



THE ALS SOCIETY OF BC

Supporting Care. Funding Research. Spreading Awareness.

MORE HELP MORE HOPE

Terry Tocher...my Life before ALS and Now

Before I was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), I was a Heavy Equipment Operator running front end loaders and dump trucks – all to do with the gravel business. I worked for Mainland Sand & Gravel up on Sumas Mountain for 18 years or so. It was a great company to work for, and good people to work with. My family has said I was a “work-a-holic”. We did have recreation time as well. We camped at Cultus Lake as a seasonal for 15 years, fun family camping with great friends every weekend.

We traveled in our motor home and got really involved in the Sprint Car Races along with our closest friends. This took us to the U.S. many a weekend to watch these little cars race around a track. We are still doing it but as I can't get into the motor home anymore. Motels have taken the place of this.

I am a husband, Dad, Stepdad, Grandpa and Great Grandpa. My Mom is still with us at the age of 93 and I have sisters & brothers. Patty and I have lived in the Pitt Meadows/Abbotsford area and now Chilliwack, for almost 10 years. We have good friends and neighbors at our manufactured home park. When ALS hit me it was a total SURPRISE, who would have thought “ALS” at this age!! My back had hurt for some years but when I got drop foot in 2006, the testing started. Doctors, specialists, and our GP were no more surprised than us when in May 2008 I was diagnosed with ALS.

I was still working at the time. After a few months I just couldn't get my legs to work getting into my machines so I had to retire. That was a very sad day as it wasn't to happen for another one to three, maybe five years. Patty was OK with that decision but apprehensive about having me home ALL day. We were dealing with a much bigger situation now, not just retirement.

After the tears were over, my family has been very supportive; as have my friends, once the shock wore off.

I wish the community was more aware of ALS and that there was more help available for those stricken with ALS in the Fraser Valley area.

The doctors, the ALS Centre Team at GF Strong and the ALS Society of B.C. are great. They are always there when you need help, or just to talk. We still need more people to get involved.

There was an event on Vancouver Island this past September that I was happy to participate in: “ON a ROLL for ALS”. We met so many wonderful people, ALS patients and TEAM ALSBC Volunteers. I managed to raise more than \$4,800 for ALS with the help of family, past fellow workers, the Company, friends and neighbours. It was fantastic!

I was able to do two events that weekend. I wish it could have been more but I got too tired, even in the power wheelchair. There was great support all up the Island.

I hope one day we can get something going in the Fraser Valley. I know lots of people out there who would like to be able to partake in something like this closer to home.

It gives purpose to our lives, and maybe one day the funds will find a “cure” or an effective “treatment” for this terrible disease. I want people to know that ALS patients are great people even when we find it difficult to eat, or breath, or move parts of our body. We need everyone to realize we didn't want this disease, it just happened and we need to find out WHY?

So, please do not to shy away from us if you don't understand. Read up about it or ask. That's what I had to do. When you see people in a power wheelchair say hello it will make your day as well as ours. We need YOUR support please.



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What is ALS?

ALS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, is a neurodegenerative disorder that affects the person's motor neurons that carry messages to the muscle resulting in weakness and wasting in arms, legs, mouth, throat and elsewhere; typically the person is immobilized or deceased within two to five years of the initial diagnosis.

ALS demands urgent attention. It's devastation is wreaked on the person diagnosed with ALS, the family, the

caregivers and the health care system. When ALS hits a family, the focus turns to provision of care, equipment, and emotional support to the person who will die in horrific circumstances. In the later stages of the disease the person with ALS often cannot speak, swallow or move anything but his/her eyes; however, the mind remains alert.

The ALS Society of BC has helped thousands of patients and their families, by providing direct services including equipment loans, information and support.

Your help provides hope. Please donate.

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