with local health workers and community resources will further support the existing services for people with ALS. It is also most beneficial for staff to be able to put names to faces when answering calls from across this region. Small communities showed

interest in Walk to D'Feet Micro Walks. An increased appreciation of scope and beauty of the geography in this area was an unexpected benefit of this trip along with wonderful hospitality and good weather.

Further trips are planned over the summer to Grande Cache and Edson.

Summer Student

Amanda Ballas has completed her second year as a student of Acupuncture. She brings her energy and enthusiasm, administrative and people skills to the ALS Society office in Edmonton until the end of August. She will assist staff with updating Information Manuals, compiling

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Did you know that our volunteers gave almost 1500 hours of their time to the ALS Society of Alberta in 2002? We could not do the things we do without the help of these wonderful people. Thank you to all of you who have given us your time and skills so generously.

Volunteer Awards

The Yates Family - Chris, Teddy and Heather were nominated for and received the first **Mary Pollock Walk to D'Feet Award** given by ALS Canada. It was presented to the Yates Family by John Pollock and his son Stuart in Calgary at the Annual General Meeting on May 31st. Congratulations to the Yates Family. We are so lucky to have you here in Edmonton. (See picture on this page)

Heather Yates was nominated for the Flare Magazine Volunteer Awards and was a finalist in this national competition. Congratulations Heather!



The Queen's Jubilee Medal was presented to **Cathy Neale** on June 2nd for her work with Westend Seniors Association (formerly E.S.S.O.) Cathy also volunteers in the ALS office on Friday mornings and is a great help to the ALS Society - N. Region. Congratulations Cathy.

IN TOUCH

My name is Sue Decker. I am a speech language pathologist on contract with the ALS Society of Alberta. I will be contributing a regularly to Newsflash.

Are you losing speech abilities? There are no easy answers, but you do not have to face it without help. I am available to help you cope with speech and swallowing changes. I can also help you coordinate the speech and swallowing services you are receiving from the health care system in your area. Contact me through the society office at 487-0754.

For next time . . . what are some creative ways to keep in touch with loved ones when talking becomes difficult? I would love to hear your ideas!

an inventory of resources, and support all the activities currently underway.

EQUIPMENT

If you have ANY EQUIPMENT you are not using, please return it, so others may benefit. If you have questions about who to contact, please call the office at 487-0754. The ALS Society is now maintaining, recycling and loaning up to 900 items. Loaning the optimal item in a timely manner depends on prompt return from users! Thank you very much.



PILGRIMS HOSPICE EXPANDS SERVICES

Edmonton's voluntary hospice recently announced the implementation of a Home Visiting Program. Volunteers are well trained, (often retired health care workers) and will provide in-home visits. This support allows primary care-givers to take some regular respite time - essential to replenish and rejuvenate in order to continue providing care at home for a loved one.

For further information about this program, or the Day Program, or Expressive Arts for Grieving Teens and Children, please call Pilgrims Hospice at 413-9801.

Pilgrims Hospice is offering community support sessions.
Please call 413-9801 and register early!
\$25.00 per session or \$75.00 for entire program.

Date	Time	Topic
Sept. 16th	6 - 9 PM	Loss, Grief & Bereavement
Sep. 18th	6 - 9 PM	"
Oct. 1	6 - 9 PM	Pain & Symptom Management / Practical Comfort Measures
Oct. 10th	6 - 9 PM	Mobility & Caregiving Skills
Oct. 11th	9 AM - noon	"
Oct. 16th	6 - 9 PM	Self Care - for the Caregiver

Corporate Rates available.

Sessions held at Pilgrims Hospice - 9808-149 St., Edmonton

BOOK REVIEW

LAUGH, I THOUGHT I'D DIE by Dennis Kaye

In his autobiography, Laugh, I Thought I'd Die, author Dennis Kaye, a native of Vancouver Island, shares the impact of ALS on him and his family. Through his ability to describe numerous "typical" scenarios in a candid, often humorous style, he makes it easy for the reader to form a relationship with him. For instance, after his initial diagnosis, he seeks the professional advice of a couple of additional physicians and uses some dark humor to share what many of us have felt when we have heard the words, "You have ALS. ALS is fatal. There is nothing we can do."

Through Dennis's experiences and his research, the reader becomes more informed about the disease as well as with various strategies for coping with it. Since Dennis was a young, vibrant logger who had many goals and a young family to provide for, it is inspiring to follow his dedicated efforts to seek out the necessary supports to meet emotional, physical, medical, and

financial needs. Dennis wins the reader's admiration and respect with the inspiring humorous letters he writes to Peter Gzowski that eventually became a regular CBC feature. These letters drew attention and interest from across the country and were a wonderful way of educating numerous listeners all across Canada about the destructiveness of ALS and the need for a commitment to further research.

The letters are included in this autobiography. Reading this book was a healthy choice for me, especially because I was in need of being able to explore ALS and experience a few chuckles instead of being drawn into the tears that have often flowed in some of the other readings. If you are looking for situations you can relate to and want to help yourself find humor in some of your day-to-day challenges, take the time to relax and read this book.

Submitted by Joyce Pirnak

Message from Alberta Aids to Daily Living - May 2003

"Effective September 30, 2003 AADL will no longer support repairs and battery replacement of privately owned wheelchairs and scooters"

Clients receiving assistance through Supports for Independence (SFI or AISH), are encouraged to contact their case worker to determine eligibility for SFI benefits as the need arises for repairs."

This affects anyone who purchased power chairs privately or with help from insurance. If you are concerned about this change, please contact your MLA.

ADVOCACY DAY

Planning for this event continues with a target date of Spring 2004. We will be meeting with as many MLA as we can in one day. It should be fun as well as rewarding. The team meets regularly to develop and refine messages to be presented to MLA's, with the intention of raising awareness of the needs of people with ALS, and improving current services to "make each day the best possible for people with ALS".

Can you help? If you know your MLA or have any connections of benefit to this project, **NOW** is the time to let us know. We are looking for people to attend the day of the event and to help with preparing hand outs and information packages.

Please call the office at 487-0754, or Laura Kemp-Hanson (Committee Chair) at 780-469-4549.

CONDOLENCES

Our sincere condolences to the families of:

Zoltan Dudas
Josina Forabosco
Alphonso Calderon

Classifieds

Available For Loan - Ramp - white metal ramp 24ft. long . Installation included. For further information please call the office @ 487-0754.

For sale—1984 Maroon Chevy Van with electric side wheelchair lift, mechanically sound \$4500 obo. Driver can be in wheelchair. Call Lawrence @ 780-592-2341





Kick Off Events in Edmonton:

LUNCH - Tuesday July 29th, Noon to 2 PM - Society for Retired and Semi Retired—15 Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton.

OPEN HOUSE - ALS Office, 4-7 PM Tuesday July 29th.
Presentation - 5.30 PM

RSVP's to the office are requested for these events. (487-0754)

WALK - Saturday September 27th - Hawrelak Park. Registration at 9 AM, Walk begins at 10 AM.

Can you help us 'grow' this event? Ask family, friends and others to assist? Extra invitations and pledge forms now available in the office at 487-0754.

Walk to D'Feet MICRO WALKS

**Can't be at a major Walk to D'Feet Event?
Why not try a MICRO WALK! Rural Support is invited!!**

What is a Micro Walk?

An opportunity for two or more people to hold an event locally (perhaps in a small town) to raise funds for ALS, supporting the larger Walk events. You start with a group of friends, family members, co-workers or classmates who want to help D'Feet ALS. You work together to collect pledges, write letters and encourage everyone to build as much awareness as they can. When you are done, you gather together to celebrate your accomplishments with a walk, a barbecue or, really, anything you want. The Walks to D'Feet ALS will be held across Alberta on September 27 and 28. You could hold your own Micro Walk then, or at another time.

A Micro Walk can be anything I want it to be?

Sure. It doesn't just have to be a walk. It could be a part of a family or school reunion. It could be an activity for your team, class or club. You could have a barbecue, picnic or block party. You could do it at work. You could get your friends together for breakfast, lunch or dinner, or you could go golfing fishing or camping. The only limit is your imagination.

How can I hold a Micro Walk?

Just get started. Ask people to participate with you. Contact the Society for all the pledge forms you will need. Let us know where you are so we can include you on our map. Start writing letters and collecting pledges. Be creative!

What will the ALS Society do for us?

- We provide all of the pledge forms!
- Everyone who raises \$100 receives a Walk to D'Feet ALS baseball hat
- We'll provide other incentive items for higher pledge raisers
- Ideas, ideas, ideas! Call us! E-mail us!

The important thing is that people who have been touched by ALS write letters and raise pledges, then get together to celebrate their hard work.

For more information contact:
T.O. Whenham, Manager of Resource Development
PH: 1-888-309-1111 or email: to@alsab.ca or www.alsab.ca/microwalks.htm

Need occasional transportation?

A new service!

Driving Force now has side exit wheelchair accessible vans with power ramps available for rent. For further information call Driving Force toll free at 1-800-936-9353 or their web page www.thedrivingforce.com

