



*AGI Music Therapist Kayley Patterson leads Sharing Sounds of Music, a new virtual program.*



## **AGI Annual Report 2021-2022**

*Enhancing the lives of everyone affected by or living  
with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.*

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## Introduction

Alzheimer Groupe (A.G.I.) Inc. is a charitable organization that offers therapeutic programs to individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Additionally, AGI provides support services to families and professional caregivers, focusing on best practices in dementia care while sensitizing the community at large through education and awareness.

AGI has been serving the Montreal community for over 38 years. 95% of those seeking support services from AGI are Anglophones, and the organization is one of the few offering improved access to dementia care for this population. More and more, people understand that Alzheimer's disease affects the lives of us all.

The number of Canadians living with Alzheimer's disease or dementia is steadily increasing, placing pressure on caregivers and a strained healthcare system. In the recent *Landmark Study: Path* (2022) completed by the Alzheimer's Society of Canada, the number of Canadians expected to be living with dementia paints a more dire picture than forecasted. These recent findings show that:

- 564,000 Canadians are currently living with dementia. New estimates show that by 2050, more than 1.7 million Canadians (685 individuals diagnosed each day) will be living with dementia
- Over the next 30 years, an estimated 6.3 million Canadians will be diagnosed, live with and eventually die of dementia.
- Women with dementia will continue to outnumber men diagnosed with this condition.
- More than 1 million Canadians will serve as care partners to people with dementia.
- For every person in Canada with dementia, a family member or friend will spend an average of 26 hours a week caring for them.

At last count, the Curator of Quebec estimates that at least 141,000 Québécois are living with dementia; 17 new cases are diagnosed each day.

AGI continues the fight to help families navigate the never-ending demands of the disease.

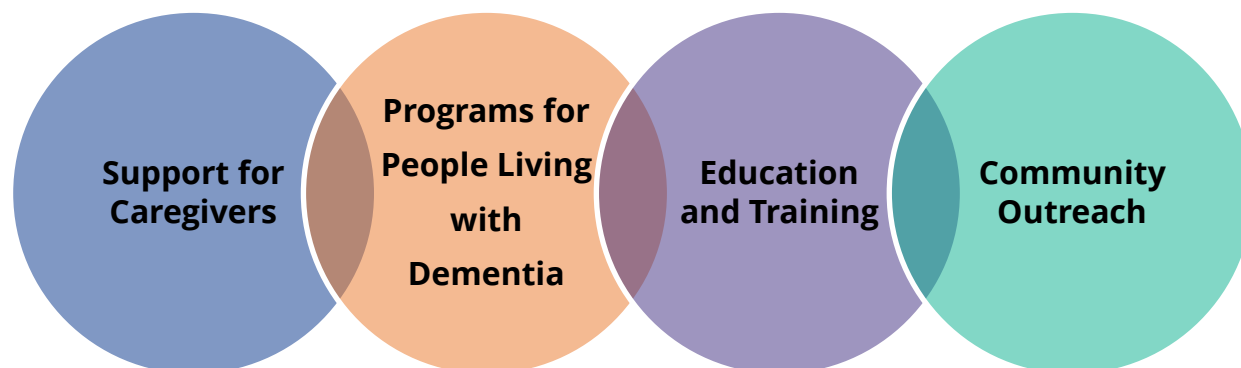
Every day, families reach out to AGI urgently seeking help. Through dedicated professionals, AGI provides practical solutions and support to these families in need.

AGI's approach to caregiving is founded on the premise that all individuals with dementia deserve an excellent quality of care characterized by joyful, loving interaction. This requires a deep understanding of the individual and their disease; a gentle and empathic approach to physical care; a concern for psychological and emotional functioning; and knowledge of appropriate intervention strategies.

AGI's professional support services team helps the entire family face a new reality with greater understanding of what can still be done and give them the hope that even through the progression of the disease, a life can be well lived.

## Introduction > continued

The foundation of AGI's work is based on the following four pillars:



## 2021-2022 Overview

At AGI, we continue to make a difference in the lives of people with dementia and caregivers in the Montreal community through our person-centred approach.

While the effects of the pandemic persisted during the 2021-2022 fiscal year, there was an opportunity for a few in-person activities and fundraising events to be re-instated. Overall, there was a feeling of optimism and hope as daily operations resumed with a sense of normalcy.

AGI's professional team worked tirelessly to resume in-person programming for people living with dementia. On November 1, 2021, AGI's Activity Centre re-opened its doors after 20 months of closure due to COVID-19. Physical distancing, capacity limitations, and appropriate health and safety protocols were all put in place with the expertise and guidance of the Brigade Santé Publique.

AGI continues to provide hybrid programming with activities available both virtually and in person to meet the current needs of people living with dementia and their caregivers. Virtual programming has provided some of our participants with increased engagement as logistical barriers, such as transportation to in-person activities, have been reduced.

In speaking with our caregivers, and interacting with people living with dementia, challenges around managing behaviours, disease progression, social isolation, and well-being are concerns facing families today. Over the past year, AGI focused on re-introducing music therapy as one tool that can help address these challenges while focusing on best practices in dementia care.

AGI's Linking Generations through Song program, a most sought-after activity, was suspended due to COVID-19 in February 2020. This program brought together people living with dementia, their caregivers, families and community members on Sunday afternoons for a singing group led by a Music Therapist.

## 2021-2022 Overview > continued

Because of this, in the Summer and Fall of 2021, AGI offered music therapy through two pilot projects facilitated by supervised music therapy students from Concordia University. Offered to clients in AGI's virtual activity centre over 16 weekly sessions, 20 people living with dementia with 15 caregivers participated in each session. Outcomes focused on reductions in behaviour and providing caregivers with respite were achieved. These pilot projects established the framework for the beginnings of a music therapy program moving forward.

In January 2022, AGI brought on to the professional team a dedicated Music Therapist who is developing and facilitating music therapy activities through AGI's support service programs for people with dementia.

The first activity introduced was the AGI Sharing Sounds of Music program, aimed at providing music therapy to people living with dementia in the comfort of their own homes. Sessions are offered in the late afternoon to reduce behaviours associated with sundowning. At the same time, providing caregivers with time to prepare dinner, look after items on their to-do list, have a moment for respite, or join in the program with their loved ones. AGI's Sharing Sounds of Music is the first such program available of its kind in Montreal, see page 7 for more information.

From **July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022** - 22 programs or activities were provided via telehealth, virtually or in-person:

Support for Caregivers	Programs for People Living with Dementia	Education and Training	Community Outreach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone Helpline</li> <li>• Email support</li> <li>• Individual and Family Counselling</li> <li>• Support Groups: Spousal and Adult-Child</li> <li>• Therapeutic Yoga for Caregivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New client intake and assessments</li> <li>• Activity Centre</li> <li>• Movement Program</li> <li>• Dance Therapy Program</li> <li>• Sharing Sounds of Music Program</li> <li>• Individual music therapy sessions</li> <li>• Weekly E-mailed Activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dementia 101</li> <li>• Specialized courses</li> <li>• Dementia Training for Healthcare Professionals</li> <li>• AGI Webinar Series</li> <li>• AGI Awareness Lecture Series</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach Presentations and Kiosks</li> </ul>

\* Note: 6 programs continue to be suspended due to the context of COVID-19.



## 1. Support for Caregivers

Providing individualized care to a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia requires significant resources on the part of the family caregiver. As dementia progresses, caregivers may find it increasingly difficult to run errands, complete daily household tasks, or to look after their own needs. Many find that they are alone in the caregiving process, isolated from family and friends. This is where AGI helps, providing relief and support.

### **Telephone Helpline and Email Support**

Experienced counsellors are available to answer questions and respond to urgent needs, Monday to Thursday from 9 am to 5 pm and Fridays from 9 am to 4 pm. In addition to addressing the concerns of caregivers, this helpline is available to those from the community at large who are in need of assistance. E-mail support is also provided.

- 179 interactions through e-mail support.
- 253 interactions through the telephone helpline, including 160 first-time callers.

### **Individual and Family Counselling**

AGI counselling services help individual and family caregivers with daily challenges related to dementia and to plan for the future. Counsellors provide relevant tools, information and resources.

- 1234 individual counselling sessions provided.
- 32 family counselling sessions provided.

### **Support Groups**

Led by expert facilitators, caregivers are encouraged to support one another, share experiences and problem-solve in a non-judgmental, friendly environment. Support groups modified to virtual due to COVID-19.

#### ***Spousal Support Groups***

- 60 hours of support provided through 40 group sessions, averaging 7 caregivers per session.

#### ***Adult-Child Support Group***

AGI has been attempting to introduce an adult-child support group for many years. The change to a virtual format helped make this group possible this year. Many adult children are living outside of Quebec and are long-distanced caregivers to parents residing in the Greater Montreal Area.

- 30 hours of support provided through 20 group sessions, averaging 5 caregivers per session.

## Support for Caregivers > continued

### Therapeutic Yoga for Caregivers

The AGI Therapeutic Yoga for Caregivers program is offered through Zoom on a weekly basis. Each 45-minute session is aimed at self-care and provides an opportunity for caregivers to learn new movement and breathing techniques to help ease anxiety and stress. Caregivers can participate without cost in this program, which is led by a RYT-500 Lifeforce Yoga Practitioner.

The aim of the program is to create resourceful, capable and informed caregivers who are empowered with the skills needed to provide support, as well as to become aware of their own self-care needs.

This program also goes further to support healthy aging, which includes physical fitness and the mental health of caregivers in the adaptation to their role.

→ 35 hours of support provided through 47 group sessions, averaging 9 caregivers per session.

## 2. Programs for People Living with Dementia

AGI offers a range of activity programs for the person with Alzheimer's or dementia. AGI's therapeutic programs are tailored to the individual, enhancing abilities while compensating for challenges. These activities improve self-esteem by providing opportunities to experience feelings of pleasure, success and competence.

### New client intake and assessment

Before a diagnosed individual can take part in AGI's programs, activities, and services, they meet with an AGI Recreation Therapist one-on-one. This allows the AGI Recreation Therapist, in consultation with the diagnosed individual and his/her caregiver, to develop a tailored program that addresses current needs. An AGI Counsellor will continue to support the family throughout the time that they are a client with the organization.

→ 54 assessments were completed.

### AGI Activity Centre

AGI's Activity Centre offers the person living with dementia engaging activities while their family member benefits from respite. The centre honours each participant as a unique person beyond the diagnosis.

Activities are tailored to individual abilities and offered in a caring, non-judgmental environment, enhancing the quality of life for those who attend. Programming focuses on providing participants with a sense of belonging, improved quality of life, a feeling of productivity and empowerment, an

## Programs for People Living with Dementia > continued

### **AGI Activity Centre continued**

opportunity to participate in leisure activities, and social inclusion in interacting with their peers.

AGI offers a virtual activity centre online for those unable to attend in-person programs. Sessions are led by Recreation Therapist and Activity Program Facilitator with enrichments through contributions by Art and Music Therapists.

The composition of each group session varies depending on the interest and ability of the participants. For example, some groups focus on cognitive activities, while others incorporate art appreciation, art therapy, peer socialization, trivia, reminiscence, exercise, music appreciation and music therapy.

In addition to this, AGI has also introduced 30-minute individual sessions for those who require one-on-one support. Through individual sessions, activities are tailored to the person's needs and abilities. Often the person might be in the later stage of Alzheimer's Disease or dementia, or they have higher needs that cannot be facilitated through a group session.

#### *Group Sessions*

→ 245 sessions attended by 25 clients on average per week.

#### *Individual Sessions*

→ 240 sessions attended by 5 clients on average per week.

### **AGI Movement Program**

As caregivers were expressing concern about a lack of stimulation in the home environment for the person living with dementia AGI developed the virtual Movement Program in order to keep minds and bodies engaged. This program is for both the person living with dementia and their caregiver.

Offered weekly, the program focuses on various types of movement exercises that participants do in the comfort of their own home. Group facilitators lead the program online, showing different adaptations of the exercises. These include adapted Tai Chi, chair yoga, balance training exercises, Zumba and dance aerobics.

This hour-long program provides participants with the opportunity to engage in exercise according to their own fitness level, which is vital as people living with dementia have differing abilities depending on the stage of the disease.

Participants have become familiar with each another, offering moments of social interaction. They are encouraged to engage with one another and this

## Programs for People Living with Dementia > continued

### AGI Movement Program continued

sense of team spirit allows the participants to feel that they are supported and included.

→ 48 sessions attended by 9 clients on average per session.

### Dance Therapy Program in partnership with the National Centre for Dance Therapy

These dance therapy sessions offer a supportive environment for AGI clients, both people with Alzheimer's and their care partners, to explore movement, express themselves, and create meaningful connections with each other and others in the group through dance. Each one-hour session, offered through videoconferencing, is adapted to be safe and accessible for everyone, promoting physical and cognitive flexibility, playfulness, balance, and coordination.

This activity was offered in partnership with the National Centre for Dance Therapy (NCDT), a division of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. The NCDT is dedicated to improving the well-being of individuals through the benefits of dance. This program is supported by What Connects Us (Ce qui nous lie), an initiative of the Public Health Agency of Canada to improve the quality of life of people living with dementia and carers.

→ 16 sessions attended by 6 clients on average per session.

### AGI Sharing Sounds of Music Program

The AGI Sharing Sounds of Music program is offered through Zoom twice weekly. Each 45-minute session provides music therapy to people living with dementia in the comfort of their own homes. Sessions are offered from 4:30 – 5:15 p.m. to reduce behaviours associated with sundowning. At the same time, providing caregivers with time to prepare dinner, look after items on their to-do list, have a moment for respite, or join in the program with their loved ones.

People living with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia can experience increased confusion, anxiety, agitation, pacing and disorientation towards the end of the day, referred to as sundowning. Music during this time can reduce anxiousness during periods of sundowning or other late-day behaviours that may manifest in the person living with dementia. This program aims to help caregivers manage the effects of sundowning that their loved ones may be experiencing.

People living with dementia participate without cost in the program, facilitated by AGI's Music Therapist. This program promotes well-being, lessens isolation and loneliness, and improves the quality of life of older adults.



## Programs for People Living with Dementia > continued

### AGI Sharing Sounds of Music Program continued

From participating in the program, caregivers have shared that they have found that the person living with dementia has:

- felt increased relaxation
- were more mindful of the here-and-now
- had improved emotional regulation
- built connections with their sense of self and others
- engaged in emotional expression, either verbal or non-verbal

The AGI Sharing Sounds of Music program is currently the only sundowning focused music therapy program being offered in Montreal.

→ 38 sessions attended by 7 clients on average (person living with dementia only counted) per session.

### Individual Music Therapy Sessions

AGI's board-certified music therapist provides one-on-one, 30 to 45-minute virtual sessions each week for participants from the comfort of their homes via Zoom.

Based on an individual assessment that includes reviewing a participant's personal history, cultural background, and musical preferences, AGI's Music Therapist creates a personalized treatment plan tailored to the psychosocial and emotional needs of each individual. This includes careful observation of non-verbal expressions in sessions, to meet participants in their current social and emotional state via musical experiences and verbal validation techniques. Musical experiences include song sharing, music-listening, multi-modal experiences, music and movement, singing, and lyrical analysis and/or translation.

Many participants currently receiving these services are partially or wholly non-verbal, and in some cases are living in a residence where activities such as music therapy are inaccessible. In these cases, music is used as a therapeutic medium. By building an intimate therapeutic relationship based on empathy, respect, and non-judgment, AGI's music therapy sessions provide a space for participants to feel seen, heard, and validated through musical experiences.

A caregiver is usually present in these sessions. In some cases, music therapy sessions allow caregivers to connect to their loved ones and engage in reminiscence, such as recalling a story from their shared past. One caregiver has shared that music therapy sessions are the "highlight" of their week.

→ There are 9 clients participating in individual programming. On average each has received 20 sessions of individual programming since music therapy was made available in February 2022.

## Programs for People Living with Dementia > continued

### Weekly E-mailed Activities

AGI's weekly activity emails to caregivers have been very well-received and the feedback has been tremendous. Each week caregivers receive activity suggestions, to engage with the person living with dementia, complete with instructions. These emails are theme based and are adapted to different stages of Alzheimer's and dementia.

This initiative was created in response to COVID-19 and ended in December 2022 as activities resumed in the activity centre in person.

→ 10 activity emails provided to 293 recipients per week.

## 3. Education and Training

The AGI Lassner Learning Centre provides a comprehensive curriculum for both family and professional caregivers that promotes a greater understanding of dementia-related topics while teaching practical skills and offering valuable solutions. All education and training programs modified to virtual due to COVID-19.

### Dementia 101

Dementia 101 is an intensive course covering a broad range of topics, from the signs and symptoms of dementia to helpful strategies for communicating, interacting and managing challenging behaviors of loved ones affected with Alzheimer's or other dementia.

→ 24 instructional hours delivered to 37 participants.

### Specialized Courses

In addition, AGI provided the following course:

1. Supportive Communication Strategies (2-part)

→ 4 instructional hours delivered to 12 participants.

### Dementia Training for Healthcare Professionals

AGI received a contract from the CIUSSS West-Central Montreal to deliver 34 training sessions to 514 healthcare professionals at the following CHLSDs: Father Dowd, Elder Care, Maimonides, St. Margaret's, St. Henri, and St. Andrews.

Three members of AGI's Support Services team delivered the 2-hour training sessions focused on stress reduction of care partners when working with people living with dementia.

## Education and Training > continued

### AGI Webinar Series

AGI offers engaging lectures through the AGI Webinar Series, featuring guest speakers who are experts in their field. Webinar topics focus on current issues and concerns related to dementia and caregiving. These presentations are open to the public without cost and are offered 1-2 times per month, currently online.

Each webinar delivers practical information to caregivers in an effort to improve their daily lives while enhancing their understanding about dementia. Through this Lecture Series, AGI aims to increase awareness, knowledge and support from the public regarding Alzheimer's and other dementias. Outreach helps to build a dementia-friendly community where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported.

In addition to the guest speaker(s), each session has an AGI moderator who provides technical support to attendees and manages questions through the chat function. Each webinar is recorded and shared on AGI's YouTube channel so caregivers can reference or share the materials. Since June 30, 2022, the presented webinars have received 774 views.

→ 11 informative hours provided to 307 participants through the following lectures:

1. [Exploring Mild Cognitive Impairment and How You Can Keep Your Memory Healthy](#) with guest speaker Dr. Elise Levinoff, MD, FRCP(C)
2. *Capacity, Mandates, and Homologation: Planning for the Future* with guest speaker Mandy Novak-Léonard, BSW, MSW, Professional Social Worker
3. [Your Guide to Home Care Services and the Placement Process](#) with guest speakers Carolee Honeywill, PSW, Chef de programme SAPA at CLSC René-Cassin; and Naomi Berkowitz, PSW, MAH CIUSS Centre-Ouest
4. *Navigating the Holidays for Caregivers*, with speakers from the AGI Support Services Team
5. [Sensitive Topics Related to Intimacy and Dementia](#) with guest speaker Sylvia Davidson, OT Reg (Ont), Manager, Baycrest Health Services

## Education and Training > continuation

### AGI Webinar Series continued

6. [Income Tax Lecture: Credits and Benefits for Caregivers](#) with guest speaker Katherine Hejnar, Tax Consultant
7. [Mealtimes: Challenges and Best Practices for Families Living with Dementia](#) with guest speaker Dr. Heather Keller, RD, PhD, FDC, FCAHS
8. [Creative Arts and Dementia](#) with speakers Karin Derouaux, MA, MA, AGI Counsellor/Art Therapist; and Kayley Patterson, MA, AGI Music Therapist
9. [Long-distance Caregiving](#) with guest speaker Mary-Catherine Lundquist, Program Director of Care2caregivers organization
10. [Understanding Aphasia and PPA](#) with guest speakers Brittany Clark, M.S, CCC-SLP, Speech Language Pathologist; and Paula-Jane Bellizzi, MSW, Social Worker
11. [Brain Injury Prevention to Reduce the Risk of Dementia](#), Dr. Michael Hennes, D.C. DACNB, Northwestern Health Sciences University

### AGI Awareness Lecture Series

In conjunction with Alzheimer's Awareness Month, AGI presented a series of 5 lectures covering different topics on dementia. 399 people attended the series virtually from January 11 to 18, 2022. The webinars were made available on the AGI YouTube page and received 421 views until June 30, 2022. The presentations were as follows:

1. [Challenges in the diagnosis and treatment](#) with guest speaker Dr. Howard Bergman, MD, FRCPC
2. [Different types of dementias](#) with guest speaker Dr. Wendy Chiu, MD.CM, FRCPC
3. [Behavioural symptoms and ways to respond](#) with guest speaker Kristen Felten, MSW, APSW
4. [Early diagnosis and interventions](#) with guest speaker Dr. Zahra Moussavi, PhD
5. [Risks for developing dementia](#) with guest speaker Dr. Michael Hornberger, PhD

## 4. Community Outreach

Through outreach, AGI aims to increase awareness, knowledge and support from the public regarding Alzheimer's and related dementias, while providing practical, hands-on information to the community at large. Outreach helps to build a dementia-friendly community where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported.

### Outreach Presentations and Kiosks

AGI achieved the goal of outreach through presentations at other organizations in the community as well as attendance at fairs or kiosks:

- McGill School of Social Work:
  - Graduate seminar (9 participants)
  - Undergraduate presentation (17 participants)
- University of Montreal (17 participants)
- McGill University Research Centre for Studies in Aging
  - Brainy Boomers lecture for World Alzheimer's Day (80 participants)
  - Brainy Boomers lecture for Alzheimer's Awareness Month (85 participants)
- Pointe Claire Library (30 participants)
- Dawson College fieldwork Information Fair (80 participants)
- McGill University Non-Profit, NGO, Community Service Fair (15 participants)

## 2021-2022 Snapshot

**AGI reached 2479** Montrealers and beyond through AGI's Programs for People Living with Dementia, Support for Caregivers, Education and Training.

**AGI connected with 2443** people across the Island of Montreal and via the world wide web through free community presentations and events.