

Annual Report

2024 - 2025



ELDERCARE
FOUNDATION

A message from our Executive Director

This past year at Eldercare Foundation has been one of listening, learning, and building stronger connections across our community. As Vancouver Island's population ages, the needs of seniors and their families are becoming more complex and diverse.

As the most recent report from the Office of the Seniors Advocate, BC, states: "there are a patchwork of programs and services [for BC seniors] which are fragmented, uncoordinated and inadequate, especially in rural and smaller communities." This reality underscores why our listening and learning approach has been so important. By engaging across Island Health, community organizations, seniors, their caregivers, and donors, we are better able to identify gaps and ensure that philanthropy is directed where it can make the greatest impact.

The centrepiece of this work over the past year has been the development of our new [Strategic Plan](#), which will guide Eldercare's growth over the next three years. It reaffirms our commitment to helping seniors age in place, to enhancing long-term care, and to supporting research and education aimed at improving the care available to seniors everywhere.

Our collaborative approach has already begun to bear fruit.

Working in partnership with Island Health, Eldercare is piloting a program to help low-income, home-bound seniors access footcare support. We hope to expand this program Island wide within a year, helping more Island seniors to avoid falls and preserve mobility and independence so they can continue to live safely at home.

In long-term care, Eldercare has forged new partnerships with care homes across Vancouver Island, improving equity in public care, and enabling Island Health to launch region-wide pilot programs that trial innovative technologies to enhance quality of life for residents.

We have also expanded our commitment to research, recognizing that new solutions are essential to meeting the challenges of an aging population. A key example is the *Distinguished Scholar in Seniors Care*, a five-year research program dedicated to making meaningful changes in how we care for our seniors in collaboration with UBC, the Conconi Family Foundation, Providence Living, Island Health and other allied health foundations.

Thanks to your support as an Eldercare donor, we are shaping initiatives that bring comfort, dignity, and hope to seniors, while laying the groundwork for a stronger and more compassionate system of care in the years ahead.

With gratitude,



Tom Arnold
Executive Director



A warm welcome to our new Board President

Mary Ellen Purkis PhD, a dedicated 25-year Eldercare volunteer, became the Foundation's Board President this year. She has previously held this role and has long served as the Chair of the Awards Committee.

Mary Ellen is a highly respected researcher who has made many academic contributions to the field of elder care, with a focus on seniors living in community. She trained in nursing in the 1980s, taught at the University of Victoria's School of Nursing for 11 years and served as Dean of what is now the Faculty of Health for 10 years.

Mary Ellen's deep professional and research interests – combined with her own personal experience of caring for aging parents – is what motivates her to contribute to Eldercare as a volunteer and a monthly donor.

"I have a strong desire to help to make the world of senior care better," says Mary Ellen. "I appreciate that Eldercare invests in research to help improve seniors' care. Supporting the foundation is my way of helping to find solutions to the challenges that lie ahead."

Earlier this year, the Board of Directors engaged in a strategic planning process. "I am excited about the possibilities," she says. "Our staff complement is strong, and our board is aligned and clear about our vision and goals."

"Eldercare is just a wonderful place to be, and I feel very proud to contribute."

At right: Mary Ellen with her dad, Jack, and pup, Casper



Board of Directors

Our volunteer Board of Directors brings expertise in healthcare, business, and community leadership to help guide Eldercare's mission.

Mary Ellen Purkis
President, Secretary

Annette Pardais
Treasurer

Jeanette Funke-Furber
Past President

Phaethon Blackburn
Director

Kirsten McGhee
Director

Dr. Mike Miles
Director

Tyrone Sinclair
Director



Our Impact: 2024-2025



Thank you for supporting Eldercare Foundation

Since 1982, Eldercare has relied on community philanthropy to enhance care and quality of life for local seniors in need. Initially we supported seniors in Greater Victoria. As of January 2025, we are officially Eldercare Foundation of Vancouver Island and poised to address the critical needs of even more seniors. **Our mission: to raise and steward donor funds to enhance quality of life for seniors in long-term care, support aging in place, and advance research and education to accelerate care improvements for today's seniors and those of tomorrow.**



\$105,910

Donations allocated to help seniors
age in place



\$355,201

Donations used to **enhance long-term care for Island seniors**



\$256,965

Donations invested in
research and education



Our Focus: Supporting Aging in Place

Through funding programs and technologies that support independence, social connection, and early intervention, Eldercare aims to enhance quality of life for aging Islanders, to reduce avoidable decline, and to see more seniors living safely and meaningfully in their homes and communities for longer.

What drives us:

- 93% of BC seniors hope to live independently at home as long as possible.
- Many will fall short of their goal due to safety, health, or financial concerns.
- Gaps in community care programs can burden family caregivers, too.

79



Number of robotic companion pets distributed to isolated seniors in community through partnerships with Oak Bay Volunteer Services and Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society.

375



Number of client visits per week at Adult Day Programs at Elk Lake, Westshore, the Summit, and the Mobile Program, all supported by Eldercare.

Supporting seniors and their caregivers

For decades, Eldercare has supported the West Shore Adult Day Program (ADP). It provides vital social connection for seniors in the community and an opportunity for their caregivers to rest and recharge.

Pictured at right are Pauline and George, who has dementia and been attending the West Shore ADP twice a week for two and half years.

“George gets picked up in a [Eldercare-funded] bus and enjoys lunch and activities at the program,” says his wife and caregiver, Pauline.

“He's quite happy to attend and it gives me a break – a few hours to do my own thing and visit with friends. I enjoy that time for *me*.”



“Thank you so much to Eldercare donors because without them it wouldn't be possible.”

A priority for Eldercare and our community: **Helping more Vancouver Islanders to age safely in place**

A new portable wound VAC (vacuum-assisted closure) funded by Eldercare will make it easier for Saanich residents to transition home from hospital.

Saanich Community Health client, Debra Morin, was the very first recipient of the Eldercare-funded wound VAC. After several weeks in hospital recovering from an infection, the wound VAC allowed her to return home sooner.



"It has a shoulder strap and carrying bag, so I'm not tied to a bed or a machine. I can putter around or go for a walk, it's fantastic." Wound VAC therapy offers several benefits for wound healing, including reduced swelling, inflammation, and infection risk, as well as improved blood flow and tissue regeneration. It can also decrease the frequency of dressing changes and may shorten hospital stays.

"I'm very grateful to Eldercare for donating the wound VAC. It's been a lifesaver," says Debra.

Coming soon: **SAFE Footcare Program for home-bound, low-income seniors**

Every year, 1 in 3 seniors aged 65+ are likely to fall at least once. For many, these falls can have serious consequences: fractured hips, hospitalizations, and loss of independence.



Your donations help us tackle this critical issue through the SAFE Lifeline Program, which provides home medical alarm systems to low-income seniors living independently with a high risk of falls or hospitalization.

Our new SAFE Footcare Program will support even more Island seniors. It will offer foot care from specialized nurses for home-bound, low-income seniors.

Having your feet in optimal health can prevent falls and preserve mobility and independence, it's foundational to healthy aging.



Our Focus: Enhancing Long-Term Care

We invest in therapeutic and enrichment programs, new technologies that improve comfort and mobility, and workforce well-being. We aim to broaden our partnerships with care facilities across Vancouver Island and champion approaches that transform—not just maintain—long-term care so that seniors in care live with dignity, purpose, joy, and meaningful connection—every day.

What drives us:

- Long-term care costs 80% of a senior's after-tax income.
- Many pensioners don't have enough leftover to cover personal care costs.
- Many residents suffer from social isolation, a lack of personalized care, and feelings of anxiety, loneliness, and depression.



1,079

Number of long-term care residents supported by Eldercare on Vancouver Island, an increase of 20% over last year.

Life-like dolls deliver cuddles and sense of calm



"It is great to see how Deb finds comfort in cuddling her baby. You can see how anxiety melts off her face. The doll is a great conversation starter, too. It's a wonderful point of connection for staff."

– Denese Alexander, a recreation therapist at Glengarry care home about Deb, a resident with dementia.

For several years, Eldercare has invested in dementia technologies that have positively impacted seniors' quality of life in community and in long-term care. Examples include the OMI motion-activated projection systems to provide engaging and stimulating activities and robotic companion pets, to offer comfort and calm for hundreds of Vancouver Island seniors.

This past year we began trialing therapy dolls in several long-term care homes. They are often used in the middle to late stages of dementia to help individuals feel calmer and more connected, potentially reducing negative behaviors and improving their overall quality of life. They are a non-pharmacological approach, shown to reduce agitation and provide comfort for people with dementia. *Thank you for helping us provide meaning and comfort for those living with dementia.*

Your generosity improves life in long-term care

“When I’m on the bike I don’t feel any pain”

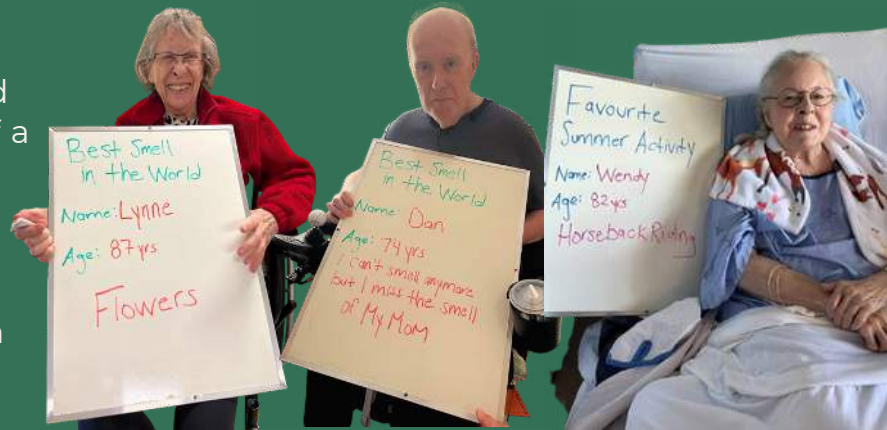
Eldercare purchased eight adaptive bikes for local long-term care facilities in 2024-25.

The Med Up bike is designed for people with physical limitations and mobility issues, including wheelchair users. People like Rob Eddy, a wheelchair-bound resident at the Priory care home, pictured at right.

“I’ve liked riding bikes since I was a kid with a paper route growing up in Sooke,” says Rob. He pedals the Med Up bike several times a week for 30 minutes per session, which offers him enjoyment and relief. “I can’t walk but I really like riding the bike. When I’m on the bike I don’t feel any pain.”



“**This is Me**” is a project that aims to foster relationships between staff and the residents they care for. It’s part of a person-centred, relational model of care that helps build trust, promote wellbeing, and deepen social connections. Kudos to the long-term care team for launching this program with support from Eldercare.



Spreading holiday joy in long-term care homes

Thanks to everyone who helped make Christmas merry for 230 local long-term care residents who no longer have family to celebrate with.

Residents across five local long-term care facilities received heartfelt gifts through **Stocking Stuffers for Seniors**, a program facilitated by wonderful community partners, London Drugs.

Harry (at left) is a resident at Gorge Road care home and a huge Canucks fan. He gave a big thumbs up upon receiving a new ballcap in his stocking. Thanks to your generosity, so many thoughtful gifts were shared with hundreds of deserving seniors like Harry.



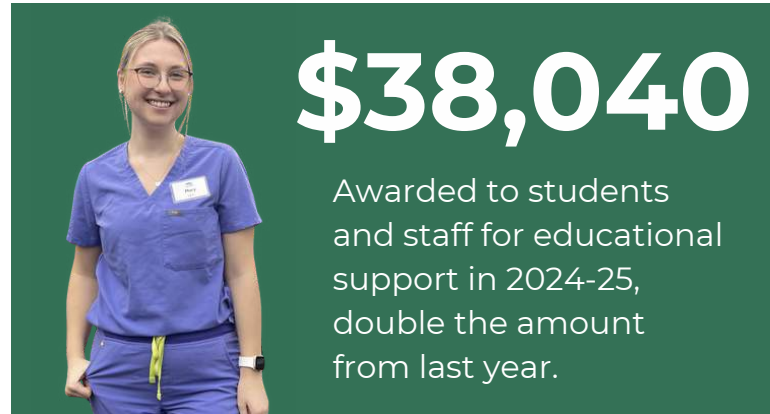


Our Focus: Advancing Research and Education

Since Eldercare was founded in 1982 the foundation has supported continuous improvement of care for seniors through investments in research and education. We engage in practice-based research, partnerships with post-secondary institutions, and education that improves care for today and tomorrow.

What drives us:

- As Canadians live longer, chronic illness rates are rising.
- Life expectancy was 65 years when most current care residents were born.
- Research and education improves health outcomes and quality of life for seniors.



You are far more powerful than you realize Lessons learned from Ruth A. Gardner

More than 40 years since her death, Ruth A. Gardner has impacted tens of thousands of lives and meaningfully advanced an entire medical discipline – all with nothing more than the stroke of a pen.

The local Victorian was a psychologist and social worker who dedicated her life to helping people. To continue helping people after she was gone, Ruth chose to create a remainder gift in her will to Eldercare. This resulted in a donation of \$53,215 when she died in 1983 – funds that Eldercare promptly invested, using the interest to support research projects aimed at improving care for seniors and those living with chronic illnesses.

Now more than \$150,000 in research grants to dozens of projects later, Ruth's legacy includes: helping doctors and nurses to better understand dementia; supporting seniors, and their families, through difficult transitions into long-term care; leading the development of therapy programs that restore joy and dignity to seniors.

Her legacy continues to grow. **Each year, the Ruth A. Gardner Research Award Fund now provides \$10,000 to a researcher at UVic's Institute for Aging and Lifelong Health**, to ensure care continues to evolve with the changing needs of Island seniors.

Ruth wasn't rich, but a few lines in her will has made an impact across generations of Island families. Maybe you could be that powerful too.



“Thank you to Eldercare donors. I’m truly grateful for your support. Receiving the Peg Bridges Award has validated my commitment to both learning and leadership in long-term care.”



The Peg Bridges Award is one of 11 awards and educational bursaries available through Eldercare for students and healthcare professionals working in the field of seniors care. Last year’s Peg Bridges Award recipient is Ally Fagan. Dedicated to seniors living in rural and remote areas, Ally is a Clinical Nurse Educator based in Westhaven long-term care in Port Alberni who is currently pursuing a Master of Nursing degree with a double major in education and leadership.

“Receiving the award has been an incredible honour and provided meaningful support in my educational journey. As a part-time Clinical Nurse Educator balancing work, graduate studies, and home life, receiving this award has helped relieve the financial pressure that often comes with pursuing higher education, and more importantly, it means I don’t have to take on extra shifts! It allows me to stay focused on my studies and continue to contribute meaningfully for residents and care teams.”

Learn more: eldercarefoundation.org/education-and-research

Eldercare invests in critical research to improve seniors care



Dr. Amy Salmon was appointed the **Distinguished Scholar in Seniors Care** in November 2024

Last year, Eldercare pledged \$1 million to support The Views in Comox, a project that represents a new model for long-term care based on the concepts of a dementia village, that has the potential to change seniors care across BC.

This year, we jointly supported critical research embedded at The Views through the inaugural **Distinguished Scholar in Seniors Care**. Supported by UBC’s Centre for Advancing Health Outcomes, the Conconi Family Foundation, Providence Living, Island Health, Eldercare and other allied health foundations, the five-year research study will play a key role in providing the tools and knowledge to implement meaningful change across both care homes and community, in BC and beyond.

\$16,700

Eldercare's contribution to the inaugural Distinguished Scholar in Seniors Care

Treasurer's report

Thanks to the remarkable generosity of our donors—including the bequest announced two years ago—Eldercare Foundation is in its strongest historical financial position to support local seniors. Eldercare recorded \$2.8 million in donations and investment income and as a result unrestricted assets grew to \$38,162,950.

This financial strength enabled us to significantly increase program spending to support seniors in need—well above our historical averages, though slightly below budgeted expenses. This variance, primarily due to delays in certain equipment purchases, caused some expenses to be shifted into the current fiscal year.

We remain deeply committed to responsible financial stewardship while having greater capacity to fund new initiatives. We continue to carefully evaluate all proposed projects to ensure they align with our mission and the expectations of our donors.

Key expenditures this year totaled \$639,897 in grants to Island Health and other community initiatives. The largest single grant was \$200,000, representing the second installment of our five-year pledge to the new care home in Comox which was inspired by the dementia village concept.

Looking ahead, and guided by our recently completed three-year strategic plan, we anticipate a significant increase in program spending. This plan is already shaping the direction of Eldercare and our key partnerships. It is paving the way for exciting new joint initiatives that will allow us to expand our impact and reach even more seniors in need.

In closing, your continued support has positioned Eldercare to make a lasting difference—helping more seniors than ever age with dignity.

Sincerely,

Annette Pardais
Treasurer, Eldercare Foundation

Restore connection, change a life today.

Seniors on Vancouver Island are facing unprecedented isolation. Your gift to Eldercare brings comfort, dignity, and companionship through innovations like robotic pets, therapy dolls, art, music, and horticulture therapy, culturally relevant food programs, and more.

eldercarefoundation.org/donate



18%

increase in the
number of
donors over
the past 3
years

Get involved

To all those who are part of our charitable community, we extend our sincere gratitude.

If you believe that ***every senior deserves a chance to age with dignity***, please consider supporting Eldercare. There are many ways to get involved: make a donation, host a fundraiser, subscribe to our monthly eNews, or follow us on social and help us spread the word.

Please join us. Together, we can improve quality of life for seniors across Vancouver Island.

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