



Coming up:

* The **ALS Society of Alberta AGM** will be held on May 24, 2008. The location is still to be determined, but mark your calendars and keep checking the website for the updated location!

*The **Annual Symposium on ALS** will be held on Tuesday June 17, 2008 in Victoria, BC. Please call (403)228-3857 for more information.

*Calling all **Volunteers!** The ALS Society of Alberta is holding their Calgary casino on August 16 & 17, 2008. Please let us know if you can help out!

We welcome article contributions from the public. To make a written contribution to *Prairie to Peak*, please submit your articles by mail, fax (403) 228-7752 or e-mail at p2peditor@alsab.ca. Due to limited space articles may not be printed in their entirety.

Contact us:

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Walks for ALS!

It's that time of the year again - time to start thinking about the Walks for ALS!

Please visit www.walkforals.ca and www.bettysrun.ca for more information about how to register and how to create your own fundraising website so that family and friends can donate easily online!

Calgary (June 8, 2008)

Betty's Run for ALS
North Glenmore Park
Contact: Hotline: 403-297-0569

Cold Lake (June 21, 2008)

Lakeland Lutheran Church
Contact: Michelle Feduniak
780-639-2360
E-mail: coldlakewalk@alsab.ca

Edmonton (June 14, 2008)

William Hawrelak Park
Contact: 780-487-0754
E-mail: edmontonwalk@alsab.ca

Grande Prairie (June 7, 2008)

Muskoseepi Park
Contact: Debbie Dechant
780-567-2485
E-mail: gpwalk@alsab.ca

Lethbridge (June 7, 2008)

Henderson Park
Contact: Marilyn Christie
403-758-3932
E-mail: lethbridgewalk@alsab.ca

Lloydminster (September 13, 2008)

Bud Miller Park
Contact: Colleen Christie 780-875-1005
E-mail: lloydminsterwalk@alsab.ca

Manning (June 14, 2008)

Lion's Club Park
Contact: Saundra Dechant
780-836-3505
E-mail: manningwalk@alsab.ca

Medicine Hat (June 7, 2008)

Heritage Pavillion,
Strathcona Island Park
Contact: Katie Bassett 403-979-2318
E-mail: medhatwalk@alsab.ca

Red Deer (June 14, 2008)

Little Chief Park
Contact: Vince & Beth LeBlanc
403-347-6485
E-mail: reddeerwalk@alsab.ca

Your walk could be here! If you would like to start a walk in your community please contact (403)228-3857

For more information on these or any other events, please contact the office!



ALS Society of Alberta Mission Statement

"Our vision is to make each day the best possible day for people living with and affected by ALS. We achieve our vision by providing support, facilitating the provision of care, promoting awareness, helping find a cure and advocating for change."

Executive Director's Message

In 2007 the ALS Society Board of Directors struck a Strategic Planning Committee to lead the development of a comprehensive 5 year Strategic Plan. Members of the committee include: Olga Maciejewski (Chair), Jan Desrosiers, Cathy Martin, Candice Li and Karen Caughey.

Over the past six months the Strategic Planning Committee has been working diligently on the development of the plan. Volunteers, staff, people living with and affected by ALS and other stakeholders were consulted on the future of the organization. We had an overwhelming response to our stakeholder survey from individuals across Alberta. Thanks to all of you who gave your precious time to provide feedback to us. This was a key part of laying the foundation for the Society to move forward. We feel we now have a strong basis to develop our five year goals to ensure we are meeting the vision and mandate of the organization.

At the February 9th Strategic Planning Workshop, the group put forward a revised mission/vision statement that was adopted by the Board of Directors on March 4, 2008. The revised vision statement is as follows:

Our vision is to make each day the best possible day for people living with and affected by ALS.

As we move forward as a Society we are fortunate to be

We achieve our vision by:

- Providing support
- Facilitating the provision of care
- Promoting awareness
- Helping find a cure
- Advocating for change

supported by an incredible group of volunteers, staff and supporters.

- Karen Caughey

Edmonton Walk Kick off Luncheon

The Edmonton Walk committee threw a very successful kick off luncheon in March to launch the Walk season! Attendees were lucky enough to hear a number of speeches from ALS clients, the chair of the ALS Society of Alberta board and the committee members themselves discussing their experiences with ALS, helpful tips about to raise money and how to have a great walk day! Over 50 people showed up for the delicious lunch and great discussion of ideas!

Support for Champions - ALS Fund for Kids

We are very excited to announce that we have been able to fund the first education bursaries from our Support for Champions Program. Our goal is to continue to grow the program.



If you need any additional information about the program, please call (403) 228-3857.

Cornflower Days

Central Albertans!! The planning for the 2008 Walk for ALS in Red Deer, scheduled for June 14th, is well underway. We're hoping to break the \$100,000 mark again this year but we'll need your support. Here's an update:

- * Cornflower Days promotions will be held all over Central Alberta in the next 2 months to promote our cause and this year's Walk.
- * We're raffling off a great mountain bike, a PS3 Video Game System, and a night in a hotel.
- * We're encouraging people to form Teams to garner support and perhaps challenge other Teams.
- * We're in need of volunteers to help with this year's Cornflower Days and the Walk.

If you'd like to help out with a Cornflower Day promotion in your community, buy and/or sell our raffle tickets (\$5), or volunteer to help with our Walk, phone 403 347-6485 or e-mail kaneben@telus.net.

Thanks to our Donors:



Third-party Events

ALS Action Group

On the evening of February 14, 2008 Action ALS, a University of Alberta based ALS group, held a bachelor/ bachelorette auction. The event went late into the night with great entertainment such as a hypnotist and break-dancers! The group raised over \$6000 for ALS Alberta. They are already planning their next big event!



Spin-a-thon

Terry Baker and her cycling supporters were at it again this year! The annual Cochrane Spin-a-thon for ALS was held on March 9th this year. The spinners managed to raise \$1600 for the ALS Society of Alberta. Special thanks to Ross Sterling, the spin leader, who kept the group energized and spinning for hours!



Bo's Bar and Grill

Once again Bo will be cooking up a feast in support of ALS. Mark your calendars! Saturday May 10 will be the next dinner night at Bo's Bar and Grill to raise money for ALS. Call (403) 309-2200 for tickets and keep checking www.alsab.ca for the menu!

Staying Awake for ALS

A group of dedicated and energetic students at Bert Church High School in Airdrie stayed awake all night long to raise money and awareness for ALS. The students played games and watched movies for 24 hours straight. They managed to raise almost \$8,000 in support of the ALS Society of Alberta - and slept very well the next day.

Safeway We Care

An Edmonton Safeway selected the ALS Society of Alberta as the beneficiary of their We Care fundraising program 2008 which ran Jan. - March. Thanks to 40 loyal volunteers the 3 events were very successful. Approximately \$10,000 was raised for client services.

Client Recommended Websites

www.patientslikeme.com- Share your experiences, find other patients like you and learn from their experiences.

www.als.net- learn about current research being conducted by this ALS therapy development institute.

If you have any trouble finding any of these items, contact Jane at 1-888-309-1111.

Research

Betty Norman Fellowship

We are pleased to announce that ALS Canada has awarded the first ever Betty Norman Research Fellowship to Dr. Kerri Schellenberg, MD. Dr. Schellenberg will be studying under Dr. Wendy Johnston, a neurologist and associate professor of neurology at the University of Alberta.

The two-year fellowship emphasizes ALS clinical care and research. It focuses on three areas: clinical expertise and leadership, teaching and research. Dr. Schellenberg will train in the ALS clinical program and the electromyography laboratory at the University of Alberta.

The fellowship was named after Betty Norman, who was the inspiration and driving force behind Betty's Run for ALS. For more information about Betty, go to www.bettysrun.ca.

Want more research news?

Check www.als.ca/researchnewsletter/ often for updated newsletters dedicated to the latest research on ALS.

Memantine Study Update

by Dr. Ming Chan, Associate professor, Centre for Neuroscience, University of Alberta.

A University of Alberta/University of Calgary study to evaluate the potential benefit of a new medication, memantine, was launched a year ago. Since then, 12 ALS patients have been enrolled and 3 have completed the study.

Although the sample is still relatively small, a couple of important observations have already emerged. First, the drug appears to be safe and is well tolerated. So far, we have not encountered any undue side effect from the medication in any of the patients. Second, although it is too early to draw any conclusion about the effectiveness of memantine in ALS, some of the novel methods used in the study to diagnose ALS and to measure change in disease progression appear promising. These non-invasive techniques allow us to figure out more accurately how severely the motor nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord are affected by ALS. In comparison to conventional methods currently used, these new methods were able to detect abnormalities much earlier and were more sensitive to disease progression. If these findings are confirmed, they can have a major impact for future studies by shortening the duration and number of ALS patients needed for clinical trials.

To fully realize the goals of the memantine trial and to reach a definitive answer of its role in ALS, we still need to enroll more patients to the study. If any ALS patients are interested to participate in this study or if they have any question, please contact Meredith Lynch, study coordinator at (780) 407-2944. All traveling and accommodation expenses for the study will be covered and the drug is provided at no cost.

Tips and Tricks

Great Buys

Visit the dollar store for:

1. "Grabbers"- They extend your arms' reach, and are very affordable

2. Long wash cloths with loops- Also available at the dollar store, they are help to reach your back more easily while showering.

3. Key rings- Attaching them to your zippers can help make it easier to get them done up.

You can also attach them to your wallet to make it easier to pull it out of your pocket (and to work any zippers that may be attached to it).



4. Waist pouch or fanny pack- Rather than a wallet, some people find these easier to use.

Other ideas...

Electric toothbrush- Easy to use, and it does a good job. You can find good quality electric toothbrushes in the drug store for a reasonable price.

Larger-handled eating utensils- Easier to use than conventional utensils, can be found at vendors or specialty drug stores.

Foam for pencils and pens- Helps to make it easier to grip, can be found in drugstores and stationary stores.

Dycem- A multi purpose non-slip material that you can put under your plates, mugs, keyboards, etc, to keep things "in place". An alternative to this would be to place a damp wash cloth under your plate or mug to prevent slipping.



Power Pudding

Eating foods high in fiber and increasing fluid intake helps avoid problems with constipation caused by immobility or decreasing ability to bear down. The recipe below is high in fiber and requires increased fluid intake. Contact your home care nurse if you are having problems, and to avoid a major problem!

Mix together:

1 ½ cups pitted prunes

1 cup unsweetened applesauce

½ cup All-Bran

¾ cup prune juice

Put in blender. Blend well. Refrigerate. Use 1/4 cup daily orally, followed by glass of water.

Upcoming Support Groups

Calgary - ALS Support Group

Support groups are held at the ALS Society office at 400, 320 - 23 Avenue SW from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Future dates include April 26 and May 24

These groups are co facilitated by Laura Cavicchi MSW and Jane Rivest.

Calgary - PLS Support Group

Support Groups are held at the Renaissance at North Hill Mall from 1:00 - 3 p.m.

Future Date: May 8.

Groups are co facilitated by Melinda Hatfield MSW and Jane Rivest.

Red Deer

Support groups are held at the MS Society office at 105, 4807 - 50 Avenue from 1:30 - 3 p.m.

Future Date: tentatively July 12.

Groups facilitated by Jane Rivest.

For information on all groups, please contact Jane at 581-888-309-1111 or jane@alsb.ca.

Condolences

Our sincerest condolences go out to the families of the following people who recently passed away: (November 3, 2007 to March 19, 2008)

Parminder Bhandhal
David Brown
Larry Browning
Peter Budney
Anne Cherwoniak
Robert (Bob) Cooper
Vera Cowie
Dan Drybrough
Patrick (Pat) Fuller
Harry Gaulton
Leona Grant
Frieda Heinrich

Angeline Heinz
William Hopkins
Walter Jowett
Timothy Loney
Clive Matthew
Jack McGladrie
James Morken
Milos Novak
Lorna Payne
Ellen Poisson
Barbara Quirk
Hugh Reid

Lionel Remillard
Marianne Schneider
Marilyn Seelye
Margaret Seles
Michael Shirley
Mervin Sims
Hugh Smith
Lois Swift
Orest Tarkowski
Shirley Vooy
Chester Wiens

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.