

Alzheimer Society Reaches Out to the Chinese Community

Another in the SMART Fund Series

Thanks to support from VCH's SMART Fund*, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is able to operate a Chinese Resource Centre offering support groups, educational sessions, individual support, and written materials for Cantonese and Mandarin speaking families.

the early and middle stages of dementia that are co-ordinated through the Alzheimer Society Chinese Resource Centre.

"Going out to the Chinese community has made it easier for families to reach out and ask for help," notes Lam,

Fund to support the many services and programs they provide to British Columbians. They do not receive ongoing government funding. For more information, visit their Web site at www.alzheimerbc.org or call 604-681-6530.



Earlier this year, **Vivian Lam** was honoured with the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for her work as the Support and Education Co-ordinator for the Alzheimer Society Chinese Resource Centre. The honourable Colin Hanson, Minister of Health Services presented her with the award. Lam was nominated by one of the many family members she has helped to support. The Golden Jubilee Medal, created to mark the Queen's 50th anniversary as Queen of Canada, is awarded to people who have made significant contributions to their fellow citizens, their community, or to Canada.

* VCH's SMART Fund supports cost-effective, innovative strategies for promoting and improving population health. The projects typically improve health determinants and build community capacities, skills and assets so communities can better identify and manage their own health needs.

Before the Alzheimer Society Chinese Resource Centre opened, there was an information gap for Asians affected by the disease. "Very few people knew about Alzheimer's disease or dementia, and they didn't know there was help available," says Vivian Lam, the Support and Education Co-ordinator.

The Alzheimer Society Chinese Resource Centre has been a welcome addition to the Chinese community. "People are grateful for the help we provide during their critical and stressful situation," says Lam. "We do make a big difference in their life through our support groups. People with the disease can share experiences, and caregivers are less stressed because they learn how to cope with a person with dementia."

There are four caregiver support groups that follow a self-help model, and four support groups for those in

"traditionally people would keep the issue within the family, which only created more stress."

In 2002/2003, 13 educational sessions were offered to the Chinese community through the Alzheimer Society Chinese Resource Centre. An average of 50 people attended each session. The Alzheimer Society was also represented at various Chinese community health fairs and functions, including a Chinese variety show and a public forum held in co-operation with other community groups that attracted more than 350 people.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. exists to alleviate the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, to promote public awareness and to search for the causes and the cures. The Alzheimer Society of B.C. relies on the generosity of individuals, the community at large, and the SMART

Our apologies: In the July issue of *Current*, we quoted the President of the BC Government & Service Employees' Union in the Making safety our priority article. In the article we quote Greg Heyman. It should actually be **George Heyman** – our apologies to Mr. Heyman.

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is published monthly by Communications and Public Affairs. If you have story ideas or feedback, please e-mail current@vch.ca or call 604-708-5281.

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