



Dave and Susan Jeffery

## ALS Society's equipment loan program contributes to quality of life for patients in need

By Dave Jeffery

In the summer of 2014 I went to my family doctor to ask him what he thought was wrong with my hand. I was an avid road cyclist but was finding it difficult to change gears with my right hand, especially when it got cold. My doctor pointed out the withered muscles between my thumb and index finger and sent me to a neurologist. Four months of appointments and tests led to a diagnosis of ALS on October 28, 2014. I remember the shock my wife and I felt when the doctor said that I had two to five years to live. At that same appointment the staff at the ALS Clinic gave me an application to join the ALS Society of BC. I had no idea at the time how important this connection to the Society would be.

For the first 4 years of my life with ALS, I actually changed very little, except for the loss of a fully functioning right

hand and arm. I was able to continue working and driving and stayed reasonably active. I was able to modify my bicycles so that I could both change gears and brake with my left hand. But by the fall of 2018 I was beginning to find it difficult to walk. So during one of my appointments at the ALS Clinic the occupational therapist fitted me for a walker. We ordered the walker through the equipment loan program of the ALS Society. My last term teaching was the spring of 2019 and my students got used to the sight of me wobbling into class with the help of my walker. Soon after I received a wheelchair and, slowly but surely, other equipment followed.

In January of 2020 I was finding it difficult to stand up from the toilet. We tried various riser fittings but eventually they no longer gave me the height I needed. Our local occupational therapist checked with the Society equipment loan stock

and found a powered lift toilet seat. We had no idea such gadgets even existed, but when it came it was nothing short of revolutionary. My Fraser Health Home Support staff were thrilled that they no longer needed to help me stand.

Now, in the fall of 2020, our home is full of equipment from

the equipment loan program. I sleep on a hospital bed and spend my days in a recliner. I use a commode and eat at the kitchen table while sitting in a transfer chair. I have a power wheelchair that enables me to accompany my wife on rambles in our neighbourhood. I am no longer able to walk, so my

caregivers use a sit-to-stand lift to transfer me from one device to another.

All of this equipment is expensive and would put a terrific strain on our finances if we had to buy or rent it. But thanks to the ALS Society's equipment loan program it is mine to use at no cost for as long as I need it. The program includes free delivery to our home in Abbotsford and any necessary setup expertise.

The equipment loan program contributes significantly to my quality of life and I am deeply grateful for it. As a way of giving back to the Society, my family and I have been regular attendees at the Walk to End ALS each summer. This past summer my wife raised \$5,600 for the Society. Not a lot when you consider the cost of a fully-customized power wheelchair but, multiplied many times over by individuals, families and corporations nationwide, these gifts make a huge difference.

### SUPPORTED BY



**WWW.ALSBC.CA SHOW THE POWER OF HOPE TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH ALS IN BC**

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

Please email [info@alsbc.ca](mailto:info@alsbc.ca) or call 1-800-708-3228 if you wish to make a stock security donation or make a monthly donation.

**ALS Society of BC**

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### What is ALS or Lou Gehrig Disease?

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a rapidly progressive 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 any time, regardless of age, gender or ethnic origin. It does not affect the senses, and only rarely does it affect the

mind. Each patient's equipment cost is an average of \$140,000, while nursing and home care costs can be up to 10 times this amount.

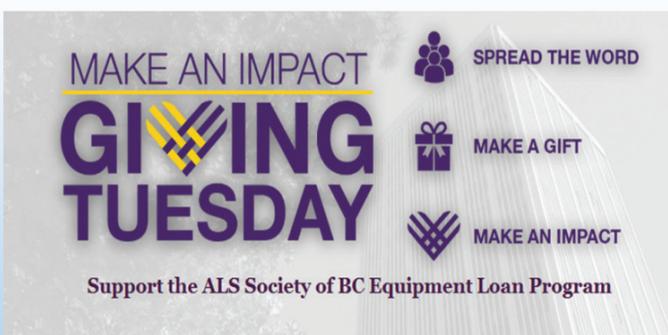
The ALS Society of BC is dedicated to providing direct support to ALS patients, along with their families and caregivers, to ensure the best quality of life possible while living with ALS. We are committed to finding the cause of and cure for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) through supporting research.

On Tuesday, December 1, 2020, the ALS Society of BC participates in the annual #GivingTuesday cam-

paign, a global day of giving back. It is a day where charities, companies and individuals join together to share commitments, rally for favourite causes and think about others.

As a participating charity of #GivingTuesday, the ALS Society of BC is requesting your support to raise its 2021 annual budget of \$955,000 for the ALS BC Equipment Loan Program.

Please Donate:  
[www.alsbc.ca](http://www.alsbc.ca) or call 1-800-708-3228



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