

Dignity Care Connection Learning

2025-2026 Annual Report



ELDERCARE
FOUNDATION



Message from the Executive Director

2025-2026 has been another banner year for Eldercare Foundation. Our growth across the Island, creating new initiatives, sharing innovative technologies, and a stable financial position have all contributed to our steady expansion.

In this time of growth, I'm particularly optimistic about the ways we are fostering comfort and connection for seniors. At our core, Eldercare Foundation is about improving quality of life and ensuring dignity, care, and connection for older adults. Thanks to your support as an Eldercare donor, we've been able to lean into our mission further. This has come in so many forms: through interventions that meet long-term care residents where they are at; through therapeutic tools that build connections between residents, staff and families; and technologies that allow for independence and a sense of dignity.

Exploring innovation and new technologies has been a key piece for us this past year. One example of a tool that brings a sense of connection is CRDL, a beautifully designed therapeutic instrument that creates music and sound through simple touch. Working with long-term care homes, we initiated a pilot project that brought CRDLs to six locations. For residents with limited speech, the CRDL brings families and friends together to create something beautiful.

Another transformational tool, the OBI Robotic Arm, has been incredible to witness. Designed to allow for independent feeding for those with limited hand and arm mobility, the robotic arm goes beyond being a simple tool for feeding; it's a way to bring dignity to older adults and allow users to enjoy a simple pleasure on their own terms. This tool is a great example of the ways Eldercare goes beyond medical support, providing independence and making a real difference in the quality of day-to-day life of seniors.



Tom Arnold
Executive Director

Through exploring tools and technologies that enhance the lives of seniors, Eldercare is cementing our role as a respected partner to frontline care staff and organizations focused on the wellbeing of older adults. Thanks to our continued engagement with community organizations, seniors, caregivers, and donors, we are uniquely situated to identify gaps and ensure that philanthropy is directed to the tools, technologies and resources that can make the greatest impact.

On behalf of everyone at Eldercare Foundation, I want to offer my sincerest gratitude to our growing community of donors. The results we are achieving and the lives that are touched would not be possible without your support. Thank you.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to recognize Jeanette Funke-Furber as she steps down from her long-standing role with Eldercare Foundation. From her direct work in care with the Juan de Fuca Hospitals to her later governance and philanthropic leadership on the Eldercare Foundation board, Jeanette's impact on our organization and in the field of senior care cannot be overstated. Her profound commitment to research and education has been a deep influence on our organization, helping to form the bedrock of our work. We are incredibly grateful for her many contributions to Eldercare.

With gratitude,

Tom Arnold
Executive Director

“ Since my early days with Eldercare in the 1980's, the foundation invested in research and education. My husband Robert and I created the Funke-Furber Gerontological Research Award for graduate students at the University of Victoria's Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health in part to safeguard the foundation's research initiatives. I give to other important causes, but seniors' care has always been my number one. ”

Jeanette Funke-Furber
Past President



Message from the Board President

I've been a volunteer with Eldercare Foundation for over 25 years, and after a full year in my current tenure as Board President, I can say with great assurance that Eldercare has never been in a better position, financially and strategically.

With new initiatives and continuing projects, Eldercare Foundation has continued measured growth that has not strayed from our overarching 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.

In 2024, Eldercare officially expanded, and recognized our new mandate with a name change to Eldercare Foundation of Vancouver Island. This past year has really shown the opportunities to extend our reach and touch more lives. Our Comfort Cart initiative is a great example of this, with Eldercare providing needed items in 13 acute care centres across Vancouver Island and Salt Spring Island. Beyond this, we've supported initiatives ranging from innovative long-term care in Comox, to a new bus for outings on Cormorant Island. The breadth of different types of support continues to impress me, and it is a great source of pride to see Eldercare find ways to help more older adults.

I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Board of Directors for their wise counsel and for helping to steer the foundation, as well as to Tom Arnold and the operations team for their impressive dedication, all in the name of bringing dignity to seniors, wherever they call home.

With thanks,

Mary Ellen Purkis
Board President



Mary Ellen Purkis
Board President

Vancouver Island Expansion



-  **Comfort Cart**
-  **New Bus for Outings**
-  **Skin Wellness Training**
-  **Mobile Adult Day Programs**
-  **Long-Term Care Enhancements**

2025/2026 At a Glance



total donations
\$1,133,797



Increase in donations
over last year
93%



donors
452

funding allocated to...



long-term care
\$1,499,838



aging in place
\$350,028



research & education
\$324,513

working with...



total equipment
purchases
\$937,712



total on adult day
program support
\$10,662



12+
different
organization partners



one bus to help seniors in long-
term care on Cormorant Island
go on outings
\$250,524



Treasurer's Report

Eldercare Foundation thanks its donors for their dedication to providing support to Vancouver Island seniors. Eldercare experienced exceptional growth in its 2025-26 fiscal year. This is evident by the \$1.13 million in donations received which is almost double the \$0.59 million in the previous year.

These donations, along with the \$1.8 million income earned on its \$37.5 million investment portfolio, enabled Eldercare to provide assistance to more seniors. Eldercare accomplished this through an increase in program spending of \$2.26 million in grants to Island Health and other community initiatives. The program expense

amount includes \$200,000, the third installment of the five-year pledge to the care home in Comox, which was inspired by the dementia village concept.

Eldercare looks forward to your continued support in helping the organization achieve its quest to help more seniors than ever age with dignity.

Annette R. Pardais
Treasurer

Dignity



Resident-In-Need Fund



Each month, broken dentures, empty PolyGrip tubes, and lost glasses—seemingly simple issues for most of us—become major life events for some of Vancouver Island’s most vulnerable residents.

Long-term care costs up to 80% of a senior’s after-tax income, but does not include vital items like clothes, medications, dentures, hearing aids, glasses, outside health visits, personal care items (shampoo, razors, deodorant, etc.), wheelchairs, entertainment, and more. Seniors who have only their pension, Old Age Security, and Guaranteed Income Supplement for income often can’t afford the things they need.

The Resident-in-Need Fund ensures that when small needs arise—like warm clothing, basic toiletries, or replacement dentures—they don’t turn into overwhelming obstacles.

In 2025-2026, our Resident-In-Need Fund supported more than 50 residents across Vancouver Island to help maintain their dignity and care. Our fundraising will continue focus on this area, as we anticipate that by 2029, Eldercare Foundation will see a 300% growth in Resident-in-Need Fund requests.

41%

increase in requests over last year

\$30,218

value of fulfilled Resident-In-Need requests

OBI Robotic Arm

The OBI robotic arm empowers individuals with physical limitations or degenerative diseases to feed themselves again by gently moving food from plate to mouth—restoring not only function, but confidence.

For Audrey, whose arthritis has significantly reduced her hand strength and mobility, the change has been life-altering.

“Before receiving the OBI, I was one of three or four people being fed at a time,” Audrey explains. “The nursing staff are busy, and sometimes I would eat too quickly. Now I’m in control of what, and how fast I eat. I’m enjoying mealtime again!”

This past year, Eldercare Foundation has provided four OBI robotic arms to assist residents at The Summit who are no longer able to feed themselves. Thanks to community donations and innovative technologies, Eldercare Foundation is helping to restore dignity, independence, and quality of life for those in need.



Care



Comfort Carts

Hospital emergency departments can be overwhelming and frightening for seniors, especially those living with dementia, cognitive impairment, or sensory challenges. Bright lights, noise, and long waits often trigger confusion and agitation. This can contribute to delirium, increased risk of falls, and decline that can prevent seniors from returning home.

A new Island-wide initiative from Eldercare Foundation is changing that reality.

This past year, we delivered Comfort Carts to 13 emergency departments across Vancouver Island. The carts are stocked with free items to provide comfort and support to seniors during emergency department visits. Items include soft blankets and neck pillows for physical comfort, pocket talkers for those with hearing loss, and sensory activities that calm and engage.

Eldercare Foundation developed this new program in partnership with Island Health clinicians and seniors' health experts. Comfort Carts have been successfully implemented in several hospitals across Canada, and represent a proven, practical solution that benefits patients, families, and healthcare teams alike.

Research shows that comfort-based interventions can reduce anxiety, prevent agitation, and support recovery. As well, they can help prevent downstream complications such as falls, delirium, prolonged hospital stays, and inappropriate transfers to long-term care. By addressing distress early, Comfort Carts protect what matters most: the ability to age with dignity in one's own community.



“We are working hard to improve the experience for seniors in emergency departments. One of the most impactful components of this is the presence of a Comfort Cart. We are incredibly excited to have them placed in every emergency department across Vancouver Island.”

Dr. Savannah Forrester, emergency physician, Island Health

There are 13 Comfort Carts located in:

- Cormorant Island Health Centre
- Cowichan District Hospital
- Lady Minto / Gulf Islands Hospital
- Nanaimo Regional General Hospital
- North Island Hospital – Campbell River
- North Island Hospital – Comox Valley
- Port Hardy Hospital
- Port McNeill Hospital
- Royal Jubilee Hospital
- Saanich Peninsula Hospital
- Tofino General Hospital
- Victoria General Hospital
- West Coast General Hospital

Most popular support items provided by Eldercare Comfort Carts so far:

947

sleep masks

322

ear plugs

275

activity books

254

colouring books

159

reading glasses

Specialized Assistance for Elders (SAFE)



Eldercare Foundation's SAFE programs help low-income seniors access interventions that can help them to safely age at home, rather than turning to limited long-term care options. Currently operating two streams, the SAFE program helps vulnerable seniors access in-home foot care as well as free fall detection alarms. These programs are designed to help seniors improve their quality of life and maintain their independence, at no cost to them.

Our foot care program is nearing the end of its successful pilot phase. We've refined our processes, working with Island Health to provide access to seniors who need these services, and are looking to expand services Island-wide.

31

footcare visits funded

66

seniors supported with fall detection alarms

STEPS

Eldercare is helping to ease pressure on the healthcare system by limiting the amount of time spent in acute care and supporting safe transitions from hospital to home or assisted living. One way we are doing this is through support of Island Health's STEPS (Short Term Enablement and Planning Suites) Program, located in the West Shore. STEPS offers temporary residential-style care for individuals who are ready for discharge from hospital but need more time to recover or decide on their long-term care needs.

As the STEPS clients' needs have grown more complex, the program reached out to Eldercare for assistance. In response, Eldercare funded practical support in the form of two Sara Stedys. These mobility devices support clients in sit-to-stand transfers—an essential part of maintaining mobility and independence.



“Eldercare's support has made a significant difference for our facility and clients. Their generous donation of *Sara Stedys* has enhanced the quality of care we provide, ensuring our clients receive the attention and services they need to maintain their health and well-being.”

Wendy Galbraith, Case Manager, STEPS Program



Connection

Gardening

Research has shown that gardening in long-term care homes is hugely beneficial. Interacting with living plants stimulates the senses and keeps the brain active, which helps ease symptoms for those with dementia or memory loss. Group gardening projects also give residents a natural way to interact with each other, sparking connection.

Supplying grants for gardens in long-term care has long been a part of Eldercare's work, but has continuously grown over the years. This year, we offered garden grants to seven sites, as well as improved patio furniture to beautify outdoor spaces and offer shade so residents could more easily gather.

128%

growth in gardening grants over last year



Stocking Stuffers for Seniors



For over 10 years, Eldercare Foundation has partnered with London Drugs to bring joy and connection to local long-term care residents through the Stocking Stuffers for Seniors program. Through this program, shoppers can pick a tag off a tree with items requested by a local resident in need. They then shop for and provide the items to their local London Drugs, which are then picked up and distributed to recipients. The program continues to be a smashing success, and we look forward to a continued relationship with London Drugs to bring needed joy to seniors.

236

stockings distributed

Ice Cream and Seasonal Treats

One of our most beloved annual traditions is providing ice cream days at long-term care residences. In addition to bringing treats into the units, we've also brought ice cream trucks to several homes, which have been a hit with staff and residents alike. These events bring opportunities for connection and a taste of summer joy to seniors in care.

1913

ice cream treats enjoyed



“Residents that rarely get out of bed, immediately agreed to go out to get ice cream. Much chaos ensued on the unit, but every face was smiling. I overheard people discussing what ice cream they would get, ice cream trucks from when they were kids, different types of ice cream treats from their past, and for a while everyone was a healthy, carefree, child again.”

from a nurse at Aberdeen Long-Term Care Home

Media

Eldercare Foundation was founded 44 years ago, but we continue to raise awareness about the vital work we do for seniors. One important way we do this is through advertising and media opportunities.

In 2025-2026, we engaged with M1, an Island-based multi-media agency, to help us capture the story of our robotic companion pet program. We were able to share beautiful videos and an ad campaign over print, broadcast, and digital channels to inform people about our important work in this area. We heard so much wonderful feedback from this campaign, and look forward to sharing more stories in the year ahead.



6

broadcast news stories

21

print media mentions

6.23 million

advertising views

Entertainment

Bringing live entertainment to long-term care residents does more than occupy people for a short time. Music and dance bring people together, build connections that help the audience recall memories, and surfaces joy that can make the difference between a bad day and a good week. Eldercare Foundation knows that entertainment for residents is not a frill – it's a vital part of quality of life. We partner with Island Health to bring these impactful performances as well as music therapy that can calm and engage.

851

hours of entertainment
funded by Eldercare

\$55,818

spent ensuring long-term
care homes have access to
music, dance and more





Learning

Seniors in the Emergency Department Research

Eldercare Foundation is proud to have funded important research into the experiences of seniors in emergency departments across Vancouver Island. The collaborative project brought together seniors with lived experience, Island Health Emergency Department staff, researchers and students from the University of Victoria School of Nursing, and the BC SUPPORT Unit Island Centre, part of Island Health's Research Department. There were three goals for this project:

- 1) Review and prioritize evidence-based emergency department interventions
- 2) Identify quick wins that can be readily implemented and
- 3) Provide recommendations for implementation for further research

This project is ongoing, but findings so far include:

- Seniors need better communication in triage and on discharge
- More attention needs to be paid to cognitive, sensory, emotional, and basic comfort needs of older adults in the emergency department
- Expanding volunteer supports and workforce training will make a difference for how seniors experience emergency care

The Comfort Carts are one intervention supported by the results of this research, and we look forward to implementing more learnings from this project into our future work.

Yakimovich Wellness Centre

The Yakimovich Wellness Centre offers free education sessions for older adults and family caregivers, covering health, wellness, and future planning. Our programs include caregiver support workshops, chronic condition self-management, end-of-life care and grief support, and community resources for seniors.

In 2025-2026, Eldercare Foundation marked a shift in how we support education for seniors, caregivers, and professionals. After primarily operating as a financial support for the Yakimovich Wellness Centre, Eldercare took over operations and scheduling alongside our financial contributions, and we've since brought on a new in-house events coordinator. We share our deepest thanks to Island Health for the long partnership, and we look forward to furthering our goal to provide free education to seniors, caregivers and professionals.



19

YWC sessions held over
2025-2026

45+

expected number of
sessions for 2026/2027

Supporting the Next Generation of Providers & Scholars

Eldercare Foundation wants to ensure dignity and care for the seniors of today and tomorrow. That's why we help to fund education and additional training for the next generation of care providers.

\$40,320

total scholarships and
bursaries distributed

16%

growth in scholarship
disbursement over last year

17

bursary, scholarship and
training support recipients



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.

Give

To donate, visit eldercarefoundation.org/donate or scan the QR code:



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