



***YouQuest exists to ensure participants ‘have a good day, every day’
and to give care partners full-day respite.***

In his own words, **Clyde (at right)** told us what it meant to him to join the YouQuest community after his first day (click link or photo).

Angela, his wife and working care partner, has **eloquently expressed her gratitude in a letter**. Realizing the extent of Clyde’s loneliness, she says:

“I knew he needed something that I could not provide and that was people and experiences that did not involve me ... YouQuest is literally the answer to my prayers.”



2020 Rewind: The Year of Unique Challenges

On March 12th, we were on a roll, on the cusp of a second service day, in the SAIT gym playing badminton and basketball, when COVID-19 alerts started flying around. After a delectable SAIT lunch, and a sunny walk in Confederation Park, we cocooned on campus to do final edits on our **group writing project** (see button below):

**“I Have Young-Onset Dementia:
I Want To Talk To You!”**



We also had fun watching **Steve and Dave** (both SAIT grads) on their photo-shoot for the **SAIT Alumni LINK magazine article** about Steve’s career and diagnosis. In the story interview, he says:

“YouQuest lets me use my brain again, like I used to use it before. One day per week, I get that back. My opinion matters to YouQuest”.

It was such a memorable afternoon, yet an eeriness was moving in on campus ...

Hold the Phone?

Then came the pandemic-induced phases. **SAIT campus closed.** Involuntary YQ pause. Holding pattern. Decisions. Messaging to families and volunteers. Dialogue with grantors. Re-planning the plan. Learning 'Adaptation 101' at warp speed. Re-imagining how to stay connected... and get *even more* lean for the as-yet-undefined hiatus.



"You don't really realize all the people in your life, until they're gone."

John McCaffery, diagnosed at 48, now 61; Board member and Volunteer.

Weekly email newsletters were created to stay connected and soon featured **Steve's music column; another myth busted about young-onset dementia!** Monthly 'physically-distanced picnics' were held to help YQ families and volunteers emerge from the pandemic restrictions in the summer.

Ironically, the whole world was grappling with extreme social isolation, but that's just normal life for our families after diagnosis.

When Life Gives You Lemons ...

During the hiatus, **Volunteer Coordinator, Susie Dooley** collaborated with local **SemperIT** experts to develop the YQ Volunteer Portal, in anticipation of scaling up for the second service day.



Our on-site volunteers provided guidance on how to make the portal work well. For **Dave Grose**, an original YQ volunteer and Telus retiree, this tool created a multiplier effect which ensured his generous personal donation was matched by **Telus**.

The portal will be an invaluable web-based tool for training materials specific to young-onset dementia developed by our first volunteer, **Dianne McDermid**.

Let's Rock and Roll!

Fast-forward to September. Green light from the Board. Recreation Therapy team poised to lead. Volunteers at the ready. Musicians keen to inspire. **Families said 'Go for it, we need this'**, so we re-tooled to re-start the original Thursday service day on September 17th at the **Calgary Jewish Community Centre (CJCC)**, our new host facility.

The SAIT setting was a tough act to follow, however, CJCC staff went above and beyond to welcome us under COVID-19 modified conditions. It was **one of our YQ families** that initiated this contact and helped us resume services! While we miss SAIT (oh, the culinary program!), the CJCC has helped us immensely with fitness amenities, a room of our own, and a sincere interest in our continued success. **It truly is a place to belong.**



Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to a few families; as their disease progressed, we could no longer meet their needs. However, we still enjoy reconnecting with families at events such as our **two-year anniversary celebration** on September 24th at **Park96**.

We value the trust our YQ families place in us to do our best for their loved ones each day. We also salute our own families who pitch in and remind us of the value of our efforts in this crazy world.



"Best news we have had in a long time. Thank you for all your hard work in getting this set up!!"
Sally, Care Partner

Move that Waitlist!

The long waitlist validated demand for our unique service, yet sadly, many families had been languishing there for a year or more. After volunteer re-orientation and testing new routines, the priority was to start our brand new, **second day of service on Tuesdays as of October 27th**. This new group is already enjoying the camaraderie of people with a strong purpose - to live every day in the moment!

The **Recreation Therapy team, Bev Hillman, Melissa Olin, and Val Romanzin**, inspire us to learn more about young-onset dementia and to 'set it aside' while enjoying a purposeful day in the community. The therapists lead by example, and nurture our many volunteers, including **post-secondary and MRU practicum students**.

The CJCC recreation setting has helped fulfill a YQ priority to **reduce the social stigma** for families living with young-onset dementia. The CJCC leadership team have also embraced the significance of our unique music element, courtesy of **Kelly Morstad's incredible roster of volunteer musicians** who bring live music to our service days.



With endless places and topics to explore, this on-site team develops deep connections and a common understanding of the YouQuest way to help participant families.

Exceptional Ways of Giving

In a year with more than a few challenges, we recognize all of our donors for your unwavering support. Here are some examples of individuals and organizations that have stepped up for YouQuest:

Dalyce Comm, care partner for husband, **Glenn**, a former anaesthesiologist, took a leap of faith to support YQ. She truly understands why this everyday approach to community connections is so important when the other circles fall away after diagnosis. Dalyce is also a repeat major donor in 2020 and we thank her for her ongoing support to help YQ grow.

Volunteer **Margaret Robertson** exudes pure joy in everyday life. Her excitement about YQ caught the attention of her partner, **Chris Burley**, whose 2019 generous year-end gift was matched by **Nutrien**. We are so fortunate they are amplifying this kindness in 2020 with a personal and matching gift of \$25,000 each!



Dan Bremner is the son-in-law of an original YQ pilot family, **Paul & Sheena Bates**. Dan invited us to the **Benevity Giving Platform** with recurring payroll donations since early 2019. He has also encouraged many Benevity co-workers to do the same in support of the Bates family, even though Paul sadly can no longer attend YouQuest.



Removing Barriers

When COVID-19 rocked our world, we knew big changes were at hand. **Transportation became a major barrier** for most families given the screening requirements and risks of using the previous Access Calgary group taxi option.

Enter the **Calgary Flames Foundation** who responded immediately when we asked for help to fund this new expense. With a \$10,000 donation promptly in hand, we could ensure the restart would proceed in partnership with our **Dreams Transportation** service provider.

As it turned out, the Flames Foundation was **now supporting one of their own**; Don, a former 20-year employee was a new Tuesday participant!



It doesn't take long for the YQ mission to resonate once people understand why young-onset dementia is different and has so many implications for younger families.

We are also grateful to the **Order of the Eastern Star Chinook Chapter**, **Kinsmen Club of Calgary**, and **Rebekah Assembly Hillhurst** who are new Service Club donors in 2020.

"He just seems so much more confident. I guess I can say I'm gob-smacked. One day with YQ."
Daina, Care Partner (after John's first day back at YQ)

Heartfelt Thanks to our Generous Grantors:

We profoundly thank our 2020 grantors for their understanding and flexibility to evolve funding support with the ongoing challenges of this pandemic year:

Calgary Foundation has shown a great deal of faith and trust in us during this tumultuous time through four different pillars of 2020-21 support:



- \$10,000 strategic grant (Fund Development & Communications)
- First Donor-Advised relationship (**Evamy Family Fund**)
- \$85,000 community grant (second service day; Volunteer Coordinator role)
- Invitation to Pandemic Recovery Program funding opportunity



Alberta Health Services - Seniors Health Strategic Clinic Network

- Extended contractor salary support for early 2021 on \$75,000 grant
- Engagement on care partner needs



Centre for Aging Brain Health Institute (CABHI)

- \$25,000 Volunteer Portal (self-administration, scheduling, training)
- Technology infrastructure tools/update

The generosity of our donors, grantors and partners makes YouQuest possible. All donations large or small make a huge difference. Tapping into personal networks and telling the YouQuest story helps expand our base of support. Your financial contributions give us the **flexibility to remain a unique and relevant service** for Calgarians living with young-onset dementia and their families.

A message from Roc Spence, Interim Executive Director

Well, as you've read, YouQuest has navigated a 'pause-and-restart' process due to COVID-19 because our service is EXACTLY what our participants and families need during these difficult times!

Modified service delivery with social distancing for everyone's safety was the top priority to make the September restart a success. **A new home, a second service day, and a shorter waitlist!**



I want to thank the amazing people who work so hard to deliver this incredible service as we simply could not operate without you! That includes the Recreation Therapy and Volunteer team on-site, and the Volunteer Coordinator, IT and Accounting experts, Co-founders, and Board of Directors in off-site roles.

We are excited to plan future growth to serve more families. We thank you for your support to date and ask, if you are able, to make YouQuest your charity of choice on **Giving Tuesday, December 1 or before December 31.**

We need your financial support to sustain YouQuest and address this service gap for our community. Thank you for caring!

A Personal Note from Co-founder, Cindy McCaffery

A cousin recently commented that my husband **John continues to “do well”** with young-onset dementia because of his deep involvement with YouQuest.

She observed that **John finds purpose and self-esteem** as both a board member and volunteer. And, being a very social person, he looks forward to making friends with (and looking out for) his fellow participants. Plus, the **physically active days** at YouQuest are a boon for his body and spirit.



Our cousin is correct. As John’s care partner, I can’t emphasize enough how important it is that his losses – a challenging career with a network and a sense of identity that went with it – have been replaced with **an inclusive community** where he is loved, appreciated, supported, and can “do well.” There are now two service days a week where I don’t have to worry about John being bored at home in the basement watching TV, or napping the day away for lack of anything better to do.

Thank you for your faith in us! We look forward to earning your continued support in 2021 and beyond.

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In Memory giving options

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Matching/Anonymous
giving options

[DONATE via Canada Helps](#)

Giving Tuesday: Dec 1, 2020
2% Bonus Offer

If you prefer to send a cheque, our mailing address is:
Comments? Questions? info@youquest.ca

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