

Alzheimer Society
TORONTO



2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

Living with **dignity,**
purpose and **connection**



Compassionate, person-centred care is at the heart of all we do

As we look back on 2025, we are filled with gratitude for your unwavering support and belief in the Alzheimer Society of Toronto. Because of you, thousands of individuals and families across our city were met with compassion, expertise and hope at each stage of the dementia journey.

This year underscored just how vital your support is. Our Public Education team reached more than 9,000 people, equipping communities, organizations, and frontline professionals with the knowledge to reduce stigma and foster understanding. Our partnership with Toronto Police Services expanded dementia-friendly training for recruits and first responders, helping ensure people living with dementia can remain safe and supported in the communities they know best.

Compassionate, person-centred care remained at the heart of all we do. With growing demand for services, expanded provincial investment in the First Link® Care Navigator program allowed us to connect more individuals to timely support. We also strengthened our offerings by launching 'What's First', a new workshop co-designed with caregivers and people with lived experience to provide essential guidance at the very beginning of the dementia journey.

Creativity and connection continued to spark joy across our Active Living programs. From music, art and improv, to fitness and walking groups, people living with dementia found community and belonging. Whether hearing the laughter in our improv workshops or the shared exploration of nature, donor-supported Active Living programs remind us that meaningful connections are always possible.

We were also proud to advance advocacy efforts locally, provincially and nationally, engaging with policymakers, participating in the Alzheimer's Association International Conference®, and welcoming important progress in treatment



research, while continuing to push for equitable access and early diagnosis.

None of this would be possible without you. Your support has made a lasting difference for individuals, families, and caregivers facing a dementia diagnosis. Because of you, people find connection, understanding and reassurance during life's most challenging times. We are truly grateful to you. Together we will continue to ensure that our clients live with purpose, meaning and compassion.

With gratitude,

Dave Spedding
CEO
Alzheimer Society of Toronto



Hilary Partner
Chair, Board of Directors



Katie MacLean
Manager,
Clinical Programs

“I am intensely grateful for the support both my partner and I received from the Alzheimer Society during the various stages of his illness. I will continue to do what I can to spread the word among people I meet who I know could benefit from your help and guidance as they face the challenge of living with dementia.”

– Clinical Programs client



Building understanding through dementia education

Community education remains central to our vision of a dementia-friendly Toronto. Through accessible workshops and training, our public educators equip businesses, organizations, and community members with the knowledge and confidence to support people living with dementia and their care partners. These efforts strengthen empathy, reduce stigma, and foster more inclusive, informed communities across the city.

Building Connections in 2025:

- Continued to grow program participation in the Mid-Scarborough Hub (AST satellite location). Dementia Friendly Communities training for individuals living in Scarborough exceeded expected targets, with additional education sessions planned for the coming year.
- Expanded outreach into diverse communities, including East African Women, Tamil, Chinese, and 2SLGBTQIA communities, for awareness sessions.
- Collaborated with the Toronto Public Library to develop a booklist for young children (up to age nine) to help their understanding of dementia. The list, which considers diversity, Canadian authors and recent publications, was spotlighted during World Alzheimer's Day and Alzheimer's Awareness Month.

SPOTLIGHT:

MAKING CRITICAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This past year, AST developed a new partnership with Toronto Police Services (TPS) to train recruits and staff through Dementia-Friendly education, reaching more than 320 officers in its inaugural year. Additionally, Search Managers were trained through the FROST (First Responders Operational Search Tactics) program, helping them understand risks and best practices when a person with dementia goes missing. Our outreach to diverse communities expanded as AST staff attended community meetings with TPS Black Liaison Officers to deliver culturally informed dementia education, helping ensure people with dementia can live safely in their communities.

BY THE NUMBERS

Held

427

education sessions across Toronto, with more than 9,100 attendees

Trained more than

894

people through Dementia-Friendly Community (DFC) Trainings, working towards a dementia-friendly Toronto



U-FIRST!®: TRANSFORMING CAREGIVING

The U-First!® program empowers care teams to provide more effective, emotion-based care for people living with dementia through a focus on the whole person. Through our training, U-First!® helps all members of the care team develop crucial skills for supporting people living with dementia. By taking a person-centred, holistic approach to problem-solving, the program equips staff to respond effectively to behaviour changes and improve overall care.

Highlights:

Expanded funding from the Ontario Government allowed for a greater number of Long-Term Care staff to receive training, ensuring that those caring for individuals with dementia lead with person-centred care.



BY THE NUMBERS

Graduated

889

healthcare professionals through U-First!®

Held

50

sessions across the city made up of individual learners, health care professionals and staff from long-term care homes



Supporting the best life possible at every stage

At the Alzheimer Society of Toronto, compassionate, person-centred care is at the core of everything we do. With one in three adults in Ontario connected to someone living with dementia, the need for trusted support has never been greater. We are committed to ensuring individuals and families have access to the resources, therapies, and guidance they need to navigate dementia with dignity, confidence, and the highest possible quality of life.

Our workshops, support groups, and one-on-one counselling sessions offer compassionate, judgment-free support. After a successful **donor-funded** pilot, AST was thrilled to make our Early Stages Support group for recently diagnosed individuals a permanent offering. Additionally, the program was expanded to include the Mid-Scarborough Hub.

Overall, in 2025 more than 2,500 new clients came to AST in support of programs and services. Including both new and existing clients, more than 3,250 individuals benefitted from attending one of our support groups this past year.

Building Connections in 2025:

- To meet rising demand, the Ontario government invested \$6.7M over the past two years and \$9M for the next three to expand the First Link® Care Navigator program, helping Ontario residents access timely dementia support and services.
- In response to client feedback, AST expanded grief-related supports by introducing specialized staff training on grief literacy. The training deepened staff's understanding of the many ways grief is experienced and expressed, helping them better support clients who regularly face periods of grief and loss.
- Working with caregivers and people with cognitive changes, AST social workers co-designed a new workshop called "What's First" to give care partners essential guidance at the very start of their journey. This initiative was in response to clients' comments that they wished they'd gained key dementia insights earlier.

"Your kind, compassionate and very efficient manner was so very much appreciated. We look forward to being in touch with you and are so grateful to have you on our resource team."

– Care Partner



MUSIC PROJECT: THE POWER OF PERSONALIZED MUSIC

Personalized music reconnects people with dementia to memories and loved ones, using tailored playlists to spark connection, comfort, and meaningful moments with family and care partners. With additional support from **The Rotary Club of Toronto and its Charitable Foundation**, the Music Project continued to expand its reach in 2025.

By partnering with hospital emergency rooms (through the DREAM program), the Music Project helped bring calm and comfort during what can be a very disorienting experience for those living with dementia. In addition, two new Alzheimer Societies from Ontario joined the program, giving access to more individuals in need.



“Just wanted to thank you again for the MP3 player. My mom recently moved into a behavioural support unit and I understand that this player is one of the best tools to keep her calm. She loves singing to the playlist and even wears the headphones when the unit is charging!”

Celebrating our Volunteers!

At the Alzheimer Society of Toronto, our volunteers are the heart of our mission. Each year, we celebrate an exceptional group of volunteers who have gone above and beyond in supporting our clients. We are grateful for each and every one – volunteers are an essential part of our success.

Meet Nada: Outstanding Volunteer of the Year

The Harbel Singh Arora Volunteer of the Year Award honours a volunteer who embodies service, resilience, and commitment to AST's mission. This year, we proudly recognize Nada for her unwavering dedication, compassion, and meaningful impact across programs—supporting people living with dementia and enriching every space she enters.

Congratulations as well to:

Ayesha: Volunteer of All Trades Award

Francheska: Ripple Effect Volunteer Award

Cherry: Life-long Learner Award

Kim: Changemaker Volunteer Award





Fostering Connection, Creativity, and Well-Being

Our Active Living programs create moments of joy and belonging for people impacted by dementia through inclusive, engaging experiences. Offered at no cost thanks to generous supporters such as the George C. Hunt Family Foundation, these programs use music, movement, and creative expression to spark connection and enhance well-being. Led by skilled facilitators, Active Living encourages curiosity, social connection, and meaningful engagement, helping individuals living with dementia remain active, supported, and connected to community.

Joyful Moments in 2025

- Launched creative and engaging programs like “Songs in the Key of Life” to celebrate the songs and sounds people love and help them to discover some new ones.
- The return of the Golden Threads Choir, which explores the joy of making music while fostering connection and creativity.
- Introduced “Growing Wild” for the horticulturalist at heart. The program provides time together in nature and promotes creativity using elements from the natural world as inspiration.
- Expanded reach and programming at the Mid-Scarborough Hub location with fun new programs like Fitness Friends to increase socialization and gentle exercise to stay active, and “Drum Circle with Thrya” where participants were encouraged to feel the rhythm through hand drumming.



BY THE NUMBERS

250

Active Living sessions held in 2025

3,500

participants attended Active Living programs in 2025



SPOTLIGHT ON LAUGHTER

Improv creates space for connection when words don't always come easily. For people living with dementia, it offers a way to communicate through laughter, presence, and shared moments without pressure to remember or perform. At the Improv Program that took place in the Fall of 2025, joy filled the room as participants responded to one another in real time, building confidence, friendships, and trust. Improv invites everyone to say "yes" to the moment, strengthening communication, reducing isolation, and reminding us that meaningful connection is still very much possible post a diagnosis.

"It's been amazing. The participants are filled with so much joy, so much passion, you can't help absorb it and give it back. I'm so glad I said yes, it was eye opening – whatever judgments or preconceived notions I may have had were quickly dashed. I'm just playing with some humans. They just happen to be a couple years older than me."

– Nigel, Improv Program Facilitator



Driving Change for a Better Future

Hosted in Toronto for the first time since 2016, the Alzheimer's Association International Conference® (AAIC®) took place in July 2025. It was a privilege for members from AST to be among global leaders united in advancing the understanding, treatment, and care of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. While research was at the heart of the conference, the breadth of topics was remarkable, including sessions like exploring the link between menopause and Alzheimer's, shedding light on why women are diagnosed at twice the rate of men.

The Alzheimer Society of Toronto was proud to join more than 20 organizations in the Canadian Pavilion, engaging in meaningful conversations with researchers, clinicians, and people with lived experience. A highlight was **AAIC For All: Community**, a free public event that created space for open dialogue and shared learning about the latest discoveries. We ended the week with an afternoon of connection, gratitude, and hope, made even more special by remarks from MP Chi Nguyen.

Health Canada Approves New Drug Therapy

In October 2025, Health Canada announced the conditional approval of Lecanemab (Leqembi), the first disease-modifying treatment approved in Canada for Alzheimer's disease. This is an important milestone in Alzheimer's therapies and a meaningful step forward, however, it is not a cure. Clinical trials show Lecanemab slows disease progression but does not stop it, and only people with mild cognitive impairment or mild dementia due to Alzheimer's will be eligible.

This raises real challenges. Early diagnosis remains difficult due to long wait times, and treatment with Lecanemab requires regular monitoring, including up to four MRIs per year to manage potential side effects. Approval of the drug also does not guarantee access. The Ontario government and private insurers must decide whether—and for whom—this treatment will be funded, with costs in the U.S. exceeding \$20,000 annually per patient.

The Alzheimer Society of Toronto welcomes this landmark approval, but it is only the beginning. With preparation, equitable access, and continued investment, this could mark the start of a long-awaited decade of change and renewed hope for people living with dementia.

Advocating for a Better Future: Provincial Advocacy in 2025

When the Ontario Government called a snap election in February 2025, the Alzheimer Society was ready and quickly mobilized our supporters with our *2025 Recommendations for a Dementia Ready Ontario*, pushing for dementia to remain a key priority for the government. We remain committed to working with government leaders to drive lasting change for Ontarians living with dementia and their care partners. In November 2025, AST CEO, Dave Spedding, joined leaders from Alzheimer Societies across Ontario to meet with MPPs to advocate for stronger, more accessible dementia care. The team from AST was grateful for the opportunity to meet with MPP Lee Fairclough, who also recognized AST during Question Period, as well as Minister Raymond Cho, MPP Adil Shamji, and MPP Stephanie Smyth. Their willingness to listen, engage, and champion the needs of caregivers and people living with dementia gives us hope as we look toward the new year ahead.



A key learning from AAIC2025: together, we are building a future where dementia is better understood, treated, and supported with dignity and compassion at the heart of it all.



A Year of Shared Commitment and Impact

IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's

More than 1,200 supporters gathered at Fort York on May 24, 2025, turning their steps into action at Toronto's IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's.

Across Canada, Alzheimer Societies raised more than \$7.2 million – the highest total ever – marking an incredible year in the history of the Walk for Alzheimer's. We extend a heartfelt congratulations to the entire community of walkers, sponsors, donors and volunteers; it is your dedication, leadership and collaboration that truly makes a difference in the lives of those we serve.

In Toronto alone, more than \$410,000 was raised. Funds raised in Toronto stay in Toronto, supporting local families through free counseling, navigation services, and social programs.

To everyone who attended, thank you for lacing up your shoes and proving that our community is stronger together. As we close out this historic year, our team is already looking ahead and excited for what we can accomplish in 2026.

Our Walk sponsors truly help drive the success of this event. Special thanks to our National Title Sponsor, IG Wealth Management; Toronto Memory Program; Chartwell Retirement Residences; Amica Senior Lifestyles; Toronto Dementia Research Alliance; Integracare Inc.; Verve Senior Living; Vestacon; Cogir Senior Living and Mosaic Home Care Services.





2025 WALK AT A GLANCE

A New Record:

\$7.2 million

raised nationally to support dementia care and services.

Community Strength:

1,200+

walkers and volunteers joined forces at Historic Fort York.

Local Impact:

\$410,000+

raised to fund local programs and services.



2025 IG PRIVATE WEALTH MANAGEMENT UNFORGETTABLE GALA

Creating moments of joy and fostering community is at the heart of everything we do at the Alzheimer Society of Toronto. On Oct. 29, 2025, the IG Private Wealth Management Unforgettable Gala was a shining example of that goal—a night where laughter, heartfelt stories, and shared purpose lit up the room. With more than 175 guests in attendance, comedians Colin Mochrie and Deb McGrath brought both hilarity and their own personal stories to the evening, filling the room with laughter and the occasional tear. Those in attendance showed their commitment to improving the lives of individuals and families impacted by dementia by helping raise an incredible \$370,000 in support of AST services and programs.

The evening would not have been possible without the generous investment of our lead sponsors: Title Sponsor IG Private Wealth Management; Program Sponsor BMO; and Entertainment Sponsor Richardson Wealth. Thank you to the many corporations and individuals who purchased tables and tickets, made in-kind donations, bought auction items and made generous donations. By coming together in this way, we shared a remarkable purpose – to help the Alzheimer Society of Toronto build a truly compassionate community of care – while sharing laughter and connection. It was a remarkable evening.



Community Events

At AST we are fortunate to have so many fundraising communities. In 2025, more than 20 third-party events, from lemonade stands to euchre tournaments, were held to raise funds for those individuals and families impacted by a dementia diagnosis.

A number of our community partners this year put the spotlight on brain health through “Get Active” initiatives. By participating in major events like the *Toronto Waterfront Marathon* and the *Constantine Yorkville Run*, participants turned physical movement into a platform for dementia awareness and fundraising. These collaborations are key to empowering the community to stay connected, proving that active living is a vital way to support those living with dementia and their care partners.



Leading with Compassion: Building a Dementia-Friendly Toronto Together

We head into 2026 with a new vision and a new Strategic Plan. Rooted in research and evidence, AST’s Strategic Plan responds to the evolving realities of dementia care in Toronto. Over the coming years, we will close service gaps, embrace ethical technology and innovation, diversify funding, strengthen staff training and deepen partnerships guided by lived experience. We envision a Toronto where every person impacted by dementia lives with dignity, purpose and connection.





Dignity, Purpose, Connection

Alzheimer
Society
T O R O N T O

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10670 5262 RR0001

We are delighted to share this 2025 Year in Review with you. If you are interested in reviewing our Statement of Operations or our Donor Listing please reference our Impact Report, found here:

www.alz.to/impactreport2025