

# Volunteer Handbook

You can make a difference!



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## Introduction

We are pleased to welcome you as a volunteer to the Alzheimer Society of Toronto (AST). Volunteers are crucial to the successful operation of all programs and services provided in our community. With the support of volunteers just like you, we offer services to more than 5,000 families through our support programs, educate more than 10,000 members of the general public and train more than 1,500 personal support workers.

The purpose of this manual is to give a thorough understanding of the operations, structure, policies and procedures for the Alzheimer Society of Toronto and the Volunteer Department.

## AST Volunteer Philosophy

Passionate and dedicated volunteers are the backbone of the Alzheimer Society of Toronto. Volunteers actively participate with the staff team at all levels of the Society, enhancing our services and ensuring that our services are responsive to the needs of our clients. AST believes that each volunteer brings a unique skill set and knowledge of our community, that helps to improve our programs, policies, procedures and other agency concerns.

## Benefits of Volunteering with the Alzheimer Society



Develop new skills



Meet new people



Give back to your community



Create meaningful connections



Gain knowledge about dementia



Gain support in achieving your goals

## Organizational Overview

In 1977, the informal operations of the Alzheimer Society of Toronto began under the name “Alzheimer Support Group for Family Caregivers”. Dr. D MacLaughlin and Lori Koicol (social worker) at Surrey Place were the first to identify a need for support in the community. In 1981, the Alzheimer Society of Toronto was officially incorporated AS Société Alzheimer Society for Metropolitan Toronto. Since then, our goal has stayed the same: We are committed to alleviating the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and promoting research. What began as a small team of passionate individuals in 1977 has grown to 43 full-time passionate staff serving those affected by dementia in Toronto.



### ***Our Mission:***

We exist to alleviate the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and to promote research.



### ***Our Vision:***

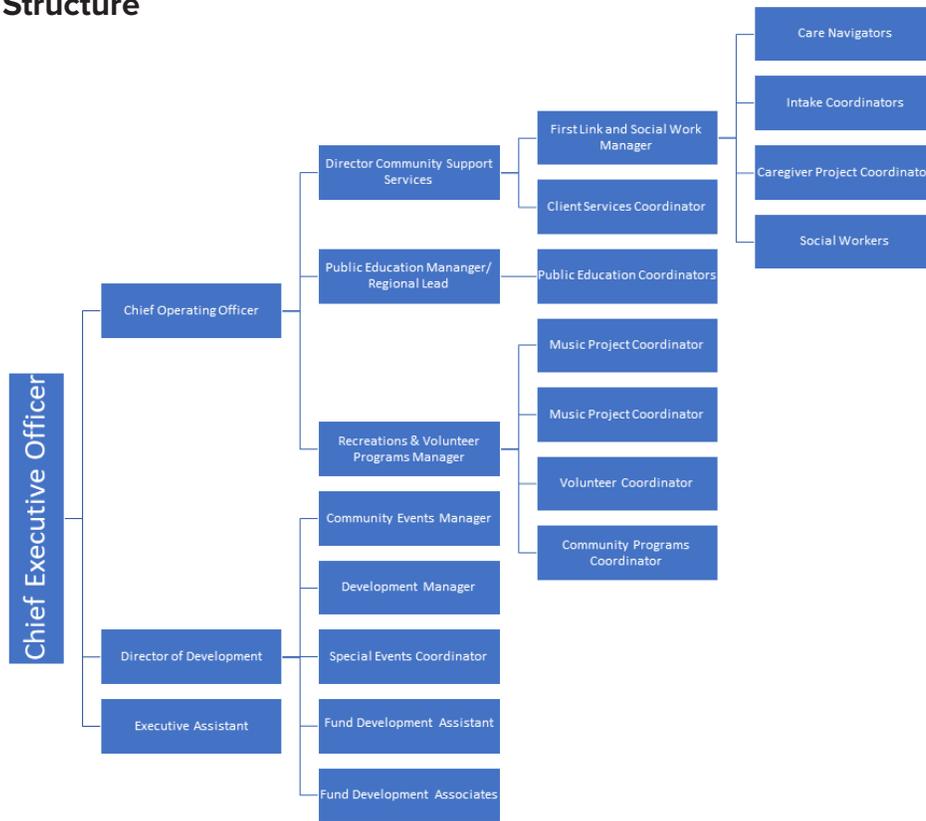
We envision a world without Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias.



### ***Our Role:***

The role of the Alzheimer Society of Toronto is to offer support, information and education to people with dementia, their families and their caregivers, to increase public awareness of dementia, to promote research and to advocate for services that respect the dignity of the individual.

## Organizational Structure



## Overview of Dementia

Dementia is an overall term for a set of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain. Symptoms may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language, severe enough to reduce a person’s ability to perform everyday activities. A person with dementia may also experience changes in mood or behaviour. Dementia is progressive, which means the symptoms will gradually get worse as more brain cells become damaged.

### Fast Facts:

**564,000**

Canadians are currently living with dementia

**16,000**

Canadians living with dementia are under the age of 65

**25,000**

New cases are diagnosed each year

**45%**

Smokers are 45% more likely to develop dementia than non-smokers

**64%**

Alzheimer’s disease accounts for approximately 64% of all dementia in Canada

Be sure to complete Dementia 101, 102 and 103 on [alzeducate.ca](http://alzeducate.ca) to best understand the basics of dementia, communication strategies and responsive behaviours.

## Programs and Services of the Alzheimer Society of Toronto

The Alzheimer Society of Toronto provides a number of programs and services for people living with dementia, caregivers and health professionals. Below, you will find some examples of programs and services that are offered. Programs and services which are currently being offered can be accessed through our calendar on our website: [www.alz.to](http://www.alz.to)

### Active Living Programs

#### *For People Living with Dementia and Care Partners*

- Minds in Motion
- Non-Impact Aerobics
- Young Onset Day Program
- Art Series
- Museum Tours

### Programs, Workshops & Counselling

#### *For Family Care Partners, Friends & People Living with Dementia*

- Caregiver Project
- Support Groups (Caregiver Stress and Building Resilience, Young Carers)
- Education Training, Education and Assistance for Caregiving at Home
- Moving to Long-Term Care
- Understanding Behaviour and Effective Communication
- Navigating the Dementia Care System
- Music Project

#### *For Healthcare Professionals*

- Behaviour Support Training Program
- Dementia Care Training Program
- Palliative Care for People with Dementia
- Brain Health



## Volunteer Opportunities

The Alzheimer Society of Toronto engages volunteers in all areas of the organization. Below, you will find an overview of how volunteers support the organization. If you are interested in learning more about other ways to get involved, you are encouraged to speak to the Volunteer Department!

### Administrative Support

#### *Clerical Assistance*

Volunteers assist with general office work like assembling packages, phone calls, preparing for mailing, event preparation tasks and other duties.

#### *The Music Project*

The Music Project was created in response to overwhelming evidence showing the beneficial effects of music and stimulation on people living with dementia. The Music Project provides personalized playlists on music players to people living with dementia to improve their quality of life and help spark memories. Volunteers provide support in various roles, including music research, playlist creations, client outreach and general administrative support.

### Special Events

#### *Quest for Kindness*

This annual fundraising event takes place each winter and requires hundreds of event day volunteers to assist with a variety of roles including registration, information, marshaling and more.

#### *IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's*

This spring Walk is a community-based fundraising event taking place in 5 different locations across Toronto. Roles vary at each Walk site but may include registration, information, marshaling and more.

### Client Operations

#### *Active Living*

AST offers a wide variety of Active Living Programs for people living with dementia. On average, each program requires 4-6 support volunteers. Volunteer responsibilities vary based on the unique requirements of the programs, but include program set up and take down, greeting clients, taking attendance, having meaningful interaction with clients and supporting client engagement.

### Social Work

#### *Respite*

AST offers respite support during programs to ensure caregivers can attend counselling, education, workshops, and more while the person living with dementia is able to engage in meaningful activities in a safe environment nearby. Respite is offered at AST sites only; AST does not provide in-home respite.

#### *Peer Support Groups*

This opportunity involves co-facilitating group discussions among caregivers, family members and friends who are affected by dementia. Peer Support runs in sessions throughout the year and requires a 2-day specialized facilitator training.

## Volunteer Rights

Volunteers are integral members of the AST team and are treated as members of the team who are entitled to their rights.

### Volunteers have the right to:

- Work in a safe and healthy workplace, to know about unsafe work and to refuse unsafe work.
- A supportive environment in which to work and contribute.
- Effective and meaningful volunteer involvement practices.
- Have their say about their work and ideas regarding their role or program.
- Provide feedback and receive feedback when requested and at regular intervals.
- Ask for and receive support from their supervisor when required.
- Be accommodated for any ability needs in order to complete non-essential tasks of the role.



## Policies and Procedures

### Recruitment, Screening and Onboarding

Volunteer applicants will undergo a screening process to ensure suitability to the role and organization. For all applicants including clients and past staff, the screening process involves completing a volunteer application, an interview, reference checks, police and vulnerable sector checks, and a declaration of potential conflicts of interest. Current staff are welcome to perform volunteer activities, and, as required, with the knowledge that the required onboarding and training overlaps with Human Resources.

### *Volunteer Application*

Volunteers must complete a volunteer application. The application can be accessed online through the alz.to website or by hard copy available at the AST office.

Volunteers referred through the Young Leaders Collective (YLC), will not be required to reapply.

### *Interview/Screening*

Applicants that are suitable for a volunteer position will be contacted to arrange an interview. All prospective volunteers have the right to be interviewed by the Volunteer Services Department. Accommodations for interviews can be made as required on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Volunteer Services Department. Acceptance as a volunteer is not guaranteed and up to the discretion of the Volunteer Services Department.

Volunteers referred through YLC will have their YLC interview form transferred to their volunteer record in place of the Volunteer Interview Form.

### *References*

2 references are required and will be contacted at the discretion of the Volunteer Services Department. References must contain one professional reference (work or volunteer related) and one personal reference (friend). The personal reference must not be an immediate family member of the prospective volunteer.

Volunteers referred through YLC will have their YLC references transferred to their volunteer record.

## Policies and Procedures (continued)

### ***Police Checks and Vulnerable Sector Screening***

Due to the vulnerable nature of our clients, volunteers may be required to complete a Criminal Record Check (CRC) or a Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS). Required screening measures will depend on the volunteer role responsibilities. Individuals applying for roles that require a CRC or VSS, who refuse to comply with this request will not be accepted as a volunteer for the role. AST will comply with all federal and provincial legislation regarding the protection of human rights for applicants when conducting any type of record check.

A valid CRC or VSS police check completed within 1 year prior to volunteer placement will be accepted. CRC and VSS applications will be provided by the Volunteer Services Department, who will advise on your local police department application process. There is a fee for CRC and VSS checks for individuals over the age of 18. Upon completion of 15 hours of service the volunteer will be reimbursed. The volunteer must provide a receipt to the Volunteer Services Department in order to receive reimbursement.

CRC and VSS checks can take between 6-8 weeks and as such, training may be completed prior to receiving a completed VSS. Volunteer Placement may be started in advance of CRC and VSS clearance in the event an AST staff member is present during the volunteer shift. The volunteer must provide the original copy of the record check to the Volunteer Services Department. The original record will be photocopied for record and returned to the volunteer

immediately after review. Should a volunteer receive an invalid CRC or VSS check AST shall review the volunteer's information on the record check to determine if the volunteer is able to fulfill their professional and ethical responsibilities. Volunteers will be required to update their CRC or VSS check every 5 years and advise the Volunteer Department immediately should the validity of their CRC or VSS change within the 5-year period.

### ***Onboarding Kit***

Volunteers will be provided with the Volunteer Handbook and will be informed of the policies and procedures for the volunteer program. During onboarding, prior to beginning placement, volunteers will be required to sign a service agreement, code of conduct policy and confidentiality form(s).

## Policies and Procedures (continued)

### ***Volunteer Records***

Each volunteer at AST shall have a personnel file, maintained in the strictest of confidence by the Volunteer Services Department. AST will limit the collection of personal volunteer information to that which is necessary for the purposes identified by AST. In all instances, AST will collect such information by fair and lawful means.

The file shall contain photocopied documents pertaining to volunteer related information and history. The original documents will be shredded to maintain confidentiality. Records are kept password protected in the AST drive as well as our database. Volunteer records will be kept for 7 years after the volunteer leaves the organization for reporting and reference purposes.

Access to volunteer records can be requested by the individual volunteer in writing. Files will be shared with other staff supervisors on a need to know basis. AST may disclose information when required by law, while under audit or when an emergency contact is needed. Volunteers are responsible for submitting and updating information contained in their files such as contact information and professional development certifications.

Volunteer records include, but are not limited to the following:

- Volunteer Application
- Volunteer Interview
- Reference Checks
- Volunteer Service Agreement
- Confidentiality Form
- Code of Conduct
- Copy of Police Record Check

Volunteers may request a correction of factually incorrect personal information about them that is held by AST. However, this does not extend to information that is related to an opinion, such as that which is documented during the annual review process.

Volunteers involved on an ongoing basis will have their records updated as necessary during their annual review, including an attestation that there have been no updates to the status of the volunteer's VSS police check. Should an incident occur which would impact the validity of the VSS check, volunteers are required to notify the Volunteer Services Department before the volunteer's subsequent shift. Volunteers will be notified when it is time to update their VSS police check.

## Volunteer Orientation and Training

Volunteer candidates who successfully complete recruitment and screening will undergo volunteer orientation. Orientation will include reviewing Volunteer Handbook, generic training, and specialized training per the assigned role. Training will be provided in group or individual format depending on the number of volunteers that require training. Volunteers may request additional training in the event they are not confident or comfortable completing assigned tasks.

### Orientation

A full orientation will be completed once a volunteer role has been confirmed and accepted. Orientation will include a tour of the facility, fire exit locations, location of the first aid kits, introductions to pertinent staff, etc.

### Generic Training

Generic Training is available to all Society volunteers regardless of their volunteer role. Training will cover content from the AlzEducate courses of Dementia 101, 102 and 103, as well as The Accessibility Act for Ontarians and the Volunteer Services Department policies. Training sessions may take place in-person or online and will be led by the Volunteer Services Department.

### Specialized Training

Specialized Training with specific duties per the volunteer role will be provided as necessary and appropriate to ensure volunteers are properly trained per their responsibilities.

### Educational Resources

There are several educational resources that AST volunteers have access to. AST staff are available to answer any questions volunteers may have. Volunteers can access further resources online at [www.alz.to](http://www.alz.to), covering a variety of topics and education available in 90 languages.

## Volunteer Accountability

Volunteers of AST are to maintain professional conduct and recognize that they are a representative of AST to the community. Volunteers are to adhere to the below accountability procedures whether on the phone, online or when meeting in person.

### Identification

Volunteers will be asked to identify themselves to clients to provide a dementia friendly experience. Identification may include name tag, screen name, etc. as deemed appropriate by the Volunteer Department.

### Professional Appearance

Volunteers are asked to wear workplace appropriate clothing when volunteering.

### Smoking/Drugs/Alcohol

AST is committed to a smoke, alcohol, and drug free environment. Volunteers should not use or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis or illegal drugs or medication that impairs performance and judgment while volunteering.

### Privacy

To maintain privacy and client boundaries, volunteers are not to share personal contact information with clients including but not limited to phone number, social media, e-mail and mailing address.

### Access to Information

AST will make every available concession to allow access to relevant information as required in relation to the volunteer's role.

### Information Technology (IT) Usage

With permission from the Volunteer Services Department and the IT Department, programs per the volunteer assignment may be downloaded from the AST internet and run on AST devices. AST recognizes that volunteers occasionally monitor personal e-mail accounts or other websites, therefore **reasonable** personal use is permitted, however, all use:

1. Must comply with applicable legislation;
2. Must comply with all Society policies;
3. Does not create unnecessary risk or costs to the Society.

AST owns all data on AST computers, servers, and systems and has the right to review, copy, delete, backup and store any data (including e-mails) on AST's systems of any kind, including personal e-mails and text messages. Volunteers will not interfere with the normal operation of any element of AST's IT system.

### Media

Any volunteer contacted directly by the media should refer them to the Volunteer Services Department staff as volunteers are not spokespeople on behalf of AST. If volunteers are asked to speak about their work with AST at a formal event, they shall inform the Volunteer Services Department and seek information on current client trends, any upcoming promotional events, or current fundraising goals.

## Volunteer Accountability

### **Absences**

#### **Shift Cancellation**

In the event a volunteer needs to cancel their shift due to illness, severe weather or personal emergency, volunteers must provide 24 hours advanced notice in writing to the Volunteer Services Department. In case of an emergency with less than 24 hours advance notice, volunteers are to call their direct supervisor.

#### **Extended Absence**

If a volunteer will be absent from their volunteer responsibility for an extended period (more than 2 consecutive shifts), volunteers are to inform the Volunteer Services Department 2 weeks in advance.

### **Change of Placement**

The volunteer must discuss their desired change of placement with the Volunteer Services Department and provide written notice of this request. This change in placement may be due to change of interest or ability to commit to the current program or event.

### **Expense Reimbursement**

Volunteers will not be reimbursed for travel expenses to and from their volunteer shifts.

### **Money Handling and Gifts**

Volunteers must have the permission of their direct supervisor to handle any money received or dispensed by AST. During times when money is involved, staff must be present to perform all monetary duties, exceptions may apply at the discretion of the staff supervisor.

Volunteers are not to engage in any behaviours that result in financial or personal benefit to yourself or loss to the client. This includes lending or borrowing money from staff, clients, or other volunteers. As well as, giving or accepting personal gifts to or from clients or caregivers.

### **Client Assistance**

For the safety of clients, volunteers are not to provide transportation in personal vehicles, assist with medication (taking/storage), or assist with personal care such as toileting, bathing, dressing, and feeding.

## Volunteer Safety and Reporting

AST is committed to safety. Efforts are made to create and maintain an environment free from situations of any kind that threatens the safety of any employee, client, or volunteer. AST recognizes the value and dignity of each client, volunteer and employee and will make every reasonable effort to identify all potential safety concerns and to minimize these risks through the Incident Management Process. The Incident Management Process provides for a system to report, investigate, and deal effectively with every incident that threatens the safety of anyone within AST.

### **Workplace Accommodations**

Volunteers in need of accommodation to fulfill the volunteer role will be accommodated when possible, provided they are able to perform the essential duties of their own role or other available work and the accommodation does not create undue hardship for the Society. If accommodation is required, volunteers are responsible for requesting accommodation from a supervisor, explaining why required and take part in contributing possible accommodation solutions.

### **Identifying Risks**

It is the responsibility of the Volunteer Services Department and staff supervisor to assess and mitigate the risks before starting a volunteer in the assigned role as identified in AST's Risk Management Framework.

Volunteers are encouraged to remain alert and aware of surroundings for potential hazards when volunteering. Volunteers are to report any items that may be hazardous or dangerous to the on-site staff member or the Volunteer Services Department as soon as possible.

### **Responding to Emergencies**

The staff supervisor is responsible for ensuring the volunteer is aware of the emergency exits, health and safety information boards and emergency contacts per their volunteering location. The Volunteer Services Department is responsible for ensuring the volunteer is oriented to the Incident Management Process in the event of an emergency. This response plan includes assessing the stages of an emergency, following emergency procedures, and completing an incident report. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to follow the steps outlined in the plan.

### **Reporting**

After an incident has occurred, the Incident Report Form must be completed by a staff supervisor of the volunteer responding to the situation and the staff member that the situation was reported to. Completed reports will be submitted to the Volunteer Services Department and the Chief Operating Officer. This is the responsibility of the staff member, not the volunteer.

## Feedback and Recognition

AST encourages feedback and suggestions about the volunteer program and any volunteer roles within the organization. AST will support the needs of the volunteer, respond to questions or concerns through their time with AST and recognize the volunteer's contributions.

### **Comments, Concerns or Complaints**

If at any time a volunteer has concerns or complaints, volunteers are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Services Department. If a complaint involves the Volunteer Services Manager, the volunteer may contact the Senior Leadership Team by following AST's Complaint Policy. All information is kept confidential. In the case of a concern or complaint, the information received will be reviewed by the relevant parties and appropriate action will take place to address it. Should the volunteer prefer to provide anonymous feedback, please refer to the Satisfaction Survey under Item 2, below.

In situations where differences arise between volunteers or between volunteers and staff, it is advised to first try to resolve these differences amongst the parties involved. If a third party is needed, the Volunteer Services Department is to be informed and will facilitate any action required.

### **Satisfaction Surveys**

#### 2.1 Programs and Services Annual Satisfaction Survey

At a minimum of once per calendar year, volunteers will receive the

opportunity to provide anonymous feedback in an online satisfaction survey. The survey will be sent in an email to all active volunteers. All results will be reviewed and utilized to improve quality of services.

#### 2.2 Special Events Satisfaction Survey

As identified by the Volunteer Services Department and the Community Engagement Department satisfaction surveys and feedback opportunities will be provided following each event in various forms including email, online survey, verbal, etc. All feedback will be reviewed and provided as relevant to the event manager to be utilized for continuous quality improvement.

### **Annual Volunteer Review**

*Once per calendar year, volunteers who have contact with clients will partake in a role evaluation with a supervisory staff member and/or a Volunteer Services Department staff member. The evaluation serves as an opportunity for both staff and the volunteer to provide feedback on the role, volunteer experience, and identify areas of opportunity for improvement. A copy of the evaluation will be placed in the volunteer's file.*

### **Recognition**

*Recognizing the hard work and dedication of volunteers is very important to AST. Volunteers will receive ongoing support and regular recognition in various ways, such as education opportunities and volunteer celebrations.*

## End of Service

AST asks that volunteers provide notice of their departure prior to leaving. Under circumstances where policies, procedures or practices are ignored by the volunteer, AST will implement appropriate measures to the infraction.

### **Resignation**

AST understands that over time a volunteer's commitment to the organization can change. AST asks that volunteers provides 2 weeks written notice to allow transitional planning. Resignation occurs when the volunteer has no intention of returning to their volunteering.

AST asks all volunteers who resign to complete an exit interview to provide feedback prior to their departure on their volunteer experience.

### **Notice and Dismissal**

Where policies, procedures, or professional practices are ignored or contravened by a volunteer, progressive discipline of volunteers is implemented. Action for the infraction of rules may be applied in the following ways:

- 1) Verbal Notice / Conversation regarding concerns
- 2) Written Notice / Warning
- 3) Dismissal

Action is applied in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and is not required to follow the sequence of the three stages listed above, pending the offence, and at the discretion of AST. The degree of seriousness is to be noted and understood by both parties and enclosed in the volunteer file.

### **Re-Application**

Former AST volunteers who resigned of their own choosing are welcome to re-apply to the Volunteer Department and may be required to update their onboarding documentation and training.

**Thank You!**