



AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS  
SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

# The ALS Society of BC

A SPECIAL INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

## Living with ALS Rick & Laurie's story

Retirement for Rick and Laurie Dunbar was something they were looking forward to, but it turned out to be not at all what they had envisioned.

Laurie and Rick were high school sweethearts. They will celebrate their 48th wedding anniversary in November 2016. Marrying young, their life was full of promise. They are the parents of two daughters, Tusha & Tarja and proud grandparents of four grandchildren; Shaye, Brody, Jase and Ryly.

Rick's working career in the transportation industry began in 1970 and continued until he dissolved his partnership with 24-7 Pilot Car Services in 2014.

Rick and Laurie became snowbirds in 2008 and started their annual trek to Arizona with their Fifth Wheel. They golfed, were sight-seers, loved 'happy hour', shared potluck dinners and celebrated many occasions with new friends. In 2013 they bought their dream Fifth Wheel and started to plan their next trek.

Early in 2013 Rick started to feel extreme pain in his back and legs. After a number of visits and tests to the doctor with no answers, he was referred to a Neurologist. An MRI

was done, and, when he and Laurie went for the follow-up appointment, it was then they learned the devastating news that the probability of Rick having ALS was 90-95%. This diagnosis was a complete shock. The Neurologist suggested they get a second opinion and an appointment was set up for them at the ALS Centre at GF Strong Rehab Centre in Vancouver. They remember how, once the diagnosis was confirmed, and, "after a silent drive home and sitting in our living room staring at each other, reality started to set in."

As their new 'reality' settled in, they were faced with the task of sharing the news with Rick's 95 year-old father, their children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, family and dear friends.

An ALS diagnosis raises the fear of the unknown and of what lies ahead. Emotions are heightened, not only for the person diagnosed, but also for family and friends. Rick and Laurie, after grasping the full impact of this diagnosis, set about educating themselves.

They discovered the ALS "family". An organization of people ready to listen; ready to help understand, and guide them, in their quest to make some sense out of



Rick Dunbar

this heart wrenching news. ALS assistance was immediate. And, to this day, the ALS Society continually ensures they have the information on how to access equipment and support, for Rick's ever changing needs. They are eternally grateful to the ALS Society and to all the wonderful caregivers who come in each day to help them with daily living.

They also made a decision not to change the way they lived - they had always focused on family and friends and they were determined to continue to do this; to laugh and experience and enjoy the moments of each and every day with their loved ones. This is easier said than done, but to this day they both look for the positives in every situation they encounter.

There is no question that ALS has taken a toll on Rick and the family. Rick's muscles are continually weakening; he uses two bipap machines and is learning how to use a Trilogy Ventilator.

Laurie is Rick's main caregiver and in April of 2015, she suffered two heart attacks. Family and friends rallied to support them in facing yet another life altering situation. They were forced once again to dig deep and find the will to carry on.

Laurie's strength and resilience is ever awe inspiring to all who know her. She gives of her time as a volunteer helping to put together the annual ALS Walk and Golf Tournament in Kamloops.

Rick and Laurie both have amazing spirits. They are truly an inspiration to all of their family and

### What is ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease?

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a rapidly progressive, neuromuscular disease. It attacks the motor neurons that transmit electrical impulses from the brain to the voluntary muscles in the body. When they fail to receive messages, the muscles lose strength, atrophy and die.

ALS can strike anyone at anytime, regardless of age, gender, or ethnic origin. It does not affect the senses, and only rarely does it affect the mind. The equipment costs for each patient average \$137,000, while nursing and home care costs can be up to 10 times this amount.

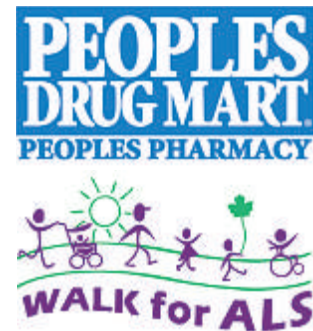
The ALS Society of B.C. is dedicated to providing direct support to ALS patients, their families and caregivers, to ensure the best quality of life possible living with ALS. Through assisting research, we are committed to find the cause of, and cure for ALS.

friends. They choose each and every day to accept whatever comes their way; to make adjustments as needed; to have the best day possible.

Through all these trials and tribulations, Rick and Laurie have remained a united front. They do not ask for sympathy, but for hope. Hope that researchers will continue to receive the much needed funding to continue their work. Hope that stem cell research will offer a breakthrough. Hope that one day there will be a cure for ALS.

They are truly our heroes.

Please checkout Rick Dunbar - YouTube if you would like more information.



### ALS SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA & YUKON LOCATIONS & DATES 2016

**May 28th, 2016**  
Richmond - Vancouver - Steveston

**June 5th, 2016**  
Tri Cities/Ridge Meadows  
West Kootenay - Nelson  
Mid Island - Parksville

**June 11th, 2016**  
Fraser Valley - Abbotsford

**June 18th, 2016**  
Kamloops - Surrey

**June 25th, 2016**  
Okanagan - Kelowna  
Williams Lake

**June 26th, 2016**  
Prince George

**June Dates To Be Confirmed**

**September 3rd, 2016**  
Dawson Creek

**September 11th, 2016**  
Vernon

**September 18th, 2016**  
Victoria

**September 25th, 2016**  
Whitehorse

## Join thousands of Canadians from across Canada for fitness, fun and the fight against ALS

For more information:  
Register online [www.walkforals.ca](http://www.walkforals.ca)

or contact the ALS Society of British Columbia & Yukon  
1-800-708-3228 | [info@alsbc.ca](mailto:info@alsbc.ca)

"ALS is a devastating disease that affects the person living with ALS, their family and caregivers. There is no known cause or cure, yet. Your participation will help us to raise funds to support people living with ALS, and research to find the cure."

- Wally Buono, GM & Vice President of Football Operations BC Lions Football Club, Official Spokesperson for the WALKs for ALS in B.C. & Yukon

Provincial Supporters:



**Raffle Tickets** \$20

- A return trip for 2 anywhere in WestJet's World  
Prize value \$2,900 Donor: **WESTJET**
- One Foursome in the ALS Golf Tournament of Hope at Kamloops on 08/18/2016  
Prize value \$680
- Wifi IPAD Mini 4 - 64GB  
Prize value \$549 Donor: **HME**

Valid until April 5, 2016. Draw will take place at Quilchena Golf & Country Club, 3555 Granville Ave, Richmond on Tuesday, April 5th, 2016 at 6:00PM. Some restrictions may apply. Employees and direct family members of the ALS Society of BC are not eligible. Ticket purchasers must be 19 years of age or older. Winners consent to the release of their names by license.

ALS Society of BC  
1233 - 13351 Commerce Parkway, Richmond, BC V6V 2X7 Tel: 1-800-708-3228 E-mail: [info@alsbc.ca](mailto:info@alsbc.ca)  
Charitable # 106708985 RR0001 BC Gaming Event Licence # 81667



### Your help provides hope. Please donate.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Payment: Cheque  MC  VISA  AMEX

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  Check here if you would like to receive ALS BC mailings

CHARITABLE # 106708985 RR0001

**WWW.ALSBC.CA** WE NEED YOUR HELP.

To learn more about ALS or to make a donation online visit [www.alsbc.ca](http://www.alsbc.ca)

Phone: 604.278.2257 | Email: [info@alsbc.ca](mailto:info@alsbc.ca)

**ALS Society of BC:** 1233-13351 Commerce Parkway, Richmond B.C. V6V 2X7



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