

Caregiver Contact

-A Publication For Alberta's Family Caregivers

Winter 2011

A Year in Review: Giving Thanks

Alberta Caregivers Association

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With the holiday season in full swing, life is busy and time is flying by. In the midst of all the hustle and bustle, days like Thanksgiving and Christmas remind us that a simple thanks can be a precious gift. We want to pause for a moment and say "thank you".

The ACGA had both an exciting and challenging year. We struggled with growing pains, changes in staff, and a limited budget. We partnered with new organizations, developed new programs, and were able to see the difference we were making in the lives of caregivers. Seeing a smile or hearing the laugh of someone who, only weeks before, was at the point of burnout is the best thank you an organization like ours can receive.

With caregiving it can be easy to focus on the negative. When we talk about the caregiver experience, it's always the stress, the guilt, the resentment. Through all the challenges, it can be difficult to find something to be thankful for, something positive. The day after Thanksgiving Bobbi, a caregiver, wrote to us about what she was thankful for. Her story, on page 4, got us thinking about what it means to be thankful.

As we go into the holiday season, our wish for you is that you find what you're thankful for. At the ACGA, we know who we're grateful for: you.

Happy New Year!

Anna Mann, Executive Director

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What's New at the ACGA



Our lovely models, waiting for their turn on the catwalk at our September Fashion Show.

It's been a busy fall at the ACGA. Here are some of the things keeping us busy:

Fashion Show Fundraiser

Our 8th Annual Luncheon, Fashion Show & Silent Auction was a huge success. We'd like to thank Laura Canada, Jolica Jewellery, models, volunteers, staff and attendees for helping us to raise almost \$5,000 for programs and new initiatives.

Sharing Your Story Program

Talking about your experience as a caregiver can be difficult, scary, and also very rewarding. Sharing your story can help us understand ourselves, help others understand what caregivers go through and can make a dif-

ference in the lives of caregivers who think they're alone. As part of a practicum project for school, Darla, our Social Media and Networks Coordinator, has developed a new program that will help caregivers shape and share their experiences. We'll be piloting the program in the new year. Please contact our office for more information.

Canadian Caregiver Coalition AGM

Anna, the ACGA's Executive Director, was invited to present on what Alberta is doing for its caregivers. "It was a great opportunity to find out what other provinces are doing. The ACGA has a lot of really unique and exciting programs to offer, but there's still a lot we can learn from other districts,"

What's New

Anna reports. The Canadian Caregiver Coalition is a national group that brings together more than 40 caregiving serving organizations in Canada. You can learn more at their website at: www.ccc-ccan.ca

Reaching Out to New Communities

The ACGA is bringing awareness of caregiving and supports for caregivers to all parts of the province. This fall, COMPASS workshops ran in Calgary, Stirling, Edson and Sherwood Park– as well as Edmonton. Other communities are getting on board as well. To find out if COMPASS is coming to your community, check our website or contact our office toll-free at 1-877-453-5088.

We're also learning more about caregiving in the multicultural communities of Edmonton. Rachelle, our Caregiver Advisor, has been connecting

with groups in Edmonton's Millwoods area to discuss what caregiving looks like in their communities. She's been invited to attend meetings, community gatherings, and even give presentations on caregiving. She reports that the caregiving experience is being seen everywhere.

New Staff

It seems like every issue we welcome new staff and volunteers to our organization. This fall was no different with some of our staff moving on to exciting new challenges and others moving into new roles within the ACGA. We welcome Anna Mann, who has made the move from Community Engagement Coordinator to Executive Director, and Bonnie Hoffmann, who is now our Planning and Development Lead. You can meet our new team members on page 7.

A Little Thank You Goes a Long Way

After the holidays, write a thank you note to family members or friends who spent time with your loved one. Emphasize the positive impact their visit or brief time spent with your loved one had on them. This may reinforce positive feelings from their visit and diminish any discomfort they experienced. They may then be more encouraged to visit again or be more supportive of your efforts.

Family Caregiver Alliance National Center on Caregiving

The Caregiving Experience

From a Thankful Mom

Thanksgiving morning, 6:55 am. The phone rings.

Call display shows it's my 28 year old daughter, Andrea. "Mom? I have a dilemma".

"What's up?" I ask. "And you sound terrible by the way."

"I know. This cold has taken over my voice. But see, I told home care not to come until 8:30 so we could all have a sleep in since it's a holiday. But I woke up an hour ago and remembered I have to take my poop pills at 7:35 because tonight's bowel routine."

Andrea is quadriplegic. Her bowels, along with everything else from the chest down, are paralyzed. Several Senekots are taken at a precise time so her bowels are ready to take action when home care puts her on the commode chair at 8:15 this evening.

"Jeff's in the spare room so he can have a late sleep-in and home care won't disturb him. He's got ear plugs in, and with no voice..."

"Well, that's one husband who's not going to hear you call!" I laugh. "7:35? I'll be there at 7:33. See you in a bit."

Thanksgiving. On my walk down the street my list of "thankfuls" grows and grows.

Thankful I only live two blocks from my daughter and her husband.

Thankful I'm an early-morning riser, so she didn't have to feel guilty about waking me up.

Thankful she always takes her cell phone to bed with her!

Thankful she takes good care of a body that could cause so much trouble if she didn't bother with strict routines.

Thankful my body works as well as it does and I don't have to worry about such things!

Thankful our province provides funding for home care for those who are severely disabled, so my involvement is much less than it could be.

Thankful my daughter is not only alive, but married, running a home business, and thriving 12 years after breaking her neck in a car accident.

And most of all, thankful that God is in control!

Sincerely,
Bobbi, Thankful Mom :)

Community Connect

Pigeon Lake Honours their Caregivers

The Pigeon Lake Child and Family Society believes that strong families build strong communities. In 2007, they introduced an award to recognize individuals who are an essential part of strong families and communities: the caregivers.

The Florence Riske Caregiver Award is named in honour of its first recipient. Florence was an inspiring woman who cared for her handicapped son Melvin who was born with a severe case of cerebral palsy. She cared for him, with limited help, in her home from his birth until she passed away at the age of 92.

Each year the award is presented to a person from the Pigeon Lake area who has given of themselves for many years to care for another. In addition to the award, the recipients are honoured at an event held for them and 50 of their guests. Their contributions are celebrated by the Pigeon Lake Child



Florence Riske with her son Melvin.

and Family society, as well as representatives from all levels of government. This year the Florence Riske Caregiver Award went to Harold Patterson of the village of Grandview. Harold cares for his wife who has Multiple Sclerosis.

The ACGA applauds the Pigeon Lake Society for recognizing and valuing the caregivers in their community. It is initiatives like the Florence Riske Caregiver Award that help raise awareness of the importance of caregivers in all of our communities.

Information provided by Gilaine Porter, Chairman of the Pigeon Lake Child and Family Society.

Recipients of the
Florence Riske Caregiver Award:

2007: Florence Riske

2008: Roy Thibodeau

2009: Tim Belec

2010: The Noac Family

2011: Harold Patterson

On the Web

Here are a few resources you can find online to assist you on your caregiving journey. We want to provide you with tools to improve your life as a caregiver! See below for more information:

The Family Caregivers' Network Video Series—Suggested by Anna

This series is designed for the busy, and stressed or overwhelmed family caregiver. Each video is only 1-3 minutes long, making it easier for you to view them when you only have a bit of time. These videos educational and inspiring.

The series can be found on YouTube by searching "Family Caregiver's Network Video Series".

Created by Family Caregivers' Network president Rick Hoogendoorn.

Lotsa Helping Hands—Suggested by Holly

Lotsa Helping Hands helps caregivers by giving their "circles of community" a way to help. Friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues can create a free Community web site to help manage the daily tasks that become a challenge during times of need and keep everyone up to date on what's happening.

You can find out more at www.lotsahelpinghands.com.

Check Us Out Online!

We are spreading the word about the caregiving experience! Become involved in the movement by talking to us on Facebook and Twitter.

When you 'like' or comment on our status updates, your friends find out about us too... and then their friends... and in keeping with the holiday spirit, the snowball effect is created!

We post caregiver quotes, research, self-care tips and organization updates.



**Facebook.com/
AlbertaCaregivers**



**Twitter.com/
ABcaregivers**

Meet Our Team



Rachelle Gietz • Caregiver Advisor

I have experienced a wonderful career working, serving and leading in mostly the non-profit sector. My life has been enriched, as I walk “along-side” those who struggle at times in their lives. I have four children and experienced raising a child with severe hearing loss. My husband and I became motivated and passionate towards fairness, inclusion, and equality for those with a disability. We also recognized that we needed a community of friends to support us in our caregiving. During visits to our acreage, you might find “Grammy” and the grandkids making cookies, building blanket forts, tobogganing, planting the garden, playing Scrabble, making crafts, or dancing to the music of loud drums.



Patti Tomas Lowe • Office Manager

After taking a nine year absence from the corporate world, I have joined the Alberta Caregivers Association. As a caregiver for my now teenage son, I value what ACGA has to offer and cannot believe my good fortune in finding an organization that “gets it”. I have volunteered extensively with the Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada in various local and national roles and have a passion for supporting families who are in crisis. I also work with individuals with special needs and their families providing home and community based intervention and advocacy services. In my spare time you can find me reading a good book, listening to music, or spending time outdoors.

Leah Eliuk • Community Engagement Coordinator



My experience as a caregiver began in high school and continues today as I have helped care for my grandparents. The support that has been shared by my parents, siblings, aunts and uncles brings to life the importance of an organization like the Alberta Caregivers Association and what it offers. As a Ukrainian dancer for the last 20 years, I have had amazing opportunities to travel the world. Some of the places I have recently visited are China, Peru, Bulgaria, Greece and London. I am passionate about experiencing cultures in the form of food, dancing, music and art. My motto: Life is short, eat dessert first!

Mark Your Calendars!

COMPASS workshops are offered **province-wide** by our partner organizations. If you looking for a workshop nearby and don't see one posted below, call our office and we will help you find a workshop in your community.

ACGA COMPASS

Location: Fulton Place School 10310-56 Street, Edmonton

Dates: Wednesdays, Jan 18 – Mar 7

Time: 1 PM – 3 PM

Strathcona Place Seniors Centre COMPASS

Location: Strathcona Place Seniors Centre, 10831 University Ave

Dates: Wednesdays, Jan 18 – Mar 7

Time: 1 PM to 3 PM

SEESA COMPASS

Location: SEESA offices
9350 - 82 Street Edmonton, (turn west off 75 street on 94 Avenue)

Dates: Thursdays, Jan 19 – Mar 8

Time: 1 PM – 3 PM

Strathcona County Family Community Services COMPASS

Location: 200, 501 Festival Ave, (2nd flr), Sherwood Park

Dates: Wednesdays, Jan 18 – Mar 7

Time: 10 AM – 12 PM

Devonshire Village COMPASS

Location: Devonshire Village Common Room, 1728 Rabbit Hill Road

Dates: Mondays, Feb 18 – Apr 3

Time: 1 PM – 3 PM

Contact the ACGA for more information at 780-453-5088 to register or set up a COMPASS for the Caregiver workshop in your community.

Submissions

We want to hear your caregiving story, words of wisdom, or caregiving tip.

Email your submission to Leah at leliuk@albertcaregivers.org

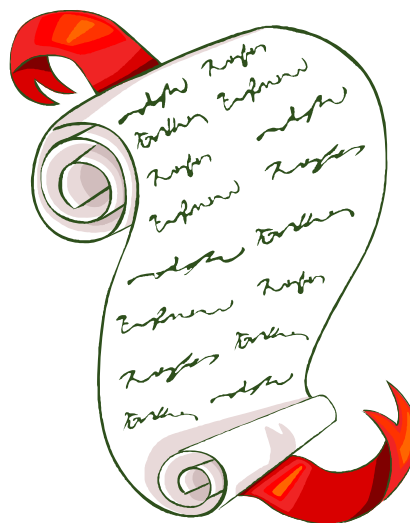
or mail to:

ATTN: Leah Eliuk

Alberta Caregivers Association

10310-56 Street

Edmonton, AB, T6A 2J2



Make the Most of Your Gifts

Your gift could be **larger** than you think!

Support the Alberta Caregivers Association this holiday season. Each dollar you donate will be matched by the provincial government's Community Spirit Program. That means that for every \$1 you donate, the ACGA will receive \$2 to help us deliver valuable programs and put caregiving in the spotlight. **There's more.** Did you know that Alberta has one of the highest charitable tax credits in Canada? For every dollar you donate over \$200 in 2011, you can receive a non-refundable tax credit of 50%. This can reduce your taxable income meaning more money in your pocket while you support caregivers.



Take advantage of these programs to **make the most** of your gifts this year!

Remember, every penny counts.



| Donation Information | | | | | |
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| Full Name: | | | | | |
| Mailing Address (including postal code): | | | | | |
| Email Address: | Phone Number: | | | | |
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| Total Amount \$ | | | | | |
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Awesome Things

These awesome things are a small collection from Neil Pasricha's Top 1000 Awesome Things Blog. He started his blog in 2008 and has gone on to write "The Book of Awesome". To see a complete list, visit 1000awesomethings.com.

#97 When someone takes care of you when you're sick

#353 Seeing Christmas trees through the window

#116 Getting the piece of chocolate you wanted from the assorted box

#403 Seeing a really happy dog out for a walk

#158 When a human answers the phone

#478 Hearing a song that reminds you of someone you love

#231 Drying off in the sun after swimming

#565 Moving forward and moving on

Thank You

Thank you for supporting the Alberta Caregivers Association. Your donation will help the ACGA expand our programs and services to reach all of Alberta's caregivers.

Phone: 780-453-5088 or toll-free 1-877-453-5088

Email: office@albertacaregivers.org

Website: www.albertacaregivers.org



**Alberta
Caregivers
Association**

Caring for Caregivers