

Volunteer Views



Issue 25 / October 2026



Our Values:

- ♥ Respect
- ♥ Compassion
- ♥ Commitment
- ♥ Ethics
- ♥ Service

We encourage all of our current volunteers to refer a friend or family member who might be interested in experiencing the rewards of volunteering. Please feel free to invite interested individuals to contact the:

**Volunteer Coordinator
(Long Term Care):**

Kate Merkowsky

Email:

kmerkowsky@intercarecorpgroup.com

Telephone:

403-255-4969 ext. 116

-OR-

Life Enrichment Coordinator

(Hospice):

Jennifer DeLeon

Email:

JDeLeon@intercarecorpgroup.com

Telephone:

403-252-1194 ext. 2190

-OR-

Apply directly online at:

<https://intercarealberta.com/volunteering/>

MESSAGE FROM THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

KATE MERKOWSKY

We kindly ask you to **save the date below** to allow us to recognize you and to show our gratitude and appreciate to all of our volunteers with a dinner and evening of comradery in their honor!

Volunteer Celebration Event

Friday October 23, 2026

5:00PM

McDougall United Church - Banquet Hall

8516 Athabasca Street S.E. Calgary, AB

RSVP (to Kate or Jennifer) by October 2, 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE LIFE ENRICHMENT COORDINATOR

JENNIFER DELEON

Hospice

Occasionally a volunteer will come and ask me how it is that we as staff know how to care for a patient when they cannot speak for themselves?

The first document is a Personal Directive. This legal document allows you to choose an 'Agent' (proxy) who will make decisions for you that include healthcare, living arrangements, who visits you and other matters of daily living. Your Personal Directive allows physicians and other medical personnel/care staff to share information with your Agent and plan to meet your care needs.

The next document is an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA). This legal document allows the 'Attorney' (proxy) you have named in your EPOA to ensure that your finances are taken care of. This would include paying your bills, looking after property, banking, investments and any other financial matters.

For both of these documents it is important that you chose individuals who you trust; who understand your values and wishes; who will act in your best interest when you are most vulnerable.

An EPOA can be 'enacted' at the moment it is signed or at a future date. A Personal Directive can only be 'enacted' at a future date under the supervision of a physician(s).

A common misconception is that Personal Directives and EPOAs remain legally valid after a person passes away - but they do not. Personal Directives and EPOAs end immediately and automatically at the moment the person who made them passes away. Upon death, responsibility shifts to the 'Personal Representative' (also referred to as the 'Executor') who is named in the deceased person's Last Will and Testament.

The final document is a Last Will and Testament (Will). Your estate includes all of the property and debts that exist at the time of death (for example: real estate, bank accounts, investments, jewelry, automobiles and pets). A Will gives your Executor clear directions for settling your debts and distributing the estate so that your wishes can be carried out easily and the burden of such decisions is lessened for your family.

It is important to consult a lawyer to discuss your estate plan and ensure you have the appropriate documents (i.e. Personal Directives, EPOAs and Wills) in place to protect yourself and your family and to plan for the future. For more information contact a law firm directly or visit websites such as: <https://www.alberta.ca/wills-in-alberta>.

Dementia is an umbrella term for a loss of memory and thinking skills severe enough to change daily life.

Common Types of Dementia

Alzheimer's Disease:

- Accounts for 60% to 80% of cases.
- Caused by abnormal protein buildups called 'Amyloid Plaques' and 'Tau Tangles'.
- Starts with trouble remembering recent events or new information.

Vascular Dementia:

- The second most common type of dementia.
- Caused by strokes or damaged blood vessels that block blood flow to the brain.
- Affects planning, focus and judgment more than early memory.

Lewy Body Dementia:

- Involves abnormal protein deposits called 'Lewy Bodies' inside brain cells.
- Causes visual hallucinations, sleep disruptions and rigid body movements like in Parkinson's Disease.

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD):

- Tends to start at a younger age, often between 45 and 64 years of age.
- Damages the front and side areas of the brain.
- Changes in personality, behavior or language use seen first.

Mixed Dementia:

- Happens when a person has more than one type of dementia, such as both Alzheimer's and Vascular Dementia.

People with dementia need to be active and do things they enjoy, however activities they used to enjoy may become challenging for them as the disease worsens. For example, they may have trouble deciding what to do or starting tasks.

Here are some ways to make activities easier and more enjoyable:

- Match the activity with what the person with dementia can do by choosing activities that can be fun for everyone.
- Help the person get started with the activity.
- Decide if the person can do the activity alone or needs help; watch to see if the person gets frustrated.
- Make sure the person feels successful and is having fun.
- Let the person simply watch if they seem to enjoy that more.

To help keep days interesting and engaging, try coming up with different activities to do each visit.

Some daily activities people with dementia may enjoy are exercising such as taking a walk together or playing and listening to music.

Visitors are important to people with dementia. The person may not always remember who the visitor is, but they often enjoy the company. Remember that dementia affects behavior and personality, not just memory. However, people with dementia still need social engagement, purpose in life and a sense of belonging. Feelings matter most!!